

**Communication 4401: Mass Communication and Youth - Hybrid**  
Spring 2019

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This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking available assistance in a timely manner. Any student who feels he/she 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 292-3307 in room 98 Baker Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**Meeting Times and Location**

Fridays 12:40 – 2:30 p.m., Journalism 360

**Required Readings**

Textbook: Strasburger, V. C., Wilson, B. J., & Jordan, A. B. (2014). Children, Adolescents, and the Media (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. A copy of this book will be on reserve at the Main Library.

Canvas: There are additional readings posted on Canvas

**Course Description**

This course examines the uses and effects of mass communication among children and adolescents. By taking a developmental perspective, we will consider how youngsters at different stages of cognitive development watch, understand, and respond to media content. The first part of the course will focus on children's uses (including the role of media in the development and socialization of self) and processing of media (including patterns of attention and comprehension). The second part of the course will review the effects of various types of content (e.g., advertising, stereotypes, violence, health messages, educational programming, frightening content). Students will be encouraged to consider the effects of mass media in light of the research on children's uses and processing of media. During the last part of the course, we will consider the role of interventions in preventing media-related outcomes that are harmful and promoting those which are positive.

## Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should be able to understand the following:

- how children represent a unique audience of the mass media that deserves careful attention and consideration.
- how theories of cognitive development and mass communication inform our understanding of children's uses of and responses to the mass media.
- the challenges associated with conducting mass communication research among children.

By the end of the semester, students should be able to do the following:

- critically evaluate social scientific research on mass communication and children.
- identify the potentially harmful aspects of specific media content
- use theory and research to propose interventions that are practical and effective.

## Course Requirements

Lecture and Discussion: This is an upper-level class and I will expect us to have thoughtful discussions during each class period. The lectures are designed to highlight, explain, update, and enhance material in the text as well as cover issues that the readings do not. I encourage you to participate by asking questions, answering questions, and offering comments. If you miss a class, be prepared to get the missed material from a classmate. The professor will not meet with you to go over missed material.

Exams: There will two exams based on material covered in class and in the assigned readings. Throughout the semester, newer material will build on older material. Thus, each exam is inherently cumulative. Both lecture material and reading assignments will be tested. The exams will be multiple choice in format.

Discussion Questions: Each student will be responsible for creating a list of **three discussion questions** raised by one day's assigned readings and to prepare them in advance of our class meeting. You will sign up for the dates on which you plan to do this. You will be asked to share these questions in class in order to facilitate our group discussion. These questions *may* be related to:

- Portions of the readings you disagree with
- Broader issues raised by the readings
- Empirical and/or theoretical questions raised by the readings
- How the readings relate to or contradict previous readings
- Practical implications of the reading

Discussion questions must be typed and submitted to the Canvas Dropbox by 11:59 pm the night before the class period in which you are assigned to share your questions. Please bring a copy of your questions to class so you can share them with the class. Students will receive 1 point for each unique and relevant question they pose, one point for posing at least one of the questions during class, and one point for submitting the questions to Canvas on time (total of 5 points possible).

Canvas Assignments: There are 6 Canvas assignments in this class. These assignments are designed to help you prepare for the next class meeting and to process the material on a deeper level. The assignments will typically require you to read something and/or watch a video, and then to respond to some questions. All assignments should be typed and submitted to the Canvas Dropbox by 12:40 p.m. on the day of class. No late work will be accepted. Each assignment is worth 5 points. The assignment descriptions are posted on Canvas.

In-Class Activities: You will regularly be asked to complete in-class assignments and/or quizzes. Students can expect roughly 5-8 of these assignments throughout the semester, though you will not know in advance which days these will occur. Because many of these assignments involve your participation in some discussion, group, or activity these assignments **cannot be made up outside of class**. That is, you must be in class in order to earn these points. However, I will drop your two lowest scores to account for situations in which you must miss a class on a day that an in-class assignment is given (this includes missing class due to illness or other commitments). **You do not need to contact me to inform me that you will (or have already) missed a class.** I will automatically drop the two lowest scores, regardless of the excuse.

Children's TV Review: Each student will complete a review of a children's TV show and present it to the class. You will sign up for the dates on which you plan to do this. The goal of this assignment is to familiarize students with children's media content, encourage students to reflect on the content in light of the unique characteristics of its audience, and provide an evaluation of the value of that content for the audience (based on what you have learned from class). This assignment is worth 10 points (5 points for the written portion, 5 points for the presentation to the class). The written portion of the assignment (including the video clip) is due to the Canvas Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. the night before the class period in which you are presenting. More information on this assignment is provided in a separate document posted on Canvas.

End-of-Semester Reflection: Each student will provide an end-of-semester reflection on the material they have learned and present their reflection to the class. The goal of this assignment is to encourage students to consider key take-away points from the semester and to consider how their learning can help them in the future. This assignment is worth 10 points. More information on this assignment is provided in a separate document posted on Canvas. This assignment is due on April 19, 2019 and should be submitted to the Canvas Dropbox by 12:40 p.m.

## Grading

Your grade in this course will be determined according to your performance on the following.

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Discussion Questions	5%
Canvas Assignments	30%
In-Class Activities	5%
Children's TV Review	10%
<u>End of Semester Reflection</u>	<u>10%</u>
TOTAL	100%

The grading scale for this course will follow the standard OSU grading scheme, which is:

A = 93-100%	C = 73-76%
A- = 90-92%	C- = 70-72%
B+ = 87-89%	D+ = 67-69%
B = 83-86%	D = 60-66%
B- = 80-82%	E = 0-59%
C+ = 77-79%	

### Course Policies

Exams: All exams are to be taken in class on the designated exam dates. No early or late exams are allowed except in the case of an extreme emergency. In the rare event that an emergency arises, it is your responsibility to: 1) inform the professor prior to the scheduled exam time, and 2) provide the professor with written documentation of the emergency (e.g., medical note from a certified physician). Such documentation must be presented before the missed exam whenever possible (and by the next class period when this is not possible). Please note that make-up exams may be of a different format or cover course content in a different ratio than the original.

