

Spring Semester 2017

Communication 3402 Crime and the News Media

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

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Professor: Felecia G. Jones Ross

Office: 3110 Derby Hall

Office hours: M, 9:30-11:30 a.m.; R, 1-3 p.m.

Phone & email: 292-3798; ross.256@osu.edu

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 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* (5th Ed.). Stamford, CT: Cengage.

Spring Semester 2017

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 assignments. **The check-in assignment** at the beginning of the semester is in this category. There may be some Canvas discussion questions, as well.

Midterm examinations (40%). 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 **20%.** **The first midterm is tentatively scheduled for Feb. 23 and the second midterm is tentatively scheduled for April 4.**

Mini-papers (15%). This consists of three focused-writing papers 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 Canvas. Each paper is worth **5%.**

Film analysis/review (14%). 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 Canvas. 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 Feb. 10.**

Film analysis/review topic (1 %). You are required to submit your topic for the film analysis/review for approval. **Deadline is Jan. 26**

Group project (25%). Each group of people, assigned by Canvass, 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 complete a form explaining, in detail, her/his role in the group, what went well and what could have gone better behind the scenes. Group assignments will be randomly made. Each group must present a different case. **Presentations begin April 13.**

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

Spring Semester 2017

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 **Canvas** will also be used for class announcements. **Canvas** will be used to supplement class information and activities such as writing tips, group assignments and other pertinent information. The professor will inform you via email of unplanned class cancellations.

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)

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. 10-12 Introduction to the course; why study crime and the news media, Crime, Justice and Media, Chapter 1; **check-in assignment due, Jan. 13, 11:55 p.m.**
Canvas dropbox

Week 2

Jan. 17-19 New Media and Social Constructionism, Chapter 2;
National Case assignment due, Jan.20, 11:55 p.m. Canvas dropbox

Week 3

Jan. 24-26 What Does Crime Look Like? Chapter 3; film review assignment;
Submit film review proposal, Jan. 26, Canvas dropbox

Spring Semester 2017

Week 4

Jan. 31-Feb. 2 Criminogenic Media, Chapter 4; **Video and discussion: *Mean World Syndrome***

Week 5

Feb. 7-9 Crime Fighters, Chapter 5
Film review due Feb. 10, 11:55 p.m. Canvas dropbox

Week 6

Feb. 14-16 The Courts, Chapter 6; discuss group project assignment;
Book chapter assignment due Feb. 17, 11:55 p.m. Canvas drop box

Week 7

Feb. 21-23 Midterm Review and midterm

Week 8

Feb. 28-March 2 Corrections and Crime Control Chapters 7-8, **submit group project topic**

Week 9

March 7-9 Crime Control and Criminal Justice Policies, Chapters 8-9

March 13-17 SPRING BREAK, NO CLASSES

Week 10

March 21-23 The Central Park Jogger case; **book chapter assignment due March 24, 11:55 p.m. Canvas drop box**
Video and discussion: *The Central Park Five*

Week 11

March 28-30 New Media, Crime and Justice in the 21st Century, Chapters 10-11;
2nd midterm review

Week 12

April 4-6 2nd Midterm, April 4 and work on group projects

Week 13

April 11-13 Work on group projects; begin presentations

Week 14

April 18-20 Group Presentations

Reflection papers are due Monday, May 1, 11:45 a.m. in Canvas drop box.

School of Communication Statement of Inclusion

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.