



MCOM 1233: Introduction to Mass Communication  
College of Fine Arts  
MCOM 1233 Section 201, Fain B 114  
Spring 2019 and Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays

Contact Information

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Course Description

As this is a survey course, emphasis will be placed on gaining a broad, general understanding of the mass media, the history and means by which they communicate, the effects of this communication, and the professional and ethical issues involved. We cover print media, photography, radio, cinema, television and new media, and such related fields as advertising, public relations and political communication.

Primary Course Learning Objectives:

- By the end of this course you should be able to explain basic terminology and theories associated in the field on communication and mass media.
- Be able to recall a variety of important historical events and how they shaped or were shaped by mass media.
- Should be able to explain how technology has increased the global scope of communication and media.
- Should be able to identify critical elements that impact sociopolitical implications of mass media and media convergence and conglomeration.
- Be able to demonstrate the ability to use critical thinking skills to analyze a variety of mass media within historical and cultural contexts.

### Textbook & Instructional Materials

Pavlik, J.V. & McIntosh, S. *Converging Media: A New Introduction to Mass Communication* 6<sup>th</sup> Ed New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press  
ISBN: 9780190646653

Note: The textbook is your responsibility. You are to keep up with the readings in the textbook as we progress through the course.

### Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook 2017-18](#)

### Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

### Grading

Course Grade - Grades will be determined on as follows: A, B, C, D, and F. By accepting this syllabus and staying enrolled in this course, you are indicating that you understand and accept the terms of this syllabus.

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment –Follow instructions listed under Course Schedule.

| Assignments                           | Points |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Quizzes                               | 20     |
| Journal Entries (10 at 4 points each) | 40     |
| Midterm Exam                          | 20     |
| Final Exam                            | 20     |
| Total Points                          | 100    |

### Quizzes

A quiz will be given most Fridays in class. These are very short quizzes emphasizing what we spoke about that week. On Wednesday, the decision will be made in class if one will be given. It will be posted on D2L Announcements after Wednesday's class as well.

### Exams

There will be a midterm and cumulative final exam in this course. Format and chapters covered, will be discussed and confirmed in class.

## Journals

In this course, you will be writing 10 (ten) journal entries. Each entry is worth 4 points. They will be graded as follows: 0- Lack of effort, content and thought—no research & coherency, 2- Shows potential and some effort---grammar/spelling issues/ research issues, and 4- Critically analyzes the entry, backs up thoughts and claims with research. The professor assigns grades in increments of .5pts. You need to read each question carefully. Do NOT simply answer the questions. Use them as a guide for you in formulating a journal entry with evidence (research) to back up your thoughts and ideas. Each entry will be 3 pages of content. Cover page and reference page do not count in your page count. If you are unhappy with your journal entry grade, see REVISION POLICY in this syllabus.

### Journal Questions- Done Sequentially

(Adopted from Media Journal by Joseph Harris, Jay Rosen, and Gary Calpas)

- 1)** For three consecutive days, write down any time you find yourself interacting with media. This includes reading a magazine, newspaper, book, comic book; listening to the radio, music, or CDs; watching television, films, videos, or DVDs; using the Internet; or being exposed to advertising such as billboards, signs, television, or radio commercials. What medium did you find yourself consistently seeking out? What media experiences did you enjoy the most? When and how were your media habits established? What do your media experiences say about you as a person?
- 2)** Many people use the media to keep in touch with the world. Imagine that you had no access to the media. You could see, hear, and know only those events that you were involved in. What would your life be like? Now, think about the news media. How does news come to you? What news stories have had a major impact on your life? What types of news do you consistently seek out? Are you in touch with world affairs? Politics? Sports? Hollywood gossip? Stock market news? Hometown developments? "News" about your family or friends? What can you learn about the media and yourself by looking at the ways you remain in touch?
- 3)** Another common motive for using the media is to stay "out of touch" or escape. Consider how you use the media to escape. Which media experiences provide you with the opportunity to escape? When do you feel the need to escape? Is escape desirable? Why or why not? Do your efforts to escape usually succeed or fail? What features of the media make it possible or impossible for you to escape? Is escape something you feel you should or should not do?

