



SYLLABUS

MASS MEDIA AND SOCIETY

10806 MCOM 1233 101 MASS MEDIA AND SOCIETY MWF 0900AM 0950AM CE 334
11588 MCOM 1233 102 MASS MEDIA AND SOCIETY MWF 1100AM 1150AM FA D101
12232 MCOM 1233 104 MASS MEDIA AND SOCIETY TR 1100AM 1220PM FA C111

A COMPLETE COPY OF THIS SYLLABUS IS AVAILABLE ONLINE UNDER MY PROFILE IN THE UNIVERSITY DIRECTORY, 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. ADA COMPLIANT.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisite: none.

Survey of the mass communication process and mass media, including print media, radio/recording, television, Internet, and emerging media. Students will learn about media issues, societal effects and trends.

Core Code: 090A - Cultural & Global Understanding

WHY BE EXCITED ABOUT THIS COURSE

Author George Orwell said, "The people will believe what the media tells them they believe." Certainly, to some extent, that's true. So much is happening every day that we rely on newspapers, television, magazines, websites and social media to sift through it, to pick out what's important and then to talk about that. Objectively? Well, that's a topic worthy of discussion. Do they get it right? More discussion. What happens when they get it wrong? Ah, so many things to discuss, so little time.

You live in a world where, in the palm of your hand, you have access to more information than your parents when they were little had in all their books and libraries combined. But how do you choose what media to consume? How do you find the truth? "Whoever controls the media, the images, controls the culture," Allen Ginsberg, a poet, said. And with great power comes great responsibility. You have the power of the press in your hands with social media and the ability to create a website that can reach billions of people in an instant. How will you use that power or hold those with that power accountable?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a result of this course, you will be able to:

- Understand and define mass communication.
- Understand and explain the function of the mass media.
- Analyze critically mass media and mass media messages.
- Demonstrate an understanding of media literacy and consumption of mass media.
- Understand the economic and social imperatives affecting message content, delivery and effects.
- Understand the influences of media content on cultural perceptions.
- Understand the characteristics of contemporary mass media, including the influence and roles of media history, media law and ethics, governmental regulation, and evolving technology.
- Analyze and discuss media message content using critical thinking skills.
- Understand media history and technology and their effects on contemporary messages.
- Develop an increased understanding and awareness of media influences on perceptions of multiculturalism and diversity.
- Understand the evolving roles of social media messages on politics, behavior, and culture.
- Understand the effects of globalization and consolidation on the media.

REQUIRED

- The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual (recent edition), \$20.⁹⁵.
Or online version <http://apstylebook.com/>, \$26/year
- Kahoot! app.
- A public Twitter account.

GRADING

25% Attendance and daily grades (including current events)

25% Midterm

25% Final

25% Final paper

CRITICAL THINKING

includes:

- observation
- analysis
- interpretation
- reflection
- evaluation
- inference
- explanation
- problem solving
- decision making.

Critical thinkers rigorously question ideas and assumptions rather than accepting them at face value. They will always seek to determine whether the ideas, arguments and findings represent the entire picture and are open to finding that they do not.

NOTES

- Unless otherwise indicated, material is due at the beginning of class.
- Late work receives a grade of zero.
- I will not discuss grades in any fashion via electronic means. You must discuss grades in person or by videoconference.
- You may not submit material that has been (or will be) submitted for a grade in any other class unless you obtain my explicit written permission.
- ANY material (and ALL material) you write for this class should be considered publishable.
- Review and follow the Society for Professional Journalists Code of Ethics available online at <http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp> and the NPPA Code of Ethics available online at <https://nppa.org/code-ethics/>

