

# Mass Media, Diversity & Society

JRSM 4702

Spring 2021

## Prof. Otis Sanford

**Office:** Meeman Journalism Building Room 318B

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. or by appointment

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## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Catalog description

Advanced study of recent, critical issues faced by mass media with exploration of complexities that cause them and their impact on society.

### Prerequisites

None

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:** Advanced study of recent, critical issues faced by mass media with exploration of complexities that cause them and their impact on society.

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**TEXTBOOK:** No specific textbook is required. There is assigned reading provided by the instructor, plus students will be required to research various topics and discuss them throughout the semester. Some material for class discussion will also be taken from reputable news sites and the latest Annual Edition of Mass Media by Joan Gorham. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ISBN 978-0-07-805124-1. The chapters taken from this textbook will be provided to students by email or through ecourseware, so there is no need to purchase the book.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** You are required to read the material assigned or provided by the instructor, view videos assigned by the instructor, take announced quizzes, when given, from the assigned readings, and engage with instructor, guest speakers and other students during class periods on assigned reading material and other information presented. You also will be given outside writing assignments on various topics discussed in class. It is also imperative that you attend all class meetings on Zoom. Attendance is mandatory. Roll will be taken by the instructor at the beginning of each class and you will not do well if you have repeated absences. So, it is imperative that you sign in to Zoom on time. Students who have more than 5 unexcused absences during the semester are subject to being penalized one letter grade. Quizzes and exams will NOT be made up except in extreme circumstances as determined by the instructor and with written excuses. Extra credit will be given for perfect attendance and other activities at the instructor's discretion.

- Journalism is all about meeting deadlines. No late work will be accepted unless in extreme circumstances. You must contact the instructor no later than the day that assignments and quizzes are due to discuss an extension. You cannot wait until near the end of the semester and ask to make up work that is weeks overdue. If you do not complete an assignment, quiz or exam by the specified time, that assignment or exam will receive a zero.

- This class begins promptly at 11:20 a.m. on Zoom on Tuesday and Thursday. You must be on time. If you arrive late for class after the roll is taken, you will be marked as tardy, and repeated tardiness will lower your overall grade.

- You should do the assignments in the following order:

- o Read the assignments

- o Be prepared to discuss in class

- o Take the quiz on ecourseware for those assignments

Take Note: If you are absent from class, please do not ask the instructor what work was covered during your absence. Instead, check with a classmate.

### **GRADING:**

Grading for this class will be on a point system. Writing assignments and quizzes are worth between 50 and 100 points each. If you miss more than two quizzes and outside assignments, it will adversely impact your final grade significantly. Students will also be assigned to write one minor paper and one major outside paper. Details will be discussed during the semester. The papers must be double-spaced, in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, plus the references list if necessary. And papers are to be turned in to the designated folder in Dropbox in ecourseware.

A: 900 points and above

B: 800-899 points

C: 700-799 points

D: 600-699 points

F: 599 and below

There will be a mid-term exam and final exam for this class. Each is worth a maximum of 200 points.

### **Ground Rules for Participation in Discussion in JRSM 4702:**

Material discussed in this class can often involve delicate and controversial topics, mostly around race, gender, ethnicity and other social issues; therefore, some ground rules are necessary.

1. Listen actively -- respect others when they are talking.

2. Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing (“I” instead of “they,” “we,” and “you”).

3. Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another – or the instructor – by asking questions and raising counter-arguments, but refrain from personal attacks. Focus on ideas.

4. Participate to the fullest of your ability -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.

5. Instead of invalidating somebody else’s story with your own spin on her or his experience, share your own story and experience.

6. The goal is not necessarily to agree -- it is to gain a deeper understanding of diversity in U.S. media.

7. Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses -- they can be as disrespectful as words. That will not be much of an issue with Zoom classes, but be mindful of it regardless.

8. Be respectful at all times. Avoid slurs and hostile language or tones, such as yelling. Make every

attempt to avoid micro-aggressions.