**4)** For many people, music reflects who they are. Punk, disco, metal, rap, funk, and country - these all conjure up sound images as well as portraits of certain types of people. Music has a strong cultural power through its ability to say something to many people while also allowing them to respond through their musical preferences. Think about the music you like that in some way expresses who you are. How did this music come to be yours? When and where did you first encounter it? How does this music fit with the rest of your life? Does it have anything to do with the clothes you wear, places you go, or people you spend time with? Think about how and where you listen to your music. Are you usually alone or with others? Do you go to concerts or clubs? Do you play an instrument? What is it about you that attract you to this type of music?

**5)** When we talk about "reading" places, we are examining the messages sent out by a specific area. Most places with an intended purpose (classroom, shopping mall) must "announce" their similarity to others like them (a place to learn, a place to spend money) yet also distinguish themselves from others ("open" classroom, "exclusive" mall). Think about the places in your life. Choose one place to study that you know fairly well. What does this place "say" to those who enter it? What messages does it send? How would you put those messages into words? Now, think about a specific place portrayed in a television show, film or advertisement. What messages are being sent? What does the place "say" about the character who uses it?

**6)** Like it or not, there are certain individuals in our society who are designated as being celebrities. Sometimes they are politicians, actors/actresses, musicians, or royalty. Think about your relationship to someone you consider being famous whom you know primarily through your experience with the media. What distinguishes this person from others of similar type? What is it about this person that interests or provokes you? What is it about this person that causes you to react the way you do towards him or her? Next, think about the means through which you have come to "know" your subject. Through what medium have your encounters taken place? How has the medium shaped the nature of the encounter? What makes a relationship real, human, and meaningful? What makes it artificial or empty?

**7)** Despite what many in our society may believe, gender and sex are not the same thing. Gender is a learned behavior while sex is a given fact. We are either born male or female, but that does not seem to preclude an unending series of lessons on how to be a man or act like a woman. Many of these lessons come through the media. Think about what it means to be a woman or a man, a girl or a boy. Look for a text (advertisement, television program, film) that directly targets one sex or the other. What does the text have to say about women or men that strike you as useful, interesting, or accurate? What seems misleading, exaggerated or false? What qualities does the text suggest as being specifically "feminine" or "masculine?" What values does it associate with being male or female? Now, think about how the text addresses you as part of the audience.

How do you know that this text is aimed specifically at one sex? What does it seem to assume about you and your concerns as a man or woman? What does it want you to do, feel, or believe? In what ways have media experiences influenced your understanding of gender, and your sense of what it means to be a man or woman?

**8)** Even though many people have never voted in an election, they may still have experienced politics through the media. Think about your experiences with politics through the news media, on television, or in films. What events are memorable to you? What images or phrases stick in your mind? What meanings did they have for you? What was the role of the media in forming your early responses to politics? How have your attitudes about politics changed, as you've grown older? Now, think about experiences when you have heard about politics in the paper, on the radio or on television. How do you typically react? Do you feel yourself a part of or apart from the world of politics? When have these feelings occurred? How did the media figure into these different experiences? Do you ever find politics absurd, ridiculous, or impossible to take seriously? Do you see ways in which the media encourages such responses?

**9)** Many people view the media as having a negative influence over society. Reports about the negative effects of movie and television violence regularly fill the airwaves. Think about a negative yet meaningful experience you have had with the media. Locate a text that insults, reduces or simply bothers you. Why do you find it difficult to ignore or forget? Is there anything compelling, even fascinating about it, despite your negative response? Think about the feelings that are evoked in you as you examine this text. What names might you give to the feelings this experience produces in you? Does it provoke anger, shame, self-doubt, and mistrust? Does it reveal a side of yourself you'd rather not see? Is it the feeling of being ridiculed, having your intelligence insulted, your values doubted, and your beliefs trashed? Is it subtler? Does it suggest in some way that you are good yet not good enough, smart yet ignorant in some way, or that you're being flattered but also manipulated in some way? What was it that disturbed you so, and what can you learn about yourself and the media from the experience?