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Week 1, Aug. 24-28	.....Course requirements; what are “the media”?; communication; marketable skills Local media: What are our choices? How do you consume them? Who owns them? Choices of national/regional media? How do you consume them? Who owns them? Log.
Week 2, Aug. 31-Sept. 4	.....Review log. Fake news. Alternative facts. Fake news. Alternative facts. Distinguishing reality from fiction. Objectivity: The myth; news vs. public relations
Sept. 7	.....Labor Day: No class
Week 3, Sept. 7-11	.....History of print media: flyers, newspapers, books, magazines A look back at Sept. 11, 2001 from a media perspective
Week 4, Sept. 14-18	.....Foundations of free speech in America More on the First Amendment
Sept. 17	.....Constitution Day and Citizenship Day Give up a freedom
Sept. 19	.....Rosh Hashana
Week 5, Sept. 19-25	.....Media law: free speech, libel, privacy, copyright Media law: Five cases you should know Media ethics and a code of ethics
Week 6, Sept. 28-Oct. 2	.....WMFA exhibit: Running for Office (selfie) Discuss WMFA exhibit: Running for Office Your editorial cartoon
Week 7, Oct. 5-9	.....History of photojournalism Your moment presentations
Oct. 10	.....Texas Association of Journalism Educators (virtual)
Week 8, Oct. 12-16	.....Review for midterm The telegraph and evolution of radio
.....	.....ONLINE: Midterm
Week 9, Oct. 19-23	.....Review midterm More about the evolution of radio and today’s podcast
Oct. 22-24	.....College Media Association / Associated Collegiate Press national convention (virtual) The evolution of cinema and leaders in the profession; top movies
Week 10, Oct. 26-30	.....Your top movies, television shows Reflecting on television and the cinema today Radio flashback: War of the Worlds
Nov. 1	.....Daylight Saving Time ends at 2 a.m.
Week 11, Nov. 2-6	.....Media and politics and polls
Nov. 3	.....Election Day Reflect on election day coverage Agenda-setting theory and framing
Week 12, Nov. 9-13	.....Topic and material for final paper due; discussion History of advertising Manipulative advertising, kids and advertising, sex sells
Week 13, Nov. 16-20	.....History of the internet and the World Wide Web Evolution of social media
Nov. 19-22	.....Journalism Education Association / National Scholastic Press Association convention (virtual) Discussion: How do you use the internet and social media?
Week 14, Nov. 23-24	.....Final discussion; course evaluation; final paper due
Nov. 25-29	.....Thanksgiving holidays
Week 15, Nov. 30-Dec. 4	.....ONLINE: Marketable skills and careers in MCOM ONLINE: Review for final Last day of classes; Last day to drop with W; ONLINE:
Dec. 7	.....ONLINE: Final exam, 8 a.m. (10806)
Dec. 7 ONLINE: Final exam, 10:30 a.m. (11588)
Dec. 14Senior documentary presentations (?)
Dec. 15Commencement (?)

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THE FINAL ESSAY

Assignment.

You will an essay that is at least 2,000 words tied to the class readings and requiring some outside investigation. Even though this paper is relatively short, it should still have the basic components of an academic essay:

- An introduction which clearly states a thesis.
- A body which develops the thesis, with one argument per paragraph, and several points of evidence supporting each argument. Be sure to tie your discussion to ideas and concepts we've discussed in class.
- A conclusion which not only restates the thesis, but leaves the reader with something more, such as speculation on the broader implications of the thesis.

Writing is a process. And it's a team exercise. Feel free to bring your ideas and initial outline to the professor for feedback. Feel free to chat with your classmates about your topic. Feel free to show early versions of your paper to the professor or your classmates to get feedback. However, the final product must be your own.

DEADLINE

The final paper must be submitted in D2L/Brightspace by 5 p.m. Nov. 23, 2020. Late papers will not be accepted for any reason.

TOPIC 1

Find a news story on any given day that was covered in multiple, different media: newspaper, social media, website, television. First, compare and contrast how each outlet covered the story.

- What is the news story?
- How do the different outlets cover the story? What was different? What was similar?
- Did they all lead with the same angle? Why/not?
- Which outlet's coverage was better? (What defines quality news coverage?)
- Why did the outlets cover the story differently? Why did they cover it similarly? What might this coverage indicate about the goals and constraints facing each outlet?
- How did the story evolve, if at all? How did coverage online and on social media reflect the changes?
- How did each outlet follow-up the story? Why?
- How does this story fit within the theories and discussions we've had in class?

DO NOT simply answer these questions. These are guidelines for topics you should consider. Your essay should be a logical argument in support of your thesis.

Throughout your essay, use class concepts — from lectures, discussions and readings — to make your case. Include at least two other sources (and properly cite them).

TOPIC 2

Find an advertisement for a product or service that was placed in multiple media: newspaper, social media, website, television. What was the objective of the company when buying this ad? Do these ads achieve that aim? Address the following details in your paper.

