

## SP19 Comm. 3402 Syllabus Ross

### Communication 3402 Crime and the News Media

TR 11:10 AM-12:30 PM

Pomerene Hall Room 150

**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](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 and change 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.

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### 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. Attendance will be taken at the end of each class using Top Hat. We will begin taking attendance the second week of the semester. 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 Carmen discussion questions, as well. The check-in assignment is due in the Carmen dropbox, **Friday, Jan. 11, 11:59 p.m.**

**Midterm examinations (45%)**. 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 of equal weight. **The first midterm is tentatively scheduled for Feb. 14 and the second midterm is tentatively scheduled for March 28.**

**Mini-papers (15%)**. This consists of three focused-writing papers that include reviewing two chapters in the textbook and a critique of the media's treatment of a national case. Each paper is due at designated times during the semester. More details will be provided on a separate handout and posted on Carmen. Each paper is worth 5%. **Deadlines are as follows: Book chapter 1, Jan. 17, Book chapter 2, Feb. 21, National case, March 7.**

**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 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 Feb. 28.**

**Film analysis/review topic (1 %)**. You are required to submit your topic for the film analysis/review for approval. **Deadline is Jan. 31**

**Group project (20%)**. 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 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 can begin April 11.**

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## 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 email. E-mail and **Carmen** will also be used for class announcements. **Carmen** will be used to supplement class information and activities. 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](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)

Guest speakers can occur on any of these dates and will be announced

### Week 1

Jan. 8-10 Introduction to the course; why study crime and the news media, Crime, Justice and Media, Chapter 1

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**Check-in assignment is due, Thursday, Jan.10, 11:59 p.m. Carmen dropbox**

### Week 2

Jan. 15-17 New Media and Social Constructionism, Chapter 2; explanation of book chapter assignment

**Book chapter assignment due, Thursday, Jan. 17, 11:59 p.m. Carmen dropbox**

### Week 3

Jan. 22-24 What Does Crime Look Like?  
Criminogenic Media Chapters 3 and 4

### Week 4

Jan. 29-31 Criminogenic Media, Chapter 4; **Video and discussion: *Mean World Syndrome***; explain film review assignment

**Submit film review proposal, Jan. 31, 11:59 p.m. Carmen dropbox**

### Week 5

Feb. 5-7 Crime Fighters, Courts Chapters 5-6

### Week 6

Feb. 12-14 The Courts; **1<sup>st</sup> midterm review; Midterm is Feb. 14**

### Week 7

Feb. 19-21 Read and discuss following stories: "A Rape On Campus," *Rolling Stone* and "Woman says Roy Moore initiated sexual Encounter when she was 14, he was 32"; stories are posted on Carmen

**2<sup>nd</sup> book chapter review is due, Feb. 21, 11:59 p.m., Carmen dropbox**

### Week 8

Feb. 26-28 Corrections and Crime Control, Chapters 7-8

**Film review is due. Feb. 28, 11:59 p.m., Carmen dropbox**

### Week 9

March 5-7 Crime Control (cont'd.) and Criminal Justice Policy, Chapters 8-9  
**National Case mini-paper is due March 7, 11:59 p.m.**

**SPRING BREAK IS MARCH 11-15. NO CLASSES**

### Week 10

March 19-21 Criminal Justice Policy (cont'd.) and New Media and Crime, Chapters 9-10;  
Explanation of case analysis project; work on project  
**Case analysis topic is due, March 21, 11:59 p.m. Carmen dropbox;**  
Work on project

### Week 11

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March 26-28 Crime and Justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Chapter 11; 2<sup>nd</sup> midterm review;  
**2<sup>nd</sup> midterm is March 28**

### **Week 12**

April 2-4 **Work on case analysis project**

### **Week 13**

April 9-11 **Work on case project; begin presentations**

### **Week 14**

April 16-18 **Continue presentations**

**Reflection papers are due Thursday, April 18, 11:59 p.m. in Carmen drop box.**

**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](mailto:titleix@osu.edu)**

### **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.**