

# COMM 175-202 / INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

Tuesday + Thursday / 2:30pm – 3:45pm  
Corboy Law Center (25 E. Pearson) / Room 303  
Luke Strosnider / [lstrosnider@luc.edu](mailto:lstrosnider@luc.edu) / SoC 221 / Office Hours by Appointment  
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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will study the important periods in communication history – the oral, written, print, electronic and digital eras. As the course unfolds, it also introduces the theories, practices and behaviors that have driven communication as an art form for thousands of years, including a look at the history of symbolic systems, from Morse code to computer codes. This course examines both storytelling in media and culture as well as how the media's technological evolution and consolidation are transforming our culture and lives at a pace unseen before.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To become more media literate, a more critical consumer of mass media institutions and a more engaged participant in our contemporary environment.
- To be able to analyze communication theories and apply them to present-day settings.
- To apply critical thinking skills in the research of communication history, with particular focus on how cultural trends influence mass media, even as innovation in the way information is delivered impacts our culture and society.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

### ***Media and Culture: Mass***

#### ***Communication in a Digital Age (9<sup>th</sup> Ed.)***

Authors: Campbell, Martin, Fabos  
Publisher: Bedford/St. Martin's  
ISBN: 978-1457628313

← OR →

### ***Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication (10<sup>th</sup> Ed.)***

Authors: Campbell, Martin, Fabos  
Publisher: Bedford/St. Martin's  
ISBN: 978-1457668739

+ Any other readings and materials will be distributed in-class and/or via the course website.

## POLICIES

### **LATE WORK / LOST WORK**

*Extensions will not be granted. Grades of "Incomplete" will not be assigned. Make-up work will not be assigned unless pre-arranged, or due to an authorized documented absence. If you fear you will miss a deadline, please discuss it with me ASAP.* Backup your files. If an assignment is lost or you discover a discrepancy later in the semester, email documentation will be required. It is your responsibility to make sure I get your work - it is not my responsibility to tell you your file was corrupted, or your email bounced, or to remind you to hand in work.

### **ATTENDANCE / LATENESS**

*Missed work cannot be made up or excused except in the case of severe illness, death in the family, or religious holiday. These absences must be documented if you'd like to make up missed work.* Documentation for a university-authorized absence must be cleared with the professor in advance.

Coming in late disrupts the class, and you'll likely miss important information. It is your responsibility to ask classmates for announcements you may have missed by arriving late.

### **ILLNESS**

If you are ill, please do not come to class. Notify me and visit the Wellness Center for advice and to get documentation.

### **PARTICIPATION**

In this class, you'll hear lectures, participate in discussion, and provide feedback to classmates. Your positive and substantive contribution to each of these class elements is expected for a passing grade - doing the bare minimum will earn you a bare minimum grade. ***Your physical presence in the room is less than bare minimum participation; participation includes attendance, attention, and attitude as well as substantive contributions.***

Leaving early, texting, checking Facebook, chatting, sleeping, eating meals, and doing other non-class related work are distractions to you, me, and your classmates. If you need to leave class early, please tell me before class starts.

### **CLASSROOM CITIZENSHIP**

Students are expected to respect each other. When you enter a classroom, you are a member of a community of learning. Your success depends on your neighbors' success. Treat each other with tolerance and understanding. The people you'll interact with in class are your peers and future colleagues. **Strive to do better on your own, but also strive to help your classmates to elevate the level of conversation and constructive criticism in the classroom.** You are responsible for your own work, but you are also responsible to your teacher and your peers. Your positive substantive participation is valuable to the class.

### **COMPUTERS IN THE CLASSROOM**

If you would like to bring your own laptop, smartphone, etc. to take notes, that is acceptable. A reminder: be respectful with your use of technology. Please do not use valuable class time to send text messages, use headphones to listen to music, watch wacky videos, look at Facebook, check email, etc.

We'll likely rely on web resources to help expand our knowledge of contemporary mass communication. **If you are using a device, you may be called upon to look up information to contribute to an in-progress class discussion. PAY ATTENTION!**

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Any student with a learning disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of the course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. **Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment.** The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (e.g., failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours). This is an academic community; being uninformed or naïve is not an acceptable excuse. It is dishonest to:

- turn in the same work for two classes;
- turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or
- copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam.

### **GRADING**

The grade given to average work on all assignments is a C. So, **if you just complete the bare minimum for each assignment, expect to earn a C for your work.** Grades of B or A indicate impressive achievement above the average. Grades of A in particular indicate **especially exceptional** work. Grades below C indicate inadequacies or errors in any or all of the grading criteria. Percentage grades are not rounded up.

