



COM101 Survey of Mass Communication

Winter 2015

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

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Class Time & Office Hours

Class time: Tuesdays/Thursdays, 3-4:50 p.m., in 6-227.
 Office hours: Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30; Wednesdays, 3-6 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 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**. All assignments and readings are due at the *start* of class. 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.

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 request one at least 24 hours **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. 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%
Response paper 1:	150 pts	15%
Response paper 2:	150 pts	15%

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.

Response Papers

You must write two critical response papers (1-2 pgs.) that demonstrate understanding of key aspects or concepts from the chapter and that show me you've thought about the content beyond the examples provided in the text. You may discuss chapter relevancy to current events or your own experiences and observances. You may address chapter shortcomings or explain areas you feel are less applicable today. I want you to engage with the material critically and further develop an aspect or two you find interesting.

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 also applying them in a collaborative online environment. Twitter feeds are assessed as a secondary participation grade independent of classroom participation.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1: Media & Society: Mass Communication Effects

- Tuesday, Jan. 6: Course introduction, class expectations. Discussion on defining media, mass communication, and media literacy.
- Thursday, Jan. 8: Read Chap. 2, Read Chap. 2, “Mass Communication Effects: How Society and Media Interact” (pp. 26-47). In-class viewing: “The Mean World Syndrome.”

Week 2: First Amendment & Media Law

- Tuesday, Jan. 13: Read Chap. 13, “Media Law: Free Speech and Fairness” (pp. 310-333). Twitter assignment overview.
- Thursday, Jan. 15: SPSA Conference (**No class**).

Week 3: Media Ownership & Consolidation

- Tuesday, Jan. 20: Read Chap. 3, “The Media Business: Consolidation, Globalization, and the Long Tail” (pp. 48-73). In-class viewing: “Quiz Show”
- Thursday, Jan. 22: In-class viewing: “Quiz Show.” **Response paper due.**

Week 4: Print Media: News & Magazines

- Tuesday, Jan. 27: Read Chap. 6, “Newspapers and the News: Reflection of a Democratic Society” (pp. 122-146). In-class activity: Media preferences and the knowledge gap.
- Thursday, Jan. 29: Read Chap. 5, “Magazines: The Power of Words and Images” (pp. 100-121). Discussion on mass culture and photojournalism.

Week 5: Books & the Publishing Industry

- Tuesday, Feb. 3: Read Chap. 4, “Books: The Birth of the Mass Media” (pp. 74-99). Midterm review session.
- Thursday, Feb. 5: **Midterm Exam.**

Week 6: Broadcast Media: Radio, Television & the Music Industry

- Tuesday, Feb. 10: Read Chap. 7, “Audio: Music and Talk across Media” (pp. 148-177); Read Griggs & Leopold, “How iTunes changed music, and the world” (on Blackboard).
- Thursday, Feb. 12: 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 7: Film & Hollywood

- Tuesday, Feb. 17: Read Chap. 8, “Movies: Mass Producing Entertainment” (pp. 178-204).
- Thursday, Feb. 19: To be announced. **Response paper due.**

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

- Tuesday, Feb. 24: Read Chap. 10, “The Internet: Mass Communication Gets Personal” (pp. 232-258). Discussion on user-generated media.
- Thursday, Feb. 26: Read Dowell, “The rise of apps, iPad, and Android”; Snider, “Social media, mobile devices help video games grow” (on Blackboard). In-class viewing: “The future of TV: How do networks plan to stay competitive?”

Week 9: Media Persuasion: Advertising & Public Relations

- Tuesday, March 3: Read Chap. 12, “Public Relations: Interactions, Relationships, and the News” (pp. 286-307).
- Thursday, March 5: Read Chap. 11, “Advertising: Selling a Message” (pp. 260-285). In-class viewing: “Generation Like”

Week 10: Minorities & Media Ethics

- Tuesday, March 10: Read “Why the Cosby Show Still Matters”; “The Hidden Factor in Hollywood’s Racial Diversity Problem”; “Rules of Attraction: Why White Men Marry Asian Women and Asian Men Don’t Marry White Women” (all on Blackboard). Discussion on ethics philosophy and media case studies.
- Thursday, March 12: Exam review session.

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