COMM 3440
Mass Communication & Society
Spring 2018, 3 credits, Hybrid Course
Tuesday 3:00 – 4:50 pm, Journalism 360

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Course Overview
Discussions about the influence of mass media on contemporary society are inherently polarized. News headlines tell us: Television is “the great equalizer” or “the boob tube.” Violent video games create “mass murderers” or “unwarranted moral panics.” Rap music is “misogynistic” or “carthartic.” Which generalizations align with empirical reality? This class addresses these issues by critically examining scientific research on the uses and effects (both good and bad) of mass media on the individual and on society.

The class begins with an introduction to research in media psychology, particularly the social scientific methods used to empirically test claims about the uses and effects of mass media on individuals and society. From there, each week addresses stereotypical ideas about mass media by engaging with research on particular causes and consequences of media use in different social contexts. Ongoing class assignments will push students to think about how mass media are (re)shaping social life, and how we might constructively respond to these changes.

Consistent with this course structure, this class aims to:

1. Help students understand basic methodological approaches for studying mass media.
2. Develop students’ ability to articulate well-reasoned, empirical arguments about the positive and negative effects of media use.
3. Push students to think, reason, argue, and approach questions from a social scientific perspective.

Textbook/Readings
There is no textbook for this course. All readings are posted on Carmen (https://carmen.osu.edu).

Grade Distribution
This class has 200 possible points. Points are distributed as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-Class Activities</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Love/Hate Debate Assignments</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes/Exams</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation/Attendance</td>
<td>15</td>
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Letter Grade Distribution
You must attempt each assignment and quiz/exam in order to receive a grade. Your final grade will be determined based on the combined score of quizzes and assignments. The grading distribution (by percentage) is as follows:

>= 92.5  A    72.5 – 76.4  C
89.5 – 92.4  A-  69.5 – 72.4  C-
86.5 – 89.4  B+  66.5 – 69.4  D+
82.5 – 86.4  B   59.5 - 66.4  D
79.5 – 82.4  B-  <= 59.4  F
76.5 – 79.4  C+

Overview of Assignments
Because this is a hybrid course, this class is designed as a combination of lecture attendance/participation and online assignments. Each week, you will be asked to complete a graded, online assignment (i.e., out-of-class activity or Love/Hate Debate assignment), as well as readings for lecture. **Online assignments and lecture readings should be completed each week before the start of lecture.** Late work will not be accepted, and make-up quizzes/exams will not be provided except under the following circumstances: illness, death in the family, participation in an official University activity, or another documented emergency.

*Out-of-Class Activities* (35 points): Some weeks have an out-of-class activity (posted to Carmen). These activities guide you through some set of tasks based on the lecture topic for the week. These tasks will ask you to read something (e.g., a news article, an empirical study) or watch something (e.g., news media, TED talk) and then answer a series of questions about the task you completed. These activities will be graded using a combination of completion and overall effort. The grading rubric for these assignments can be found on the last page of this syllabus.

*Love/Hate Media Debate* (50 points): On four different weeks during the semester, you will complete an assignment that guides you through gathering, examining, and synthesizing empirical research on a topic of your choice. Each of these assignments builds on work completed during previous weeks, and you will be expected to incorporate instructor feedback as you develop your ideas over the course of the four assignments. The purpose of these assignments is to have you consider how the media influence society, emphasizing both positive and negative effects. These assignments will conclude by having you formulate advice about “best practices” for using media in daily life, and then having you communicate that advice to someone who is in need of such advice. These assignments will be graded using a combination of completion, accuracy, and effort.

*Quizzes/Exams* (2 quizzes X 30-points each + 1 final exam X 40 points = 100 points): Two in-class quizzes (non-cumulative) and one final exam (cumulative) will be used to test your understanding of course material. Quizzes and exams will be based on content contained in both lecture material and online assignments. The quizzes are “non-cumulative” in the sense that they focus only on lecture and online materials covered during the given time period. However, the course material builds on concepts from previous weeks. The final exam is cumulative and will be held during the last class session (NOT during finals week). Quizzes and exams will be made up of multiple-choice and true/false questions.
Participation (15 points): Every class session, we will be doing several individual and group activities, and lecture will contain numerous opportunities for class participation. You are expected to attend class, raise your hand, and actively contribute to class discussion during every class session. You are not expected to agree with me, your classmates, or the readings, but you are expected to express yourself in a polite and considerate manner. Your personal experiences are valued and we are interested in hearing them if you want to share. Overall, I am hoping for a classroom ambiance where students are actively engaged with ideas, respectful of each other, enthusiastic, and lively.