### **Tentative Class Schedule for Spring 2021:**

Because outside guest speakers will be arranged for this class, it is not possible to schedule all class meetings at the beginning of the semester. Below are tentative class meetings and assignments at the beginning of the semester through March 4.

- Tuesday, Jan. 19: Introductions, discussion of syllabus, introduction of the instructor, topics to be covered and importance of this class. Also a brief discussion of the inauguration of the next president and vice president and how it will be reflected in the news media.
- Thursday, Jan. 21: From Left to Right – How Cable TV news has helped divide America. A detailed look at the evolution of cable news and how it morphed from straight objective news to strictly opinion, particularly in the all-important primetime news slots.
- Tuesday, Jan. 26: Media coverage of protests from TEA Party, to Black Lives Matter to the Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol: Was the coverage fair and consistent?
- Thursday, Jan. 28: If necessary, we will complete discussion of media coverage of various protest groups. Begin discussion of distributed article “Television and the Decline of Deference.”
- Tuesday, Feb. 2: Discussion of Article: “Revolution in a Box.” This is a discussion of the good, the bad and the ugly of television where diversity is concerned. Assignment is to research one of the following television news media figures, write a short one-page essay on the person you select and turn it in to Dropbox by Thursday, Feb. 9. The news media personalities to select from are Edward R. Murrow, Walter Cronkite, Barbara Walters, Charlayne Hunter Gault, Connie Chung, Isabell Wilkerson, Gwen Ifill, Ed Bradley, Carole Simpson, Wolf Blitzer, Anderson Cooper, Joy Reid, Don Lemon, Tucker Carlson, Sean Hannity or Max Robinson. Take quiz on previous lectures.
- Thursday, Feb. 4: The State of Television News. Are personalities more important than the content?
- Tuesday, Feb. 9: Tentative guest speaker from local television news industry discussing the state of local TV news coverage. Discuss your essays on tv news personalities. Take quiz on previous class lectures.
- Thursday, Feb. 11: Memphis and the Movement – A detailed look at the political, racial and media history of Memphis from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to today. Who were the key players in politics, civil rights and media who shaped the city’s culture and future?
- Tuesday, Feb. 16: The state of local print journalism. Is it more racially diverse, or less? Also does quality control still exist?
- Thursday, Feb. 18: The Future of Newspapers with special emphasis on racial diversity in the newsroom. Take quiz on previous lectures and class discussions.

- Tuesday, Feb. 23: Discussion of Article: “A Porous Wall: How Newspapers are Monetizing Content.”
- Thursday, Feb. 25: How the mass media are treating sexual orientation issues in the news, in programming, even in commercials.
- Tuesday, March 2: The Value of Opinion Journalism. Does diversity exist there?
- Thursday, March 4: Take mid-term exam. No class lecture.

The remaining class schedule for the semester will be sent by email and posted on ecourseware.

## ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

### Five Pillars in JRSM 4702

- *Critical Thinking*: Student discussions regularly involve deep dives into media ethics, diversity in the dissemination of news and personal feeling about issues in the news. All the discussions are focused on the effects of media on society.
- *Media Literacy*: Students engage with both emerging and legacy media platforms to understand the changing media audience, including diversity in all its forms. Students are expected to understand various issues affecting media and must be able to discuss those issues with clarity.
- *Multimedia*: A significant portion of this class focuses on multimedia in all segments of journalism and how it has changed the landscape of news gathering, presentation and immediacy. Examples of multimedia news gathering are displayed regularly in class.
- *Professionalism*: Lectures and discussions in this class will include sessions about ethical decision making, evaluation of legitimate sources of news, media law and proper use of social media in journalism to help students learn to conduct themselves professionally. The instructor and occasional guest speakers regularly stress professionalism in their lectures and talks.
- *Writing*: Through lectures and guest speakers, students learn the importance of good writing skills. Students are encouraged to research the best written articles on topics that are discussed in class. Students are required to practice good writing for all assignments.

