Communication 7840--Spring 2019
Mass Communication & the Individual
Tuesday/Thursday 9:35-10:55am
3116 Derby Hall

Professor:  Emily Moyer-Gusé
3065 Derby Hall
moyer-guse.1@osu.edu

Reading
Required readings are available on our class Carmen website

Course Description
This course provides an introduction to prominent theory and research on media use and effects at the individual level. Our purpose is to explore the major theoretical perspectives pertaining to the social and psychological effects of media on viewers and the ways that viewers select, understand, interpret, and react to media content. Specifically, we will examine how and why individuals choose media, how they process media messages, and the intended and unintended effects of this media use. We will focus on research conducted within a social scientific framework. Our readings and class meetings will be guided by the major theoretical approaches in this area. Within the context of these theories, we will read empirical studies across a variety of media topics (e.g., media violence, health, political, entertainment media, news media, etc.)

Specific objectives of the course are:
1) Give students a sense of both the “classic” and current research on media effects.
2) Provide thoughtful discussion, critique, and extension of current theorizing and research
3) Allow students to select a media topic and design a research project that advances theory

Format & Participation
Given that this course is a graduate seminar, most of our class time will be dedicated to collective discussion. This means that you should master the reading assignments and come to class prepared with questions, criticisms, and comments. In class, I will provide some background information and clarify portions of the readings when needed. However, I will rely primarily on your comments and questions to guide our class discussions. As such, you should read the material with an eye for generating questions and discussion in class.

Course Requirements
Grades will be determined on the basis of regular and active participation in seminar discussion (15%), written discussion questions (15%) seminar discussion leading (20%), and a research paper and corresponding paper benchmarks (50%).

Seminar Participation
15 percent of your grade in this course will be based on regular and thoughtful participation in seminar discussion. It is not enough for you to merely come to class or to do the readings. Rather, you must actively discuss the readings and engage in discussion with other students. Each student should come to class ready to discuss the readings and raise questions about them. To this end, each student will contribute to the development of a classroom environment where ideas are examined from various perspectives.

In combination with regular and thoughtful participation, please also treat others (your classmates and me) with respect while they are speaking. This means giving them/me your full and undivided attention. **Disengagement with the class (e.g., extensive fixation of eye gaze on the laptop screen during presentations/discussions) has no place in a graduate seminar and is not consistent with active participation.** While I understand the use of laptops in class for taking notes and/or referring to assigned readings, they should not be used for anything else under any circumstances during class. Please do not check your email, send email, work on other academic material, or really do anything unrelated to this seminar during class. I am very serious about this.

**Discussion Questions**
To facilitate class discussion, you should post 2-3 discussion questions for each class meeting for which readings have been assigned. You should have at least one discussion question raised by each of the assigned readings OR several questions that span themes related to the readings in the aggregate. You should be prepared to describe why you raised the question and your thoughts on an answer to it. I will review these questions, and may refer to them in the course of our group discussion.

Discussion questions should be uploaded to the course website by **7:00pm** the day before class. You cannot post a question that has already been asked. Therefore, you need to pay attention to the questions that have already been posted by your classmates. You can, however, build off of your fellow classmates’ questions to create a cohesive line of inquiry. Questions should be accompanied by a few sentences that briefly describe/clarify the issue you are trying to raise.

Questions can serve a variety of purposes such as seeking to clarify an issue you find confusing, critically challenging some aspect of a reading, or provoking discussion of a particular issue you find compelling. Overall, try to ask questions that will stimulate a scientific discussion and avoid asking questions that you could easily answer yourself with some additional research.

To get you thinking along the right track, your questions **may** be related to:
- Portions of the readings you disagree with
- Broader theoretical issues raised by the readings
- Empirical and/or theoretical questions raised by the readings
- How the readings relate to or contradict previous readings or other research in the field

**Discussion Leading**
Each student will be responsible for leading our class discussion on one day during the latter half of the semester (students may work individually or in pairs). Students will prepare a presentation,
discussion questions, and lead the class discussion for that day. In addition to reading the required readings, discussion leaders will read (and be prepared to discuss) additional work on the same general topic that builds upon, contradicts, or fills gaps in the assigned reading. To do so they must seek out this additional relevant material. You are welcome to do this in consultation with the instructor, but should plan ahead accordingly to ensure you have time to schedule an appointment with me to review what you have found.

In order to structure the discussion in the class, discussion leaders should develop 7-10 discussion questions—and for themselves, the answers to those questions. Questions are likely to pertain to some combination of the theory, method, or connections across papers and topics in the assigned readings. At least 24 hours prior to your seminar discussion leading, you will post these questions to all class participants via Carmen as well as the list of additional readings you did for the topic (for reference only). Students should review these questions and consider their responses prior to arriving at class.

