COMM 7841 Mass Communication & the Social System

Autumn 2023, 3 credits, M/W 9:35-10:55 am Hybrid Course

Faculty Instructor:

J. Alex Bonus, Ph.D. he/him/his 3045C Derby Hall bonus.1@osu.edu Office hours: Mon 2–3pm, or by appointment

Course Overview

This course examines the impact of mass media on the social system, focusing on its capacity to exert social control and foster social change. Example weekly topics include the influence of educational television on the academic achievement gap, the efficacy of public health campaigns in preventing adolescent smoking, and the role of social media influencers in shaping the political behaviors of emerging adults. These topics lay the groundwork for evaluating macrosocial communication theories, such as diffusion of innovations theory, the knowledge gap hypothesis, spiral of silence theory, media-systems dependency theory, mediatization, and more.

This course is structured as a "teaching-infused" seminar, meaning students will have multiple opportunities to develop teaching skills that are often neglected in graduate student training. For example, students will demonstrate mastery of macrosocial communication theories by designing and implementing lesson plans about those theories for undergraduates. Additionally, students will have the option of designing a course syllabus for their final project (in lieu of writing a research proposal). Because these instructional skills are likely unfamiliar to many students, we will spend ample time discussing principles of effective pedagogy, such as backward design and authentic assessment. These skills are fundamental to a career in academia, yet they are transferable to any professional setting where employees are required to translate complex topics for lay audiences.

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

- 1. ...summarize the predictions of macrosocial communication theories.
- 2. ...evaluate the contributions and limitations of macrosocial communication research.
- 3. ...design and deliver classroom lessons about macrosocial communication theories.
- 4. ...develop syllabi that adhere to established principles of effective pedagogy.
- 5. ...develop research proposals that address gaps in macrosocial communication theorizing.

Grade Distribution

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

Questionnaires (x4)	10 points
Lesson Plan	40 points
Lesson Evaluations (x6)	12 points
Final Project	20 points
Project Milestones (x3)	18 points

Letter Grade Distribution

You must attempt each assignment 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+	

Course Structure

Most weeks are structured so that Mondays entail group discussion about the assigned readings and Wednesdays entail a student-led lesson.

Mondays: I will provide discussion questions in advance of each Monday meeting. We will begin Monday sessions by reviewing the macrosocial communication theory addressed in the assigned readings. Afterward, we will engage in group discussion around the questions provided. You are encouraged (but not required) to submit your own discussion topic prior to the start of class. A discussion topic could include an additional question about the assigned readings, or a piece of short media (e.g., video, podcast) related to the readings that could serve as a catalyst for deeper discussion. If Dr. Bonus opts to include a student-generated topic in class, the student who submitted it will receive one "Dr. Bonus" point added to their final grade. Students can receive up to three "Dr. Bonus" points over the course of the semester.

Wednesdays: At the start of the semester, you will select a week during which you will design and deliver a 45-minute classroom lesson related to the course material. On weeks where you are not assigned to present a lesson, you will serve as a participant in the lesson plans designed by other students. During the remaining 30 minutes of these class meetings, we will provide feedback to our colleagues to help them improve their lessons before they submit their revised plans for grading.

Certain weeks will deviate from the structure described above and instead serve as professional development weeks. Specifically, we will discuss principles of effective pedagogy. These meetings are typically structured as interactive lectures, in which I will review the principles described in the assigned readings and provide insights about my own experiences applying those principles in my classes. These meetings are intended to support you in completing assignments related to teaching. The hybrid nature of the course will allow us to hold most of these interactive lectures on Zoom. Consequently, I have scheduled these meetings for weeks where students are likely to be traveling (i.e., the days preceding Fall break, the NCA conference, and the final two weeks of class).

Overview of Assignments

The following descriptions provide a brief overview of the assignments in this course. More detailed information about each assignment (as well as grading rubrics) are available on Carmen.

Questionnaires: I will periodically ask you to complete short questionnaires that inquire about your experiences in this course. These questionnaires will only take a few minutes to

complete, and they will provide the foundation for class discussion and/or for improving the class as the semester progresses. These questionnaires will be graded out of 2.5 points for completion (i.e., 2.5 = complete; 0 = incomplete).

