

CHILDREN AND THE MEDIA

*Course number: V05.0150; 4 points credit

*Instructors: Nicole Foubister, MD, Assistant Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; and Jess P. Shatkin, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

*The course will be offered in fall of 2008 and annually each fall thereafter.

*Prerequisites: None

Course Description:

Consuming media has far outstripped reading storybooks or playing make-believe as the average American child's favorite pastime. Overall, children between the ages of two and eighteen spend an average of five-and-a-half hours a day using some form of media. This course will review the current literature on how media use affects children's mental health as well as their cognitive, emotional and social development. Designed for those who wish to learn to think critically, this course will focus on providing a comprehensive, research oriented review of how children and adolescents are influenced by the media. Discussions will include an examination of controversial issues, such as media's effects on children's violent behavior, substance abuse, and the potential benefits of media.

Course Aims:

a. Knowledge

Students will learn key aspects of:

1. Children and adolescents as unique audiences for media consumption.
2. The role of media in social, emotional and cognitive development.
3. The potential effects of media on behavior.

b. Skills

Students will be able to:

1. Discuss the current literature regarding children and the media.
2. Enhance skills in critiquing and evaluating published research.
3. Critically appraise the strength of research findings and conclusions.

c. Attitudes

Students will develop:

1. An appreciation of the strengths, weaknesses, value, and limitations of the currently available research.
2. A sensitivity to the challenges in developing appropriate research studies in media.
3. An ability to generate hypotheses regarding the effects of the media on the mental health and development of children and adolescence.

*Course Syllabus

Class #	Topic	Assigned Reading
1	Introduction: Media's Impact on Social, Emotional, and Cognitive	Strasburger, V. C., & Wilson, B. J. (2002). Chapter 1: Children and Adolescents: Unique Audiences

	Development	
2	Media's Impact on Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Development (continued)	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bickham, D., & Rich, M. (2006). Is Television Viewing Associated With Social Isolation?: Roles of Exposure Time, Viewing Context, and Violent Content. <i>Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine</i>, 160, 387-392. • Giles, D. C., & Maltby, J. (2004). The Role of Media Figures in Adolescent Development: Relations Between Autonomy, Attachment, and Interest in Celebrities. <i>Personality and Individual Differences</i>, 36(4), 813-822. • Zimmerman, F. J., & Christakis, D. A. (2005). Children's Television Viewing and Cognitive Outcomes. <i>Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine</i>, 159(7), 619-625.
3	Children as Active Media Consumers	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. (2003). <i>A. Zero to Six: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers</i>. Menlo Park, CA: Rideout V. J., Vanderwater, E. A., & Wartella E. • Valkenburg, P. M., & Cantor, J. (2001). The Development of a Child into a Consumer. <i>Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology</i>, 22(1), 61-72. • Villani, S. (2001). Impact of Media on Children and Adolescents: A 10-Year Review of the Research. <i>Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry</i>, 40(4), 392-401. <p>❖ Assignment 1 Due</p>
4	Portrayal of Mental Illness in the Media	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harper, S. (2005). Media, Madness and Misrepresentation: Critical Reflections on Anti-Stigma Discourse. <i>European Journal of Communication</i>, 20(4), 460-483. • Stout, P. A., Villegas, J., & Jennings, N. A. (2004). Images of Mental Illness in the Media: Identifying Gaps in the Research. <i>Schizophrenia Bulletin</i>, 30(3), 543-561.
5	Portrayal of Mental Illness in the Media (continued)	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnebo, J., & Van Acker, A. (2004). Does Television Influence Adolescents' Perceptions of and Attitudes Toward People with Mental Illness? <i>Journal of Community Psychology</i>, 32(3), 257-275.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wahl, O. F. (2003). Depictions of Mental Illnesses in Children's Media. <i>Journal of Mental Health</i>, 12(3), 249-258.
6	Racial and Ethnic Stereotypes	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Millard, J. E., & Grand, P.R. (2006). The Stereotypes of Black and White Women in Fashion Magazine Photographs: The Pose of the Model and the Impression She Creates. <i>Sex Roles</i>, 54, 659-673. Sungupta, R. (2006). Reading Representations of Black, East Asian, and White Women in Magazines for Adolescent Girls. <i>Sex Roles</i>, 54, 799-808.
7	Racial and Ethnic Stereotypes (continued)	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bang, H. K., & Reece, B. B. (2003). Minorities in Children's Television Commercials: New, Improved, and Stereotyped. <i>The Journal of Consumer Affairs</i>, 37(1), 42-67. Li-Vollimer, M. (2002). Race Representation in Child-Targeted Television Commercials. <i>Mass Communication & Society</i>, 5(2), 207-228.
8	Gender Stereotypes	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aubrey, J. S., & Harrison, K. (2004). The Gender-Role Content of Children's Favorite Television Programs And Its Links to Their Gender-Related Perceptions. <i>Media Psychology</i>, 6, 111-146. Ward, M. L., Hansbrough, E., & Walker, E. (2005). Contributions of Music Video Exposure to Black Adolescents' Gender and Sexual Schemas. <i>Journal of Adolescent Research</i>, 20(2), 143-166. <p>❖ Assignment 2 Due</p>
9	Gender Stereotypes (continued)	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hurtz, W., & Durkin, K. (2004). The Effects of Gender-Stereotyped Radio Commercials. <i>Journal of Applied Social Psychology</i>, 34(9), 1974-1992. Sheldon, J. P. (2004). Gender Stereotypes in Educational Software for Young Children. <i>Sex Roles</i>, 51(7/8), 433-444.
10	Media Violence and Aggression	<p>Strasburger, V. C., & Wilson, B. J. (2002). Chapter 3: Media Violence</p> <p>Sternheimer, K. (2003). Chapter 3: Fear of Media Violence. Four fallacies of media-violence effects.</p>
11	Media Violence	<p>Articles:</p>

