



Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

The [California Open Educational Resources Council](http://www.cool4ed.org) has designed and implemented a faculty review process of the free and open etextbooks showcased within the California Open Online Library for Education (www.cool4ed.org). Faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California were invited to review the selected free and open etextbooks using a rubric. Faculty received a stipend for their efforts and funding was provided by the State of California, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Textbook Name:

Media and Cultural Theory



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Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

Textbook Authors:

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Title/Position:

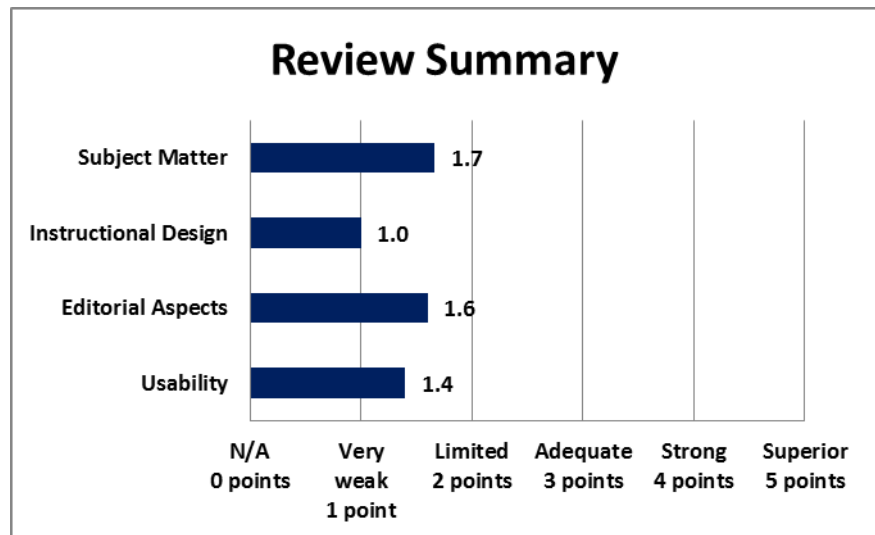
Professor

Format

Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.



Date Reviewed:

May 2016

California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [FTVE 105](#)

Subject Matter (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the content accurate, error-free, and unbiased?			X			

Does the text adequately cover the designated course with a sufficient degree of depth and scope?		X				
Does the textbook use sufficient and relevant examples to present its subject matter?		X				
Does the textbook use a clear, consistent terminology to present its subject matter?		X				
Does the textbook reflect current knowledge of the subject matter?			X			
Does the textbook present its subject matter in a culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)				X		

Total Points: 10 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- Assumes broad knowledge of social theory and philosophy on the part of the students, well beyond any reasonable expectation for the average (or even exceptional) undergraduate.
- A. 1. & 5. The content tends to feature philosophical and social theory over communication or media theories, in spite of the implicit promise of the title. Major figures in the development of media and culture are not treated; e.g. Marshall McLuhan is never mentioned!
- A. 3. The authors ground most examples in British public policy, history or modern culture which is unknown to most of our students.
- A. 4. The terminology and vocabulary used in the text is often poorly defined, or overblown. Consequently, the content is generally unclear and inaccessible.
- A. 6. The authors include sections on feminism and on post-colonialism that introduce some people not treated in the mainstream texts for the most part. However, my concern is that they are siloed in these sections and I see little effort to integrate discussion of feminist or critical ideas elsewhere in any meaningful or insightful way.
- The book includes no resources. As far as I know there is no IRM, and the text itself lacks: learning objectives; suggested activities; review questions, or discussion questions.
- In fact, the text, no "external skeleton" (Kumpf 2000) except for some section headings. A useful "skeleton" is comprised such elements as headers, footers, indentations, section titles, and page numbers....; helps reader apprehend the overall logic of the text. Given the lack of any perceptible logical structure in the text, any uses of metadiscursive skeleton would help readers make sense of the content. However, such help is almost nonexistent.
- In sum, students and instructors are on their own to make sense of an extremely dense text.
- Kumpf, E. P. (2000). Visual metadiscourse: Designing the considerate text. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 9, 401-424.

