COMM 3440

Mass Communication & Society

Spring 2021, 3 credits
Online Course

Faculty Instructor:

Graduate Teaching Assistants:

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Course Overview

News headlines about media effects tend toward the extreme. Are smartphones destroying a generation? Does screen time ravage children's brains? Are video games digital heroin? Does the devil live in our phones? To the untrained eye, it might seem difficult to separate fact from clickbait.

This class begins with an introduction to the basics of media psychology, including the scientific methods used to test claims about the 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 these effects are stronger, weaker, or non-existent. Ongoing class assignments will push students to consider how the realities of media effects can be communicated to mass audiences in ways that are practical, accurate, and devoid of fearmongering.

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to...

1. ...classify "media psychology" as a branch of social science.

- 1.1. Identify key theories and research methods used by media psychologists.
- 1.2. Identify appropriate methods for various research scenarios.
- 1.3. Explain how key theories can be used to understand media effects in everyday life.
- 1.4. Use theories to predict the outcomes of research studies.

2. ...evaluate the quality of published research on media effects.

- 2.1. Recognize the limitations of survey and experimental research methods.
- 2.2. Analyze the limitations of published research on media effects.
- 2.3. Compare the relative strength of evidence produced across studies.

3. ...evaluate how media effects research is communicated to the public.

- 3.1. Explain how "moral panics" influence news coverage of media effects research.
- 3.2. Illustrate the disconnect between research results and news coverage of those results.
- 3.3. Distinguish between high- and low-quality news coverage of media effects research.

4. ...develop evidence-based recommendations for media use in everyday life.

- 4.1. Identify and gather published research on a specific media effects topic.
- 4.2. Summarize key findings of published research on a specific media effects topic.
- 4.3. Translate research findings for a mass audience.

Textbook/Readings

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

Grade Distribution

This class has 100 possible points. Points are distributed as follows:

"5M" Activities (x6)	6 points
Checkpoints (x9)	14 points
Research Synthesis Assignments (x3)	30 points
Online Quizzes (x4)	10 points
Online Exams (x2)	40 points

Letter Grade Distribution

You must attempt each assignment in order to receive a grade. Your final grade will be determined based on the combined score of all assignments. The grading distribution 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+	

Technology

Each weekly module features video lectures on Carmen. Lectures are posted in two formats: (1) PowerPoint files with audio recordings, and (2) online YouTube playlists. The content included in each version is identical, so you only need to access one version (whichever you prefer). The YouTube playlists allow for closed captioning. Please make certain you have a strong internet connection and relevant audio equipment (e.g., headphones). It is not feasible for me or your TAs to help you with technical problems. University Tech support can help you (614-688-HELP) with technical problems.

Overview of Assignments

Each weekly module contains readings, lectures, and assignments. All work is due by 11:59 pm on Sunday (i.e., the **END** of each week).

"5M" Activities: The main concepts introduced this semester are summarized as the 5M's: $\underline{\mathbf{M}}$ oral panics, Research $\underline{\mathbf{M}}$ ethods, $\underline{\mathbf{M}}$ ediation, $\underline{\mathbf{M}}$ oderation, and $\underline{\mathbf{M}}$ eta-analysis. When these concepts are introduced, you will complete a worksheet that asks you to examine how that concept manifests in published research papers and/or news articles. There are six activities in total, and they are graded out of one point for thoroughness and completion (1 = satisfactory, .5 = needs improvement, 0 = incomplete).

Checkpoints: Periodic "checkpoints" serve to assess your understanding of key course concepts. Each checkpoint consists of open-ended questions on Carmen. You will receive instructor feedback, which will help as you prepare your research synthesis (see below). There are nine checkpoints in total, and they are graded out of one or two points for thoroughness and completion.

Research Synthesis Assignments: The main course project asks you to research a specific media effects topic of your choice. This project culminates in a 1-page paper (single-spaced) that summarizes existing research on your topic and provides evidence-based recommendations about how people should approach media use in everyday life. Prior to writing this short paper, there are two preliminary assignments that ask you to gather, evaluate, and synthesize research on your chosen topic. These assignments are each graded out of 10 points using a combination of completion, accuracy, and effort. Detailed rubrics are provided for each assignments.

