



COM101 Survey of Mass Communication

Fall 2014

“Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media...than by the content of the communication.” – Marshall McLuhan

Dr. Jason Turcotte
Assistant Professor
Department of Communication
Office: Building 1-307
Phone: (909) 869-3526
Email: jmturcotte@cpp.edu

Class Time & Office Hours

Class meets Tuesdays/Thursdays, 3-4:50 p.m., in Building 1-316. Fall office hours are Tuesdays, 5-7 p.m.; Wednesdays, 2-4 p.m.; and by appointment.

Required Text

Hanson, R. E. (2013). *Mass Communication: Living in a Media World* (4th ed.)

Course Objectives

This course offers an overview of major mass media industries including, but not limited to, news, public relations, advertising, film, radio, television, and the web. This course emphasizes the ubiquity of both mainstream and emerging media, the organizational structures and business of these industries, their effects, and how we as media consumers engage with media. Moreover, this course explores the cultural context of mass media industries – how these industries shape societal norms and values, inform democracy, and influence audience attitudes and behavior. Objectives of this course include:

- Develop an understanding of industry consolidation, regulation, and law guiding mass communication, and think critically about who and what controls the media.

- Understand the importance of accuracy, fairness, and truth in mass communication and develop a sensitivity to issues of diversity in the media, including the portrayal of minorities and under-represented groups.
- Gain an awareness of media power and appreciation for theories of media effects; define the role of mass media in a capitalist and democratic society.
- Identify distinctions between entertainment and information media and the tensions undergirding these types of content.
- Understand the changes unfolding in the media environment, and current developments in mass communication industries, including media convergence and user-generated content.

Expectations

This course is designed as a comprehensive primer on your chosen discipline: mass communication. Thus, you should be motivated and intellectually curious. You are expected to make contributions to class discussions and fully participate in in-class activities. (Dead weight in the classroom is frustrating to me as well as your classmates). You are expected to complete all assignments and readings **on time**. You are expected to come to class on time, well-read, and prepared to participate. Some materials from lectures will be provided but these are not comprehensive; it is imperative that you read assignments and supplement lectures and readings with your own notes.

Note: All written work must be stapled, double-spaced, and typed in 11 or 12-point Times New Roman font (unless otherwise specified). All written work must be free of factual errors, grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, and typos. Written work must also conform to the citation style outlined in the assignment instructions.

Technology Policy

Laptops are for note taking purposes only; Facebook, texting, gaming, and online shopping will *not* get you very far in the course. Mobile devices must be turned on silent or remain off. Texting is prohibited; regardless of how discreet you think you are, the behavior is a distraction. If it is an emergency, excuse yourself from the classroom.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is held to the strictest of standards. The work you turn in is yours – and no one else's. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student (such as submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructors, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on an assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act.

Plagiarism is defined as the unacknowledged inclusion of someone else's words, structure, ideas, or data. When a student submits work as his/her own that includes the

words, structure, ideas, or data of others, the source of this information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific references, and, if verbatim statements are included, through quotation marks as well. Failure to identify any source (including interviews, surveys, etc.), published in any medium (including on the internet) or unpublished, from which words, structure, ideas, or data have been taken, constitutes plagiarism. Please see me if you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism or other examples of academic misconduct.

Absences and Late Work Policy

I will only excuse absences resulting from family emergency, illness, conference or other engagement I deem beneficial to your career; however, work shifts are no excuse for absences or late work. If a due date extension is necessary, you must notify me **prior** to the class in which the assignment is due. No-shows do not have the luxury of make-up work unless the absence is due to extreme circumstances (e.g. severe medical or family emergency). I reserve the right to require documentation for approved absences and make-up work. *All **unapproved** late work will receive a **zero** and habitual absences will adversely affect your participation grade.*

Classroom Respect

There will undoubtedly be times when your classmates, or I, express views and opinions counter to your own. Every voice and opinion will be heard and respected both within *and* outside of the classroom. I encourage you to challenge myself and your classmates but discussions must always remain collegial, respectful, and germane to the topic.

Assignments:

Midterm exam:	200 pts	20%
Final exam:	300 pts	30%
Participation:	100 pts	10%
Twitter feed:	100 pts	10%
Media brief:	100 pts	10%
Critical response:	100 pts	10%
Group meme:	100 pts	10%

A = 930-1000	A- = 900-929	B+ = 870-899	B = 830-869
B- = 800-829	C+ = 770-799	C = 730-769	C- = 700-729
D+ = 670-699	D = 630-669	D- = 600-629	F = 599 or less

Exams

Throughout the course you will complete a midterm exam that draws from material presented in the first half of the course. There will also be a cumulative final exam covering material throughout the quarter. Each exam – including the final – will also include current events questions applied as extra credit.

Media Brief

You will write up a short brief of an important media event, outlining the historical context and relevance to mass communication. You must also discuss the societal and cultural significance and/or ethical implications of the event. Your media briefs will be posted to Blackboard and shared with the class.

