



SYLLABUS

COMM 3440

Mass Communication and Society
Summer 2022 (8-week term)
3 credit hours
Online

COURSE OVERVIEW

Instructor

Instructor: Sophie Kjaervik

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Phone number: +1(614) 816-7362

Office hours: Upon request

Teaching Assistant

TA: Matt Erxleben

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 12:00–1:00. [Link](#), Password: 102788

Course description

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.

Course learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students should successfully 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.

HOW THIS ONLINE COURSE WORKS

Mode of delivery: This course is 100% online. There are no required sessions when you must be logged in to Carmen at a scheduled time.

Pace of online activities: This course is divided into **weekly modules** that are released one week ahead of time. Students are expected to keep pace with weekly deadlines but may schedule their efforts freely within that time frame.

Credit hours and work expectations: This is a **3-credit-hour course**. According to Ohio State policy (go.osu.edu/credithours), students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average.

Attendance and participation requirements: Because this is an online course, your attendance is based on your online activity and participation. The following is a summary of students' expected participation:

- **Participating in online activities for attendance: AT LEAST ONCE PER WEEK**
You are expected to log in to the course in Carmen every week. (During most weeks you will probably log in many times.) If you have a situation that might cause you to miss an entire week of class, discuss it with me *as soon as possible*.
- **Office hours and live sessions: OPTIONAL**
All live, scheduled events for the course, including my office hours, are optional.
- **Participating in discussion forums: 2+ TIMES PER WEEK**
As part of your participation, each week you can expect to post at least twice as part of our substantive class discussion on the week's topics.

COURSE MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Textbooks

There is no textbook for this course. All readings are posted on Carmen.

Course technology

Technology support

For help with your password, university email, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the Ohio State IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at ocio.osu.edu/help/hours, and support for urgent issues is available 24/7.

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** ocio.osu.edu/help
- **Phone:** 614-688-4357(HELP)
- **Email:** servicedesk@osu.edu
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

Technology skills needed for this course

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen (go.osu.edu/canvasstudent)
- CarmenZoom virtual meetings (go.osu.edu/zoom-meetings)
- Recording a slide presentation with audio narration (go.osu.edu/video-assignment-guide)
- Recording, editing, and uploading video (go.osu.edu/video-assignment-guide)

Required equipment

- Computer: current Mac (MacOs) or PC (Windows 10) with high-speed internet connection
- Webcam: built-in or external webcam, fully installed and tested
- Microphone: built-in laptop or tablet mic or external microphone
- Other: a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) to use for BuckeyePass authentication

Required software

- Microsoft Office 365: All Ohio State students are now eligible for free Microsoft Office 365. Full instructions for downloading and installation can be found at go.osu.edu/office365help.

Carmen access

You will need to use BuckeyePass (buckeyepass.osu.edu) multi-factor authentication to access your courses in Carmen. To ensure that you are able to connect to Carmen at all times, it is recommended that you take the following steps:

- Register multiple devices in case something happens to your primary device. Visit the BuckeyePass - Adding a Device help article for step-by-step instructions (go.osu.edu/add-device).
- Request passcodes to keep as a backup authentication option. When you see the Duo login screen on your computer, click **Enter a Passcode** and then click the **Text me new codes** button that appears. This will text you ten passcodes good for 365 days that can each be used once.
- Download the Duo Mobile application (go.osu.edu/install-duo) to all of your registered devices for the ability to generate one-time codes in the event that you lose cell, data, or Wi-Fi service

If none of these options will meet the needs of your situation, you can contact the IT Service Desk at 614-688-4357(HELP) and IT support staff will work out a solution with you.

GRADING AND FACULTY RESPONSE

How your grade is calculated

ASSIGNMENT CATEGORY	POINTS
Checkpoints (x2)	8
Media reflection (x2)	12
Research Synthesis Assignments (x2)	30
Online Quizzes (x6)	20
Online Exams (x2)	30
Total	100

See course schedule below for due dates.

Descriptions of major course assignments

Checkpoints: Each checkpoint consists of open-ended questions on Carmen. There are two checkpoints, and they are graded out of 2 points for thoroughness and completion. The first checkpoint is an introduction of yourself. The second checkpoint is a midterm evaluation of the course.