Lesson Plan: At the start of the semester, you will select a week during which you will design and deliver a lesson plan. This lesson should be directed toward upper-level undergraduate students, it should focus on some dimension of the theories or research articles examined in the assigned readings for that week, and it should involve some component of active learning (e.g., hands-on activities; small-group discussion). After delivering your lesson to the class, you will have the opportunity to revise and improve your lesson plan. Finalized lesson plans are due by Sunday at 11:59 pm on the week that you deliver your lesson in class. You can complete this assignment alone or with a partner.

Lesson Evaluations: Whenever you participate in a lesson plan delivered by your peers, you will have the opportunity to complete a feedback survey. Your feedback will consist of close-ended ratings and open-ended suggestions for improving the lesson. You are not permitted to evaluate lesson plans that you did not attend. These evaluations will be graded out of two points for completion (i.e., 2 = complete; 0 = incomplete). You will have the opportunity to complete 7 total evaluations during the semester, but you only need to complete 6 for full credit. (In other words, you can miss one lesson without any penalty to your grade).

Final Project: For your final project, you have the choice of writing a (1) research proposal or (2) course syllabus proposal. I only expect you to complete one type of proposal. Consequently, you should select the type of proposal that will be most useful for you. *Research proposals* should aim to make novel contributions to communication theory, and they should consist of a literature review, at least two directional hypotheses, and a description of appropriate research methods (e.g., participants, measures). *Syllabus proposals* should address a topic related to communication, and they should consist of a course description, student learning goals, assignment descriptions, course policies, course schedule, and example readings. Prior to turning in your final project, you will have the opportunity to obtain feedback from your peers by presenting your proposal during one of our final class meetings.

Project Milestones: In preparation for completing your final project, you will periodically turn in drafts of key components (e.g., possible study hypotheses; possible course learning goals). I will provide feedback on each of these components to assist you with developing your ideas as the semester progresses.

Late Work Policy

I generally prefer that students benefit from completing course assignments, even if those assignments are completed late. Consequently, I am willing to accept questionnaires and project milestones late. However, you should do your best to notify me in advance of the deadline, and you must provide justifiable cause (e.g., illness, mental health, emergency). You are not required to provide me with detailed information about the reason you are turning in those assignments late. Assignments that are turned in late without notice will receive a zero.

I am unable to accept the following assignments late:

- 1. <u>Lesson Plans</u>: If you miss the day you are scheduled to deliver a lesson plan, I cannot schedule a makeup (given that it would require asking students to attend class outside of our regular meetings or restructuring our schedule to accommodate your absence). Consequently, failure to deliver your lesson plan on the day you are scheduled will result in a zero for that assignment.
- 2. <u>Lesson Evaluations</u>: If you are absent the day that your peers deliver a lesson plan, your feedback on that lesson plan would not be particularly helpful. Consequently, I will not accept lesson evaluations late. However, you only need to complete 6 total lesson evaluations (out of 7 possible evaluations) to receive full credit.
- 3. <u>Final Project</u>: I cannot accept final projects late, given that there is a tight turnaround to complete final grades at the end of the semester. Consequently, failure to turn in your final project by the scheduled deadline will result in a zero for that assignment.

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/

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.

WEEK 1 (Aug 23)		
	Course Introduction	
READINGS	 Monday NO CLASS Wednesday Viswanath, K., & Demers, D. (1999). Introduction: Mass media from a macrosocial perspective. In D. Demers & K. Viswanath (Eds.), Mass media, social control, and social change: A macrosocial perspective (pp. 3-30). Iowa State University Press. Trautner, N. N. (2014). Teaching-infused graduate seminars: 	
	Incorporating pedagogy into substantive courses. <i>Teaching Sociology</i> , <i>42</i> (1), 61-68.	
ASSIGNMENTS	Questionnaire 1 (Introduction) due before Wednesday's meeting	