Extra Credit
Participate in a research study! Conducting scientific research is crucial to the mission and purpose of the School of Communication at The Ohio State University. You can earn 1 point of extra credit for each 0.5 hours of research participation (up to 3 hours, or 6 points total) that you complete in School of Communication research studies. Be sure to read the detailed instructions on the SONA site. Importantly, missing your research appointment or quickly clicking through surveys and giving researchers fake data will not earn participation credit. You must sign up for studies at: https://osucomm.sona-systems.com

Academic Integrity
All work must be the original work of the student and not turned in to any other course prior to this one. Cheating on quizzes/exams is unacceptable and will result in: (1) a zero grade, and (2) a formal report to the School of Communication and the Committee on 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 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct: http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/

Student Academic Services
Arts and Sciences Advising and Academic Services’ website provides support for student academic success. Information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors can be obtained through this website. The site is: http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml

Student Services
The Student Service Center assists with financial aid matters, tuition and fee payments. Please see their site at: http://ssc.osu.edu

Copyright Disclaimer
The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.
Diversity

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.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at http://titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

Requesting Accommodations

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 via email 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; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.
Tentative Course Outline

Note: Readings are subject to change depending on how the class progresses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Content/Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 (Jan 9)</td>
<td>Media Psychology as a Social Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Assignment: Complete OA1 Preliminary Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture Reading: Piotrowski &amp; Valkenburg (2017)</td>
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<td>Optional Reading: Jordan &amp; Zanna (1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2 (Jan 16)</td>
<td>Understanding Survey Research: Reality Television and Social Perceptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Assignment: Read Sparks (2006), p. 25-35</td>
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<td>Read Lippman et al. (2014)</td>
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<td>Complete OA2 Understanding Surveys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture Reading: Morgan et al. (2014)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3 (Jan 23)</td>
<td>Understanding Experimental Research: Prosocial Media and Behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Assignment: Read Sparks (2006), p. 35–39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Saleem et al. (2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete OA3 Understanding Experiments</td>
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<td>Lecture Reading: Greitemeyer (2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4 (Jan 30)</td>
<td>Using Multiple Methods: Media Effects on Stereotypes &amp; Prejudice</td>
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<td>Online Assignment: Read Dill (2013), p. 4-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete Love/Hate Debate Part 1</td>
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<td>Lecture Reading: Saleem et al. (2015)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5 (Feb 6)</td>
<td>Triangulation: Violent Media &amp; Aggression (Part I)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Assignment: Quiz Review (not graded)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture Reading: Huesmann et al. (2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>QUIZ 1 STARTS CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6 (Feb 13)</td>
<td>Triangulation: Violent Media &amp; Aggression (Part II)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Assignment: Read Prot &amp; Anderson, p. 110-113</td>
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<td>Read Ferguson (2015)</td>
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<td>Complete OA4: What Should We Believe About Media Violence?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture Reading: Bushman &amp; Anderson (2009)</td>
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| Week 7 (Feb 20) | Online Assignment:  
Conditional Media Effects:  
Pornography Exposure & Sexism  
Read Hald et al. (2013)  
Complete OA5: Sexism & Pornography Exposure  
Lecture Reading:  
Valkenburg & Peter (2013) |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 8 (Feb 27) | Online Assignment:  
Third-Person Effects:  
Media Depictions of Substance (Ab)use  
Complete Love/Hate Debate Part 2  
Lecture Reading:  
Gunther et al. (2006) |
| Week 9 (Mar 6)  | Online Assignment:  
News Exposure:  
Priming, Agenda-Setting, & Framing  
Quiz Review *(not graded)*  
Lecture Reading:  
Scheufele & Tewksbury (2007)  
QUIZ 2 STARTS CLASS |
| Week 10 (March 13) | No assignments. Have a fun & safe break!! |
| Week 11 (March 20) | Online Assignment:  
Exaggerated Depictions & Body Image  
Watch (Miss)Representation  
http://www.veoh.com/watch/v39771873Amj6RRWb  
Complete OA6: (Miss)Representation  
Lecture Reading:  
NO LECTURE  
Read Kleemans et al. (2016) |
| Week 12 (March 27) | Online Assignment:  
Media Persuasion:  
Advertising & Health Campaigns  
Complete Love/Hate Debate Part 3  
Lecture Reading:  
Moyer-Guse (2008) |
| Week 13 (April 3) | Online Assignment:  
Parasocial Contact Theory:  
Attitudes about Sexual Identity  
Watch Transparent, Episode 1  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70nsqyfFzu8  
Complete OA7: Transparent  
Lecture Reading:  
Bond (2013) |
Grading Scale for Out-of-Class Activities

The primary aim of out-of-class activities is to get you thinking about the lecture topics for the week and to prepare to you arrive at lecture ready to discuss these topics. As such, it is not important that your answers are accurate — indeed, many questions on these assignments won’t have right or wrong answers. However, it is important that you demonstrate that you are thoughtfully engaging with the material. Consistent with this aim, all out-of-class activities are worth 5 points, and they will be graded according to completion (i.e., whether all the questions were answered) and overall effort (i.e., how much thought went in to answering the questions).

5 points: All questions are answered entirely. Answers are thoughtful, on-topic, and demonstrate deep engagement with the material.

4 points: All questions are answered entirely. Although all answers are on-topic, some lack deep consideration of the material, or they miss the overall intent of the questions.

3 points: All questions are answered entirely, but responses were relatively off-topic, or they lacked engagement with the material.

2 points: All questions were answered, but they might not have been addressed entirely. Responses that were provided were off topic, tangential, or lacked engagement with the material.

1 point: Some questions left unanswered, or it is clear that the student did not attempt to engage with the material in a thoughtful manner.

0 points: Assignment was incomplete or late.

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Week 14 (April 10)
Children & Children’s Media

Online Assignment: NONE → Relax a bit!
Lecture Reading:
Fisch (2013)

Week 15 (April 17)
FINAL EXAM

Online Assignment: Complete Love/Hate Debate Part 4 (due Friday)
Final Exam Review (not graded)
Lecture Reading:
FINAL EXAM