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
[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

6. The Evidence of Effects
Metatheoretical perspectives on the paradigm of effects. [Readings: Hearold, 1986; Gandy and Matabane, 1989]

Third Examination (March 12th) April 16th
Proposal Due (April 30th, Noon)

Reading List

Required Texts:


Reserve Texts:


Articles and Chapters:


Tentative Course Outline

1. Introduction
   Thinking about audiences a question of perspective. The historic bias in the pool of knowledge. Critical perspectives and the denial of choice (Readings: Anderson, 1990)

2. Audience for Data
   Audience as product. Content as productive input. The emergence of choice with the evolution of media systems. The ratings industry and the market for ratings.
   Readings: Harrow and Harrow, ch 4-13. Reading ch 5-11: Grady, in mass media (1990)

3. The Measurement of Audiences
   A composition of measurement technologies.
   Reading: Belsilie, 1988, ch 4-6; Gunter, 1985

   First Examination (February 18th)

4. Taste and Preferences
   The recognition of choice. Audience saliency, habituation, fans and superfans. Activity, interest, orientation clusters, users of television.
   Readings: Barwise and Ehrenberg, chs 2-5. Noelle-Neunanne and Schoen 1989; Woerbe, 1987; Frank and Grebner, chs. 3, 10, 11; Mericy, 1966

   Second Examination (March 8th)

5. Learning From Television and Other Media