	WEEK 2 (Aug 28 & Aug 30)	
	Cultivation Theory:	
The S	Socializing Role of Children's Educational Television	
READINGS	Monday	
	 Potter, W. J. (2014). A critical analysis of cultivation theory. <i>Journal of Communication</i>, 64, 1015-1036. 	
	 Jordan, A. B. (2004). The Three-Hour Rule and educational television for children. <i>Popular Communication</i>, 2(2), 103-118. 	
	 Ostrov, J. M., Gentile, D. A., & Mullins, A. D. (2013). Evaluating the effect of educational media exposure on aggression in early childhood. <i>Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology</i>, 34(1), 38-44. 	
	<u>Wednesday</u> 4. Lesson Plan: Dr. Alex Bonus	
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Lesson Evaluation 1 (during Wednesday's meeting)	

	WEEK 3 (Sept 4 & Sept 6)
	Principles of Effective Pedagogy:
	Understanding Backward Design
READINGS	Monday NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)
	 Wednesday 1. Michael, N. A. & Libarkin, J. C. (2016). Understanding by design: Mentored implementation of backward design methodology at the university level. <i>Journal of College Biology Teaching</i>, 42(2), 44-52.
	 Bernstein, D. A. (2017). Bye-bye intro: A proposal for teaching introductory psychology. <i>Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology</i>, 3(3), 191-197.
	 Shabatura, J. (2022). Using Bloom's Taxonomy to write effective learning outcomes. Retrieved from <u>https://tips.uark.edu/using- blooms-taxonomy/</u>
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Questionnaire 2 (College Reflection) due before Wednesday's meeting

	WEEK 4 (Sept 11 & Sept 13)
	The Knowledge Gap Hypothesis:
Ses	same Street as a Resource for Low-Income Families
READINGS	 Monday 1. Lind, F., & Boomgaarden, H. G. (2019). What we do and don't know: A meta-analysis of the knowledge gap hypothesis. <i>Annals of the</i> <i>International Communication Association</i>, 43(3), 210-224.
	 Cook, T. D (1975). Objectives and summary of the major findings. In T. D. Cook, H. Appleton, R. F. Conner, A. Shaffer, & S. J. Weber (Eds.), <i>Sesame Street revisited</i> (pp. 1-25). Russell Sage Foundation.
	3. Kearney, M. S., & Levine, P. B. (2019). Early childhood education by television: Lessons from <i>Sesame Street. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 2019</i> , <i>11</i> (1), 318-350.
	Wednesday
	4. Lesson Plan: Dr. Alex Bonus
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Project Milestone 1 due Sunday 11:59 pm

	WEEK 5 (Sept 18 & Sept 20)
	Two-Step Flow-of-Communication Theory:
	Evaluating the Influence of Influencers
READINGS	Monday
	 Soffer, O. (2021). Algorithmic personalization and the two-step flow of communication. <i>Communication Theory</i>, <i>31</i>(3), 297-315
	2. Harff, D. & Schmuck, D. (2023). Influencers as empowering agents? Following political influencers, internal political efficacy, and participation among youth. <i>Political Communication</i> , <i>40</i> (2), 147-172.
	3. Dekoninck, H., & Schmuck, D. (2023). The "greenfluence": Following environmental influencers, parasocial relationships, and youth's participation behavior. <i>New Media & Society</i> , advance online publication.
	 Wednesday Lesson Plan: TBD
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Lesson Evaluation 2 (during Wednesday's meeting)

	WEEK 6 (Sept 25 & Sept 27)	
	Diffusion of Innovations Theory:	
	Investigating the Generation Gap	
READINGS	 Monday 1. Rogers, E. M., Singhal, A., & Quinlan, M. M. (2009). Diffusion of innovations. In D. W. Stacks & M. B. Salwen (Eds.), <i>An integrated approach to communication theory and research</i> (pp. 418-434) NY: Routledge. 	
	2. Correa, T. (2014). Bottom-up technology transmission within families: Exploring how youths influence their parents' digital media use with dyadic data. <i>Journal of Communication</i> , 64(1), 103-124.	
	 Mares, M. L., Chen, A., & Bond, B. J. (2023). Mutual socialization during shared media moments: U.S. LGBTQ teens and their parents negotiate identity support. <i>Journal of Communication</i>, advance online publication. 	
	Wednesday	
	• Lesson Plan: TBD	
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Lesson Evaluation 3 (during Wednesday's meeting)	

