

SYLLABUS COMM 3440

Mass Communication and Society Summer 2025 (8-week term) 3 credit hours Online

COURSE OVERVIEW

Instructor

Instructor: Jane Hu

Email address: hu.2831@osu.edu (PLEASE DO NOT MESSAGE ME IN CARMEN)

Office hours: Tuesday 11:00AM-12PM EST via Zoom (or by appointment through emails).

Please find the zoom link on Carmen.

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:

- ...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.
- 1. ...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.
- 2. ...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.
- 3. ...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 will be presented fully online in an asynchronous format. There will be no set meeting times or live components.

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. The professor will provide a welcome video for the week that will include information about the week's content, updates about the course, and reminders for material that is due in the upcoming week.

Credit hours and work expectations: This is a 3-credit-hour course. According to Ohio State policy, 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. ASC Honors provides an excellent guide to scheduling and study expectations.

Attendance and participation requirements: Because this is an online course, your attendance is based on your online activity and 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.

COURSE MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Textbooks

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

Course Technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

- Carmen:
 - Carmen, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit <u>Carmen.osu.edu</u>. Log in to Carmen using your name.# and password. If you have not setup a name.# and password, visit <u>my.osu.edu</u>.
 - Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at <u>https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen</u>
 - This online course requires use of Carmen (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.
 - Carmen accessibility
- Carmen Zoom:

- Office hours will be held through Ohio State's conferencing platform, Carmen Zoom. A separate guide to accessing Carmen Zoom and our office hours is posted on the course Carmen page under Files.
- Students may use the audio and video functions if a webcam and microphone are available. If not, there is still a chat function within Carmen Zoom for the student to live chat with the professor or TA in the virtual office hours room.
- o Carmen Zoom help guide

Turnitin:

Students at The Ohio State University are accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Therefore, you should be familiar with the guidelines provided by the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) and Section A of OSU's Code of Student Conduct in order to meet the academic expectations concerning appropriate documentation of sources. In addition, OSU has made Turnitin, a learning tool and plagiarism prevention system, available to instructors. For this class, you will submit your papers to Turnitin from Carmen. When grading your work, I will interpret the originality report, following Section A of OSU's Code of Student Conduct as appropriate. For more information about Turnitin, please see the vendor's guide for students. Note that submitted final papers become part of the OSU database.

• Self-Service and Chat support: http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice

Phone: 614-688-HELP (4357)

Email: 8help@osu.eduTDD: 614-688-8743

Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses

· Basic computer and web-browsing skills

Navigating Carmen

Necessary equipment

- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- Web cam and microphone

Necessary software

- Word processor with the ability to save files under .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf. Most popular word processing software programs including Microsoft Word and Mac Pages have these abilities.
- OSU students have access to Microsoft Office products <u>free of charge</u>. To install, please visit <u>https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=kb04733
 </u>

GRADING AND FACULTY RESPONSE

How your grade is calculated

ASSIGNMENT CATEGORY	POINTS
"5M" Activities	10
Checkpoints	10
Research Synthesis Assignments	30
Online Quizzes	10
Online Exams	40
Total	100

See course schedule below for due dates.

Descriptions of major course assignments

"5M" Activities: The main concepts introduced this semester are summarized as the **5M's**: Moral panics, Research Methods, Mediation, Moderation, and Meta-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 five activities in total, and they are graded out of two points for thoroughness and completion (2 = satisfactory, 1 = 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 six checkpoints in total, and they are graded 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 is one preliminary assignment that asks you to gather, evaluate, and synthesize research on your chosen topic. These assignments are graded using a combination of completion, accuracy, and effort. Detailed rubrics are provided for each assignment.

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).

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

Policy for assignments

- Quizzes and exams are open for a duration of time and the window in Carmen will close. The quiz or exam will not be re-opened unless University or medical documentation is provided.
- Assignments are to be turned in (and fully uploaded) on time at 11:59 p.m. EDT/EST. At
 midnight, a 20% deduction will apply. There will be a 20% deduction for every day the
 submission is late. No submissions will be accepted after 4 days without University or
 medical documentation. It may take some time for your file to upload. Assignments are
 provided at the opening of the module, if not before. Technology issues at the last
 minute do not qualify for extensions.
- Each student may take advantage of a one-time, one-week extension during the semester. If you would like to utilize your extension, please email the instructor and TA.
 You do not need to provide an explanation. Please note, we will be keeping track and only one undocumented extension will be granted. This must be requested no later than

the due date of the assignment and the work must be completed by the end of the following week.