- Where was the ad placed? Why was it placed there?
- What was its intended function? How do you know this?
- And how well does the ad perform that function? Again, what is your evidence for this?
- Look on social media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook). How does the company's presence on social media further the goals of the specific ad (or not)?
- How does this ad campaign fit within the theories and discussions we've had in class?

DO NOT simply answer these questions. These are guidelines for topics you should consider. Your essay should be a logical argument in support of your thesis.

Throughout your essay, use class concepts — from lectures, discussions and readings — to make your case. Include at least two other sources (and properly cite them).

TOPIC 3

An undergraduate research project: Best practices of college media on social media.

WRITING PROCESS:

- Story idea
- Background research
- Develop story angle
- Reporting / interviewing
- Draft — just get words on paper
- Editing including fact checking, more reporting
- Rewrite
- Edit / Rewrite until (a) story is as good as it's going to be; (b) you run out of time

WRITING CENTER

<https://msutexas.edu/writing-center/>

Located in 201b Prothro-Yeager, the MSU Writing Center provides tutoring on all writing tasks, from first-year composition to senior research papers and graduate school application materials.



Part of working in the mass media is getting new experiences. These are some photos with students at MSU—Texas and with my dog, Koda.

INSTRUCTOR: BRADLEY WILSON, PHD

An associate professor at Midwestern State University, Bradley received his doctoral degree in public administration with research work in media agenda-setting and local governments. He teaches various reporting and other mass communication classes although his particular area of interest is visual communication.

He got his start working as a photojournalist for a weekly newspaper in Austin. Along the way, he has worked as an executive director, public information officer and director of marketing for various companies.

Dr. Wilson is the editor of the national magazine, *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, for the national Journalism Education Association and co-managing editor of *College Media Review* for the College Media Association.

In 2020, the Scholastic Journalism Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication gave him the David Adams Educator of the Year Award.

He has received the Gold Key from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, the Pioneer Award from the National Scholastic Press Association, the Star of Texas from the Association of Texas Photography Instructors, the Trailblazer Award from the Texas

Association of Journalism Educators and the Carl Towley Award from the Journalism Education Association. In 2014, the National Press Photographers Association named him the Robin F. Garland Educator of the Year and the College Media Association named him a Distinguished Adviser for newspaper advising at a four-year college or university. In 2017, he received the Edith Fox King Award for contributions to scholastic journalism in Texas.

Publications he advised at North Carolina State University for a decade, including a yearbook, a daily newspaper, a literary magazine, a 25,000-watt radio station and video outlet won numerous awards including six Gold Crown awards from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (four for yearbook and two for literary magazine) and nine Pacemaker from the Associated Collegiate Press (four for yearbook and five for literary magazine).

He worked for more than 20 years as an emergency medical technician – intermediate, the last 11 of them at Cary Area EMS where he was awarded that organization’s highest honor, Squadsperson of the Year, and life membership. He plays euphonium and other low-brass instruments and has been active in numerous community bands.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part | **Good publications are never finished; you only run out of time.** | Don’t think in terms of filling space or time. Think in terms of providing information. | **Web first. Get it online.** | Fair. Accurate. Then first. | **Don’t forget your primary audience. With every story you tell, remember who you’re working for.** | Respect is earned. | **Want to be a better writer? Read.**

CONTACT

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FAIN D207

OFFICE HOURS
MWF 10-11 a.m.
W 3-5 p.m.
Or by appointment.

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STATEMENTS

As the instructor of record for this course, I reserve the right to change any part of this syllabus for any reason. The most current version of the syllabus will be maintained online. I reserve the right to drop — with an F — any students who have excessive absences, who miss assignments, who engage in disruptive behavior, have a poor attitude or who are not taking the class seriously.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, classwork, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure, loss of privileges, disqualification and/or dismissal.

Neither plagiarism, the use of someone else's thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument in your own work without appropriate documentation, nor copyright violation in any form will be tolerated whether intentional or not. Both plagiarism and copyright violation involve the theft of intellectual property and will be considered not only a violation of the Student Honor Creed as well as University policy and applicable laws. To avoid any instances of plagiarism or copyright violation, credit the sources of all information appropriately and obtain written permission for the use of copyrighted works when necessary.

Fabrication and falsification are unacceptable. Falsification is the changing or omission of research results including misquoting a source. Fabrication is the construction and/or addition of data, observations, or characterizations that never occurred including making up quotations from real or fictional sources.

