

Communication 463
Seminar in Mass Media Effects
Tuesdays & Thursdays: 5-6:15 p.m.

Instructor: K. Megan Hopper, Ph.D.
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Overview:

This course will provide students with a broad introduction to theory and research on mass communication and human cognition, emotion, and behavior. Not only will we survey the potential effects of the mass media on the audience, we will also examine the tools individuals need to responsibly consume as well as create media messages through media literacy skills. Throughout the course of the semester, students in this course will encounter topics that have received a great deal of attention in the literature on mass communication uses and effects. Students will then work together to plan and create a series of media literacy lessons for a specified target audience they feel are in particular need of media literacy regarding one of the media effects topics that we will examine in class.

Required Text:

Bryant, J., & Oliver, M. B. (Eds). (2020). *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research* (4th Ed.). New York: Routledge.

Various weekly readings to be made electronically available in Files on Canvas.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the semester, students in COM 463 will be able to:

- Understand the major theoretical approaches to research on the social psychological effects of mass media on the individual in varying cultural and global contexts.
- Gain insight into current research on the impact of mass media content on individuals in varying cultural and global contexts and propose novel research on how to study those effects.
- Work effectively with others to create a plan for media literacy lessons for a specific target audience residing anywhere around the world about one of the media effects topics we will examine in class.
- Become more aware of the differing types and regulations of media content, not just in the U.S. but worldwide.
- Lead effective and respectful discussion of varying types of media effects and the potential for worldwide media literacy initiatives to combat negative media effects and promote positive media effects.

Assignments:

1 – Discussion Leader – Each student will select TWO class periods to lead discussion with an overview of the readings, including questions and problems. The presentation should include an assessment of the major strengths and weaknesses of the theories, methods, and findings presented in the articles. **Most importantly, the discussion should link the readings to media literacy.**

Further, you should engage your classmates in a media literacy exercise. Discussion leadership should last approximately 40-45 minutes. Incorporating mediated examples from across the globe is highly encouraged (e.g., TV show/movie clips and any other audiovisual examples related to the content you are covering in your discussion). As part of your leadership, you also need to complete a mini literature review (4-5 pages) regarding recent research on your topic and share that research with the class during your presentation. **Please turn in your mini literature review on Canvas and bring in a hard copy by no later than 5 p.m. on the evening you present.**

2 – Exam – one essay exam will be given midway through the semester. The goal is to review and reflect on the broad issues of the course and how media content may affect individuals in varying global contexts. Open book and notes.

3 – Final Project – Individually or in a group, you will produce a plan for a series of media literacy lessons for consumers around the world about one of the media effects topics that we examine in class (e.g., violence, body image, sexuality, stereotyping, etc.) as well as design a research study that would assess the outcome of those media literacy lessons. Each group will need to produce a 15-20-page paper that details your lesson plans, as well as relevant scholarly research in the effects area you are focusing on and media literacy. By **Oct. 13**, you will need to decide what your group plans to focus on for the final project, and you will discuss ideas for your plan with the rest of the class via an online discussion forum

4 – Asynchronous Assignments & Participation – Throughout the semester, you will submit short reflections asynchronously (on days in which we do NOT have in person class) on the assigned readings and relating them to what the media mean to you and how you see the media affecting you as well as others from differing cultures and perspectives. When we DO have class, please note that this course is NOT primarily lecture based. Rather, it is set up to foster meaningful discussions during each class meeting. Therefore, your regular attendance and participation in the in-person class sessions, are essential to your success.

5 – Individual Reflection on Media Literacy Paper – Toward the end of the semester, you will have an opportunity to share via a written paper and an oral presentation your personal views on media literacy given all that we have discussed and read this semester. More details regarding this assignment can be found on Canvas.

Grading:

Discussion leadership and mini literature review	200 points
Exam	50 points
Research project	100 points
Individual reflection on media literacy paper	50 points
<u>Participation (via in person discussion & asynchronous writing assignments)</u>	<u>100 points</u>
TOTAL	500 points

Expectations:

1. Come to class. I understand that emergencies arise, but you need to try to let me know ahead of time of any possible absences. (See attendance statement below).
2. Engage the readings BEFORE class and bring thoughtful reflections on them to class.
3. Take part in seminar in-person discussions as well as participate fully in the online discussions. This class is not a lecture and can only work well if you are pro-active in the classroom.

