

Mass Communication Theories

JOUR 7050-001

Fall 2014

Tuesday 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Meeman 106

Dr. Ashley D. Furrow

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

CATALOGUE/COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Write, produce content for a personal blog that will house multimedia stories on important, complex topics in the city of Memphis; course will mirror collaborative opportunities underway in industry and provide students with the strongest multimedia material possible for portfolios.

This class will provide you with an overview of the important theories in our field, and will encourage you to think about how these apply to the real world and how they will inform your future work as a media professional.

PREREQUISITE:

None.

TEXTBOOKS:

•McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory*, 6th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

•Harris, R. J. (2004). *A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication* (4th ed.).

Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. (available as an e-book through UM Libraries)

•Additional course readings will be available via eCourseware.

Note: A tentative list of readings is included in the syllabus; course readings may be altered during the semester.

CLASSROOM FORMAT: This is a graduate style seminar with lecture and class discussion. Please note that failure to attend class or to actively take part – even if all your assignments are turned in on time and done acceptably - could affect your final grade by as much as a full letter. Be sure you have read the material BEFORE class and come prepared to discuss it.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS: Grades in the class will come from the following activities:

1. *Discussion Leaders.* Each week, one person or a team of two will serve as the discussion leader(s). Discussion leaders should address the following general questions:
 - What contribution has this approach made to the field of mass communication?
 - What are the theory's strengths and weaknesses? or What are the argument's strengths and weaknesses?
 - What is the (theoretical) significance of the research?
 - What are the practical applications of this approach to media studies?
 - What were the most important or interesting points from the readings?

The discussion leader will develop a list of questions based on the readings for the class to discuss, paying special attention to the “real-world” implications of the research and theory we will be reading. Please be creative and find ways to try to engage the class and help us remember the important concepts. For example, show us a video clip, a cartoon, a photo, or a Web site and ask the class to analyze it from the theoretical perspective(s) of the week.

Discussion leaders should e-mail a typed outline of their discussion plan by noon on the Sunday before their assigned class. I will review the outline and get back to the discussion leader(s) promptly. The discussion leader(s) should also plan to visit with me at some point during the week (prior to class) to review the plan for class. In short, I don’t want our discussions to be a free-for-all.

In addition to the assigned readings, discussion leaders are responsible for choosing at least one new article from an academic journal related to the general topic/ theme for the week. You should summarize the article for the class and give us a written bullet-pointed list of approximately five key points from the article. If you are working in teams of two, each discussion leader should choose their own article. Failure to do this will result in a one-grade deduction. Please try to choose an article that you find interesting, relevant, and one written in the past two years.

2. *Final Paper.* Complete a literature review of approximately 15 pages (double-spaced). The literature review will help students to synthesize a variety of material on a particular topic. I will discuss the mechanics of completing a literature review in class. Many of the readings for this course include excellent reviews of relevant literature, which may be used as a model for this assignment. You might think of it as a lit review for a study you plan to conduct yourself and submit to a conference or journal for publication. Ideally, it will be useful to you in your thesis or project.

It must have at least 10-15 different citations, the bulk of which must be from books or academic journals. You are to read the original research (don’t cite somebody who is in turn citing somebody else). Papers should synthesize major conclusions and themes in the literature. Chicago or APA style must be followed.

You will have several mini deadlines before your final paper is due. The paper proposal is due Tuesday, Sept. 30. All students must have their proposals approved by the instructor before they can proceed with their literature reviews. The proposal in brief should include a development of your research idea, significance of project, and introduction of theoretical/conceptual framework.

An annotated bibliography of the sources each student plans to use in his/her literature review is due at the beginning of class on Nov. 4. The annotated bibliography must include: author(s), title of article, chapter, or book, publication name, volume and/or issue of publication, page numbers, date published, and two paragraphs of commentary for each source included. The first paragraph should summarize the article, chapter, or book and the second paragraph should explain the usefulness of the source to the research topic.

The third deadline is a BRIEF, INFORMAL presentation of your findings to the class on Tuesday, Dec. 2.

The final paper is due Friday, Dec. 5. These mini deadlines will be counted as short assignment grades.

3. *Short Assignments.* You may have a few short assignments/short papers throughout the semester in addition to the mini deadlines described above. If I determine that the class is not doing the readings and participating in class, I will assign additional papers based on the readings. My advice is not to force me to do that.

4. *Attendance & Participation.* This is a graduate seminar. Perhaps you yearn for the days of being spoon-fed information and then regurgitating it on tests. That is for undergraduates. You need to be an active part of your own education. That’s just how it works at this level. Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of each class session.