	WEEK 7 (Oct 2 & Oct 4)	
Т	the Influence of Presumed Influence Hypothesis:	
	Health Campaigns and Adolescent Smoking	
READINGS	Monday	
	1. Gunther, A. C., & Storey, J. D. (2003). The influence of presumed influence. <i>Journal of Communication</i> , <i>53</i> (2), 199-215.	
	 Gunther, A. C., Bolt, D., Borzekowski, D. L. G., Leibhart, J. L., Dillard, J. P. (2006). The influence of peer norms: How mass media indirectly affect adolescent smoking. <i>Journal of Communication</i>, 56, 52-68. 	
	 Cho, H., Shen, L., & Peng, L. (2021). Examining and extending the influence of presumed influence hypothesis in social media. <i>Media</i> <i>Psychology</i>, 24(3), 413-435. 	
	 Wednesday Lesson Plan: TBD 	
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Lesson Evaluation 4 (during Wednesday's meeting)	

	WEEK 8 (Oct 9 & Oct 11)
	Principles of Effective Pedagogy:
	Understanding Authentic Assessment
READINGS	Monday: [ZOOM MEETING]
	1. Montgomery, K. (2002). Authentic tasks and rubrics: Going beyond traditional assessment in college teaching. <i>College Teaching</i> , <i>50</i> (1), 34-40.
	 Mueller, J. (2005). The Authentic Assessment Toolbox: Enhancing student learning though online faculty development. Journal of Online Learning and Teaching, Retrieved from <u>https://jolt.merlot.org/documents/VOL1No1mueller.pdf</u>
	3. Browse the <u>Authentic Assessment Toolbox</u> (online resource)
	Wednesday NO CLASS (Fall Break)
ASSIGNMENTS	 Questionnaire 3 (Mid-term Evaluation) due Sunday at 11:59 pm. Project Milestone 2 due Sunday at 11:59 pm

	WEEK 9 (Oct 16 & Oct 18)	
Spiral of Silence Theory:		
	The Fear of Speaking Your Mind	
READINGS	Monday	
	 Scheufele, D. A. (2008). Spiral of silence theory. In W. Donsbach & M. W. Traugott (Eds.), <i>The SAGE handbook of public opinion research</i> (pp. 175-183). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 	
	 Gearhart, S., & Zhang, W. (2018). Same spiral, different day: Testing the spiral of silence across issue types. <i>Communication Research</i>, 45(1), 34- 54. 	
	3. Matthes, J. (2015). Observing the "spiral" in spiral of silence. International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 27(2), 155-176.	
	 Wednesday Lesson Plan: TBD 	
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Lesson Evaluation 5 (during Wednesday's meeting)	

WEEK 10 (Oct 23 & Oct 25)	
	The Parasocial Contact Hypothesis:
Ρορι	alar Media and Support for Transgender Civil Rights
READINGS	 Monday Banas, J. A., Bessarabova, E., & Massey, Z. B. (2020). Meta-analysis on mediated contact and prejudice. <i>Human Communication Research</i>, 46, 120- 160.
	 Massey, Z. B., Wong, N. C. H., & Barbati, J. L. (2021). Meeting the (trans)parent: Test of parasocial contact with transgender characters on reducing stigma toward transgender people. <i>Communication Studies</i>, 72(2), 232-250.
	3. Billard, T. J. (2019). Experimental evidence for differences in the prosocial effects of binge-watched versus appointment-viewed television programs. <i>Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly</i> , 96(4), 1025-1051.
	 Wednesday Lesson Plan: TBD
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Lesson Evaluation 6 (during Wednesday's meeting)