Online Quizzes: Quizzes occur every 2-3 weeks. Each quiz is worth 2.5 points and consists of 10 multiple-choice questions. You have two opportunities to complete each quiz, and these attempts have no time limit. You should complete the first attempt without referencing your notes. After submitting the quiz, you can 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 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 and address gaps in your knowledge. As such, these quizzes serve as periodic checks of your knowledge, as well as reviews for exams.

Online Exams: There are two online exams that consist of 20 multiple-choice questions and 10 true/false questions. Each exam is worth 20 points. A study guide is provided, and you can use your notes to complete the exams. However, you only have ONE attempt to complete each exam. This attempt is timed (60 minutes).

If you score less than 70% on an exam, you have the opportunity to complete an *Exam* Reflection Assignment. This assignment requires you to reflect on errors that you made and demonstrate mastery of the material that you misunderstood. Satisfactory completion of this reflection will increase your exam grade to 70%.

Late Work Policy: Freebies!

All late assignments receive a zero for that assignment. However, you are allowed two "freebies" over the course of the semester, such that you can turn in an assignment late with **NO PENALTY**. In order to use your freebie, you need to email your TA within one day of the assignment due date (i.e., some time on Monday). Your TA will keep track of how many freebies you have used. Once you use up your two freebies, you will receive a zero on any late assignment—no exceptions.

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 1 hour of research participation (up to 3 hours, or 3 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

Mental Health: Please Take Care of Yourself!

As a student, you might experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to your learning (e.g., strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation). These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you are or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766. If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24 hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445 / National: 800-273-8255); or text (4hope to 741741); or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org

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

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.

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 can also 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.

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 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.

Additional Disclaimer

This syllabus represents a contract "in the works." Events that transpire over the semester may require modifications to the course. In the event of a change, I will announce the change and update the syllabus on Carmen. Ultimately it is your responsibility to keep up with any such modifications and to be aware of current policies, deadlines, etc. I reserve the right to modify course policies throughout the semester.

University COVID-19 Policies

All students, faculty and staff are required to comply with and stay up to date on all university safety and health guidance (https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu), which includes wearing a face mask in any indoor space and maintaining a safe physical distance at all times. Non-compliance will result in a warning first, and disciplinary actions will be taken for repeated offenses. Students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's request process, managed by Student Life Disability Services. If at any point you are too ill to participate in this course due to COVID-19, please contact the instructor as soon as you are able. If at any point the instructor is too ill to teach the course for a period of time, the designated backup for this course will step in. You will be notified via email from the School of Communication.

UNDERSTANDING "MEDIA PSYCHOLOGY" (Week 1 & Week 2)

CTIDENTITION (WEEK 1 CO WEEK 2)		
	WEEK 1 (Jan 11 – Jan 17)	
	Media Psychology as a Social Science	
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LECTURES	Introductory Lecture: Course Overview	
	2. Introductory Lecture: Assignments Overview	
	3. Introductory Lecture: Tips for Success	
	4. A Brief History of Media Psychology	
	5. Personalized Media Effects	
	6. How to Read a Journal Article	
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Checkpoint #1: Introduction	
Due 11:59 pm		
Sunday Jan 17		
READINGS	1. Jordan, C. H. & Zanna, M. P. (1999). How to read a journal article in	
	social psychology. The Self in Social Psychology. Philadelphia: Psychology	
	Press.	
	2. 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 18 – Jan 24)		
M	Moral Panic Theory and Fears about Media Effects	
LECTURES	1. The Tenets of Moral Panic Theory	
	2. Identifying a Moral Panic	
ASSIGNMENTS	1. 5M Activity #1: Understanding Moral Panic Theory	
Due 11:59 pm	2. Checkpoint #2: Identifying a Media Effect	
Sunday Jan 24		
READINGS	1. 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.	
	2. Markey, P. M., & Ferguson, C. J. (2017). Teaching us to fear: The	
	violent video game moral panic and the politics of game research.	
	American Journal of Play, 10(1), 99-115.	
	3. 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/	

UNDERSTANDING MEDIA EFFECTS (Week 3 – Week 8)

WEEK 3 (Jan 25 – Jan 31)	
Survey Methods:	
Cı	ultivation Theory and Social Perceptions of Reality
LECTIBEC	4 77 7
LECTURES	1. The Tenets of Cultivation Theory
	2. The Basics of Surveys
	3. Interpreting Survey Results
	4. Understanding Statistical Significance
ASSIGNMENTS	5M Activity #2: Understanding Survey Methods
Due 11:59 pm	,
Sunday Jan 31	2. Checkpoint #3: Clarifying Confusions
READINGS	1. Scientific Methods in Media Effects Research, p. 25-35 only
	2. Morgan, M., Shanahan, J., & Signorielli (2014). Cultivation theory in the twenty-first century. <i>The Handbook of Media and Mass Communication Theory</i> . London: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
	3. Segrin, C. & Nabi, R. L. (2002). Does television viewing cultivate unrealistic expectations about marriage? <i>Journal of Communication</i> , 52(2), 247-263.