Media reflection Assignments: The media reflection occurs in week 2 and 6. The **first** media reflection assignments ask you to find a news article with a *weird* statement about media effects. Then, you are asked to explain the statement and how media has portrayed the effect and why you think it's weird. The **second** media reflection assignment asks you to consider your own media use and how it makes you feel to use social media (e.g., did you post something? If so, how did it make you feel? What did you post (e.g., a picture, a statement, a cool article); or did you scroll through a platform (e.g., reddit, Instagram, TikTok)? What type of posts did you see? How did you feel before and after? Why did you go on media? Why did you choose that platform?). This should be about a 1-page reflection on your own use of media. Each reflection is graded out of 6 points for level of reflection 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 15 points using a combination of completion, accuracy, and effort. Detailed rubrics are provided for each assignment.

Online Quizzes: Quizzes occur every week except exam weeks. Each quiz is worth 4 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. At the end of the semester your lowest Quiz score will be dropped, so only 5 of 6 Quizzes will count towards your final grade.

Online Exams: There are two online exams that consist of 20 multiple-choice questions and 10 true/false questions. Each exam is worth 15 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%.

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>

Late assignments

Late submissions will not be accepted. Please refer to Carmen for due dates.

Grading scale

>= 92.5 A

89.5 – 92.4 A-
86.5 – 89.4 B+
82.5 – 86.4 B
79.5 – 82.4 B-
76.5 – 79.4 C+
72.5 – 76.4 C
69.5 – 72.4 C-
66.5 – 69.4 D+
59.5 - 66.4 D
<= 59.4 F

Instructor feedback and response time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can call **614-688-4357(HELP)** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

- **Grading and feedback:** For large weekly assignments, you can generally expect feedback within **7 days**.
- **Email:** I will reply to emails within **24 hours on days when class is in session at the university**.
- **Discussion board:** I will check and reply to messages in the discussion boards every **24 hours on school days**.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Discussion and communication guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style:** While there is no need to participate in class discussions as if you were writing a research paper, you should remember to write using good grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A more conversational tone is fine for non-academic topics.
- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across online.
- **Citing your sources:** When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up what you say. For the textbook or other course materials, list at least the title and page numbers. For online sources, include a link.
- **Backing up your work:** Consider composing your academic posts in a word processor, such as Microsoft Word, where you can save your work, and then copying into the Carmen discussion.

Academic integrity policy

See **Descriptions of major course assignments**, above, for my specific guidelines about collaboration and academic integrity in the context of this online class.

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/>.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by university rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the university’s *Code of Student Conduct* (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

- Committee on Academic Misconduct web page (go.osu.edu/coam)
- Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity (go.osu.edu/ten-suggestions)

Student Services and Advising

University Student Services can be accessed through BuckeyeLink. More information is available here:

<https://contactbuckeyelink.osu.edu/>

Advising resources for students are available here:

<http://advising.osu.edu>

Copyright for instructional materials

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.

Statement on Title IX

All students and employees at Ohio State have the right to work and learn in an environment free from harassment and discrimination based on sex or gender, and the university can arrange interim measures, provide support resources, and explain investigation options, including referral to confidential resources.

If you or someone you know has been harassed or discriminated against based on your sex or gender, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, or sexual exploitation, you may find information about your rights and options at titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at titleix@osu.edu. Title IX is part of the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) at Ohio State, which responds to all bias-motivated incidents of harassment and discrimination, such as race, religion, national origin and disability. For more information on OIE, visit equity.osu.edu or email equity@osu.edu.

Commitment to a diverse and inclusive learning environment

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the land that The Ohio State University occupies is the ancestral and contemporary territory of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe and Cherokee peoples. Specifically, the university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of Greenville and the forced removal of tribes through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. I/We want to honor the resiliency of these tribal nations and recognize the historical contexts that has and continues to affect the Indigenous peoples of this land.

More information on OSU's land acknowledgement can be found here:

<https://mcc.osu.edu/about-us/land-acknowledgement>

Your mental health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learn, such as 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. No matter where you are engaged in distance learning, The Ohio State University's Student Life Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) is here to support you. If you find yourself feeling isolated, anxious or overwhelmed, on-demand resources are available at go.osu.edu/ccsondemand. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766, and 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org. The Ohio State Wellness app is also a great resource available at go.osu.edu/wellnessapp.

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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 immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. 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; 614-292-3307; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Accessibility of course technology

This online course requires use of CarmenCanvas (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.