Class absences. Students are expected to come to class each day. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get the notes from a classmate. The professor will not provide lecture notes. **You do not need to inform me if you are going to miss (or have already missed) a class.** If you miss class, you may miss out on completing an in-class activity; however, as noted above, I will automatically drop the two lowest scores on in-class activities (regardless of the reason for missing class).

Respect for Fellow Students and Professor: Please turn off phone during class. If you choose to come to class, you should give your full attention to any person who is speaking (whether it is the professor or another student). During class, avoid reading newspapers, sending text messages/email, updating your Facebook page, sleeping, talking while others are talking, etc. ***Students engaging in these or other disruptive behaviors during class will be asked to leave.***

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.

Use of Email and Canvas: You are responsible for all information sent to you via your OSU email account and/or posted on the Canvas Website. Therefore, it is important for you to check your OSU email account regularly and be sure to purge your account of unneeded email so that new messages can get through.

Similarly, check the Canvas website regularly for any updates or announcements. Supplementary materials may be posted to Canvas throughout the semester.

A general note about grades: There will NOT be opportunities for students to re-take exams or re-complete assignments in order to raise their grade. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that he or she receives a passing final grade by working diligently and responsibly throughout the semester. Exceptions will NOT be made. **Providing extra assignments for one student or "bumping up" a grade for one student invalidates the standards applied to the class and is unfair to every student.** For this reason, please do not ask me to reconsider your grade unless there has been an error in how it was calculated.

### **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/>

## Course Schedule and Readings

Course schedule is subject to change. In such a case, announcements will be made in class.

Week	Date	Topic
<b>1</b>	Jan 11	<b>Introduction; Why study children and media?</b>
<u>Due: Sign up for dates for (1) Discussion Questions and (2) Children's TV Review</u>		
<b>2</b>	Jan 18	<b>Unique Issues: Research on children and media; Children's media habits</b>
<i>Read: pp. 1-10 from the textbook</i> <i>Read: Chapter 9 from the textbook</i> <i>Read: "Always connected..." article by Gutnick et al. (2011) on Canvas</i> <i>Read: "Common Sense Media Under Two Media Habits" (2017) on Canvas</i>		
<u>Due: Assignment 1 to Canvas</u>		
<b>3</b>	Jan 25	<b>Cognitive development</b>
<i>Read: pp. 11- 36 from the textbook</i> <i>Read: "The immediate impact..." article by Lillard &amp; Peterson (2011) on Canvas</i> <i>Read: "The effects of fast-paced cartoon" article by Christakis (2011) on Canvas</i> <i>Watch: Ted Talk on Media and Children by Christakis: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoT7qH_uVNo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoT7qH_uVNo</a></i>		
<u>Due: Assignment 2 to Canvas</u>		
<b>4</b>	Feb 1	<b>Attention &amp; comprehension</b>
<i>Read: "Media and young children's learning" article by Kirkorian et al. (2008) on Canvas</i> <i>Read: "Effects of repeated exposure..." article by Crawley et al. (1999) on Canvas</i>		

Week	Date	Topic
5	Feb 8	Media violence
Read: Chapters 4 & 10 from the textbook Read: "Parental desensitization..." article by Romer et al. (2014) on Canvas		
6	Feb 15	EXAM 1
7	Feb 22	Scary content
Read: "Tales from the screen..." article by Harrison & Cantor (1999) on Canvas Read: "Fright reactions..." article by Valkenburg et al. (2000) on Canvas  <u>Due: Assignment 3 to Canvas</u>		
8	Mar 1	Advertising
Read: Chapters 2 & 6 from the textbook (pay particular attention to the sections on advertising in Chapter 6) Watch: Ted Talk on Food Marketing: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bop3D7-dDM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bop3D7-dDM</a>  <u>Due: Assignment 4 to Canvas</u>		
9	Mar 8	Stereotypes
Read: "Gender Stereotypes" by Smith & Cook (2008) on Canvas Read: "Pretty as a Princess" by Coyne et al. (2016) on Canvas		
10	Mar 15	Spring Break
11	Mar 22	Health

*Read: Chapters 5 & 7 from the textbook*

Week	Date	Topic
12	Mar 29	<b>Educational &amp; prosocial media</b>
<p><i>Read: Chapter 3 from the textbook</i>  <i>Read: "Learning at home..." article by Rideout (2014) on Canvas</i>  <i>Watch: Berenstain Bears segment on Junk Food (first 12.5 minutes of the link):</i>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkqMiKlc6wE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkqMiKlc6wE</a></p> <p><u>Due: Assignment 5 to Canvas</u></p>		
13	Apr 5	<b>Interventions</b>
<p><i>Read: pp. 423-428 from the textbook</i>  <i>Read: Chapters 11, 12 &amp; 13 from the textbook</i>  <i>Watch: Frontline episode: "Growing up Online":</i> <a href="https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/kidsonline/">https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/kidsonline/</a></p> <p><u>Due: Assignment 6 to Canvas</u></p>		
14	Apr 12	<b>EXAM 2</b>
15	Apr 19	<b>END OF SEMESTER REFLECTION</b>
<p><u>Due: End of Semester Reflection Due to Canvas</u></p>		