

St. Joseph's College of Commerce

(Autonomous)

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Department of English

B.A. General English

Sem I

Academic Year 2024-25

B.A. General English – Semester I

Media Literacy and Communication Skills

Course Description: The Media Literacy and Communication Course has been designed as a response to the questions—where and what do our students often read and write? Which are the new spaces that significantly shape their experiences? Do our courses address the challenges present in the emerging media spaces?

The term ‘media’ has an expansive meaning in today’s context. It may refer to a piece of paper on which news is printed or to a political advertisement that pops up while browsing for the latest TV show on the internet. Media often acts as a tool to manufacture consent, and at the same time it is also a space where such ‘manufacturing’ can be resisted. Hence, understanding media is critical to understanding the modern world that is saturated with information.

The Media Literacy and Communication Course also intends to inculcate LSRW skills and thereby enable them to analyse and interpret the information received from different sources. Also, the course aims to support students in developing the much-needed aptitude to assess socio-political, economic, and cultural developments. The syllabus of the course has been conceptualized to make it a foundation for developing informed perspective by engaging in evidence-based discussions. The activities designed aim to facilitate the fostering of skills needed to fact-check, source materials for research, and navigate through the online space.

Course Objectives

The course aims to help the students to:

- navigate through the digital world
- understand the news media ecosystem
- learn how to look for information in digital spaces, organize them, and validate the credibility of the information collected for academic and everyday needs
- analyse and interpret media discourses to understand the society and study how they shape individual experiences
- develop and refine the LSRW skills through discussions and activities

Course Outcomes

Students who successfully complete the course will be able to:

- source and organize information from reliable resources and figure out the credibility of news reports, articles, stories, and other information available on diverse media outlets
- display an understanding of the ways in which media platforms influence perceptions and shape experiences
- display an ability to critique media generated socio-political and cultural discourses
- articulate issues/ideas with greater clarity and communicate effectively

Module 1: News Analysis and Interpretation

12 hours

a) **Evaluating news articles:** Read articles and opinion pieces published in various newspapers, web-portals, and magazines to evaluate their authenticity, bias – if any, and the perspective from which the news is reported or the opinion is stated.

b) **Analysing television news and debates:** Watch television news debates and discuss the authenticity, bias – if any, and the perspective from which the news is presented or reported. Also discuss both common and exclusive aspects of news reported on television and print media. The activities in this module will study the impact created through both television and print media on individuals and the society at large.

The activities will focus on developing and refining the LSRW skills. The course instructor is free to select news article/report/TV shows/documentaries/videos of his/her choice for the activity other than those prescribed in the syllabus.

Readings:

1. The Propaganda Model – Extract from *Manufacturing Consent* by Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky
2. “Why so many people believe fake news – and how to get them to see through conspiracy theories” by Mark Lorch, *The Conversation*
3. The Indian Tale of Lost Credibility of Journalism: Who to Blame? – Sidhant Dubey
4. Private Interest Journalism – Hartosh Singh Bal
5. Open Letter to the Chief Justice of India – P Sainath

Module 2: Digital Media and the Internet

12 hrs

- a) **Information gathering in online spaces:** Select a topic and search online to find in-depth information about the topic. Students may speak about the processes that they underwent while collecting the information, including the websites they visited and how they got to know about the sources.
- b) **Video analysis:** Watch well-researched YouTube videos and engage in discussions based on select themes. Give chance to each student to briefly express their experience of selecting and watching the video.
- c) **Producing content for the online spaces:** Discuss various ways of producing content for the internet. Encourage students to come up with content for a media platform of their choice, and conduct peer review sessions. Encourage students to go through the content assigned to them and use the skills learnt in the semester to analyse the content and share feedback.

Readings and Viewings

1. Youtube Channels: Ted Talks, Big Think, Kurzgesagt
2. Case Study: People's Archive of Rural India (ruralindiaonline.org)
 - a) In Haveri, Ratnavva's Life of Hopes and Seeds – S. Senthilir
 - b) I Never Got a Chance to Play for India Again – Riya Behl
 - c) The Headmaster of Dabli Chapori – Priti David
 - d) Rita Akka's Life is Going to the Dogs – M Palani Kumar

Module 3: Understanding Social Media

12 hrs

This module includes a set of activities related to how experiences are represented in social media. The course instructor may conduct any two activities from the list given below in class.

- Discuss the students' relation with social media. Ask students to write how social media spaces influence their everyday experiences
- Imagine a month without social media and write about the possible impacts
- Ask students to identify an important change they discovered within themselves after engaging with social media
- Discuss the impact of social media on society and individuals by discussing an essay

Readings and Viewings:

1. "I type, therefore I am" by Tom Chatfield, Aeon Magazine
2. The Social Dilemma (2020)

Module 4: Communication Skills

9 hrs

Reading activity:

- a) Read a passage and identify key words
- b) Read a passage and identify the purpose of the punctuation marks used
- c) Read a passage and identify the relevance of paragraph breaks
- d) Read a passage and identify the key points or arguments
- e) Read a passage and identify the sentence structure

Listening activity

- a) Listen to a radio broadcast of a discussion, talk, or a YouTube video and comment on the content
- b) Listen to the ideas/perspectives shared by fellow-students and respond
- c) Listen to a conversation/story/narrative and narrate it to the class

Writing activity

- a) Write about personal experiences/personal narratives
- b) Recollect and write about a conversation that you had with friends or family members
- c) Describe an incident that you have witnessed
- d) Recollect a memory associated with an object and write about it
- e) Describe a photograph or painting
- f) Explain a process (e.g., opening an email account, riding a bike, operating a machine)
- g) Write about a topic that emerges through a classroom discussion
- h) Write about an inspiring topic

Speaking activity

- a) Conduct discussions on contemporary issues
- b) Presentations by students on select themes or topics
- c) Narrate a story or an incident