Critical Response

On *any* chapter of *your choosing*, you must turn in a 1-2 page critical response paper that demonstrates full understanding of key concepts and that you've thought about the content beyond the examples provided in the text. You may discuss chapter relevancy to current events or your own personal experiences/observances. You may also address chapter shortcomings or explain areas that you feel are less applicable to today's media environment. Bottom line: I want you to engage with the material more critically and deeply than you do during a typical reading.

Twitter Feed

Early in the quarter you will launch and operate your own Twitter account focused on one specific area of mass communication. The purpose of this assignment is two-fold: to become comfortable using social media tools in a professional setting, and to develop an expertise in a particular area of mass communication – and share that expertise with your classmates. You are expected to remain active on your account and post content throughout the quarter. In doing so you are not only developing media literacy skills but applying them in a collaborative online environment. Twitter feeds are assessed as a secondary participation grade independent of classroom participation.

Meme Project

In assigned groups you will craft an original concept to create user-generated media with the goal of “going viral.” In doing so you will either use basic image editing software or video editing software (iMovie or Windows Movie Maker) to create a short clip or visual to be presented to the class. The audience will vote on their favorite meme. Top projects will be handsomely rewarded.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1: Course Introduction

- Thursday, Sept. 25: Course introduction and class expectations.

Week 2: Media & Society: Mass Communication Effects

- Tuesday, Sept. 30: Read Chap. 1, “Living in a Media World” (pp. 1-25). Twitter workshop.
- Thursday, Oct. 2: Read Chap. 2, “Mass Communication Effects: How Society and Media Interact” (pp. 26-47). In-class viewing: “The Mean World Syndrome.”
Media brief due.

Week 3: Media Ownership & Consolidation

- Tuesday, Oct. 7: Read Chap. 3, “The Media Business: Consolidation, Globalization, and the Long Tail” (pp. 48-73).
- Thursday, Oct. 9: In-class viewing: “Quiz Show” (133 minutes).

Week 4: The First Amendment, News, & Democracy

- Tuesday, Oct. 14: Read Chap. 13, “Media Law: Free Speech and Fairness” (pp. 310-333).
- Thursday, Oct. 16: Read Chap. 6, “Newspapers and the News: Reflection of a Democratic Society” (pp. 122-146); Read Doctor, “Six things to consider about the new Los Angeles Register” (on Blackboard). In-class activity: Media preferences and the knowledge gap.

Week 5: Publishing: Books & Magazines

- Tuesday, Oct. 21: Read Chap. 4, “Books: The Birth of the Mass Media” (pp. 74-99).
- Thursday, Oct. 23: Read Chap. 5, “Magazines: The Power of Words and Images” (pp. 100-121); Read Popova, “Aesthetic Consumerism and the Violence of Photography: What Susan Sontag Teaches Us about Visual Culture and the Social Web” (on Blackboard).

Week 6: Radio & the Music Industry

- Tuesday, Oct. 28: **Midterm Exam.**
- Thursday, Oct. 30: Read Chap. 7, “Audio: Music and Talk across Media” (pp. 148-177); Read Griggs & Leopold, “How iTunes changed music, and the world” (on Blackboard).

Week 7: Hollywood & Television

- Tuesday, Nov. 4: Read Chap. 8, “Movies: Mass Producing Entertainment” (pp. 178-204).
- Thursday, Nov. 6: Read Chap. 9, “Television: Broadcast and Beyond” (pp. 206-231). Listen to NPR podcast “The golden age of MTV – and, yes, there was one” (on Blackboard). Discussion on MTV, satire, and ‘reality’ television.

Week 8: Digital Media: The Internet, Social Media & Mobile Technology

- Tuesday, Nov. 11: **Veteran's Day (no class).**
- Thursday, Nov. 13: Read Chap. 10, "The Internet: Mass Communication Gets Personal" (pp. 232-258); Read Dowell, "The rise of apps, iPad, and Android" (on Blackboard). Read Crouch, "How viral culture is changing how we learn, share, create, and interact" (on Blackboard). Discussion on user-generated media, going viral, and internet meme project.

Week 9: Media Persuasion: Advertising & Public Relations

- Tuesday, Nov. 18: Read Chap. 12, "Public Relations: Interactions, Relationships, and the News" (pp. 286-307). Group collaboration time.
- Thursday, Nov. 20: Read Chap. 11, "Advertising: Selling a Message" (pp. 260-285). In-class viewing: "Generation Like"

Week 10: Media Ethics & Diversity

- Tuesday, Nov. 25: Read Chap. 14, "Media Ethics: Truthfulness, Fairness, and Standards of Decency" (pp. 334-358). Discussion on ethnocentrism, the Hispanic press, Al Jazeera, the Boston Marathon bombing, and minority representation in media; Michelle Bachmann and O.J. Simpson case studies.
- Thursday, Nov. 27: **Thanksgiving (no class).**

Week 11: Session Review & Meme Presentations

- Tuesday, Dec. 2: Meme project presentations.
- Thursday, Dec. 4: Session review.

Note: Finals Week, Dec. 8-12

Note: Readings, assignments, and due dates subject to change.