

## **Mass Communication Theories**

JOUR 7050-M50

Spring 2015

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

Online

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Key concepts and development of theories offered to explain operation and effects of mass communication media; multidiscipline overview of theories dealing with advertising, broadcasting, print, and public relations messages, media, and effects.

#### **PREREQUISITE:**

Graduate status

#### **TEXTBOOKS:**

- McQuail, D. (2010). *Mass Communication Theory*, 6th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Harris, R. J. (2004). *A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication* (4th ed.). ***Because we will only be reading a few chapters from this book, I'll send it to you via email.***

**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. Synchronous Internet Chat using Adobe Connect. This class operates in a seminar format. To that end, students must complete the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss the night's topic.

#### **ATTENDANCE & CLASS CONDUCT FOR JOUR7050**

- Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of each class session. Students are allowed two unexcused absences; after two, additional unexcused absences will drop the student's final grade by one letter grade for each absence. Missing a total of six classes will result in the student failing the course. The University's policy for excused absences apply to this course.
- Attendance will be determined by a roll call on the online chat system.

**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). Every person will have one week to run the discussion. After everyone has his/her chance, then we will divide into groups. Discussion leader(s) 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.
  - 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 send me 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.
  - Discussion leader(s) should e-mail a typed outline of their discussion plan and their summaries by Noon CT on the Saturday before their assigned class. I will then forward their discussion points and summaries to the entire class. During the class session, the discussants will take the lead in the classroom seminar.
2. *Final Paper.* Complete a literature review of between 15-20 pages (11 pt. font double-spaced) plus endnotes or references (at least 15 different citations, the bulk of which MUST come from refereed journals) summarizing in some depth a NARROW area of mass communication theory and research. *The endnotes or references do NOT count as part of the 15 pages-20 pages.*
  - You are to read the original research, so you will NOT use your textbook as a citation. Papers should synthesize major conclusions and themes in the literature.
    - You are limited to no more than two block (long) quotes.
    - No lists will be acceptable.
    - Chicago or APA style MUST be followed.

- You will have several mini deadlines before your final paper is due.
  - Your first deadline is paper topic deadline—Monday, Feb. 23
  - Your second deadline is annotated bibliography—Monday, March 23
    - An annotated bibliography is all of the sources each student plans to use in his/her literature review. 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 presentation of your findings—Monday, April 27
    - Your presentation is limited to 10 minutes. You MUST use a PowerPoint slideshow (no Prezi) as part of your presentation.
  - Your fourth deadline is the actual paper—Monday, May 1
    - I will discuss the mechanics of completing a literature review. 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.

3. *Short Assignments.* You may have a few short assignments/short papers throughout the semester if I determine that the class is not doing the readings and participating in class.

**GRADING:**

- Attendance and Participation: 10 percent
- Short Assignments: 0-10 percent
- Discussion Leader: 30-40 percent
- Final Paper: 50 percent

**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. A substantial pattern of errors will result in a significant grade deduction. All assignments must be turned in via email as a Microsoft Word document.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Week 1			
Monday, Jan. 26	Course Introduction. What is Theory?	<b>Discussion Leader sign-up</b>	McQuail: Ch. 1
Week 2			
Monday, Feb. 2	History of Mass Communication Research; Introduction to Library Databases.		McQuail: Ch. 2 Readings sent via email.
Week 3			
Monday, Feb. 9	The Basics: Building Theory, Scientific Method and Models		Readings sent via email.
Week 4			
Monday, Feb. 16	Agenda-Setting, Framing		McQuail: Ch. 3-5 Readings sent via email.
Week 5			
Monday, Feb. 23	Classic Media Effects: Cultivation, Social Learning Theory, Bullet model vs. limited effects	<b>Paper proposal due</b>	McQuail: Ch. 17-18 Readings sent via email.
Week 6			
Monday, March 2	Journalism Studies: Making the News, Gatekeeping, News values, influences on media content		Readings sent via email.
<i>Monday, March 9</i>	<i>Spring Break—No Class</i>		
Week 7			
Monday, March 16	Media Persuasion, Psychological Appeals in Advertising		McQuail: Ch. 15-16 Harris: Ch. 4 (sent via email). Readings sent via email.
Week 8			
Monday, March 23	Uses & Gratifications; Media Dependency	<b>Annotated Bibliography due</b>	Readings sent via email.
Week 9			
Monday, March 30	Reality TV, Video Games, & Internet		McQuail: Ch. 13-14 Readings sent via email.
Week 10			
Monday, April 6	News, Media and Democracy		McQuail: Ch. 8-11, 19 Readings sent via email.
Week 11			
Monday, April 13	Critical and Cultural Studies		Readings sent via email.
Week 12			
Monday, April 20	Stereotyping of Social Groups, Sexuality in the Media		Harris: Ch. 3 (sent via email).
Week 13			
Monday, April 27		<b>Research Presentations</b>	
Week 14			
Monday, May 1		<b>Final Paper Due by midnight</b>	

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

## DEPARTMENT POLICIES

### **PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:**

All Department of Journalism undergraduate students are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Students are to begin the portfolio in JOUR 2121 and contribute to it during every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their concentration.

### **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 <http://iam.memphis.edu> 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. Personal student information, such as grades, is restricted to your UM email address.

### **MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:**

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone to be used during class or to complete class assignments. Others do not allow them. Your instructor will set the policy for his/her specific 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. Your instructor will set the policy for his/her specific class. Students with excessive absences are encouraged to withdraw from the course prior to the drop deadline.

### **DEADLINES:**

All deadlines are firm. Assignments turned in late will **NOT** be accepted unless arrangements have been made with the instructor.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers any fabrication of content and/or sources, misappropriation and plagiarism of facts or other content, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be completed on his/her own, and violations of copyright law as acts of academic dishonesty punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and/or department chair. Penalties might include grade reductions, failure of the course and/or 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).

**Intellectual property and copyright guidelines**

1. Ideas cannot be copyrighted.
2. Anything set down in a tangible form, i.e., written, is by law copyrighted.
3. If, in a paraphrase, your work is “substantially similar” to a copyrighted work, you are guilty of copyright infringement.
4. A citation indicates where you got material. However, that portion you do not show as a direct quote must be “substantially original” to you. In other words, you can’t just paste in something from another’s work, put a citation at the bottom and call it your own. You need a full rewrite in your own words and syntax so the unquoted material is “substantially original” to you.

**Plagiarism: From UM Student Handbook:** 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 or clear acknowledgement. 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.

**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 me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**DIVERSITY:**

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with civility. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communication reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

**WEATHER POLICY:**

Check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day’s work.

**AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:**

All written work should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don’t know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.