

Antioch College M.A. in Media

Introduction

• Media Studies is not Broadcasting and Film or Communication Research, it is not Future Studies or Experimental Education, not Social Science or Journalism. It borrows much from each of these recognized fields and goes beyond. The parameters are undefined.

New technologies and new aesthetics are expanding and reshaping our flow of information, culture, and values. In the over-mediated environment in which we all now grow up, work, and live, Understanding Media is an essential humanity, and Doing Media is an important survival skill.

Antioch is in the process of developing, accrediting, and recruiting for a Master of Arts program in Media Studies. The purpose is not to define and institutionalize a new humanity, rather it is to pull together and give academic recognition and institutional support to speculative research, experimental production design, and

practical application already being explored randomly in other contexts.

Antioch intends to offer the M.A. through coordinated efforts of at least three units of the Antioch Network: The Baltimore-Washington campus, The Center for Understanding Media in New York City, and the Yellow Springs campus in Ohio. Each of these centers will be building onto an already established program, faculty base and pool of essential resources. All centers will share a common central administration. This will facilitate the exchange of faculty among all three units, and students may also take residential study and work in more than one of the geographic centers. Since different centers will be equipped for primary service to different combinations of vocational and academic objectives on the part of students, what follows is each Center's own description of its particular program capabilities.

ANTIOCH BALTIMORE/WASHINGTON PROGRAM:

(For more information, contact Tom Johnson, Urban-Media Program, 525 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, Md., 21202.)

PURPOSE: TOWARD MEDIA

- literacy
- competency
- sensitivity

through examination

- of how we are affected by media,
- of how we can be effective with media;

through exploration

- of communication research and strategy,
- of moving-image aesthetics,
- of media technologies (present and future);

through experimentation

- with media (tion) designs,
- with the creative potential of media,
- with documentation modes.

The graduate level program which we propose to offer is not available elsewhere. It is a new field of inquiry built of inter-related media skills and social research concerns which merit academic recognition and institutional support.

We will recruit and develop skilled mediators in the area of applied urban social-animation. The Baltimore Program will be more utilitarian,

more political, and more actively engaged in practical applications than CUM or Yellow Springs. We will be constantly extracting theory from our trial and error, project-based approach, evaluating what we find and incorporating it into subsequent project designs.

The Baltimore-Washington Program for the M.A. in Media Studies will emphasize production and communication related to urban social problems and social change. Community-based media action projects become skill-development vehicles, sources of data on communications problems and possibilities, and stimulus to development of artistic expression and social theory/methodology.

Clientele

In the first year, beginning September 1973, we expect to admit twenty-five candidates seeking masters level work in media who are not oriented toward broadcast careers or toward traditional filmmaking. It is expected that this group might include:

a. Urban social strategists who want to begin experimenting with media and information flow in a supportive institutional framework.

b. Professional people with life experiences applicable to the degree and who want to experiment in their own fields with new approaches to using and understanding the media. (These students could also be credited for learning from previous life experiences if needed to establish their prior achievement of a bachelor's degree equivalency).

c. Persons who have worked in counter-cultural, alternative or free-form media and who want

to explore a more theoretical framework from which that activity grows, who need time for research in an environment with people of similar concerns, and who need access to resources.

d. Students in undergraduate programs involved in communications or media who want to focus in on specific media and areas of inquiry related to urban culture. (Within the Antioch system, these students could work directly for a five-year M.A. degree.)

CENTER FOR UNDERSTANDING MEDIA:

(For more information, contact Mr. Robert Geller, Center for Understanding Media, 267 West 25th St., New York, N.Y., 10001)

Purpose

The Center for Understanding Media engages in research and projects in communications, education and the arts. The Center specializes in projects involving young people and the new media. It works to develop critical and active consumers for the various forms of communication and to integrate teaching about the new media with teaching about literature and the traditional arts. It stresses the need for programs in media study and media making at all levels of education. It specializes in training teachers to serve the needs of this new media study curriculum. It believes that media study represents the arts and humanities in a new key.

The C.U.M. degree program will differ from other programs that put exclusive emphasis upon either production and aesthetics for film careerists or theory and philosophy for communications majors. A degree candidate will investigate the historical, cultural, and aesthetic influences of media not only through careful study but also by means of intensive work-study experiences where teacher-artists can help the candidate to create his own varied media

formats. For example, a candidate might be asked to investigate carefully the evolution of the TV documentary from 1950 until 1970. He would be asked to examine the cultural, economic, and technological forces that have been shaping the documentary format as well as the impact, if any, of programs like the Pentagon Papers and Harvest of Shame on the American viewer. His production courses in filmmaking, photography, and video/taping would attempt to use these insights and refine them by having him scripting and processing his own documentary materials.

Clientele

The Center for Understanding Media will serve two major categories of students: (a) the teachers, community leaders, and policy makers in the arts and media who will be candidates for the Antioch Masters Degree in Media Studies, and (b) part-time students who are working for a Master's in Education with another college or university. The latter have been our students to date and will continue to be involved with many of the day-to-day operations related to the M.A. program.

ANTIOCH, YELLOW SPRINGS, OHIO:

(For more information, contact Bob Devine, Communications Studies Center, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, 45287.)

Purpose

The Yellow Springs emphasis is on an active engagement with the media—the making, doing and working-with-it aspect of media studies. Media are seen as a new way (skill) of exploring the world (knowledge) with the result of a new logos of patterning behavior (intelligence). Some of the media, such as 1/2 inch video, are barely

four years old. Other hybrid forms are fundamentally altering some of our basic assumptions about the nature of the communicative process.

Whereas traditional programs in communications often seem to view the content of study as fixed and assume the task of presenting that content and developing critical skills in relation to it, this degree will emphasize investigative and ex-

ploratory work with media, with media hybrids, and with experimental media forms. We see students, faculty and staff as being on the frontier of media exploration.

The program involves time spent with the media, not just as experience but as it relates to a theoretical framework, as it affects the person and his ways of thinking, and as it leads to a reorganization in ways of knowing through media. Program units will involve themselves with deepening student involvement; the structure for the study is seen as a generative process of building rather than an "editing-into-form" process. In this sense, the program is holological—the elements of study are interrelated to the extent that the absence of any one component would result in a decrease in intensity rather than breadth of study. The student does not work with specialized fields of information, but deals with program and project motifs which can blend into informational wholes. The Center will play the role of facilitator by encouraging and supporting both idiosyncratic and dialogue modes of study, and by encouraging flow between the two. While self-designed and self-initiated programs of inquiry are seen as an asset to this style of media study, interfacing of media is seen as a valuable tool in realizing the goals of the program.

Feedback

We expect to begin in New York this Spring and in Baltimore and Yellow Springs in September. Inquiries are welcome now. We are in the process of developing the program ideas and welcome suggestions from Radical Software readers.

This degree in Media Studies would be one of the first in the country to offer program work in experimental and alternative media forms. Antioch Yellow Springs has a long history of intense undergraduate involvement in film, video and other media, and a growing list of recognized graduates in media. The Masters program is a direct outgrowth of this undergraduate tradition.

Clientele

The projected enrollment in Year One would be forty full-time equivalent students. Starting-date is contingent upon completion of the preliminary accreditation process (estimated September, 1973).

We will seek students similar to those described in the Baltimore program but whose emphasis will be on their own development as artists in addition to the occupational skills and tools they will acquire from the program.

We also plan to enroll film artists who are looking for an environment to explore personalized film within an artistic and creative framework. These students would enter for one year, work under a specific film artist, and might not seek a degree.