**10)** Everyone has, at one time or another, wondered about the "effects" of watching television. Those effects may differ depending on the circumstances in which television is encountered. Observe a group of people as they interact with each other and the set while watching television. Switch your attention back and forth between the group of people and what is taking place on the screen. How are the people behaving as they are watching television? What are they doing besides watching the screen? In what ways do they interact with one another? In what ways do they interact with the set, or with the people on television? How are their interactions as a group influenced by what they're watching? What sort of talk do you hear as the group watches? How much of this talk is related to what's on television? What is the purpose of this talk?

## Requirements All Submitted Work

All work submitted in this course should be prepared according to the following guidelines and submitted on D2L. 1) Papers must be typed, double-spaced in 12-point font in Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins. 2) Pages must be numbered in the top, right-hand corner of each page. 3) Papers should have a cover page with a title, your name, course identifier, and date. 4) Papers must include accurate and complete in text citations and a complete reference list. You should follow the guidelines of the MLA or APA style manual.

## Revision Policy

I believe all work is in a constant process of revision. Therefore, I invite and encourage you to rework your assignments. A revision, however, means more than just changing some grammar errors and typos. It requires you to rethink, recognize and rewrite your work. As a rule of thumb, I never drop your grade based upon a revision. The lowest grade you will receive is the original grade. There is only a one (1) week window of opportunity for you to revise and resubmit (Example- If I hand back a journal on Friday, then the revision is due the following Friday.) Please be sure to attach the original graded copy to the revision on the day it is due. A revision will NOT be accepted without the original graded journal.

## 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 the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

## Attendance

Successful completion of the course requires regular class attendance at lectures and active participation in class discussions and projects. More than four (4) absences will result in a fifteen (15)-point deduction from your grade. On the eighth (8) absence from the class, you will fail the course.

If you have to miss a class or a deadline for any reason, please contact me IN ADVANCE to let me know. CONTACTING ME IN ADVANCE DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY EXCUSE AN ABSENCE, but it is a lot better than calling after the fact. If you fail to contact me before the next class period to explain an absence, it will be very difficult for me to excuse the absence. Please note that work, non-emergency medical and dental appointments, hangovers, intramural games, visitors from out of town, fixing your roommate's computer, fraternity/sorority events, arguments with boyfriends/girlfriends and studying for other classes do NOT constitute excused absences.

## Instructor Class Policies

### Missed Assignments Policy

If you miss any assignments without being excused, you will fail the course. I reserve the right to determine whether an absence will be excused. In-class assignments may be excused at my discretion; however, all outside assignments must be completed within a reasonable time frame after your absence — no exceptions. In addition, I reserve the right to determine what, exactly, is a “reasonable time frame.” In sum: This is a zero-tolerance policy. I have no time or patience for those who are not going to take this class seriously; thus, “three strikes and you’re out” does not apply. “ONE strike and you’re out” is more applicable. Some past students have flunked the course for this reason. In any case, I tend to be cynical about making up missed assignments, but if you have a legitimate problem, alternate arrangements can be made at my discretion. If you cannot make it a priority to complete every assignment, on time, please drop now so another student, who is more serious, can have your spot. By accepting this syllabus and remaining enrolled in this course, you are indicating that you understand the Missed Assignments Policy.

### Sports Teams

Individuals on sports teams, please see me with a copy of your schedule (games and practices) so we can make accommodations for those missing classes. This however must be initiated and followed through by the athlete not the instructor’s responsibility.