Instructional Design (35 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Does the textbook present its subject materials at appropriate reading levels for undergrad use?		X				
Does the textbook reflect a consideration of different learning styles? (e.g. visual, textual?)		X				
Does the textbook present explicit learning outcomes aligned with the course and curriculum?		X				
Is a coherent organization of the textbook evident to the reader/student?		X				
Does the textbook reflect best practices in the instruction of the designated course?		X				

Does the textbook contain sufficient effective ancillary materials? (e.g. test banks, individual and/or group activities or exercises, pedagogical apparatus, etc.)		X				
Is the textbook searchable?		X				

Total Points: 7 out of 35

Please provide comments on any aspect of the instructional design of this textbook:

- B. 1. The text is not at an appropriate reading level.
- B. 2. It is entirely text-focused; there are no relevant graphical assists be they diagrams, pictures, fonts or other non-textual content.
- B. 3. There are no stated learning objectives. In fact, the general goals of the book as whole seem to be lost by the authors.
- B. 4. Lacks any clear conceptual organizational structure.
- Discussion moves from topic to topic without providing any rationale for treating topics. While the text is divided into sections, the macro logical relationships between the sections is not articulated, nor are the meso or micro relationships clear. The text lacks and sense of "chunking" (Kumpf 2000) of content that would facilitate learning.
- B. 5 One would expect that a text regarding media theory would be disposed to a more "multimodal" approach. (See the work of G. Kress and others)
- B. 6. Nothing
- B. 7. The text only searchable using "find" within the PDF reader one may be using. That allows only a kind of browsing, one finding after another; a searchable text creates a list of linked results that permit comparison and also clue readers into how terms are used within the text. In that sense, the text is not searchable.
- Kress, G., Jewitt, C., Ogborn, J., & Tsatsarelis, C. (2001). Multimodal teaching and learning. London: Continuum.
- Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication. London: Arnold.

Editorial Aspects (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the language of the textbook free of grammatical, spelling, usage, and typographical errors?					X	
Is the textbook written in a clear, engaging style?		X				
Does the textbook adhere to effective principles of design? (e.g. are pages laid out and organized to be clear and visually engaging and effective? Are colors, font, and typography consistent and unified?)		X				
Does the textbook include conventional editorial features? (e.g. a table of contents, glossary, citations and further references)		X				
How effective are multimedia elements of the textbook? (e.g. graphics, animations, audio)		X				

Total Points: 8 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook:

- C. 2 Overwritten; vocabulary is largely inaccessible to a capable undergraduate. Here's a sample:
 - Key to the complicity of individuals is their internalisation of the 'apparatus' of power: We can argue that our reliance on knowledge of institutions of power (including the media) or what Giddens (1990) refers to as 'expert systems', the self-reflexivity (self-scrutinising) that enables us to construct and perform our self-identities, and the self-surveillance required in observing social norms and conventions in what Goffman (1959) calls 'front-stage' performances, - those for the benefit of others

- are all internalised forms of external power.

- This sort of writing makes little sense even to experts, let alone undergraduate students in California.
- C. 4. It included a table of contents; no index.

Usability (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the textbook compatible with standard and commonly available hardware/software in college/university campus student computer labs?			X			
Is the textbook accessible in a variety of different electronic formats? (e.g. .txt, .pdf, .epub, etc.)	X					
Can the textbook be printed easily?				X		
Does the user interface implicitly inform the reader how to interact with and navigate the textbook?	X					
How easily can the textbook be annotated by students and instructors?			X			

Total Points: 7 out of 25

Please provide comments on any aspect of access concerning this textbook:

- D. 5. Students would have to be pretty savvy with Adobe or Nuance PDF applications to annotate this text, but it can be done.

Overall Ratings	Not at all (0 pts)	Very Weak (1 pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3 pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
What is your overall impression of the textbook?		X				
How willing would you be to adopt this book?	X	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)

Total Points: 1 out of 10

Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?

- I wouldn't recommend it.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?

- To be honest, this text, as it is, could not be revised sufficiently by these authors to make is usable.
- I strongly discourage any use of this text, even as an ancillary reader.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to the [textbook site in MERLOT](#) (Please [register](#) in MERLOT to post your feedback.)



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