

1994-

Communication 634: Audience Analysis

Meetings: Thursdays, 9-11 AM

Instructor: Oscar H. Gandy, Jr.

Office Hours: Rm 306, Tuesdays, 1-4PM; Thursdays, 1-4PM, and by appointment
(898-7030/FOG@ASC.UPENN.EDU)

Course Description:

This course explores audiences, primarily the television audience, from a variety of perspectives which have developed over time. Audiences are seen as the products of the broadcasting industry, whose qualities are estimated by the ratings industry. Audiences are seen as active consumers guided by differentiated tastes and preferences. Audiences are seen as the site of exposure effects or negotiated meanings, which differ across identifiable clusters of persons. Familiarity with these approaches is developed through lecture, discussion, short quizzes and a final research proposal.

Course Evaluation:

Grades are to be assigned on the basis of three short papers (5 pages, 20 points) and a research proposal (40 points).

Text: Orders for four texts have been placed in the bookstore, additional readings have been placed on reserve in the Annenberg Library.

Tentative Course Outline

1. Introduction

Thinking about audiences...a question of perspective. The historic biases in the pool of knowledge. Critical perspectives and the denial of choice.
[Readings: Anderson, 1989]

2. Audiences for Sale

Audience as product. Content as productive inputs. The emergence of choice with the evolution of media systems. The ratings industry and the market for ratings.
[Readings: Barwise and Ehrenberg, chs 6-12; Beville ch 1-3, 7-11; Gandy, in press; Jhally and Livant, 1986]

3. The Measurement of Audiences

A comparison of measurement technologies.
[Readings: Belville, 1988, ch 4-6; Gutman, 1985]

First Examination (February 15th)

4. Tastes and Preferences

The recognition of choice. Audience selectivity. Habituation. Fans and superfans. Activity, interest, orientation clusters. Uses of Television.
[Readings: Barwise and Ehrenberg, chs 2-5; Noelle-Neuman and Schulz, 1989; Wober, 1989; Frank and Greenberg, chs. 1-3, 10,11; Morley, 1986]

Second Examination (March 8th)

5. Learning From Television and other Media

