

Intro to Media

JRSM 1700-001/350

Spring 2026

Monday-Wednesday, 12:40 to 2:05 p.m.

100 Meeman Journalism Building

Prof. Joe Hayden

Office: 304 Meeman Journalism Building

Office Hours: MW, 4:00-5:30 p.m., or by appointment

Email: jhayden@memphis.edu [*Email is the best way to reach me outside of class.*]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Social background, scope, functions and organization of modern communication media, attention to all major mass communication media; history, philosophy and goals of modern journalism and media entertainment; impact on governmental, social and economic systems.

Prerequisites

None

Textbooks:

Media and Culture: Mass Communication in a Digital Age by Richard Campbell, Christopher R. Martin and Bettina Fabos, 13th edition, ISBN: 978-1-319-24493-4. (Note: There is also a free copy on 2-hour reserve in the library.)

Classroom format

This is primarily a lecture and discussion course.

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis Canvas login page: <https://memphis.instructure.com>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. On the Dashboard, click on the course JRSM 1700-001/350.

Grading

- Four chapter quizzes: 75 percent
- Attendance and participation: 25 percent

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and participate in the discussions.

They will take four **online** quizzes during the semester, which will be based on readings, lectures, PowerPoint presentations, and class discussions, as well as any additional assigned readings and comments from guest speakers. You will be tested only on the material covered since the last quiz. Every quiz can be taken up to two times if you like; I'll use the higher grade.

As part of your participation grade, and in emphasizing media literacy in this class, each week during the semester students must post on the class Facebook page a link to one news story **about the media**, plus a two-sentence summary, from any one of the following online news sites.

LOCAL

1. *The Commercial Appeal*
2. *The Daily Memphian*
3. *The New Tri-State Defender*
4. The Institute for Public Service Reporting at the University of Memphis
5. Local TV station newscasts: WMC, WREG, WHBQ, WATN, WKNO
6. *Memphis Flyer*

REGIONAL

1. *The Jackson (Tennessee) Sun*
2. *The Tennessean*
3. *The Knoxville News-Sentinel*
4. Newspapers in Mississippi or Arkansas

NATIONAL

1. *USA Today*
2. *The New York Times*
3. *The Washington Post*
4. *The Wall Street Journal*
5. *The Chicago Tribune*
6. *The Los Angeles Times*
7. *Atlantic Monthly*
8. *Rolling Stone*
9. ABC-TV
10. CBS-TV
11. NBC-TV
12. PBS-TV
13. CNN
14. BBC
15. NPR radio
16. ProPublica
17. Pew Research Center
18. Poynter Institute
19. News Literacy Project
20. Snopes.com

You're more likely to find media stories from the national outlets. In any case, these organizations have been selected because they provide reliable news coverage for local, regional, national or global issues. Access to *The Commercial Appeal* and *The Daily Memphian* is available for free through the University of Memphis Library. You do not need to buy a subscription.

Additional credit will be given to students who reply, in a civil manner, to other students' posts. Agreement is not necessary, of course. But being respectful is. Abusive or bullying behavior isn't professional and won't be tolerated.

Honors 350 Students

If you are registered in the Honors section, you have an additional written assignment titled the Media Pro Essay. You will interview a media professional who works in newspapers, magazines, PR, broadcast, journalism education, Internet/web, film, visual communication or advertising. The person must work at this job full-time and must be paid. (No volunteer work or part-time jobs.) Your goal is to discover the skills, issues and future directions for a particular media job and field. **If you have trouble finding someone for your story, ask me for help. You cannot interview me.**

More specifically, answer these kinds of questions in your essay from the interview:

1. Who is this person?
2. What does this person do?
3. Where does this person work?
4. When did this person begin this job or career?
5. How did this person get into this career field? Were there any obstacles/challenges the person faced when beginning this career path? What were the obstacles and does this person have any advice to help others avoid them?
6. Would this person suggest this career for an aspiring young professional? Why or why not?
7. What are the negative aspects of this career for an aspiring journalist?
8. What are the positive aspects of this career that the person likes the most?

Please note: This is an important exploratory exercise to help you learn more about the media. So have fun with the interview. Your essay should be at least 500 words. Please prepare this assignment in narrative writing form. You may use direct quotes from the person interviewed. No Q & A formats.

At the top of your submission, include your name and email, as well as the name, title, email, and business telephone number of the person you interview. Your professor or the graduate assistant may call the source to verify the interview.

This is meant to be a very simple journalistic assignment, so do not use library or Internet sources or footnotes. Think of yourself as a reporter who is interviewing a subject and writing a story based on what you have been told in your interview. This is a *story*, not a research paper. Have fun with it.

Ground Rules for the Media Professional Essay:

- You may conduct the interview in person, by phone, or via Zoom or Teams. You may establish contact by email, but please don't conduct the interview by email; that's not personal enough. You must talk to the person you interview.
- Local and national media professionals are acceptable. Direct messages via social media can be more effective than email for contacting sources.
- You may complete this assignment at your convenience during the semester, so long as it is turned into the Assignment module in Canvas on or before noon on **Wed., April 23**.
- No late submissions will be accepted.
- You should file your essay as a Word document. No other format will be accepted.
- Be sure to identify the subject fully on the first page, along with when, where, and how you conducted the interview.

Course policies

Attendance

Students are expected to attend each session and be on time. The instructor usually makes announcements about assignments and other issues at the start, so if you walk in late you'll miss out on important information and will have to get it from a classmate.

