

COMM 175-202 / INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

Tuesday + Thursday / 2:30pm – 3:45pm

School of Communication (51 E. Pearson) / Room 014

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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 not only the central role of storytelling in media and culture but also explores 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.
- 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

- Campbell, et. al., *Media and Culture: Mass Communication in a Digital Age* (8th or 9th edition will work)
- 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. Incompletes 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.**

Come to class on time. 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. **Arriving late repeatedly will bring down your participation grade.**

Illness

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

Participation

Attendance and lateness policies described above factor into your participation grade, and so does your contribution the community

of learning in our classroom. Your participation in class depends on quantity and quality of 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 a valuable aspect of the class.

Computers in the Classroom

If you would like to bring your own device (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, chat, etc. Doing so will lower your participation grade severely.

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. The university grading scale will be used. Percentage grades are not rounded up. An 87.45% is a B+, not an A-.

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 with my assessment, 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 (75 points)

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

2.) In-Class Writings (50 points)

Students will respond to screenings / readings / discussions via in-class writing assignments. **These will be graded as "Completed" or "Not Completed" and will be assigned randomly.** These in-class writings serve as a way to generate ideas and discussion **as well as an incentive to come to class.** Ten points each, five times during the semester.

3.) Pop Quizzes (50 points)

Brief quizzes on the textbook readings. **These will be assigned randomly.** Ten points each, five times during the semester.

4.) Midterm Exam (50 points)

A multiple choice exam covering the course content for the first half of the semester.

5.) Book Review & Presentation (100 points)

Working in groups, students will choose a book to read, collaboratively write a review, and present their review to class.

6.) Final Exam (100 points)

A multiple choice & essay exam covering the course content for the second half of the semester.

7.) Participation (75 points)

Attentive attendance, and contribution to discussion (both in-class and by commenting on Discussion Leadership posts).

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 500

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 / JANUARY 13 + 15 / MASS COMMUNICATION: A CRITICAL APPROACH

Read (for Thursday) *Media & Culture*, Chapter: Mass Communication: A Critical Approach

WEEK 2 / JANUARY 20 + 22 / THE INTERNET, DIGITAL MEDIA, AND CONVERGENCE

Read *Media & Culture*, Chapter: The Internet, Digital Media, and Media Convergence

WEEK 3 / JANUARY 27 + 29 / RECORDED SOUND + POPULAR MUSIC

Read *Media & Culture*, Chapter: Sound Recording and Popular Music

WEEK 4 / FEBRUARY 3 + 5 / RADIO + THE ORIGINS OF BROADCASTING

Read *Media & Culture*, Chapter: Popular Radio and the Origins of Broadcasting

WEEK 5 / FEBRUARY 10 + 12 / TV, CABLE, AND THE POWER OF VISUAL CULTURE

Read *Media & Culture*, Chapter: Television and Cable: The Power of Visual Culture

WEEK 6 / FEBRUARY 17 + 19 / PHOTOGRAPHY AND MOTION PICTURES

Read *Media & Culture*, Chapters: Movies and the Impact of Images

WEEK 7 / FEBRUARY 24 + 26 / MIDTERM REVIEW & EXAM

WEEK 8 / MARCH 3 + 5 / SPRING BREAK / NO CLASS MEETINGS

WEEK 9 / MARCH 10 + 12 / NEWSPAPERS

Read *Media & Culture*, Chapter: Newspapers: The Rise and Decline of Modern Journalism

WEEK 10 / MARCH 17 + 19 / BOOKS

Read *Media & Culture*, Chapter: Books and the Power of Print

WEEK 11 / MARCH 24 + 26 / ADVERTISING + COMMERCIAL CULTURE

Read *Media & Culture*, Chapter: Advertising and Commercial Culture

WEEK 12 / MARCH 31 + APRIL 2 / PUBLIC RELATIONS

Read *Media & Culture*, Chapter: Public Relations and Framing the Message

WEEK 13 / APRIL 7 + 9 / MEDIA EFFECTS

Read *Media & Culture*, Chapter: Media Effects and Cultural Approaches to Research

WEEK 14 / APRIL 14 + 16 / MEDIA ECONOMICS

Read *Media & Culture*, Chapter: Media Economics and the Global Marketplace

WEEK 15 / APRIL 21 + 23 / FINAL EXAM