

# Mass Communication

## COMMUNICATION STUDIES 265

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We are surrounded by mass communication. Advertisements bombard us; the news media tells us what to think; PR spin makes us doubt what we hear (or should); music, television, and movies, much of it accessed through a computer, occupy our time. Yet, we often do not think about the effect it has upon us and upon society. This course is an introduction to the history, theory, and analysis of mass communication. The focus will be on going beyond the text to research and critically think about mass communication and to share what you learn with the class.

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to

- ❖ understand and describe the history and communication theories associated with mass communication.
- ❖ identify and explain rules and regulations that govern mass communication.
- ❖ analyze and describe the impact of new media, movies, television, and music on society and culture.

### TEXT

Biagi, S. (2017). *Media/Impact: An Introduction to Mass Media*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth. (You can get the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> edition if it saves you money.)

### Course Requirements

### EXAMS

There will be two open-note multiple-choice/true-false exams, each worth 100 points and each covering half the course. There will also be an optional comprehensive, multiple-choice final. Since I will drop your lowest score, the final should be thought of as a chance to improve one of your previous test grades or to make up a missed exam. The final is optional; however, taking it cannot lower your grade. Exams will be based on the text, lecture, videos, and discussion. Bring Scantron 882E and a pencil. (200 points)

### CHAPTER QUESTIONS

Students will answer one question after each chapter. Specific questions will be provided on a handout. Each answer should be 1-2 pages, typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman. Answers for chapters 1-7 are due the day of the first exam; answers for chapters 8-14 are due the day of the second exam. No answers are required for chapters 15-16. (100 points)

### GROUP PROJECT

In groups, students will research and present a topic related to a specific chapter of the text. Topics will be allocated on a first come, first-served, sign-up basis. The presentation should last **15-20**

**minutes**; visual aids, such as posters, photographs, or videos should be used, and any outside research should be cited. Students will receive a group grade based upon content, creativity, organization, and delivery. (75 points)

**LAB ATTENDANCE**

You are **required** to attend one, hour-long speaking event. The on-campus event that fulfills this requirement costs \$12, but your attendance is tracked and no paper required. Off-campus events require a paper and ticket/flyer as proof of attendance. Date will be announced in class. (25 points)

**MOVIE ANALYSIS PAPER (& QUIZ)**

Students will watch 5 classic movies and write a 1-2 page answer to a specific question for each movie (typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman). Amongst other aspects, students may be asked how each movie informs us about mass communication or the era in which it was produced, the use of music or visual effects, or the impact on society. **The paper is due the last class meeting of week 14 at the start of class, at which time a simple quiz will be given on the movies.** If you watched the movies, you’ll ace the quiz. A detailed guideline sheet will be provided a couple of weeks into the semester. (100 points: 80 paper, 20 quiz)

**POINT ALLOCATION**

			<i>Keep track of your own points:</i>	
2 Exams	40%	200 points	Exam 1 _____	
			Exam 2 _____	
Chapter Questions	20%	100 points	Questions 1 _____	
			Questions 2 _____	
Group Project	15%	75 points	Project _____	
Lab	5%	25 points	Lab _____	
Movie Paper/Quiz	20%	100 points	Paper _____	
			Quiz _____	
		TOTAL	500 points	

**GRADING**

Generally, grades will be calculated on a straight percentage as follows:

- 90 – 100% (450-500 points) = A
- 80 – 89.9% (400-449 points) = B
- 70 – 79.9% (350-399 points) = C
- 60 – 69.9% (300-349 points) = D
- 59.9% (299 and below) = F

**Students must receive a “C” in the course for it to count as a general education credit.**

***KEEP ALL RETURNED WORK UNTIL FINAL GRADE IS POSTED***

*Additional “stuff”*

### **ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION/TARDINESS**

While I understand that students have lives and responsibilities outside of school, it is vital that you attend class if you wish to do well in this course. Since a large part of the course involves watching videos and discussing various aspects of mass communication, it is important that you be a responsive participant (which in turn, kinda requires that you be present). You have 2 free absences. After that, **you will lose three points for every undocumented absence, and two for every tardy.** If you are more than 30 minutes late, you will be considered absent. **If you miss 2 classes before the add deadline or 5 classes overall, you will be dropped.** No electronic equipment is allowed in class. **I will ask you to leave and mark you absent if you use any electronic devices without permission.** You must be present at the beginning of class in order to give a presentation, turn in an assignment, or take an exam. *“Hiss! Boo!!!”*