	and Aggression (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beresin, E. V. (1999). Media Violence and Youth. <i>Academic Psychiatry</i>, 23(2), 111-114. • Gentile, D. A., Walsh, D. A., Ellison, P. R., Fox, M., & Cameron, J. (2004). Proceedings from American Psychology Society 16th Annual Convention: <i>Media Violence as a Risk Factor for Children</i>. Chicago, IL.
12	Midterm Exam	
13	Advertising and Child Consumerism	<p>Strasbeurger, V. C., & Wilson, B. J. (2002). Chapter 2: Advertising</p> <p>Sternheimer, K. (2003). Chapter 7: Fear of Advertising and the Young Consumer; How much is that is that psyche in the window?</p> <p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connor, S. M. (2006). Food-Related Advertisements on Preschool TV: Building Brand Recognition in Young Viewers. <i>Pediatrics</i>, 118(4), 1478-1485. • Verma, D.P.S., & Kapoor, N. (2004). Influence of TV Advertisements on Children's Buying Response: Role of Parent-Child Interaction. <i>Global Business Review</i>, 5(1), 51-71.
14	Body Image	Strasbeurger, V. C., & Wilson, B. J. (2002). Chapter 7: Eating and Eating Disorders
15	Body Image (continued)	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becker, A. E. (2004). Television, Disordered Eating, and Yong Women in Fiji: Negotiating Body Image and Identity During Rapid Social Change. <i>Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry</i>, 28, 533-559. • Marshall S. J., Biddle, S. J. H., Gorely, T., Cameron, N., & Murdey, I. (2004). Relationships Between Media Use, Body Fatness and Physical Activity in Children and Youth: A Meta-Analysis. <i>International Journal of Obesity</i>, 28, 1238-1246. <p>❖ Project Proposal Due</p>
16	Sex and Sexuality	<p>Strasbeurger, V. C., & Wilson, B. J. (2002). Chapter 5: Sexuality and the Media</p> <p>Sternheimer, K. (2003). Chapter 8: Fear of Sex. Do the media make them do it?</p>
17	Sex and Sexuality (continued)	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown, J. D., Halpern, C. T., & L'Engle, K. L. (2004). Mass Media as a Sexual Super Peer for Early Maturing Girls. <i>Journal of Adolescent</i>