Expectations for all Written Assignments:

The formatting rules for your paper are given below. Failure to follow any of these rules will adversely affect your assignment's grade; whereas, a one or more grade reduction will be imposed based on the extent and severity of formatting errors.

- Page layout for an entire paper must be in "portrait" orientation, not "landscape."
- 1-inch margins all around for the main text of your paper all pages (set headers and footers at ½ inch *inside* top and bottom margins).
- Number all pages in the upper right corner of the header and include your last name with the page number.
- Double-space text throughout.
- 12-point Times New Roman type throughout, including headers.
- Indent all paragraphs ½ inch for the first line only. Do not have any extra space between paragraphs.
- Use a cover page with the title of your paper, your name, the course title, and due date.
- If you use any secondary sources (including readings from class in the textbook or posted on Canvas), you must document them according to APA style in the body of your paper and in a references section at the end of your paper.

For your own protection, you are expected to keep electronic copies and/or photocopies of all assignments submitted to me. As you work on any computer remember to save your work frequently, always backup your work, and always protect your files and computer from viruses and malicious software. **More information regarding each specific writing assignment is provided in the "Assignments" area on Canvas.**

Attendance

You are responsible for attending class and completing all academic work. Be familiar with [which absences are excused under university policy and which are not](#). You are responsible for making arrangements with me to complete missed coursework after an excused absence. Follow the instructions in this syllabus about any additional absences I excuse for this class. If you need advice on how to manage an extended absence or want notification of your absence sent to your instructors, contact the [Dean of Students Office](#).

Academic Dishonesty

You are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and any additional syllabus language. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and/or unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else's work, is plagiarism. Content generated by an Artificial Intelligence third-party service or site (AI-generated content) without proper attribution or authorization is another form of plagiarism. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or another form of academic dishonesty, please reach out to me to discuss it as soon as possible. Any allegation of academic dishonesty may be referred to [Student Conduct and Community Responsibilities](#), a unit of the Dean of Students Office, for possible review. If found responsible for academic dishonesty, a grade penalty can also be applied.

Student Access & Accommodations: Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 308 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, Video Phone [\(309\) 319-7682](#) or visit the website at [StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu](#).

Diversity & Respect: ISU remains committed to creating and maintaining a working, learning and living environment that is welcoming, supportive, respectful, inclusive, diverse and free from discrimination and harassment. Please be kind and courteous to everyone you interact with both in and out of class and respect diverse viewpoints. Here in the School of Communication, I am a member of the Anti-Racism, Social Justice, and Coalition-Building Committee (ASC) that is here for you if ever you experience issues related to equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and respect. Feel free to reach out to me!! In addition, the Inclusive Community Response Team (ICRT) serves students by fostering an open and inclusive campus and responding to instances of hate and bias. You can learn more about how the team can help and report concerns on the [ICRT website](#). The Multicultural Outreach Team (MCOT) is a group of staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students in Student Counseling Services dedicated to fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive university community for our minoritized students. MCOT offers workshops which promote dialogue about identity, empathy, stereotypes, bias, privilege, power, white supremacy, and systemic racism. Students can learn more about MCOT at <https://counseling.illinoisstate.edu/outreach/multicultural-outreach-team/>

[Multicultural Center:](#) The Multicultural Center provides a number of programs and services to help students flourish academically and socially and to encourage understanding, appreciation, and respect for diversity in the University community. Resources include LGBTQAI+ resources, legal resources for undocumented students, healing and self-care resources, anti-racism education, leadership development, cultural organizations (BSU, ALAS, TRIBE, PRIDE and APAC), and lots of gathering space!

Mental Health and Well-Being: Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. It's hard to learn if you're hungry or couch surfing. If you are having difficulty affording groceries, accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or securing a safe and stable place to live, help may be available. Please contact the Dean of Student's Office to learn more. Other helpful resources include:

- [Student Counseling Services](#) (SCS) is FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at counseling.illinoisstate.edu or by calling (309) 438-3655.
- [Planned Parenthood, Bloomington](#) offers abortion care, contraception, pregnancy testing, STI treatments, transgender hormone therapy, and more. 1319 N. Veterans Parkway, Bloomington, IL. Phone: (309) 827-2204.
- [The School Street Food Pantry](#). Students suffering from food insecurity can get groceries at the School Street Food Pantry. For more information and hours visit their website.

Course Schedule:

WEEK 1

T, Aug. 18

Course Introduction

- Course Syllabus

R, Aug. 20

What is media literacy? What does it mean to you?