- Canvas accessibility (go.osu.edu/canvas-accessibility)
- Streaming audio and video
- CarmenZoom accessibility (go.osu.edu/zoom-accessibility)
- Collaborative course tools

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: May 10th – 15th

Media Psychology as a Social Science, Moral Panic Theory and Fears about Media Effects

LECTURES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction: Instructor 2. Introduction: Course Overview 3. A Brief History of Media Psychology 4. Personalized Media Effects 5. How to Read a Journal Article 6. The Tenets of Moral Panic Theory 7. Identifying a Moral Panic
ASSIGNMENTS Due 11:59 pm Sunday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Checkpoint #1: Introduction 2. Quiz #1
READINGS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jordan, C. H. & Zanna, M. P. (1999). How to read a journal article in social psychology. <i>The Self in Social Psychology</i>. Philadelphia: Psychology Press. 2. Valkenburg, P. M. & Piotrowski, J. T. (2017). Themes and theoretical perspectives. <i>Plugged In: How Media Attract and Affect Youth</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press. 3. Markey, P. M., & Ferguson, C. J. (2017). Teaching us to fear: The violent video game moral panic and the politics of game research. <i>American Journal of Play</i>, 10(1), 99-115. 4. Twenge, J. M. (2017). Have smartphones destroyed a generation? <i>The Atlantic</i>. Retrieved from: https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/09/has-the-smartphone-destroyed-a-generation/534198/

WEEK 2: May 16th – 22nd

Survey Methods: Social Perceptions of Reality

LECTURES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Basics of Surveys 2. Interpreting Survey Results 3. Understanding Statistical Significance
ASSIGNMENTS Due 11:59 pm Sunday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media reflection #1: News article on media effects 2. Quiz #2
READINGS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Scientific Methods in Media Effects Research</i>, [only p. 25-41] 2. Saleem, M., Prot, S., Anderson, C. A., & Lemieux, A. F. (2017). Exposure to Muslims in media and support for policies harming Muslims. <i>Communication Research</i>, 44(6), 841-869. [only study 1]

WEEK 3: May 23rd – 29th

Experimental Methods & Mediators: Media Exposure and Social Behavior,

Inspirational Television and Altruistic Behavior, Stereotypical Depictions & Prejudice

LECTURES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 7. The Tenets of Emotional Contagion Theory 8. The Basics of Mediator Variables 9. Responses to Inspirational Television
ASSIGNMENTS Due 11:59 pm Sunday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research Synthesis #1: Gathering Evidence of Media Effects 2. Quiz #3
READINGS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Rapson, R. L. (1993). Emotional contagion. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i>, 2(3), 96-99. 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. 3. Roskos-Ewoldson, D. R., Roskos-Ewoldson, B., & Carpentier, F. D. (2009). Media priming: An updated synthesis. <i>Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research</i>. London: Routledge. [Read only the posted pages under the header "Models of Priming" p. 79-81] 4. Saleem, M., Prot, S., Anderson, C. A., & Lemieux, A. F. (2017). Exposure to Muslims in media and support for policies harming Muslims. <i>Communication Research</i>, 44(6), 841-869. [Read from study 2]

WEEK 4: May 30th – June 5th

The Dual Influence of Cognition and Emotion: Intergroup Contact in Online Video Games

LECTURES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Tenets of Intergroup Contact Theory 2. Intergroup Contact in Online Video Games
ASSIGNMENTS Due 11:59 pm Sunday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exam #1
READINGS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intergroup Contact Theory. <i>Encyclopedia of group processes and intergroup relations</i>. 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 5: June 6th – 12th

Meaning is in the Eye of the Beholder: The Importance of Moderator Variables

LECTURES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Basics of Moderator Variables 2. Interpreting the Results of Moderation Analyses
ASSIGNMENTS Due 11:59 pm Sunday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Checkpoint #2: Midterm evaluation 2. Quiz #4
READINGS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Piotrowski, J.T. & Valkenburg, P.M. (2015). Finding orchids in a field of dandelions: Understanding children's differential susceptibility to media effects. <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i>, 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. <i>Media Psychology</i>, 21(1), 93-110.

WEEK 6: June 13th – 19th**When Scholars Disagree: Meta-Analyses of Social and Violent Media Effects**

LECTURES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Basics of Meta-Analysis 2. Meta-Analyzing the Effects of Social Media Use 3. Conclusions of Meta-Analyses in Media Psychology
ASSIGNMENTS Due 11:59 pm Sunday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media reflection #2: Impact of social media use 2. Quiz #5
READINGS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

WEEK 7: June 20th – 26th**Constructively Communicating Media Effects Research**

LECTURES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to Avoid a Moral Panic
ASSIGNMENT S Due 11:59 pm Sunday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research synthesis #2: Gathering Evidence of Media Effects 2. Quiz #6
READINGS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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_hav_en_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.

	<p>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/</p> <p>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/</p> <p>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</p>
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WEEK 8: June 27th – July 1st (Friday)

EXAM 2

ASSIGNMENTS

Due 11:59 PM
Friday

1. EXAM 2