

Media Psychology – ADV 6315

Applying psychology to the complex system of human interaction with the ever-evolving media landscape

Media Psychology focuses on the psychology behind media and technology choice, use, and impact. Broadly speaking, media psychology uses the theories, concepts and methods of psychology to study the impact of the mass media on individuals, groups, and cultures. The study of media psychology combines an understanding of human emotions, cognition and behavior with an equal understanding of media technologies in order to apply this information to issues of media usability, effectiveness and impact.

The rapid adoption of media technologies around the globe and the ever-evolving 'new' media landscape makes media psychology 1.) an exciting and important field that touches every aspect of life and 2.) a field with a growing need for professionals that have the expert understanding of how media impacts human behavior; how to use and create media; as well as how to advise others on its effective creation to evoke positive social changes in our world.

This graduate course examines how we come to understand ourselves and our world through personal and mass communication technologies. We will address the psychological antecedents and consequences of communicating via mass media, telecommunications media, and personal media.

More specifically:

- We will discuss how motivation, cognitive processing, interpretation, emotion, cognition and behavior are impacted by media contexts and content.
- We will further explore the dynamic process of such impacts on subsequent perceptions of the world, future media experiences, and ourselves.
- We will identify this dynamic interaction of media with human experience in various contexts for the purpose of promoting public understanding and positive media development and use.

The aim of this course is to provide students with a deeper understanding of the highly commodified media environment that surrounds them and in which they participate as consumer and, increasingly, producer.

Potential topics to be discussed include:

• entertainment • educational media • gaming • social media • interactive media • mobile technologies • trans-media storytelling • audience involvement • self-referencing, identity & memory • interface and visual design • user experience • emotion, mood & self-esteem management • message and framing strategy

Media psychology is cross-disciplinary in theoretical framework, approach, and application. Understanding how, why and when media can impact, persuade and facilitate behavior is fundamental to the development, design and use of media technologies across many applications. Thus, several areas of application are discussed in the course: advertising, news and politics, educational and public information programming, and entertainment. The course also discusses the implications of psychology and the mass media for parents, consumers, educators, and researchers. As you work through the course, I will encourage you to think about your own professional practices and how these psychological principles might apply in your field of study or work.

ADV 6315.002 CRN 29800

Thursday 6pm – 8:50pm

Melanie Sarge, Ph.D.

“All media work us over completely. They are so pervasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered... All media are extensions of some human faculty - psychic or physical.

-McLuhan and Fiore, 1967, p.26”