

COMM 3440
Mass Communication & Society
Spring 2019, 3 credits, Hybrid Course
Wednesday 12:40 pm – 2:30 pm, Journalism 360

Instructor:

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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 “cathartic.” 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. We then consider the psychological mechanisms through which media effects are thought to occur before examining the contexts in which media use might have stronger, weaker, or non-existent effects. Ongoing class assignments will push students to consider how the realities of media effects can be more effectively communicated to a mass audience.

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>).

Film: *Miss Representation* (2011), directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom. Available to watch at <https://osu.kanopy.com/video/miss-representation-0>

Grade Distribution

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

Attendance & Participation	10 points
Out-of-Class Activities (x5)	20 points
Movie Reflection	10 points
Love/Hate Debate Assignments (x3)	40 points
Online Quizzes (x4)	20 points
Exam 1	50 points
Exam 2	50 points

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, Love/Hate Debate assignment, or online quiz), 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.

Attendance/Participation: Points are assigned for regular attendance to (and participation in) lecture. You can miss a total of one lecture with no penalty to your grade. After your first absence, each missed lecture will result in a 1-point deduction from your attendance grade. Attendance will be taken using Tophat (tophat.com), so you should create an account and sign in to our course using the following join code: 233383. For assistance using Tophat, visit the following link: <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/top-hat/using-top-hat-students>

Out-of-Class Activities: On five weeks of the semester, you will complete 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, podcast, TED talk) and then answer a series of questions about the task you completed. These activities will be graded out of 4 points. The grading rubric for these assignments can be found on the last page of this syllabus.

Love/Hate Media Debate: On three 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 three assignments. The purpose of these assignments is to have you consider how media use influences people, emphasizing both *indirect* and *conditional* effects of that use. These assignments will conclude by having you formulate advice about “best practices” for using media among some particular audience. These assignments will be graded using a combination of completion, accuracy, and effort.

Online Quizzes: On four weeks during the semester, you are required to complete online quizzes. These quizzes are available on Carmen, and they serve to review key material up to that point in the semester. Each quiz will be worth 5 points and will consist of 5 to 10 multiple choice questions. You have two opportunities to complete each quiz, and you should complete the first attempt without referencing your notes. After submitting the quiz, you will be able to see which questions you answered incorrectly. You should then use your notes to figure out why you got those questions wrong. You can then correct your answers and resubmit. Only your highest score (out of 5 points) will be counted. Research shows that this process of testing yourself, re-learning the material, and correcting your responses is a more effective study technique than simply reviewing your notes because it forces you to recognize gaps in your knowledge and work to address those gaps. As such, these quizzes intend to serve as periodic checks of your knowledge as well as reviews for exams.

Exam 1: Halfway through the course, your knowledge of material covered up to that point will be assessed using a combination of multiple choice and true/false questions. This exam will be held during lecture time and is closed book. A study guide will be provided indicating what information you can expect to see on the exam.

Exam 2: During the final week of the course, your knowledge of material covered during the second half of the course will be assessed using a combination of multiple choice and true/false questions. This exam will be held during lecture time and is closed book. This second exam is *NOT* cumulative. It will only cover material discussed during the second half of the course. A study guide will be provided indicating what information you can expect to see on the exam.

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 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

Policy on Children in Class

The university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is just a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to student, staff, and faculty parents. I understand that unforeseen disruptions in childcare sometimes put parents in the position of having to miss class to stay at home with a child. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in childcare is perfectly acceptable. I ask that students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status. In all cases where children come to class, I ask that parents sit close to the door so that if their child needs special attention and/or is

disrupting the learning of other students, the parent can easily step outside with their child until the child's needs have been met. More generally, while I maintain the same high expectations for all students in my classes regardless of parenting status, I am happy to problem-solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for school-parenting balance.

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, you should 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.

UNDERSTANDING “MEDIA PSYCHOLOGY” (Week 1 & Week 2)

WEEK 1 (Jan 9)

Media Psychology as a Social Science

Read for Lecture:

- Valkenburg, P. M. & Piotrowski, J. T. (2017). Themes and theoretical perspectives. *Plugged In: How Media Attract and Affect Youth*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

WEEK 2 (Jan 16)

Moral Panic Theory and Fears about Media Effects

Online Assignments:

- [Complete OA1: Media Use and Moral Panics](#)
- Twenge, J. M. (2017). Have smartphones destroyed a generation? *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/09/has-the-smartphone-destroyed-a-generation/534198/>
- Cassidy, M. (2015). “Concerning printed poison”: 19th century American adults’ ambivalence about children’s interactions with cheap fiction. *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 8(2), 211-228.

Read for Lecture:

- Jordan, C. H. & Zanna, M. P. (1999). How to read a journal article in social psychology. *The Self in Social Psychology*. Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

UNDERSTANDING MEDIA EFFECTS (Week 3 – Week 8)

WEEK 3 (Jan 23)

Survey Methods: Cultivation Theory and Social Perceptions of Reality

Online Assignments:

- [Complete OA2: Understanding Research Methods](#)
- Read *Scientific Methods in Media Effects Research*
- Segrin, C. & Nabi, R. L. (2002). Does television viewing cultivate unrealistic expectations about marriage? *Journal of Communication*, 52(2), 247-263.