### Professional Conduct

I expect common courtesy and civility: Do not speak when someone else is talking (that includes your instructor!). I appreciate a sense of humor, but you should know when to get serious. Offensive comments directed towards the instructor or other students are not appropriate. Inappropriate behavior will bring down your final grade at the discretion of the instructor. If for any reason you need to leave the classroom while in session, please be considerate to the rest of the class and do it in a quite non-disruptive manner! D2L use is required for this course- all PowerPoints, handouts, syllabus, etc.. In addition, when an exam/quiz is given, it must be completed during the class it is given. No makeup exams or pre/post arrangements are made. Only documented and verified excused absences, (as supplied by the Office of the Provost) will be given an opportunity for any make up.

### Missed Class

It is your responsibility to find out what you missed in the event of absence from class. I recommend befriending another classmate and exchange contact information so you can find out what you missed and not fall behind schedule.

### Religious Obligations

Please notify the instructor of any religious obligations that might conflict with our class schedule at the beginning of the semester.

### Electronic Devices

No cell phones, laptops, headphones, music, computer games, nor texting/IMing/e-mail/camera devices of any description are to be used during class: ZERO TOLERANCE. This means all aforementioned devices (and presently unknown versions of such) are to be turned off and out of your sight and mind. In any case, I reserve the right to ask you to leave immediately or to embarrass you mercilessly if your beepers/phones/ pagers/etc. make noise during class. If cell phones become more than a one-time problem, I reserve the right to lower your final semester grade and/or take further disciplinary actions.

### Writing Center

Begin drafting papers as early as possible and take advantage of the MSU Writing Center, located off the 2nd floor atrium of Prothro-Yeager! Tutoring is available Monday through Thursday from 9am to 4pm; you can also find a tutor at the satellite location in Moffett Library Honors Lounge, Sunday and Thursday from 6pm to 9pm. Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they will provide support and feedback at every stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting, revising to proofreading.

### Plagiarism

Clear cases of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the course. Plagiarism is (1) the use of source material of other persons (either published, including the Internet) without following the accepted techniques of giving credit or (2) the submission for credit of work not the individuals to whom credit is given. If a student in the class is caught plagiarizing, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The Student Creed developed and adopted by the MSU Student Government reinforces the discouragement of plagiarism and other unethical behaviors. The first statement of the Creed reads, "As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else to do so." Plagiarism is lying, cheating and stealing.

### Senior Portfolio Requirement

Please note that all mass communication majors are required to submit a portfolio as part of their Internship course (Internship is a prerequisite to Senior Production). This requirement is a part of MSU's reaccreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and is non negotiable. Through the portfolio, students are required to demonstrate communication competence through the written word and visual communication; two examples of each competency are required. As you go through this and other classes, you are



responsible for saving course work that could be included in your senior portfolio. Please see me, your adviser, the department chair or any mass communication faculty member for handouts with more information ("Mass Communication Portfolio Competencies" and "Mass Communication Portfolio FAQ"). These handouts are also available on our department web page: <http://finearts.mwsu.edu/masscomm/>.

### 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 application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (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 <http://www.mwsu.edu/student-life/disability>.

### College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

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<br>1/14 to 1/18 | <b>Class:</b> Introduction to the Course & Explanation of Syllabus<br><b>Assignment:</b> <u>Read:</u> Chapters 1 & 2  |  |
| Week 2<br>1/21 to 1/25 | <b>MONDAY 1/21 – No Class – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</b><br><br><b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture & Discussion: Chapters: 1 & 2: Mass Media and Its Digital Transformation & Media Literacy in the Digital Age<br><br><b>Assignment:</b><br><u>Read:</u> Chapter 3<br>Work on: Journal # 1 | <b>Self-Logo Project Due 25<sup>th</sup></b> |
| Week 3<br>1/28 to 2/1  | <b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture & Discussion: Chapter 3: Print Media: Books, Newspapers, and Magazines<br><br><b>Assignment:</b><br><u>Read:</u> Chapter 4<br>Work on: Journal # 2  | <b>Due:</b> Journal # 1 on 1/28 on D2L       |
| Week 4<br>2/4 to 2/8   | <b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture & Discussion: Chapter 4: Audio Media: Music Recordings, Radio<br><br><b>Assignment:</b><br><u>Read:</u> Chapter 5<br>Work on: Journal # 3   | <b>Due:</b> Journal # 2 on 2/4 on D2L        |
| Week 5<br>2/11 to 2/15 | <b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture & Discussion: Chapter 5: Visual Media: Photography, Movies, and Television<br><br><b>Assignment:</b><br><u>Read:</u> Chapter 6<br>Work on: Journal # 4  | <b>Due:</b> Journal #3 on 2/11 on D2L        |
|                        |   |  |