		<p><i>Health</i>, 36(5), 420-427.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Institute on Media and the Family. (1999). <i>Teen-oriented Radio & CD Sexual Content Analysis</i>. Gentile, D. A. • Rich, M. (2005). Sex Screen: The Dilemma of Media Exposure and Sexual Behavior. <i>Pediatrics</i>, 116(1), 329-331. <p>❖ Assignment 3 Due</p>
18	Impact of Media Use on Health and Risk Behaviors	Strasburger, V. C., & Wilson, B. J. (2002). Chapter 6: Drugs and the Media
19	Impact of Media Use on Health and Risk Behaviors (continued)	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collins, R. L., Ellickson, P. L., McCaffrey, D., & Hambarsoomians, K. (2007). Early Adolescent Exposure to Alcohol Advertising and Its Relationship to Underage Drinking. <i>Journal of Adolescent Health</i>, 40(6), 527-534. • Gunasekera, H., Chapman, S., & Campbell, S. (2005). Sex and Drugs in Popular Movies: An Analysis of the Top 200 Films. <i>Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine</i>, 98, 464-470. • Sargent, J. D., Stoolmiller, M., Worth, K. A., Cin, S. D., Wills, T.A., Gibbons, F. X., et al. (2007). Exposure to Smoking Depictions in Movies: Its Association With Established Adolescent Smoking. <i>Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med.</i>, 161(9), 849-856.
20	Children and the Internet	<p>Strasburger, V. C., & Wilson, B. J. (2002). Chapter 9: The Internet</p> <p>Sternheimer, K. (2003). Chapter 9: Fear of the Internet. Information regulation.</p>
21	Suicide and Copycats	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becker, K., & Schmidt, M. H. (2006). When Kids Seek Help On-Line: Internet Chat Rooms and Suicide. <i>Reclaiming Children and Youth</i>, 13(4), 229-230. • Gould, M. S. (2001). Suicide and the Media. <i>Annals New York Academy of Sciences</i>, 932, 200-224. • Gould, M. S., Jamieson, P., & Romer, D. (2003). Media Contagion and Suicide Among the Young. <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i>, 46(9), 1269-1284. <p>❖ Assignment 4 Due</p>
22	Media Literacy	Strasburger, V. C., & Wilson, B. J. (2002). Chapter 10: Media Literacy

23	School Readiness/ Academic Achievement	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beentjes, J. W. J., & Van der Voort, T. H. A. (1988) Television's Impact on Children's Reading Skills: A Review of Research. <i>Reading Research Quarterly</i>, 23(4), 398-413. • Landhuis, C. E., Welch, D., & Hancox, R. J. (2007). Does Childhood Television Viewing Lead to Attention Problems in Adolescence?: Results From a Prospective Longitudinal Study. <i>Pediatrics</i>, 120(3), 532-537.
24	Family Values	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albada, K. F. (2000). Public and Private Dialogue About the American Family on Television. <i>Journal of Communication</i>, 50, 79-110. • Gentile, D. A., & Walsh, D. A. (2002). A Normative Study of Family Media Habits. <i>Applied Developmental Psychology</i>, 23, 157-178. • Lull, J. (1980). Family Communication Patterns and the Social Uses of Television. <i>Communication Research</i>, 7(3), 319-334.
25	Professionals' Role	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McIlhaney Jr., J. S. (2005). Problems and Solutions Associated with Media Consumption: The Role of the Practitioner. <i>Pediatrics</i>, 116(1), 327-328. • Sege, R., & Dietz, W. (1994). Television Viewing and Violence in Children: the Pediatrician as Agent for Change. <i>Pediatrics</i>, 94(4), 600-607. • Strasburger, V. (2006). "Clueless": Why Do Pediatricians Underestimate the Media's Influence on Children and Adolescents? <i>Pediatrics</i>, 117(4), 1427-1431.
26	Potential Benefits of Media	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arnett, J. J. (1995). Adolescents' Uses of Media for Self-Socialization. <i>Journal of Youth and Adolescence</i>, 24(5), 519-533. • Elder, R. W., Shults, R. A., Sleet, D. A., Nichols, J. L., Thompson, R. S., Rajab, W., & Task Force on Community Preventative Services. (2004). Effectiveness of Mass Media Campaigns for Reducing Drinking and Driving and Alcohol-Involved Crashes: A Systematic Review. <i>American Journal of Preventative Medicine</i>. 27(1), 57-65.
27	Potential Benefits	<p>Articles:</p>

	of Media (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frenn, M., Malin, S., Brown, R. L., Greer, Y. Fox, J., Greer, J., & et al. (2005). Changing the Tide: An Internet/Video Exercise and Low-Fat Diet Intervention with Middle-School Students. <i>Applied Nursing Research</i>, 18(1), 13-21. • Green, S. C., & Bavelier, D. (2003). Action Video Game Modifies Visual Selective Attention. <i>Letters to Nature</i>, 423, 534-537. • Linebarger, D. L. (2001). Learning to Read From Television: The Effects of Using Captions and Narration. <i>Journal of Educational Psychology</i>, 93(2), 288-298.
28	Solutions	<p>Strasburger, V. C., & Wilson, B. J. (2002). Chapter 11: Ten Arguments in Favor of Solutions</p> <p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown, J. D. (2006). Media Literacy Has Potential to Improve Adolescents' Health. <i>Journal of Adolescent Health</i>, 39, 459-460. • Thoman, E., & Jolls, T. (2004). Media Literacy—A National Priority for a Changing World. <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i>, 48(1), 18-29.
29	Bringing it All Together Review for final examination.	<p>Sternheimer, K. (2003). Conclusion: Rethinking Fears of Media and Children. Media: A sheep in wolf's clothing.</p> <p>❖ <i>Final Projects Due</i></p>
30	Final Written Examination	

Required Texts:

Children Adolescents and the Media. Starburger, VK, et al., Sage Publications (2002).

It's Not the Media. Sternheimer, K, Westview Press (2003).

Readings will be supplemented by primary sources from the scientific literature of child psychology and psychiatry. Typically, three to five readings will be assigned each week.

Course Meetings:

The course will meet twice weekly, once for lecture and once for recitation. The lecture will teach basic concepts, and the recitation will provide an opportunity for discussion and review of the required readings.

Course Grading:

Grades will be based upon:
 Assignments (20%), Project Proposal (5%), Midterm Examination (25%), a Final Examination (30%), and Final Project (20%).

Assignments: Students will complete four assignments (5% each). Each assignment will be a response to reflection questions based upon the readings. These assignments will be no more than three pages in length, double-spaced.

Project Proposal: Students will present a written outline detailing their final project.

Midterm Examination: Students will complete a one-hour, short answer and multiple-choice examination based upon the material covered during the first six weeks of class.

Final Examination: Students will complete a two-hour, short answer and multiple-choice examination based upon the material covered during the entire semester.

Final Project: Students will generate an innovative research project applying the knowledge that they have gained on a hot-button topic of their choice. Projects will encompass two distinct phases: (1) In the first phase, students will review the literature relevant to their topic (e.g., movie ratings, video game ratings, portrayal of girls and young women in media, television's effects on children, etc.) and outline the strengths and conclusions of this research. (2) In the second phase, students will develop a project designed to broaden and improve upon the currently available research which was utilized to establish their topic. The projects should be creative and inventive in their presentation; examples include creating a parents' guide to the media, a health professionals' guide to gathering an accurate media history, an improved or original ratings system, a children's instructional book on the media, etc. Projects may be submitted in multiple formats, including video, pamphlet, DVD, brochure, or web page. Each student must obtain approval from the professor prior to initiating the project (see project proposal). If the Children and the Media course later moves to a lecture format, the final project will then become a group assignment.