

## Spring Semester 2016

### Communication 3402 Crime and the News Media

TR: 11:10 a.m.-12: 30 p.m. 239 Journalism Building

**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 614-292-3307 in Room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.**

Professor: Felecia G. Jones Ross

Office: 3110 Derby Hall

Office hours: T, 1-3 p.m.; W, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

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**Course Description:** In this course, we will examine the various media that we consume multiple times daily and how they cover crime and the criminal justice system. How do newspapers, magazines, radio and TV broadcasters and online outlets decide what stories to report? How do they ensure fairness? How do they educate the public about crime and safety? To what extent is social media influencing the public's engagement with the media and law enforcement?

We will help answer these questions through readings, discussions, lectures, guest speakers and audiovisual presentations.

### Course Goals

By the end of this course, students will do the following:

- Appreciate and understand the role the media plays in influencing our understanding of criminal justice and public safety
- Appreciate the ability to challenge the performance of the media in its representation of crime and the criminal justice system
- Understand the realities of the criminal justice system
- Understand the realities of the media in its representation of the criminal justice system

### Required Text

Surette, R. (2015). *Media, crime, and criminal justice: Images, realities, and policies* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Stamford, CT: Cengage.

### Class Requirements

**Participation (5%).** It is the desire of the professor for this class to be as interactive as possible. Attendance, as well as your contributions to class discussions, will be factors in determining your participation grade. Some participation may require some writing assignment. **The check-in**

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**assignment** at the beginning of the semester is in this category. There may be some Carmen discussion questions, as well.

**Midterm examinations (30%).** The midterm examinations will be based on reading materials and in-class content that can include audiovisual presentations, guest speakers, lectures and class discussions. There will be two midterm examinations each counting **15%**.

**Mini-papers (15%).** This consists of three 2-page papers (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font) at designated times during the semester. The assignments are as follows: analyze media coverage of a recent national case; review two chapters in the textbook in preparation for each of the midterm examinations. More details will be provided on a separate handout and posted on Carmen. Each paper is worth **5%**.

**Film analysis/review (19%).** Write a 2-3-page review of a movie in the style of the *New York Times*. (<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/movies/index.html>) The movie should be on the topic of some aspect of the criminal justice system; however, I must approve it. A form will be posted on Carmen. Take a sophisticated position on the movie. In other words, do not just write that you thought it was good or bad. What was the movie's strengths/weaknesses with regard to helping us understand the criminal justice system? You are encouraged to interview anyone associated with making the movie or anyone who has knowledge about the criminal or justice-related issues portrayed in the movie. **Deadline is 11:55 p.m., Feb. 25 in Carmen dropbox**

**Film analysis/review topic (1 %).** You are required to submit your topic for the film analysis/review for approval. **Deadline is 11:55 p.m., Feb. 5 in Carmen drop box.**

**Group project (30%).** Each group of people, assigned by Carmen, will select a famous/infamous case study involving the media and crime, and make a multimedia presentation to the class. The time will be based on the number of groups. Each person will submit a 2-page paper explaining, in detail, her/his role in the group, what went well and what could have gone better behind the scenes. **Presentations begin April 19**

## EXTRA CREDIT

There will be opportunities for you to complete work for extra credit. You may earn up to four points of extra credit that will be added to your examination scores. The extra credit can come from C-REP participation and/or from events/activities the professor will announce in advance. For non-C-REP activities, the professor will provide the requirements for earning the points.

## **Out-of Class Communication**

The professor welcomes and encourages one-on-one communication with the students. In addition to office hours, students are encouraged to communicate using e-mail. E-mail and **Carmen** will also be used for class announcements. **Carmen** will be used to supplement class

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information and activities such as writing tips, group assignments and other pertinent information. The professor will inform you via email of class cancellations because of inclement weather.

### Safe & Healthy

Keeping students healthy and preventing the spread of illness is important to The Ohio State University. Students are encouraged to stay home if they are sick and may be asked to leave class if they are coughing/sneezing. Students who are sick and cannot attend class must contact Dr. Ross *BEFORE* class to receive any materials and turn in assignments via the drop box or e-mail. If your illness is too severe to make contact BEFORE class, then notify Dr. Ross within a reasonable time period (seven days) and provide appropriate documentation. If you do not notify Dr. Ross, **your assignment will not be accepted.**

### Academic Misconduct:

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-31-02). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource\\_csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp))

**Grading scale will follow the Carmen default: 93 or higher, A; 90-92, A-; 87-89, B+; 83-86, B; 80-82, B-; 77-79, C+; 73-76, C; 70-72, C-; 67-69, D+; 60-66, D; below 60, E.**

### **Class Activities Schedule (Tentative)**

#### **Week 1**

Jan. 12-14 Introduction to the course; why study crime and the news media, Chapter 1

#### **Week 2**

Jan. 19-21 Crime, Justice and Media, Chapter 1; group project assignment discussed

#### **Week 3**

Jan. 26-28 New Media and Social Constructionism, Chapter 2; **Mini-paper 1 due Jan. 29, national case, 11:55 p.m. Carmen dropbox**

#### **Week 4**

Feb. 2-4 What Does Crime Look Like? Chapter 3; **submit film review proposal, Feb. 5**

#### **Week 5**

Feb. 9-11 Criminogenic Media Chapter 4  
**Video: Mean World Syndrome**

#### **Week 6**

Feb. 16-18 Crime Fighters, Chapter 5; **submit group project topics**

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### **Week 7**

Feb. 23-25      The Courts, Chapter 6, Work on Film Review Project; **Film review is due 11:55 p.m., Feb. 25 in Carmen dropbox**

### **Week 8**

March 1-3      Corrections, Chapter 7; work on group project; **Mini-paper 2 due March 4, chapter from text , 11:55 p.m. Carmen drop box**

### **Week 9**

March 8-10    **Midterm 1 review; Midterm 1**

## **SPRING BREAK, NO CLASSES, MARCH 14-20**

### **Week 10**

March 22-24    Crime Control, Policy and Race, Chapters 8-9, another reading TBD

### **Week 11**

March 29-31    New Media and Criminal justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Chapters 10-11; **Mini-Paper 3 due, chapter from the text, April 1, 11:55 p.m. Carmen dropbox**

### **Week 12**

April 5-7      **2<sup>nd</sup> Midterm Review and 2nd Midterm**

### **Week 13**

April 12-14    Work on group projects

### **Week 14**

April 19-21    Group presentations

### **Week 15**

May 2          **Group presentations; class is from 10-11:45 a.m. This is the final exam time. Reflection papers are due, 11:55 p.m. in Carmen dropbox**