Read for Lecture:

- Morgan, M., Shanahan, J., & Signorielli (2014). Cultivation theory in the twenty-first century. *The Handbook of Media and Mass Communication Theory*. London: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

WEEK 4 (Jan 30)

Experimental Methods: Media Exposure and Social Behavior

Online Assignments:

- [Complete Online Quiz 1](#)

Read for Lecture:

- Jacob, C., Geuguen, N., & Boulbry, G. (2010). Effects of songs with prosocial lyrics on tipping behavior in a restaurant. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 29, 761-763.
- Saleem, M., Anderson, C. A., & Gentile, D. A. (2012). Effects of prosocial, neutral, and violent video games on children’s helpful and hurtful behaviors. *Aggressive Behavior*, 38, 281-287.

WEEK 5 (Feb 6)

Cognitive Responses to Media: Stereotypical Depictions & Prejudice

Online Assignments:

- Complete OA3: Indirect Effects and Multiple Research Methods
- Saleem, M., Prot, S., Anderson, C. A., & Lemieux, A. F. (2015). Exposure to Muslims in media and support for policies harming Muslims. *Communication Research*, advance online publication, 1-29.

Read for Lecture:

- Roskos-Ewoldson, D. R., Roskos-Ewoldson, B., & Carpentier, F. D. (2009). Media priming: An updated synthesis. *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*. London: Routledge. [Read only the posted pages under the header "Models of Priming" p. 79-81]

WEEK 6 (Feb 13)

Emotional Responses to Media: Meaningful Content, Elevation, and Moral Virtue

Online Assignments:

- Complete Love/Hate Debate (Part I): Topic Selection
- Dill, K. E. (2013). Media psychology: Past, present, and future. *The Oxford Handbook of Media Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press. [Only read section called "The False Dichotomy: Media as All Bad or All Good" p. 4 -5].

Read for Lecture:

- Tsay-Vogel, M. & Krakowiak, K. M. (2016). Inspirational reality TV: The prosocial effects of lifestyle transforming reality programs on elevation and altruism. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 60(4), 567-586.
- Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Rapson, R. L. (1993). Emotional contagion. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 2(3), 96-99.

WEEK 7 (Feb 20)

The Dual Influence of Cognition & Emotion: Persuasion via Entertainment Media

Online Assignments:

- Complete Online Quiz 2

Read for Lecture:

- Moyer-Guse, E. (2008). Toward a theory of entertainment persuasion: Explaining persuasive effects of entertainment-education messages. *Communication Theory*, 18, 407-425.

WEEK 8 (Feb 27)

Exam 1

Online Assignments:

- Study for Exam 1!

Read for Lecture:

- Study for Exam 1!

CONTEXTUALIZING MEDIA EFFECTS (Week 9 – Week 13)

WEEK 9 (March 6)

Meaning is in the Eye of the Beholder: Individual Differences Matter

Online Assignments:

- Complete OA4: Individual Differences and Conditional Media Effects
- Kleemans, M., Daalmans, S., Carbaat, I., & Anschutz, A. (2018). Picture perfect: The direct effect of manipulated Instagram photos on body image in adolescent girls. *Media Psychology*, 21(1), 93-110.

Read for Lecture:

- Piotrowski, J. T. & Valkenburg, P. M. (2015). Finding orchids in a field of dandelions: Understanding children's differential susceptibility to media effects. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 59(14), 1776-1789.

WEEK 10 (March 13)

SPRING BREAK

Online Assignments:

- None. Have a safe and relaxing break!

Read for Lecture:

- None. Have a safe and relaxing break!

WEEK 11 (March 20)

The Medium is Not the Message: Context Matters

Online Assignments:

- Complete Love/Hate Debate (Part II): Indirect and Conditional Effects

Read for Lecture:

- Anderson, D. R. & Pempek T. A. (2005). Television and very young children. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 48(5), 505-522.

WEEK 12 (March 27)

When Scholars Disagree: Social Networking Sites & Well-Being

Online Assignments:

- Complete Online Quiz 3

Read for Lecture:

- Huang, C. (2017). Time spent on social network sites and psychological well-being: A meta-analysis. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 20(6), 346-354.

WEEK 13 (April 3)

When Scholars Disagree: Violent Media & Aggression

Online Assignments:

- Complete OA5: Interpreting the Results of a Meta-Analysis
- Greitemeyer, T. & Mugge, D. O. (2014). Video games do affect social outcomes: A meta-analytic review of the effects of violent and prosocial video game play. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 40(5), 578-589.

Read for Lecture:

- Huesmann, L. R., Dubow, E. F., & Yang, G. (2013). Why is it hard to believe that media violence causes aggression? The Oxford Handbook of Media Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press.

COMMUNICATING ABOUT MEDIA EFFECTS (Week 14 & Week 15)

WEEK 14 (April 10)

Constructively Communicating Media Effects Research

Online Assignments:

- Complete Movie Reflection
- Watch *Miss Representation* (2011), directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom. Available to watch at <https://osu.kanopy.com/video/miss-representation-0>

Read for Lecture:

- Guernsey, L. G. (2017). Don't take away your teen's phone: Smartphones are linked to problems, but they haven't "destroyed a generation." *Slate*. Retrieved from: http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2017/08/smartphones_haven_t_destroyed_a_generation.html

WEEK 15 (April 17)

Exam 2

Online Assignments:

- Complete Online Quiz 4
- Complete Love/Hate Debate (Part III): Research Synthesis – Due Monday April 22 @ 5 pm

Read for Lecture:

- Study for Exam 2! (Regular lecture time)

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 4 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).

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

3 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.

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.