WEEK 4 (Feb 1 – Feb 7)	
Experimental Methods:	
	Media Exposure and Social Behavior
LECTURES	1. The Basics of Causation
	2. The Basics of Experimental Research
	3. IV Manipulation
	4. Randomization
	5. Experimental Research Example
	6. Internal and External Validity
	·
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Quiz 1
Due 11:59 pm	· ·
Sunday Feb 7	
READINGS	1. Scientific Methods in Media Effects Research, p. 35-41
	<i>y</i> , <i>y</i>
	2. 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.
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WEEK 5 (Feb 8 – Feb 14)	
Emotional Mediators:	
Inspirational Television and Altruistic Behavior	
 The Tenets of Emotional Contagion Theory 	
2. The Basics of Mediator Variables	
3. Responses to Inspirational Television	
-	
1. Research Synthesis #1: Gathering Evidence of Media Effects	
1. Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Rapson, R. L. (1993). Emotional	
contagion. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 2(3), 96-99.	
5 8 7 (7)	
2. Tsay-Vogel, M. & Krakowiak, K. M. (2016). Inspirational reality TV:	
The prosocial effects of lifestyle transforming reality programs on	
elevation and altruism. <i>Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media</i> , 60(4),	
567-586.	

WEEK 6 (Feb 15 – Feb 21)		
Cognitive Mediators:		
	Stereotypical Depictions & Prejudice	
LECTURES	1. The Tenets of Priming Theory	
	2. Review of Research Methods	
ASSIGNMENTS	1. 5M Activity #3: Understanding Multiple Methods and Mediators	
Due 11:59 pm	1. SHI I redvity 11.5. Chacistanding Hundple Methods and Mediators	
Sunday Feb 21		
READINGS	1. 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]	
	2. Saleem, M., Prot, S., Anderson, C. A., & Lemieux, A. F. (2015).	
	Exposure to Muslims in media and support for policies harming	
	Muslims. Communication Research, 44(6), 841-869.	

	WEEK 7 (Feb 22 – Feb 28)	
The Dual Influence of Cognition and Emotion:		
	Intergroup Contact in Online Video Games	
LECTURES	The Tenets of Intergroup Contact Theory	
LECTURES	2. Intergroup Contact in Online Video Games	
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Quiz 2	
Due 11:59 pm Sunday Feb 28	2. Checkpoint #4: Identifying a Mediator Variable	
READINGS	1. Intergroup Contact Theory. Encyclopedia of group processes and intergroup relations. p. 1-11.	
	2. Adachi, P. J. C., Hodson, G., Willoughby, T., Black, C., & Ha, A. (2016). From outgroups to allied forces: Effects of intergroup cooperation in violent and nonviolent video games on boosting favorable outgroup attitudes. <i>Journal of Experimental Psychology: General</i> , 145(3), 259-265.	

WEEK 8 (March 1 – March 7) Exam 1	
LECTURES	1. None!
ASSIGNMENTS Due 11:59 pm Sunday March 7	 Exam 1 Checkpoint #5: Mid-semester Evaluation
READINGS	1. Study Guide

CONTEXTUALIZING MEDIA EFFECTS (Week 9 – Week 12)

WEEK 9 (March 8 – March 14)	
Meaning is in the Eye of the Beholder:	
The Importance of Moderator Variables	
LECTURES	1. The Basics of Moderator Variables
	2. Interpreting the Results of Moderation Analyses
ASSIGNMENTS	1. 5M Activity #4: Understanding Moderators
Due 11:59 pm Sunday March 14	2. Checkpoint #6: Identifying a Moderator Variable
READINGS	1. 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.
	2. 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.

