



MCOM 1233 Mass Media and Society

Summer I 2026 | Online/Asynchronous

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Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Description & Objectives

This course will survey the mass communication process and mass media, including print media, radio/television, internet, and emerging media. You will learn about media issues, societal effects, trends and media literacy. In this course, you should become more informed about how media work, what they do to us and for us.

This course is designed to give you an overview of how the mass media operate and their place in American society. In doing so, students will:

- Learn about a variety of important historical events and how they shaped or were shaped by mass media.
- Use critical thinking skills to analyze a variety of mass media within historical and cultural contexts.
- Examine and analyze contemporary issues facing the mass media.
- Briefly examine career opportunities in mass communication.

You begin your core for mass communication with this course. This course also satisfies the Cultural & Global Understanding MSU core curriculum requirement. Students of any major can benefit from this course because they will become better-informed media consumers. Students are encouraged to seek out more in-depth readings on various topics.

Recommended Textbook & Materials

- Textbook: *Mass Communication, Media, and Culture* - OER Full Textbook is in your online course for free.
- An internet connection and the use of D2L for this class.
- Additional materials will be distributed and posted through D2L.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

This is a fully online course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this platform. 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.

Course Requirements

Journal:

You will choose a topic related to issues within the social, cultural, political, or economic forces of our society and use it throughout your journal. Your journal entries should include significant developments or works related to your topic through the lens of the time period and media of that week. More information can be found in D2L.

Comprehension Checks:

These will be based on the cumulative readings of each week. However, the instructor reserves the right to add additional checks or quizzes as needed.

Weekly Activities:

During this class, we will have several different activities including finding relevant examples of media and creating media content with various platforms (e.g., TV, print, radio, social-media, games, etc.). The details and instructions will be provided in class.

Discussions:

Weekly discussions will be required. The topics, of course, will vary based on the week's focus. Please use these discussions to share ideas, pose questions and interact with your classmates. Even virtually, this is a communications class and effective, and thoughtful communication is expected.

Participation:

- This class includes various class activities. The activities are designed to be interesting and to help you learn. Thus, your active participation will affect how much you learn and how well you do in the course.
- If emergencies arise or your circumstances change, please communicate with me. This will help us work together to try to find a solution for your situation.
- Throughout the course, please:
 - behave professionally
 - actively participate
 - treat others with courtesy and respect
 - use language thoughtfully
 - engage with both the material and your peers

Attendance/Deadlines:

- Because this is an online, asynchronous course, attendance is measured only by your participation and engagement. Therefore, it is imperative that you meet deadlines as instructed. Failure to do so results in a 10 point deduction per day late.

Grading

Final grades will be based on a personal journal made up of 4 entries, a final exam, smaller assignments and quizzes, and professionalism. You should take note that you will be required to do quite a bit of writing over the course of the semester, and the quality of your writing will be a factor in your final grade. You will also be required to think critically about the issues being discussed and form coherent, defensible positions.

Final grades will be based on the following:

- Journal entries = 20%
- Class activities = 20%
- Discussions = 15%
- Quizzes/comprehension checks = 20%
- Professionalism = 5%
- Final assessment = 20%
- Total = 100 %

Grading Criteria

The following scale will be used to determine the final grade:

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = Less than 60%

Course Policies

1. **Academic Dishonesty:** Plagiarism is: (1) using someone else's source material (published or unpublished, including content from the Internet) without following accepted citation guidelines; or (2) submitting work that is not your own. The instructor will take appropriate disciplinary action for students if a student is caught cheating, plagiarizing or fabricating information. The MSU Student Honor Creed in your student handbook and the university catalog reinforces this policy: "As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else to do so." By remaining enrolled in this class, you acknowledge that you have learned the meaning of the term *academic dishonesty*. Students cannot use the excuse that they do not understand the concept of academic dishonesty.

2. **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):** The use of AI is highly discouraged as this is a course in critical thinking. However, you are permitted to use ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist you in gathering information and brainstorming ideas but you may not copy and paste information directly from the AI tool and present it as your own without citation. You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query and for assuring that it does not contain misinformation or unethical content and that it does not violate intellectual property laws. You are expected to include a disclosure statement at the end of your assignment describing which AI tool you used and how you used it. For example, "ChatGPT was used to draft approximately 50 percent of this assignment and to provide revision assistance. AI-produced content was edited for accuracy and style." Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited for academic integrity. For this course, we will use APA (<https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>).
3. **Disruptive Behavior:** Any student's classroom behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or other students' ability to benefit from the instruction – or violates any other Standard of Conduct applicable to the classroom environment – will result in his/her removal from the class. (See MSU Student Handbook, "Standards of Student Conduct.").
4. **Special Accommodations:** Any student with a disability who is registered with the MSU Office of Disability Support Services (940-397-4140, CSC Room 168) and needs specific accommodations, or requires other considerations because of a disability, should notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester to ensure that these accommodations are provided. Please note that all information provided to me remains confidential.
5. **Limited Right:** The university requires faculty to provide this statement to all students: By enrolling in this course, the student expressly grants MSU a "limited right" in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The "limited right" shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student's work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and educational purposes.
6. **FERPA:** As a result of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, federal law bars the instructor from releasing information about students to parties outside the university – including parents/guardian - without the student's signed consent. Thus, in almost all cases the instructor will not discuss your academic progress or other matters with your parents. The instructor will only discuss grades with students. If there are any grade issues, the instructor will discuss grades during office hours.

7. **Campus Carry:** Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective Aug. 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at <https://mwsu.edu/campus-carry/rules-policies>. Please be advised that any violations of the law will be reported immediately.
8. **Social justice:** Social justice is one of Midwestern State University's core values, and I consider the classroom to be a place where students will be treated with respect as human beings, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Moreover, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged. It is my expectation that ALL students be able to consider the classroom a safe environment.

Suggestions

- I am available to help you. Ask for help as soon as possible if you don't understand something. Please know that I do have a "day job" and will answer emails as often as I can.
- Back up your work. Have two backups.
- Expect the unexpected.
- Work ahead as you can.
- The goal of the class is to think critically about mass communication, which is of growing importance in today's world. Take the time to understand how mass media has developed and how it is evolving.

I reserve the right to change any part of this syllabus for any reason, which could include adding or deleting assignments. Sufficient notice will be given to you if any changes occur.

By accepting this syllabus and remaining in this course, you are indicating that you understand and accept the terms of the syllabus.