You may miss two class sessions for any reason. After that, though, two points will be deducted from your course grade for each additional absence. (*In other words, if you miss, say, seven classes, that will mean the drop of ten points—a whole letter grade.*)

Signing anyone else's name to the attendance sheet is considered *academic fraud* and can subject you to expulsion from the university.

The fact is, it is virtually impossible to get a good grade in this class if you do not attend class sessions and take part in the lectures. **There will also be no make-up work at the end of the semester to help improve your grade, so please do not ask.**

Email

Most announcements and assignments are also sent to your campus email. I do not use your personal emails.

Electronic devices?

HELL, NO. Multi-tasking is a myth, and any kind of live screen is hugely distracting both to you and anyone sitting nearby. Please be considerate of the rest of us. You're not in your car.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Jan. 21, Welcome, Course, Syllabus

This week we will cover the syllabus and course expectations.

Week 2: Jan. 26-28, Chapter 1 (Introduction)

This week we'll cover chapter 1

Week 3: Feb. 2-4, Chapter 2 (Internet/Social Media)

This week we'll cover chapter 2

Week 4: Feb. 9-11, Chapter 3 (Digital Gaming) and Quiz 1

This week we'll cover chapter 3 and complete Quiz 1.

- Assignments: **Take Quiz 1** (Due Wed., Feb. 11, 11:59 p.m.)

Week 5: Feb. 16-18, Chapter 4 (Music Recording)

This week we'll cover chapter 4

Week 6: Feb. 23-25, Chapter 5 (Radio)

This week we'll cover chapter 5

Week 7: March 2-4, Chapter 6 (Television) and Quiz 2

This week we'll cover chapter 6 and complete Quiz 2.

- Assignments: **Take Quiz 2** (Due Wed., March 4, 11:59 p.m.)

Week 8: March 9-11 (SPRING BREAK – no classes)

Week 9: March 16-18, Chapter 7 (Movies)

This week we'll cover chapter 7

Week 10: March 23-25, Chapter 8 (Newspapers)

This week we'll cover chapter 8

Chapter 9: March 30-April 1, Chapter 9 (Magazines) and Quiz 3

This week we'll cover chapter 9

- Assignments: **Take Quiz 3** (Due Wed., April 1, 11:59 p.m.)

Week 11: April 6-8, Chapter 10 (Books)

This week we'll cover chapter 10

Week 12: April 13-15, Chapter 11 (Advertising)

This week we'll cover chapter 11

Week 13: April 20-22, Chapter 12 (Public Relations)

This week we'll cover chapter 12

- Assignments: **Take Quiz 4** (Due Wed., April 22, 11:59 p.m.)

Week 14: April 27-29 A.I. (Artificial Intelligence) and Wrap-Up

- *For Honors Students: Professional Interview due April 29, 12:40 p.m.*

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Professional Values and Competencies in JRS 1700

- Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, both in a global context and in the United States
- Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications
- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially along racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation and ability differences.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity

How professional values and competencies will be met

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

- Recognize the role of media in influencing the political and cultural dynamics on the global stage.
- Demonstrate a strong historical sense of how mass communication technologies originated and developed.
- Understand the variety of relationships between media and their audiences, including diverse audiences.
- Be sensitive to the needs of diverse and under-represented groups in the delivery of media messages.
- Recognize the ethical and philosophical issues that arise in media culture and understand the range of viewpoints regarding these issues.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the behind-the-scenes operations and decision-making processes of major mass communication industries.
- Understand how new technology affects the media and communication.
- Understand what's involved in preparing for and advancing a career in the changing media.
- Demonstrate the ability to conduct effective interviews that elicit information needed to for delivery of media content.
- Development an awareness of how of forms of mass communication that are often taken for granted, such as music, movies television shows and social media postings, are used to affect society and effect change.

- Understand the allied fields of social media, advertising and public relations and their relationship to media systems.
- Understand mass communication theories and their application to media professions.

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

- Complete out-of-class assignments related to assessing content and media messages in newspapers, magazines, advertising, music, television, radio and movies.
- Participate in discussions about relevant issues and events in mass media.

How assessment of student learning will be met

Awareness

- Grow awareness of the First Amendment and basics of media law
- Recognize major divisions of mass media, including newspaper, magazine, TV, radio, the internet, books, movies, music, public relations and advertising.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the need for diversity in all areas of mass communication.

Understanding

- When ethical decision making is discussed throughout the semester as it applies to each media profession, students will be required to present justification for their opinions during discussion and class exercises to show they are not just repeating the instructor's lecture points, but showing understanding of the process.
- A requirement to read news content regularly, either on web sites or in printed newspapers, will help students understand and appreciate the decisions that go into how news is covered and what is presented to consumers on a daily basis.

Application

- Written analysis of U.S. media operations and systems.

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSM 3900/3905. The portfolio should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or SquareSpace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, 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
- Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

Electronic devices

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

AI/Chat GPT

The use of artificial intelligence software, such as Chat GPT, is prohibited in some courses and required in others in Journalism & Strategic Media. Please refer to specific guidelines for this course in the course-specific part of the syllabus.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C-) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You 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. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

Academic integrity

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and 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, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws 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 and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). 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.

Online SETEs

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE evaluation forms; 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 seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. 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.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

AP Style and grammar

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

Disability and accommodations

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Diversity and inclusivity

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

Weather policy

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather.

Student support

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.