The grading scale is as follows:

A = 94% - 100%	C = 74% - 76%
A- = 90% - 93%	C- = 70% - 73%
B+ = 87% - 89%	D+ = 67% - 69%
B = 84% - 86%	D = 65% - 66%
B- = 80% - 83%	F = 64% and below
C+ = 77% - 79%	

Students will receive comments and grades for each assignment unless otherwise noted in the syllabus. It is your responsibility to keep track of the grades you earn. I will not send you updates on cumulative grades. I will not send you warnings when you drop below some point value. I will not send you prompts to participate more or to work harder. **The total points possible for the class and for the assignment are listed in the syllabus so at any point in the semester, you should be able to calculate an approximation of your grade easily.** Students may meet with me during office hours throughout the semester to discuss their grades and comments.

If you would like to discuss a grade on an assignment you must make an appointment to visit me during office hours. Bring the assignment, my comments, and a written explanation of how your work met the requirements of the assignment, and showed impressive achievement above the average. **You have two weeks from the day I return the assignment to dispute my assessment of that work.** After two weeks, I will assume you are satisfied, and I will not reconsider the assessment for any reason.

## ASSIGNMENTS

NOTE: Further assignment details will be presented in class at the appropriate time.

### 1.) Discussion Leadership / 100 points

Discussion leaders will write a post on the class blog that raises provocative questions based on that weeks reading. They will be called upon during class to assist in guiding discussion, respectful debate, and deeper reflection.

### 2.) In-Class Research and Writing / 50 points *(Ten points each, five times during the semester.)*

In small groups, students will engage in n-class research assignments. **These will be graded as “Completed” or “Not Completed” and will be assigned randomly.**

### 3.) Pop Quizzes / 50 points *(Ten points each, five times during the semester.)*

Brief quizzes on the textbook readings. **Assigned randomly.**

### 4.) Book Review & Presentation / 100 points

Students will be divided into groups and will choose a book which they will read, and collaboratively a.) write a review, and b.) present their review to class.

### 5.) Midterm Exam / 100 points

An exam covering the course content for the first half of the semester.

### 6.) Final Exam / 100 points

An exam covering the course content for the second half of the semester.

**TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 500**

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1 / JANUARY 19 + 21 / INTRO + MASS COMMUNICATION: A CRITICAL APPROACH

**Textbook Reading For This Week** > Mass Communication: A Critical Approach

### WEEK 2 / JANUARY 26 + 28 / BOOKS

**Textbook Reading For This Week** > Books and the Power of Print

### WEEK 3 / FEBRUARY 2 + 4 / NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES

**Textbook Readings For This Week**

> Newspapers: The Rise and Decline of Modern Journalism

> Magazines in the Age of Specialization

**WEEK 4 / FEBRUARY 9 + 11 / SOUND**

**Textbook Readings For This Week**

- > Sound Recording and Popular Music
- > Popular Radio and the Origins of Broadcasting

**WEEK 5 / FEBRUARY 16 + 18 / IMAGES**

**Textbook Readings For This Week**

- > Television and Cable: The Power of Visual Culture
- > Movies and the Impact of Images

**WEEK 6 / FEBRUARY 23 + 25 / DIGITAL MEDIA**

**Textbook Reading For This Week** > The Internet, Digital Media, and Media Convergence

**WEEK 7 / MARCH 1 + 3 / MIDTERM REVIEW & EXAM**

**MIDTERM EXAM - THURSDAY, MARCH 3<sup>rd</sup>**

*For This Week, Review Previous Readings to Prepare for Midterm Exam*

**WEEK 8 / MARCH 8 + 10 / SPRING BREAK / NO CLASS MEETINGS**

**WEEK 9 / MARCH 15 + 17 / ADVERTISING AND COMMERCIAL CULTURE**

**Textbook Reading For This Week** > Advertising and Commercial Culture

**WEEK 10 / MARCH 22 + 24 / PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**Textbook Reading For This Week** > Public Relations and Framing the Message

**WEEK 11 / MARCH 29 + 31 / MEDIA ECONOMICS**

**Textbook Reading For This Week** > Media Economics and the Global Marketplace

**WEEK 12 / APRIL 5 + APRIL 7 / THE CULTURE OF JOURNALISM**

**Textbook Reading For This Week** > The Culture of Journalism: Values, Ethics, and Democracy

**WEEK 13 / APRIL 12 + 14 / MEDIA EFFECTS**

**Textbook Reading For This Week** > Media Effects and Cultural Approaches to Research

**WEEK 14 / APRIL 19 + 21 / LEGAL CONTROLS AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

**Textbook Reading For This Week** > Legal Controls and Freedom of Expression

**WEEK 15 / APRIL 26 + 28 / COURSE WRAP-UP + FINAL EXAM REVIEW**