Makeup request (excused absence)

Makeups or extensions due to medical issues or University-related travel may be requested and late penalties will be excused. Documented makeups should be requested prior to the due date if possible, even if documentation has not yet been obtained. In case of a medical matter or emergency, makeups should be requested within one week of the assignment deadline. As these assignments are due late in the evening, the instructor may not be able to immediately respond to last minute requests for makeup. Please contact the instructor and TA as soon as you know a makeup will be necessary. We will review and get back to you as soon as we are able. Please do not send multiple messages with the same request if we are unable to answer immediately.

Most assignments are open for a week (sometimes more) and may be turned in at any time during the week. Please plan accordingly and do not wait until the last minute. Situations such as getting called into work at the last minute, transportation issues, falling asleep while studying, etc. are not eligible for documented makeup. Please see the one-time extension option listed above.

Providing documentation

Please do not send photos or videos as proof of your illness or injury. I often read student emails while eating at my desk or enjoying my coffee. Photos of this nature do not aid digestion.

If you are escorting a friend or family member to an appointment/ urgent care/ emergency room visit, please request a caretaker or companion excuse note from the facility. This should be requested at the time of the appointment and should be provided to you at no charge

Grading scale

>= 92.5 A

89.5 – 92.4 A-

86.5 – 89.4 B+

82.5 - 86.4 B

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79.5 – 82.4 B-
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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.

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 at titleix@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 Greeneville 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 learning, 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. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are 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 and 24 hour emergency help is also available 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Requesting accommodations

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's request process, managed by Student Life Disability Services. 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; slds.osu.edu; 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	Lectures	Readings	Assignments (due @ 11:59pm)
Week 1: Media Psychology as a Social Science	1.1 Introduction; 1.2 Moral Panic Theory and Fears about Media Effects	 Jordan, C. H. & Zanna, M. P. (1999). How to read a journal article in social psychology. The Self in Social Psychology. Philadelphia: Psychology Press. Valkenburg, P. M. & Piotrowski, J. T. (2017). Themes and theoretical perspectives. Plugged In: How Media Attract and Affect Youth. New Haven: Yale University Press. 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. 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. 	Checkpoint #1 (May 9 for video; May 14 for replies) Checkpoint #2 (May 9) 5M #1 (May 9)

		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: Research Methods	2.1 Survey; 2.2 Experiment	1. Scientific Methods in Media Effects Research, p. 25-35 only 2. Segrin, C. & Nabi, R. L. (2002). Does television viewing cultivate unrealistic expectations about marriage? Journal of Communication, 52(2), 247- 263. 3. Scientific Methods in Media Effects Research, p. 35-41 4. 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.
Week 3: Emotional and Cognitive Mediators	3.1 Emotional Mediators; 3.2 Cognitive Mediators	 Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Rapson, R. L. (1993). Emotional contagion. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 2(3), 96-99. Tsay- Vogel, M. & (May 23) Tsay- Vogel, M. & (May 23) Inspirational reality TV: The prosocial effects of lifestyle transforming reality programs on elevation and altruism. Journal of

		Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 60(4), 567-586. 3. 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 4: Mediated Intergroup Contact	Week 4: Mediated Intergroup Contact	1. 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:</i> General, 145(3), 259-265.
Week 5: Identifying Moderators	Week 5: Identifying Moderators	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. Quiz 3 (June 4) 5M #4 (June 6) Checkpoint #5 (June 6) Exam 1 (June 8)
		 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. Stamps, D. (2020). Race and media: A critical essay acknowledging the current
		state of race-related media effects research and directions for future

		exploration. Howard Journal of Communications, 31(2), 121-136. 4. Banjo, O. O., Appiah, O., Wang, Z., Brown, C., & Walther, W. O. (2015). Coviewing effects of ethnicoriented programming: An examination of in-group bias and racial comedy exposure. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 92(3), 662-680.	
Week 6: Meta Analysis	6.1: Meta analysis 1; 6.2: Meta analysis 2	 Huang, C. (2017). Time spent on social network sites and psychological well-being: A meta-analysis. Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 20(6), 346-354. 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. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 40(5), 578-589. