CMNS 335 Media and Information Literacy Course Information

Introduction/syllabus

Virtually all we know about the world and our economic, political, and social lives beyond our immediate senses comes to us through the media. Media and other information providers, including libraries, archives, and museums, are recognized as being central to democracy, cultural dialogue, and good governance—because they foster diversity and democratic debates, promote peace and sustainable development, and are essential sources of information and knowledge. Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is an umbrella term that encompasses various and evolving competencies required to navigate today's increasingly complex communications environment. MIL equips citizens with the following competencies: the ability to understand information for public good; the ability to engage with information, media, and digital communications for participation in sustainable development; and the ability to seek and enjoy the full benefits of fundamental human rights. This course has been developed based on a UNESCO MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) primarily directed to teachers (in both formal and informal settings), but anyone interested in critical skills for navigating today's media landscape will benefit from knowledge of MIL.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the scope and significance of media and information literacy.
- Apply various frameworks to media and information to analyze and assess media messages, information legitimacy, audiences, and production.
- Explain the meaning of freedom of expression (FOE), its relationship to media and information literacy (MIL), and its importance in a democracy..
- Identify the elements that contribute to positive media representations and to equity, diversity, dialogue, and inclusion.
- Describe media and information literacy strategies and tools for recognizing disinformation and misinformation.
- Explain why privacy is a special concern for MIL in digital media cultures.
- Assess AI and algorithms in the context of MIL.
- Summarize the importance of decolonization and cultural sovereignty to media and information literacies.
- Explain the significance of active audiences as global citizens.

Course Outline

Unit 1: Introduction to Media and Information Literacy
Unit 2: Using Media and Information Literacy to Make Sense of the News
Unit 3: Freedom of Expression as Cornerstone of Media and Information Literacy
Unit 4: Representation and Race in Media and Information Literacy
Unit 5: Media and Information Literacy and the Problem of "~~Fake News~~" Misinformation and
                      Disinformation
Unit 6: Media and Information Literacy in the Digital Age: Privacy and Online Safety
Unit 7 A Media and Information Literacy Approach to Artificial Intelligence

Unit 8: Decolonizing Media Cultures: Indigenous Media
UNIT 9: Media and Information Audiences & Global Citizenship

References and Resources

Reference lists at the end of each unit cite all sources mentioned in the discussion. Note that several sources appear several times over the 9 units, and several are assigned as readings in other units as well.

These reference lists can be valuable sources for your research essay or further learning. Further peer-reviewed sources are listed under **Additional Resources.**

Additional Resources lists useful websites on MIL teaching and learning which you may also wish to consult, either for your work in this course or in your professional capacities.

A Note on Assigned Readings

Each unit presents a commentary on the topic(s) followed by 3 or 4 assigned peer-reviewed academic articles, which are briefly summarized followed by **study questions.** These study questions are intended to guide you through the key points of the reading and are best read through before beginning the article. Be aware that answers to the questions are typically woven through the article rather than supplied in one place. You will be working with study questions in Assignments 1 and 2. We hope that they'll also prove helpful in framing topics for other assignments.

Suggested Study Schedule

Weeks 1-3. Read Units 1, 2 and 3. Consider Assignment 1; study notes are recommended.

Week 5. Read Unit 4.

Weeks 6-8. Read Units 5, 6, 7 and 8. Consider Assignment 2; study notes are recommended.

Week 10. Submit Assignment 2 (after Unit 8).

Weeks 9-11. Read Units 7, 8 and 9. Consider Assignment 3.

Week 13. Submit Assignment 3.

Week 15. Submit Research Paper proposal.

Weeks 16-19. Write and submit research paper.

Evaluation of Student Work

Assignment 1 Study Questions and Activities   15%

Assignment 2. Study Questions and Activities   15%

Assignment 3. Learning Object   25%

Assignment 4. Research Paper.   45%

1. **Assignment 1 Units 1-4: Study questions and activities   20%**
    Part A. From three of units 1, 2, 3 and 4, select 2 study questions and answer them
    with reference to the readings, explaining and drawing connections between overall in
    terms of themes, pedagogy, concepts and/or any other aspect that catches your
    attention.
    Length: 6 answers of a substantial paragraph each (about 250-300 words each).
    Sample points to consider:
    - How do the ideas and concepts (eg hegemony, digital literacy,
      encoding/decoding, democracy and citizenship) in the readings support or relate
      to the value or purpose of the activity? Do the critical viewpoints of the authors
      resonate or help to explain your everyday experiences of media?
    - Can you imagine a lesson that would help students to understand the topic(s)?

2. **Part B**. From units 1 - 4, select and carry out one of the suggested activities. How does
    the activity enhance your understanding of MIL? How might you adapt this activity to an
    audience? Write an account of your experiences or findings and reflect upon it critically
    with reference to course content, including the Study Guide and videos, (about 600
    words in total).

- To what extent do you consider elements of the Media Triangle in your own media use
  or production? Consider the media and information you create and share online, such as
  informative posts, videos, and photographs.
- According to Duncan McCue, why has there been a decline in trust towards journalism?
  What are some of the key questions McCue believes all consumers of news should be
  asking to determine if news sources are ethical and reliable?
- What does decolonization in the newsroom mean? Why is this process important?
  Ideally, what are the results of this process?

- Choose two news organizations that cover news in the same region; for example, *Al
  Jazeera*, *BBC*, *CNN*, and *The Guardian* all cover international news. Are there differences
  in the stories that these news organizations choose to cover? Are there other factors
  that should be considered here?

- Locate news sources in your region that identify themselves with a particular
  community. Compare headlines with a more "traditional" news source. How do they
  differ? How are they the same?

- In what ways do the key concepts for MIL apply to work to support FOE?
- Go to [Reporters Without Borders](https://rsf.org/en). https://rsf.org/en Are there articles there about violence against journalists in your country? Others? Does the gender, religion, or ethnicity of the journalist seem to be a factor? What methods does this organization take to prevent such violence? In what ways can a media and information literate citizenry support the work of journalists and freedom of the press?
- Are you aware of examples of diverse communities that digital technologies have helped to make possible? What kinds of interaction and communication do the technologies make possible?.
- Visit the websites for media being produced by LGBTQ+ individuals or media companies. In what ways do the perspectives and the stories being told represent alternatives to mainstream media content?

3. **Assignment 2 Study Questions and Activities**   20%
   As above: work with units 5-8.

Part A: Study Questions

Part B: Activities (Select from the following).

- Some of the most common topics for mis- and dis-information are climate change, vaccinations, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Investigate the news and information available on one or more of these topics. To identify mis- and dis-information, apply the 4 media and information literacy steps from Media Smarts to "Break the Fake."

- . The Bad News Game https://www.getbadnews.com/books/english/ The game exposes players to strategies used to create "credible" but inaccurate news stories by having them make "fake news" inside the game using different strategies: impersonation, emotion, polarization, conspiracy, discrediting, and trolling. Play the game and report on how you used one or more of these strategies.

- Several years ago, Eli Pariser gave a TED talk called "[Beware online filter bubbles](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8ofWFx525s)" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8ofWFx525s that became very popular. According to Pariser, how are filter bubbles created? What are some of the key issues he raises regarding the social and political implications of filter bubbles? How does he compare traditional media to the algorithmic media of the present day? Are there other issues or examples you would raise based on your media experiences today?
- Ramos, Gabriela. "[Gabriela Ramos on how to build the rule of law in the digital world (short version)." UNESCO,](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXZanRQf3HM) November 4, 2020. Video, 2:06. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXZanRQf3HM

What points does Gabriela Ramos use to build her case? Which points do you accept as valid? Discuss the need for digital rights law that will enable Internet companies to provide equitable access to online information and narratives, as well as enhance citizens' online experience.

- Complete a content survey of selected movies and/or TV programs broadcast on prime-time television or on a popular streaming service. To what extent are Indigenous stories, characters, and points of view central to the stories being told in these examples? What are the potential ramifications—political and social—of the presence or absence of Indigenous stories and the kinds of representations that are available in mainstream media? To what extent are media stereotypes employed?

What kinds of representations are available through the media stories that Indigenous people are telling themselves? To what extent do the stories you find at an Indigenous media outlet represent **cultural sovereignty**?

Visit the website for [Reporting in Indigenous Communities](https://riic.ca/), https://riic.ca/ an organization dedicated to helping journalists in decolonizing journalism, and read the Reporter's Checklist. What elements of this checklist create an approach that is different from what we might typically see in mainstream news reporting?

Examine media reports of racialized groups to locate examples of both interpersonal racism and institutional racism. How do accounts of policies and practices support those in positions of power and authority while disadvantaging others?

Assignment 3   Learning Object   25%

A learning object may be thought of as a "component" or a "module" that can be used as part of an overall lesson or curriculum plan. How would you present important concepts and practices to students in a clear and accessible manner? How would you teach them to apply what they've learned?

Your learning object may be a PowerPoint presentation, a poster, a website, a text with visual aids, a lesson plan or another form that you have found useful or wish to develop in your own pedagogic practice (remember that this means not only teaching in schools but in informal contexts such as running a workshop in your local library, training journalists in MIL strategies, creating a storyboard for a short film, and so on). In all cases, keep your specific audience in mind.

Whatever form you choose, you are marked on content, synthesis of materials, and clarity of ideas, and the usual qualities of good grammar and style. You are not expected to have expertise in producing a website or a film—you might simply describe its content and include sample visuals. For the purposes of this assignment, cite your references (footnotes are a good way of doing this so as not to interrupt the flow of content) and provide a reference list.

1. **Note: Work Integrated Learning Option** For this assignment you have the option of integrating your learning into your workplace experience as a special project or component of your regular practice. This might include producing your presentation in the form of **Community and Industry Research**, Internships, **Service Learning, or other form of sharing/developing your academic work with a host institution or organization. Please consult your tutor to discuss this option.**

2. **Length**: variable depending on form but equivalent to a short essay of approximately 6-8 pages of text. A PowerPoint should be no more than 12 slides; a lesson plan could be 5-10 pages depending on use of text and graphics; a website's components could add up to 8-10 pages; consult your tutor with any questions.

3. Drawing upon resources (commentary, readings, activities, supplementary website resources and reading lists) from Units 7, 8 and 9, design a learning object that educates a viewer, reader or student in principles and practices of MIL in the contexts of your knowledge of AI, decolonization and global citizenship. You may also refer to any key course content from Units 1 – 6. You can use any appropriate style and tone, whether conversational, formal or creative but it must be based in at least 5 course resources though you may also include supplementary outside sources.

4. **A learning object** combines several items of content (eg concepts of MIL) and practice (activities applying the content) toward a chosen learning objective (eg understanding the uses of AI in decolonizing media; how media literacy supports citizenship in a diverse society, etc). A learning object may be thought of as a "component" or a "module" that can be used as part of an overall lesson or curriculum plan. How would you present important concepts and practices to students in a clear and accessible manner? How would you teach them to apply what they've learned?

5. Your learning object may be a PowerPoint presentation, a poster, a website, a text with visual aids, a lesson plan or another form that you have found useful or wish to develop in your own pedagogic practice (remember that this means not only teaching in schools but in informal contexts such as running a workshop in your local library, training journalists in MIL strategies, creating a storyboard for a short film, and so on). In all cases, keep your specific audience in mind.

6. Whatever form you choose, you are marked on content, synthesis of materials, and clarity of ideas, and the usual qualities of good grammar and style. You are not expected to have expertise in producing a website or a film—you might simply describe its content and include sample visuals. For the purposes of this assignment, cite your references (footnotes are a good way of doing this so as not to interrupt the flow of content) and provide a reference list.

Assignment 4 Research Project 35%

Proposal: 2 pages maximum. Not marked, but *must be submitted and approved* prior to your submitting the finished paper.

Basic outline of the proposal:

Summary or synopsis of the proposed project, rationale (why is this an important topic? Why should it be read?), aims/objectives (to give an account of something, to explain something), thesis statement.

Statement of background and significance: what is the importance of MIL and/or your particular focus? Why is this project relevant to students and practitioners? What knowledge will it explain or contribute?

Case study: What will you do, how will you do it?

Sources: Do you have sufficient relevant research sources for your topic? List these: it's not written in stone and the list may change in progress, but demonstrates that you have a solid foundation for your project.

Length: 12 pages (approx. 3400 – 3600 words.)

This assignment asks you to create a proposal for a teaching module in media and information literacy for presentation to a fictional school board. The learning module can be for any grade level K-12, but you must specify this in the materials. The proposal/presentation will have three components and must include at least two of the ten main course themes: these are the three stages:

(i) a.   Develop a script / narration that introduces and explains the proposed module, : its value to course learning objectives, its content and format. It must include at least two of the ten main course themes.

(ii)b.   Prepare a multimodal presentation to accompany the script in order to illustrate your ideas; this could be a powerpoint presentation, an audio or video production, a podcast, a chart or other multimedia form such as graphic

(iii) c.   Finally, write a theoretical analysis defending and explaining the relevance and significance of your proposal based on in course materials of the overall project, based in course materials (at least 4-5 sources/readings); you may also refer to 3-5 external peer reviewed sources. Finally, incorporate personal experience and/or reflection on your own learning process and (actual or potential) teaching approaches. Length:

Weighting of assignment components
(i) a.   20%
(ii)b.   30%
(iii) c.   50%

Assignment 4 Research Paper 45%

Proposal: 2 pages maximum. Not marked, but *must be submitted and approved* prior to your submitting the finished paper.

Basic outline of the proposal:

Summary or synopsis of the proposed project, rationale (why is this an important topic? Why should it be read?), aims/objectives (to give an account of something, to explain something), thesis statement.

Statement of background and significance: what is the importance of MIL and/or your particular focus? Why is this project relevant to students and practitioners? What knowledge will it explain or contribute?

Case study: What will you do, how will you do it?

Sources: Do you have sufficient relevant research sources for your topic? List these: it's not written in stone and the list may change in progress, but demonstrates that you have a solid foundation for your project.

Research Paper

Length: 12 pages (approx. 3400 – 3600 words.)

Method: At least 8-10 peer-reviewed academic sources, up to 5 from course readings content, up to 5 or more from external sources. For your case study or lesson plan details, you can also use websites such as those provided with the units. Be sure to cite all sources and provide a reference list, in standard format such as APA or MLA.

The goal here is not quantity of citations but quality---not just an inserted quote or two, but an engagement with the author's arguments and main points as they help to illuminate your own discussion. Please see the Guide to Writing an Academic Research Paper, below, and/or consult the AU Write Site for guidelines.

Topics

You are invited to choose your own topics with the following suggestions as to approach. Please consult with your tutor if you are unsure of your topic or how to develop it.

Choose one of the main topics (i.e. check unit titles) of the course and explore the relevant significance, concepts and practices of media and information literacy. Topics overlap between units of course (eg. Representation and Decolonization; Freedom of Expression and Journalism) so you are not limited to one particular unit. Choose an issue that is important to you or that you deem important to develop in your teaching (and learning) practice. If you are already working in this field and have developed materials, you can use this as your case study or entry point.

Imagine that you are proposing a course, workshop, program or lesson series in MIL. You need approval from an institution, funding, or both. This paper will serve as your rationale and supporting material to promote and justify the importance of your planning.

Provide a case study (eg a case of fake news, an issue in race representation, an existing program, a potential audience group in need of MIL, inspiration drawn from a survey of related programs and initiatives, and so on.) Alternatively, you might carry out an in-depth analysis of a media production and interrogate it according to MIL concepts and goals. Give a succinct account of your resulting proposal for teaching and learning---not a detailed lesson plan (etc) necessarily, but you can base this on your work for Assignment 3 if you wish.

In order to provide a robust rationale, you will contextualize this in the scholarship of MIL.

A few considerations to get you started:

- Who is the audience? Are they media producers or consumers or both?
- What principles and practices of MIL are most useful or appropriate for this group?
- What can we learn from the research to enhance our own practice or knowledge?
- What are general and specific goals of MIL programs?
- What features of our mediascapes and networked society impel or inspire you in this research?

Guide to Writing an Academic Research Paper

Please insert standard guide as included in CMNS course materials**.**