| Week or Module          | Activities/Assignments/Exams   | Due Date                               |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Week 6<br>2/18 to 2/22  | <p><b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture &amp; Discussion:<br/>Chapter 6: Interactive Media: The Internet, Video Games, and Augmented Reality</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b><br/>Read: Chapter 7<br/><b>Start to Study for Midterm Exam</b></p> | <b>Due:</b> Journal # 4 on 2/18 on D2L |
| Week 7<br>2/25 to 3/1   | <p><b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture &amp; Discussion:<br/>Chapter 7: The Impact of Social Media</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b><br/>Read: Chapter 8<br/>Work on: Journal # 5</p>  | Midterm in Class 3/1                   |
| Week 8<br>3/4 to 3/8    | <p><b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture &amp; Discussion:<br/>Chapter 8: Journalism: From Information to Participation</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b><br/>Read: Chapter 9<br/>Work on: Journal # 6</p>   | <b>Due:</b> Journal # 5 on 3/4 on D2L  |
| Week 9<br>3/11 to 3/15  | <p><b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture &amp; Discussion:<br/>Chapter 9: Public Relations: Building Relationships with Strategic Communication</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b><br/>Read: Chapter 10<br/>Work on: Journal # 7</p>                | <b>Due:</b> Journal # 6 on 3/11 on D2L |
| Week 10<br>3/18 to 3/22 | SPRING BREAK- NO CLASS   |  |
| Week 11<br>3/25 to 3/29 | <p><b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture &amp; Discussion:<br/>Chapter 10: Advertising: The Power of Persuasion</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b><br/>Read: Chapter 11<br/>(March 25<sup>th</sup> last day to W)<br/>Work on: Journal # 8</p>      | <b>Due:</b> Journal # 7 on 3/29 on D2L |

| Week or Module          | Activities/Assignments/Exams   | Due Date                                   |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Week 12<br>4/1 to 4/5   | <p><b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture &amp; Discussion:<br/>Chapter 11: Media Ethics</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b><br/>Read: Chapter 12<br/>Work on: Journal # 9</p>  | <b>Due:</b> Journal # 8 on<br>4/1 on D2L   |
| Week 13<br>4/8 to 4/12  | <p><b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture &amp; Discussion:<br/>Chapter 12: Communication Law and<br/>Regulation in the Digital Age</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b><br/>Read: Chapter 13<br/>Work on: Journal #10</p> | <b>Due:</b> Journal # 9 on<br>4/8 on D2L   |
| Week 14<br>4/15 to 4/19 | <p><b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture &amp; Discussion:<br/>Chapter 13: Media Theory and<br/>Research</p> <p>No Class 4/19 –Holiday Break</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b><br/>Read: Chapter 14</p>                | <b>Due:</b> Journal # 10 on<br>4/15 on D2L |
| Week 15<br>4/22 to 4/26 | <p><b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture &amp; Discussion:<br/>Chapter 14: Mass Communication<br/>and Politics in the Digital Age</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Study for Final Exam<br/>Read: Chapter 15</p>      |  |
| Week 16<br>4/29 to 5/3  | <p><b>Class:</b> Review, Lecture &amp; Discussion:<br/>Chapter 15: Global Media in the<br/>Digital Age</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Study for Final Exam</p>  |  |
| Final Exam<br>5/8       | Wednesday 3:30 PM- 5/8 Final Exam  | Wednesday 3:30 PM-<br>5/8 Final Exam       |
|                         |  |  |