	WEEK 11 (Oct 30 & Nov 1)	
Media-Systems Dependency Theory:		
The Role of Media in Times of Social Crisis		
READINGS	Monday	
	1. Ball-Rokeach, S. J., & DeFleur, M. L. (1976). A dependency model of	
	mass-media effects. Communication Research, 3(1), 3-21.	
	2. Lowrey, W. (2004). Media dependency during a large-scale social	
	disruption: The case of September 11. Mass Communication & Society,	
	7(3), 339-357.	
	3. Bond, B. J. (2021). Parasocial relationships as functional social	
	alternatives during pandemic-induced social distancing. Psychology of	
	Popular Media, 11(3), 250-257.	
	Wednesday	
	• Lesson Plan: TBD	
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Lesson Evaluation 7 (during Wednesday's meeting)	

WEEK 12 (Nov 6 & Nov 8)		
Mediatization:		
Growing Up in the Digital Age		
READINGS	 Monday Livingstone, S. & Lunt, P. (2014). Mediatization: An emerging paradigm for media and communication studies. In K. Lundby (Ed.), <i>Mediatization of communication: Handbooks of communication science</i> (pp. 703-724). De Gruyter Mouton. 	
	 Hjarvard, S. (2013). The mediatization of play: From bricks to bytes. In S. Hjarvard (Ed.), <i>The mediatization of culture and society</i> (pp. 103-136). Taylor and Francis Group. 	
	 Coyne, S. M., Linder, J. R., Booth, M., Keenan-Kroff, S., Shawcroft, J. E., & Yang, C. (2021). Princess power: Longitudinal associations between engagement with princess culture in preschool and gender stereotypical behavior, body esteem, and hegemonic masculinity in early adolescence. <i>Child Development</i>, 92(6), 2413-2430. 	
	 Wednesday Lesson Plan: TBD 	
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Lesson Evaluation 8 (during Wednesday's meeting)	

WEEK 13 (Nov 13 & Nov 15)		
Principles of Effective Pedagogy:		
Creating a Learner-Centered Syllabus		
READINGS	Monday: [ZOOM MEETING]	
	 Fornaciari, C. J. & Dean, K. L. (2014). The 21st-century syllabus: From pedagogy to andragogy. <i>Journal of Management Education</i>, 38(5), 701-723. 	
	 Richmond, A. S., Morgan, R. K., Slattery, J. M., Mitchell, N. G., & Coopers, G. A. (2019). Project Syllabus: An exploratory study of learner-centered syllabi. <i>Teaching of Psychology</i>, 46(1), 6-15. 	
	3. <u>Project Syllabus website</u>	
	Wednesday NO CLASS (NCA Conference)	
ASSIGNMENTS	1. Project Milestone 3 due Sunday 11:59 pm.	

THANKSGIVING BREAK (Nov 20 & Nov 22)

NO CLASS: Professor Bonus will hold open office hours to discuss final projects.

	WEEK 14 (Nov 27 & Nov 29)
Principles of Effective Pedagogy:	
	Writing a Statement of Teaching Philosophy
READINGS	Monday: [ZOOM MEETING] 1. O'Neal, C., Meizlish, M. & Kaplan, M. (2007). Writing a statement of
	 O Real, C., Metzlish, M. & Raplah, M. (2007). Whiling a statement of teaching philosophy for the academic job search. Retrieved from <u>https://www.sas.upenn.edu/ctl/grad/documents/UniversityofMichiga</u> <u>nTeachingPhilosophy_000.pdf</u>
	 Kelsky, K. (2015). Just say no to the weepy teaching statement. In K. Kelsky (Ed.) <i>The professor is in</i> (pp. 164-178).
	3. Example teaching statements from Professor Bonus
	 Wednesday [ZOOM MEETING] Final Project Presentations: TBD
ASSIGNMENTS	Questionnaire 4 (Reflection) due Sunday 11:59 pm

WEEK 15 (Dec 4 & Dec 6)		
Final Project & Final Thoughts		
READINGS	Monday: [ZOOM MEETING]	
	 Final Project Presentations: TBD 	
	 Wednesday [ZOOM MEETING] Coenen, L. (2023). Lost in a maze? On the philosophical problems with differential and individual-level susceptibility in research on media effects. Unpublished manuscript. 	
ASSIGNMENTS	Final Project due Wednesday 11:59 pm	