On the day of your presentation, you will begin class with a presentation (using PowerPoint) and facilitate the discussion that day using your presented material, your discussion questions, and other questions raised by class members. You will be responsible for moderating the discussion that day, though I will also weigh in as I see fit and will reserve the last 10 minutes or so of our meeting to provide an overview and wrap-up of our discussion.

Discussion leaders will be evaluated based on the quality of their questions, depth of understanding of the material, amount of recommended readings they are able to bring into the discussion, and their performance in leading the discussion.

You will be given an opportunity to submit to me your preferred dates at the end of the first week of the semester.

Research Paper
In an 8-10 page research paper, you should propose an original, theoretically driven, study concerning mass communication and the individual. You should propose a study that addresses a gap in the literature on a particular topic and/or theory in media effects. You are not expected to collect data during the semester, but I encourage you to select a paper topic you are interested in completing after the semester is over.

The paper should follow standard APA formatting guidelines. Include a brief introduction, a thorough review of the theoretical question of interest, past literature that provides a compelling rationale for the study, a statement of the hypotheses and/or research questions, a detailed method section identifying how you will carry out the study, and a discussion section that highlights what will be learned from the data, strengths and limitations of the study.

Your papers will be evaluated based on your ability to identify a theoretically driven research question/hypothesis that improves our understanding of some phenomenon, your review of relevant literature and construction of a logical argument that leads to a set of testable hypotheses, and the appropriateness of your design of a study to test those hypotheses.
At several points during the semester, you will be asked to report on your paper progress (topic selection, rationale, hypotheses, and research design). You will also present your finished paper to the class and receive a detailed “review” of your research plan. Additional details about these paper benchmarks, the paper assignment, and how they will be evaluated are posted on the course website.

1/29  Paper topic idea(s) in class  
2/19  Paper prospectus due  
3/19  Summary of your research design due  
3/28  Draft paper outlines due  
4/2  Final paper outlines due  
4/11-4/18 Presentation to class of your final research proposal  
4/22  Final papers due

Late work is penalized (10% per day) unless an extension is granted beforehand. In addition, please let me know in advance if you must miss a class meeting.

**Academic Integrity**
All students at the Ohio State University are bound by the code of student conduct (see http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp). Any evidence of academic misconduct will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct in accordance with the Ohio State University Code of Student Conduct and the rules of faculty governance. Academic misconduct is any activity that compromises the academic integrity of the institution or subverts the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct can be found at the above website.

**School of Communication Diversity Policy:**
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.

**Accommodations**
Any student who feels he or 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 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.
# Tentative Class Schedule*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tu 1/8</td>
<td>Introduction to Class</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th 1/10</td>
<td>Introduction to Media Research &amp; Theory</td>
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| 2    | Tu 1/15 | Understanding Media “Effects”                |


|      | Th 1/17 | Media Audiences & selection                  |


Tu 1/22  Media Selection & Selective Exposure


Th 1/24  Media Selection & Enjoyment/Appreciation


4  Tu 1/29  PAPER: Preliminary topic idea(s) due today

Th 1/31  Social Cognitive Theory


5   Tu  2/5   Media-based priming effects


Yang, G. S., Huesmann, L. R., & Bushman, B. (2014). Effects of playing a violent video game as male
versus female avatar on subsequent aggression in male and female players. *Aggressive Behavior*,
40, 537-541.

Th  2/7   Agenda-Setting and Framing

R. T. Craig (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of communication theory and philosophy* (pp. 1-
13).


Communication, 61*, 959-983.

6   Tu  2/12   Cumulative Effects & Cultivation

Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N., & Shanahan, J., & Signorielli, N. (2009). Growing up with television:
Cultivation processes. In J. Bryant & M. B. Oliver (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and


Communication and Society, 18*, 674-699

Th  2/14   Cumulative & Delayed Effects

L. van Zoonen (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of media effects*. New York, NY: Wiley.


7 Tu  2/19     Desensitization     PAPER: Prospectus due today


Th  2/21    Indirect and Third Person Effects


8 Tu  2/26     Individual final paper meetings (schedule a time slot)

Th  2/28     Individual final paper meetings (schedule a time slot)
9  Tu 3/5     Media and Persuasion


Th 3/7     Relationships with Media Characters


10 Tu 3/19    Relationships w/ Characters and Narrative Persuasion  PAPER: Design & Method Due


Th 3/21    Mechanisms of Narrative Persuasion

Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public


11  Tu 3/26  Media and Stereotypes


12  Tu 4/2  Interpersonal communication and Media Effects  Final Outlines due today


13  Th 4/4  Viewing context and media effects


13  Tu 4/9  Looking back, looking forward


14  Tu 4/16  Student Presentations

Th 4/18  Student Presentations

Final Papers Due Monday 4/22