- Media Literacy: A Definition (posted under Files on Canvas)
- Media Literacy Education Lacks Consistency (posted under Files on Canvas)
- NCTE Position Statement (posted under Files on Canvas)
- **SELECT DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP DATE**

WEEK 2

T, Aug. 25

Reading for what? How to best read for academia

- Guidelines for Reading, Summarizing, & Critiquing Empirical Articles on Canvas
- Reading a Scientific Article on Canvas

R, Aug. 27

Understanding media effects & what is your relationship with the media? (NO IN PERSON CLASS - ASYNCHRONOUS WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE BY 6:15 P.M.)

- Chaps. 1 & 2 of textbook
- Bryant & Miron (2004)

WEEK 3

T, Sep. 1

The audience & individual differences

Discussion leader: _____

- Chap. 10 of textbook
- Vidmar & Rokeach (1974)

R, Sep. 3

The audience & cross-cultural individual differences

Discussion leader: _____

- Chaps. 12 and 21 of textbook
- Kuipers et al. (2009)

WEEK 4

T, Sep. 8

Persuasion, advertising, & media effects

Discussion leader: _____

- Chaps. 8 & 18 of textbook

R, Sep. 10

Narrative media effects

**(NO IN PERSON CLASS - ASYNCHRONOUS WRITING
ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE BY 6:15 P.M.)**

- Chap. 9 of textbook

WEEK 5

T, Sep. 15

Cultivation theory & its descendants

- Chap. 5 of textbook
- Shanahan & Morgan (1999)

R, Sep. 17

Cultivation & its descendants

**(NO IN PERSON CLASS - ASYNCHRONOUS WRITING
ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE BY 6:15 P.M.)**

- Morgan et al. (2015)
- Munawar et al. (2020)

WEEK 6

T, Sep. 22

Media priming

Discussion leader: _____

- Chap. 6 of textbook
- Dixon & Azocar (2007)

R, Sep. 24

Media priming

**(NO IN PERSON CLASS - ASYNCHRONOUS WRITING
ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE BY 6:15 P.M.)**

- Aubrey et al. (2011)

WEEK 7

T, Sep. 29

Final Project Pitch Meetings with Me

R, Oct. 1

NO CLASS – FINAL PROJECT WORK DAY

WEEK 8

T, Oct. 6

Agenda setting, framing, & misinformation

Discussion leader: _____

- Chap. 3 & 4 of textbook
- Scheufele & Tewksbury (2007)

R, Oct. 8

Final project focus feedback session (NO IN PERSON CLASS DISCUSSION FORUM MEETING)

- **FINAL PROJECT FOCUS DUE BY 5 P.M. ON CANVAS DISCUSSION FORUMS**

WEEK 9

T, Oct. 13

Children & media effects

Discussion leader: _____

- Chap. 19 of textbook

R, Oct. 15

NO IN PERSON CLASS – EXAM DUE BY 6:15 P.M.

WEEK 10

T, Oct. 20

Behavioral media effects & media violence

Discussion leader: _____

- Chap. 14 of textbook
- Glascock (2015)

R, Oct. 22

Behavioral media effects & video games

Discussion leader: _____

- Chap. 22 of textbook
- Carnagey & Anderson (2005)

WEEK 11

T, Oct. 27

Health & media effects

Discussion leader: _____

- Chap. 20 of textbook

R, Oct. 29

Stereotypes, cross-cultural influences, & media effects

Discussion leader: _____

- Chaps. 16 & 27 of textbook
- Mastro (2003)

WEEK 12

T, Nov. 3

**Presentations of Individual Reflections on Media Literacy
(Individual Reflection Papers Due by 5 p.m. on Canvas)**

R, Nov. 5

Sexuality, body image, & media effects

Discussion leader: _____

- Chap. 11 & 15 of textbook
- Hopper & Aubrey (2013)

WEEK 13

T, Nov. 10

Effects of social media & mobile communication

Discussion leader: _____

- Chaps. 24 & 25 of textbook

R, Nov. 12

NCA CONFERENCE PRESENTATION PRACTICE SESSION

WEEK 14

T, Nov. 17

WORK DAY - FINAL PROJECT PREPARATIONS

R, Nov. 19

OPTIONAL MEETINGS WITH ME (via Zoom or In Person)

WEEK 15

Nov. 23-27 NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 16

T, Dec. 1 FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

R, Dec. 3 FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

WEEK 17

FINAL PAPERS DUE DEC. 7 BY 5 P.M.