GRADING:

1. Attendance and Participation: 10 percent
2. Short Assignments: 20 percent
3. Discussion Leader: 30 percent
4. Final Paper: 40 percent

A = 94-100	C+ = 77-79
A- = 90-93	C = 74-76
B+ = 87-89	C- = 70-73
B = 84-86	D = 65-69
B- = 80-83	F = 64 and below

MOBILE AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

Mobile telephones must be turned to vibrate during class and should be used only for emergencies. Excessive text messaging will not be tolerated.

DEADLINES:

Remember there's a reason "DEAD" makes up half the word "deadline." All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and mass communications. **Assignments turned in late will NOT be graded.** If you get into trouble, talk to me. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

All written work in this class should follow the accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Good, clear, concise writing and excellent grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. This is a graduate course, and therefore I expect your skills in this area to be exemplary. I encourage you to edit your work carefully and enlist the support of a friend or our departmental writing coach. A substantial pattern of errors will result in a significant grade deduction. I do not have the time to line edit graduate students' work that contains major errors or is difficult or impossible to understand. All assignments should be turned in via the Dropbox on eCourseware as a Microsoft Word document.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Class	Content	Due	Readings
Week 1			
Tues., Aug. 26	Course Introduction. What is Theory?	Discussion Leader sign-up.	McQuail: Ch. 1
Week 2			
Tues., Sept. 2	History of Mass Communication Research; Introduction to Library Databases.		McQuail: Ch. 2
Week 3			
Tues., Sept. 9	The Basics: Building Theory, Scientific Method and Models		On eCourseware
Week 4			
Tues., Sept. 16	Agenda-Setting, Framing		McQuail: Ch. 3-5
Week 5			
Tues., Sept. 23	Classic Media Effects: Cultivation, Social Learning Theory, Bullet model vs. limited effects		McQuail: Ch. 17-18
Week 6			
Tues., Sept. 30	Journalism Studies: Making the News, Gatekeeping, News values, influences on media content	Paper Proposal	On eCourseware
Week 7			
Tues., Oct. 7	Media Persuasion, Psychological Appeals in Advertising		McQuail: Ch. 15-16 Harris: Ch. 4
Week 8			
Tues., Oct. 14	Fall Break. (No Class).		
Week 9			
Tues., Oct. 22	Uses & Gratifications; Media Dependency		On eCourseware
Week 10			
Tues., Oct. 28	Reality TV, Video Games, & Internet		McQuail: Ch. 13-14
Week 11			
Tues., Nov. 4	News, Media and Democracy	Annotated Bibliography	McQuail: Ch. 8-11, 19
Week 12			
Tues., Nov. 11	Critical and Cultural Studies		On eCourseware
Week 13			
Tues., Nov. 18	Stereotyping of Social Groups, Sexuality in the Media		Harris: Ch. 3
Week 14			
Tues., Nov. 25	Work on your papers.		
Week 15			

Tues., Dec. 2	Wrap up. Research presentations.	Research Presentation	
Fri., Dec. 5	Final Paper Due by midnight		

NOTE: Schedule and syllabus are subject to change based on the needs of this class and at the professor's discretion.

ASSESSMENT

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOUR 7050-M50 / MASS COMMUNICATION THEORY:

- Explore theory development
- Explore broad range of mass communication theory
- Explore the basic principles and purposes of mass communication theory
- Explore the evolution and development of mass communication theory
- Understand the application of mass communication theory to all forms of mass media and communication

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

Cognitive Objectives To Be Mastered (Ability To Explain, Analyze, Understand, Think Critically):

- Develop an understanding of what constitutes theory in general, mass communication theory specifically
- Understand how mass communication has developed and is applied within research
- Understand how mass communication theory is applicable to all forms of mass media and mass communication

Performance Standards To Be Met (Demonstrable Skills, Abilities, Techniques, Applied Competencies):

- Students will actively facilitate and participate in class discussions, contributing to understanding mass communication theory and its application
- All students will read all class readings, additional journal articles pertaining to selected mass communication theories, and each student will post commentary about one of that week's readings to the UM drive (??).
- Students will write one theory evolution paper, detailing the development and evolution of a specific mass communication theory and how it has been and continues to be applied
- Students will develop a theory application research paper proposal and write a critical research paper containing a comprehensive literature review that analyzes a mass communication theory and applies the theory to a phenomenon found in both "old" and "new" media.

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR THEORIES:

Assignments will be assessed based on mastery of skills detailed above.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be to

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Council seeks to promote student learning and encourages experimentation and innovation. Assessment is a system of evaluation of student learning at the course or unit level (as opposed to grading at the individual level). Three criteria should guide assessment of student learning:

- Awareness: familiarity with specific information, including facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
- Understanding: assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.
- Application: competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

EMAIL:

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the University.

CELLPHONES:

You must turn them off during class.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

CHEATING:

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university.

"Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all." (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

ONLINE SETEs:

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

DISABILITY:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Services at (901) 678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.