### Professional values and competencies for PBRL 4440

- 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.

- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively, and independently.

## How professional values and competencies will be met

### *Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)*

- Students will learn to identify issues and analyze the way issues impact journalistic disciplines.
- Student will be able to reach logically thought-out conclusions about how issues should be dealt with in specific settings.
- Students will critically examine, discuss, and monitor the “how” and “why” behind the coverage of issues.
- Students will be able to identify and analyze news content from reputable sources that follow carefully prescribed journalistic principles for accurate news gathering and distinguish that content from information from more dubious sources.
- Students will learn to evaluate official responses to public issues and objectively assess those responses for credibility.

### *Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)*

- Students will be assigned a current issue to monitor during the semester. Findings will be shared through an oral/written presentation to the class.
- Throughout the course students will participate in discussions involving issues that are covered in the media.
- Students will demonstrate their knowledge through successful completion of a series of quizzes over assigned readings materials.
- Students will hear from professionals in the field and questions them to obtain a broader understanding of the mission of various media.
- Students will take part in least one in-class debate on a controversial and topical mass media issue.

## How assessment of student learning will be met

### *Awareness*

- Lecture and discussion on the role diversity plays in media coverage, hiring decisions and ethical decision-making based on the practical experience of the instructor and guest speakers.
- Case studies from the textbook and elsewhere on the changes taking place in mass media and how those changes impact society.
- Student participation in research and discussion of critical media issues will be carefully examined by the instructor.

### *Understanding*

- Discussion questions will be posed in class to stimulate critical thinking and healthy classroom debate, with the overall goal of helping all students understand the vital role mass media play in society.

- As part of their grade, students are required to offer feedback in class concerning the various issues facing the media in 21<sup>st</sup> Century society and to demonstrate an understanding of the coursework through regular quizzes and exams on the material covered.

### *Application*

- Each student will be required to select a current issue in mass media and follow that issue throughout the semester. Students will write a detailed paper about the topic as part of their final grade.
- There will be at least two large group discussions on a current issue, selected by the instructor, impacting journalism. The topics will incorporate ethical decision-making, approaches to media coverage and how the public was impacted by the decision.
- Issues of diversity, in all its forms, in news coverage and media representation will be examined and debated routinely by students.

## **JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES**

### **Portfolio requirement**

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or SquareSpace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files and writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

## Email

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

## Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop, or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

## Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of 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). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

## Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

## Academic integrity

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

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media class, students are expected to comply with copyright law and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating

originality of your ideas. Also, to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (*Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018*)

### **Online SETEs**

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

### **Deadlines**

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

### **AP Style and grammar**

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

### **Disability and accommodations**

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

### **Diversity and inclusivity**

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

### **Weather policy**

Always 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.

### **Student support**

Student who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can

help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.

## COVID-19 protocols for this course

### Student Accommodations

Students with accessibility issues or learning accommodation issues due to a disability should contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS) to submit an official request for course accommodations. Contact DRS at 901.678.2880 or at [drs@memphis.edu](mailto:drs@memphis.edu). (<https://www.memphis.edu/drs/index.php>)

### Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly, through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class in addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed through the regular institutional disciplinary procedures. (<https://www.memphis.edu/osa/students/academic-misconduct.php>)

### Student Health

Students who have a positive COVID-19 test should contact the Dean of Students at [deanofstudents@memphis.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@memphis.edu).

### Student Resources

Students who need additional resources can visit the Dean of Students Office website at <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php>.

## Guidelines for classes, labs and equipment in Meeman Journalism Building in Spring 2021

- Anyone feeling sick should stay home and join class virtually.
- Social distance from all others at least 6 feet.
- Wear a mask at all times when in University buildings and on campus.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer regularly.
- No more than one person in the elevator at a time.
- Disinfect your workstation before and after use, including desks, keyboards, mice and screens. Wash your hands after cleaning.
- Have phone or Zoom meetings with professors and classmates. Do not meet face to face, if possible.