### **MAKE-UPS/LATE ASSIGNMENTS/ INCOMPLETES**

Group project make-ups will be allowed only with a **valid, documented excuse**, and will usually entail changing your project. Exams may not be made up; the exam you miss will be the one I drop. The movie quiz cannot be made up without a valid, documented excuse. Late chapter questions will be accepted up to 1 week late with a **penalty of a letter grade.** After 1 week they will be accepted for **half credit** up until the first class meeting of the final week. **Nothing will be accepted after the first class meeting of the final week.** Incompletes will be given only under compelling circumstances. *More hissing and booing!*

### **READING**

It is important that you complete the assigned reading **prior** to coming to class in order to contribute to discussion. I realize that some of you will glaze over when reading this. *Blink hard and try to focus.* (Just kidding—kinda.) You need to read the text in order to enjoy and pass this class.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Special Resource Center on campus as soon as possible to better ensure such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. As well, please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Special Resource Center 310-660-3295

### **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

If you arrive late and a class member is presenting, please wait outside until he or she is finished. Communication among “strangers” can be daunting. I will make every effort to provide a supportive, non-judgmental learning environment. You are encouraged to voice your opinions and concerns regarding class content as long as appropriate consideration is given to the feelings and/or beliefs of your fellow students. I have a great sense of humor and find most things funny; I do not find intolerance funny. (Does that make me of intolerant of intolerance?) Texting and/or surfing the web during class makes me crazy—please don’t do it.

### **CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be ignored. I expect that students in this course will do their own work. Engaging in either cheating or plagiarism will result in an "F" for the course.

## SAMPLE SEMESTER SCHEDULE

*NOTE: Public holidays are not included and will change what is below.  
The schedule for summer will obviously be different, but this can serve as a guide.*

WEEK	TOPIC	ASSIGNED READING
1	Introduction to Course MASS MEDIA IN EVERYDAY LIFE	CH. 1
2	BOOKS NEWSPAPERS <b>Sign-up for group projects</b> MAGAZINES <b>Documentary: <i>Remembering Life</i></b>	CH. 2 CH. 3 CH. 4
3	RECORDINGS <b>Term paper assignment</b> <b>Documentary: <i>Dreamworlds—Sex and Power in Music Video</i></b>	CH. 5
4	RADIO MOVIES <b>Group Project 1</b>	CH. 6 CH. 7
5	MOVIES, CONT. <b>Documentary: <i>Hollywood on Trial</i></b> <b>Documentary/Movie: <i>This Film Is Not Yet Rated</i></b>	
6	<u>Exam #1 Ch. 1-7; Chapter Questions due</u> TV	CH. 8
7	<b>MOVIE: <i>QUIZ SHOW</i></b>	
8	TV, CONT.. <b>Group Project 2</b> <b>TV Episodes: <i>All In the Family, M*A*S*H</i></b>	
9	INTERNET MEDIA, <b>Group Project 3</b> ADVERTISING <b>Group Project 4</b>	CH. 9 CH. 10
10	<b>Documentary: <i>The Persuaders</i></b> PUBLIC RELATIONS	CH. 11
11	NEWS AND INFORMATION <b>Documentary: <i>The Press Secretary</i></b> <b>Group Project 5</b>	CH. 12
12	SOCIETY AND POLITICAL ISSUES <b>Documentary: <i>The MissRepresentation</i></b>	CH. 13
13	SOCIETY AND POLITICAL ISSUES, CONT. <b>Documentary: <i>Celluloid Closet</i></b> <b>Group Project 6</b>	
14	LAW AND REGULATION <u>Exam #2 Ch. 8-14; Chapter Questions due</u>	CH. 14
15	<u>Movie Quiz; Movie Analysis Paper due</u> <b>Movie: <i>The Insider or Truman Show or other cool movie</i></b>	
16	<u>Optional Cumulative Exam; extra credit/late work due</u>	