Cheating and collusion are also unacceptable. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; or (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the university faculty or staff. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. The term "collusion" means collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit of that collaboration is not authorized by the faculty member in charge.

STUDENT HONOR CREED

"As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so."

As students at MSU, we recognize that any great society must be composed of empowered, responsible citizens. We also recognize universities play an important role in helping mold these responsible citizens. We believe students themselves play an important part in

developing responsible citizenship by maintaining a community where integrity and honorable character are the norm, not the exception. Thus, We, the Students of Midwestern State University, resolve to uphold the honor of the University by affirming our commitment to complete academic honesty. We resolve not only to be honest but also to hold our peers accountable for complete honesty in all university matters. We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any unauthorized material in examinations, or to present, as one's own, work or ideas which are not entirely one's own. We recognize that any instructor has the right to expect that all student work is honest, original work. We accept and acknowledge that responsibility for lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty fundamentally rests within each individual student. We expect of ourselves academic integrity, personal professionalism, and ethical character. We appreciate steps taken by University officials to protect the honor of the University against any who would disgrace the MSU student body by violating the spirit of this creed. | *Written and adopted by the 2002-2003 MSU Student Senate.*

STUDENT CONDUCT

Classroom behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to profit from the instruction will result in the removal of that student from class. Such students may be referred to the appropriate university departments including, but not limited to, the University Police, Office of the Dean of Students, Vinson Health Center or the Counseling Center.

TITLE IX

Social justice is one of Midwestern State University's stated core values. The professor considers this classroom to be a place where everyone will be treated with respect as a human being — regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. **It is the professor's expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.**

MSU officials strive to create and actively promote a welcoming and supportive environment in order to recruit, hire, retain, and support a culturally diverse faculty, staff, and student body. Midwestern State University officials are committed to providing an environment of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits unlawful discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, age, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, veteran's status, disability, or citizenship. Retaliation against individuals who in good faith file a claim of discrimination or otherwise oppose discriminatory actions will not be tolerated.

At Midwestern State University, the Title IX Department conducts investigations into possible

violations of MSU's Sexual Misconduct Policy, as well as oversees the university's primary prevention and education programming related to sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and sexual harassment.

Effective Jan. 1, 2020 SB212 creates a Class B misdemeanor offense for a person who is required to make a report of an incident of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking, to report it but knowingly fails to do so.

The crime must allegedly have been committed by or against a student or employee of the institution and it must be reported, promptly, to the institution's Title IX coordinator or deputy Title IX coordinator.

<https://msutexas.edu/titleix/>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES / SPECIAL NEEDS

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 397-4140.

Students that need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, that need to share emergency medical information, or students that require special accommodations in the event of an emergency should contact Dr. Wilson as soon as practical.

STUDENT PRIVACY STATEMENT

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* prohibits me from releasing information about students to certain parties outside of the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases I will not discuss your academic progress or other matters with your parents or any other party. Do not have them call me. Regardless of these important legal considerations, it is my general policy to communicate with the students, not their parents, even when a student has signed a consent form.

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/>

PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY

Cell phones and tablet devices must be silenced and put away. The first time the instructor sees a device, the student will be warned about the use of the device. The instructor will ask the student to leave the class and to visit with the instructor.

In an emergency requiring the use of a cell phone — on vibrate, notify the instructor and leave the class to handle the emergency.

Personal computers are permitted in class only for the purpose of taking notes and only if approved in advance by the instructor.

Students should never use only technology to record an interview but should instead supplement it with written notes.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to be in class each and every time the class meets. Students will not be able to make up unannounced quizzes given in classes they miss. E-mail Dr. Wilson prior to the absence as a courtesy. Students are responsible for making up any work missed on their own time, working with classmates.

If you need to miss class due to University-sponsored events such as field trips or athletics, see me as far in advance as possible. You will be required to complete the assigned work on or before the due date, and you will be required to submit an official form from the University before your absence.

Students with excused absences — as determined by the Office of the Dean of Students or other appropriate University departments — may make up major exams on a schedule mutually agreeable with the instructor and the student. Projects and stories with advance deadlines will not be accepted late. Plan ahead.

After a warning, a student with more than four absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor.

GRADING

Grading is on a scale of:

≥90	A	Excellent
80-89	B	Good
70-79	C	Satisfactory
60-69	D	Passing
<60	F	Failing

Semester grading follows the same scale.