WEEK 10 (March 15 – March 21) Communication So White, So Weird:	
Racial Identity as a Moderator Variable	
LECTURES	 A Brief Primer on U.S. Racism #CommSoWhite, #CommSoWeird Racial Identity as a Moderator Variable
ASSIGNMENTS Due 11:59 pm Sunday March 21	Research Synthesis #2: Gathering Evidence of Mediators and Moderators
READINGS	1. Stamps, D. (2020). Race and media: A critical essay acknowledging the current state of race-related media effects research and directions for future exploration. <i>Howard Journal of Communications</i> , 31(2), 121-136.
	2. Banjo, O. O., Appiah, O., Wang, Z., Brown, C., & Walther, W. O. (2015). Co-viewing effects of ethnic-oriented programming: An examination of in-group bias and racial comedy exposure. <i>Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly</i> , 92(3), 662-680.

WEEK 11 (March 22 – March 28)		
When Scholars Disagree I:		
Meta-Analyses of Social Media Effects		
LECTURES	1. The Basics of Meta-Analysis	
EECTCRES	2. Meta-Analyzing the Effects of Social Media Use	
ASSIGNMENTS Due 11:59 pm Sunday March 28	1. Quiz 3	
READINGS	1. Cooper, H. M. (2011). Meta-analysis. The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods	
	2. Huang, C. (2017). Time spent on social network sites and psychological well-being: A meta-analysis. <i>Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking</i> , 20(6), 346-354.	

WEEK 12 (March 29 – April 4)		
When Scholars Disagree II:		
	Meta-Analyses of Violent Media Effects	
LECTURES	 Conclusions of Meta-Analyses in Media Psychology Tips and Tricks for Checkpoint #7 	
ASSIGNMENTS Due 11:59 pm Sunday April 4	 5M Activity #5: Understanding Meta-Analyses Checkpoint #7: Identifying a Meta-Analysis 	
READINGS	1. Greitemeyer, T. & Mügge, D. O. (2014). Video games do affect social outcomes: A meta-analytic review of the effects of violent and prosocial video game play. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i> , 40(5), 578-589.	
	2. Rains, S. A., Levine, T. R., & Weber, R. (2018). Sixty years of quantitative communication research summarized: Lessons from 149 meta-analyses. <i>Annals of the International Communication Association</i> , 42(2), 105-124.	

COMMUNICATING ABOUT MEDIA EFFECTS (Week 13 - Week 16)

WEEK 13 (April 5 – April 11)					
Cons	Constructively Communicating Media Effects Research:				
	Part I				
LECTURES	1. How to Avoid a Moral Panic				
ASSIGNMENTS	1. 5M Activity #6: Constructively Communicating Media Effects				
Due 11:59 pm Sunday April 11	2. Checkpoint #8: Approaching Your Own Writing				
READINGS	1. Guernsey, L. G. (2017). Don't take away your teen's phone: Smartphones are linked to problems, but they haven't "destroyed a generation." <i>Slate</i> . Retrieved from: http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2017/08/smartphones_haven_t_destroyed_a_generation.html				
	2. Lillard, A. S., & Peterson, J. (2011). The immediate impact of different types of television on young children's executive function. <i>Pediatrics</i> , 128(4), 644-649.				
	3. French, N. (2011). Will SpongeBob make you gay? No, but he might make you stupid. <i>National Review</i> . Retrieved from: https://www.nationalreview.com/the-home-front/will-spongebob-make-you-gay-no-he-might-make-you-stupid-nancy-french/	:-			
	4. Jabr, F. (2011). SpongeBob drains attention, but doesn't harm brains. <i>New Scientist</i> . Retrieved from: https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn20914-spongebob-drains-attention-but-doesnt-harm-brains/	-			
	5. Reilly, G. (2011). It's official: SpongeBob SquarePants is making our children stupid. <i>Business Insider</i> . Retrieved from: https://www.businessinsider.com/its-official-spongebob-squarepants-is-making-our-children-stupid-2011-9				

WEEK 14 (April 12 – April 18) Constructively Communicating Media Effects Research: Part II		
LECTURES	1. None!	
ASSIGNMENTS Due 11:59 pm Sunday April 18	 Quiz 4 Research Synthesis #3: Advice for the General Public 	
READINGS	1. None!	

WEEK 15 (April 19 – April 23) Exam 2 & Course Reflection		
LECTURES	1. None!	
ASSIGNMENTS Due 11:59 pm Friday April 23	 Exam 2 Checkpoint #9: Course Reflection 	
READINGS	1. Study Guide	