



Course Syllabus: Mass Media and Society
Lamar D. Fain College of Fine Arts
MCOM 1233 Section 203
Spring 2026

Contact Information

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Course Description

- This course is designed to give students an overview of how the mass media operate and their place in American society.
- Students will briefly examine career opportunities in mass communication.
- Students will also examine and analyze contemporary issues facing the mass media.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

I have not assigned a mandatory textbook for this course. Your reading materials will be primarily from handouts and research.

However, I do recommend:

Converging Media 6th Edition

A New Introduction to Mass Communication

John V. Pavlik, Shawn McIntosh

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes: cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted

techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work, not the individual to whom credit is given). Students are expected to uphold academic integrity. The Office of Student Conduct governs academic misconduct policy and procedures.

AI Policy

AI may be used for pre-task activities such as brainstorming, outlining and initial research. You may use AI for planning, idea development, and initial research. Your final submission should show how you developed and refined these initial ideas into the final submission (AI Level 2 Policy adopted from VinUniversity Artificial Intelligence Assessment Scale).

Moffett Library

The Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information.

Grading

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Weighting
Personal Journal	20%
Mid-Term Exam	25%
Weekly Discussion Leader	20%
Participation	10%
Final Project	25%

Final Project

Details pertaining to the Final Project will be given during the semester.

Mid-Term Exam

Students will be given a Mid-Term Exam during Week 9. Further details pertaining to the exam will be given during the semester.

Projects/Assignments Required

This course will require students to keep a **journal**, which will consist of analyses of articles pertaining to the mass media.

Once per week, each student will be required to lead a discussion on the current state of mass media as part of the **Weekly Discussion Leader** assignment.

The specific details for each assignment/presentation will be given as the semester progresses and will be well in advance of each due date.

Extra Credit

I do not typically give or accept extra credit assignments. Students are expected to take advantage of my office hours, utilize handouts, keep abreast with readings and all other course material to earn the best possible grade.

Late Work

Students are expected to turn in all assignments on time, at the beginning of class, on the assigned due date. Late work will not be accepted, unless there are extenuating circumstances that led to the work being late. I reserve the right to determine whether or not the reason given by the student is legitimate.

Make-up Work

A student who misses an assignment/project will only be allowed to do a make-up assignment if the student missed the original date because of a legitimate reason. Once again, I will decide whether or not the reason is valid.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact me or the technicians listed for the program.

Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Given that this is a communication class, class participation is especially important. **Students are therefore expected to participate, as this will account for 10% of their final grade. To earn the participation points, students must be actively engaged in class discussion. Attendance does not mean participation.**

If your absence is due to extenuating circumstances, the absence will be excused, at my discretion. However, students with excessive absences will be dropped from the course by the instructor.

Being more than ten minutes tardy will be counted as late. Three times tardy will count as an absence.

Instructor Class Policies

Students are expected to be respectful of both their peers and the instructor and conduct themselves in a manner that is in accordance with the university's Code of Conduct. Cell phones should be kept off or on silent for the duration of class. Texting and using social media are not allowed during class. Students are expected to bring their writing materials to each class in order to take notes during lectures.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the university) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. However, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans, and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs.

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on university property or at university-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License-to-carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

****Notice: Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.****

Course Schedule

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 01/20 to 01/23	Course Introduction Definition of Communication Communication Model Mass Communication Theory	N/A
Week 2 01/26 to 01/30	Mass Communication Theory Cont'd Journal Instructions Discussion Leader Instructions	N/A
Week 3 02/02 to 02/06	Pervasiveness of Mass Media Effects of Mass Communication	Weekly Discussion Leader Presentations Begin – February 2 nd
Week 4 02/09 to 09/13	Industry Concerns Formation of Mass Media	Weekly Discussion Leader Presentations Continue
Week 5 02/16 to 02/20	Media Convergence: Brief History Role of the Internet Current Problems	Weekly Discussion Presentations Continue
Week 6 02/23 to 02/27	Print: Newspapers, Magazines, Books	Weekly Discussion Presentations Continue
Week 7 03/02 to 03/06	Aural: Radio, Recording	Weekly Discussion Presentations Continue
Week 8 03/09 to 03/13	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
Week 9 03/16 to 03/20	Visual: Television (Over-The-Air/Cable/Satellite/Streaming Film (Theatre/Streaming))	Weekly Discussion Presentations Cont. Mid-Term Exam – March 18 th
Week 10 03/23 to 03/27	Strategic Communication: Advertising Public Relations	N/A
Week 11 03/30 to 04/03	Freedom of Expression/First Amendment 04/02 – 04/04 HOLIDAY BREAK	Journals Due -April 1
Week 12 04/06 to 04/10	Freedom of Expression/First Amendment	N/A
Week 13 04/13 to 04/17	Freedom of Expression/First Amendment	N/A
Week 14 04/20 to 04/24	World-Wide Web/ Social Media	N/A
Week 15 04/27 to 05/01	World-Wide Web/ Social Media	N/A
Week 16 05/04 to 05/08	FINAL PROJECT DUE	Final Project – May 6
Week 17 05/09 to 05/14	FINALS WEEK	N/A