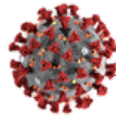
Grading will be determined from specific assignments, projects, written exams, quizzes, a final exam, and class attendance. Take home assignments are due when announced and will not be accepted late. Any assignment turned in after the deadline receives a grade of zero. Written exams will include material covered in the class and may include, but may not be limited to, multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

The instructor reserves the right to add, adjust, or cancel assignments as the course progresses. The method of obtaining the final grade will remain essentially the same: the total points achieved will be divided by the total points possible to obtain a percentage, and a grade will be assigned according to a percentage scale.

WRITING PROFICIENCY

All students seeking a bachelor's degree from Midwestern State University must satisfy a writing proficiency requirement once they've 1) passed English 1113 and English 1123 and 2) earned 60 hours. You may meet this requirement by passing either the Writing Proficiency Exam or English 2113. Please keep in mind that, once you've earned more than 90 hours, you lose the opportunity to take the \$25 exam and have no option but to enroll in the three-credit hour course.

<https://msutexas.edu/academics/wpr/>



COVID-19

in the fall of 2020

FALL 2020 MODIFICATIONS

MSU Texas will resume in-person teaching and learning for the fall 2020 semester utilizing a blend of face-to-face, hybrid and online modalities. Modifications to course delivery and classroom guidance will foster a safe environment for students and faculty. This course will utilize a hybrid model with some material face-to-face and some material online.

The structure of the source this fall has been modified in accordance with guidelines from university officials and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The health, safety and well-being of the students, faculty and staff is the university's top priority.

MASKS

Masks or appropriate face coverings will be required of all faculty, staff and students while in class and in classroom buildings — at all times. If you do not have a mask or are not wearing it, you will be asked to leave.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

The University will emphasize social distancing of at least six feet between individuals.

HAND SANITIZER

Students should use hand sanitizer or should wash their hands before entering class and after leaving class.

STATION SANITIZATION

Students should clean their work area in the classroom before class begins AND before leaving the classroom. Disinfectant will be placed in classrooms along with paper towels for student use.

EXPOSURE TO COVID-19

In the event that a student has been in close contact with someone that tests positive for COVID-19, the student should immediately notify the Vinson Health Center, who will direct him or her in quarantine procedures.

CONFIRMED COVID-19

In the event that a student tests positive for COVID-19, the student should immediately notify his or her physician and Vinson Health Center. Self-isolation procedures will be directed by the appropriate county health department, who will assign a case manager. If a student is required to self-isolate due to a positive test, the student may be asked to temporarily vacate his or her current housing location and return to his or her permanent residence or to move to a different on-campus location to complete self-isolation until the student meets the CDC guidelines for return.

ATTENDANCE

Do NOT come to class if you are exhibiting any of the signs of the new coronavirus.

Because this class will use a face-to-face model, students will be required to attend class and will be assigned a seat so that contact with students can be tracked if necessary.

If course enrollment exceeds the maximum capacity for the room as allowed by university guidelines during the pandemic, students will be designed to attend class online or in person. That routine will be worked out with students during the first week of class. However, attendance will still be required and recorded.

After a warning, a student with more than four absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor. Absences due to official university functions or documented illness will be dealt with on an individual basis and should be discussed with the instructor outside of class time.

ONLINE REQUIREMENTS

Because this class will use some online instruction, students should become familiar with the online learning management system Brightspace by D2L. As it has for eight years, this course, as with all courses, will contain the minimum information in Brightspace:

- Syllabus
- Course communication
- Course schedule
- Gradebook
- Online faculty office hours

Students should have access to Brightspace, email and a webcam to complete the online components of the course.

TRANSITION TO ONLINE

If and when mandated by university or state officials, this course may move to an online model. Because some components of this course are already online, this transition should be relatively smooth. However, the class will continue to meet at the scheduled day/time as indicated in the course schedule. Attendance will still be required. After a warning, a student with more than four absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor. Absences due to official university functions or documented illness will be dealt with on an individual basis and should be discussed with the instructor outside of class time. There are no "excused" absences from regular class periods online or in person.

MODIFICATIONS

For more information on modifications to campus during the pandemic, visit <https://msutexas.edu/return-to-campus/msu-texas-commitment.php>.

IMPACT

For updates on the impact of the coronavirus, visit <https://msutexas.edu/coronavirus/index.php>.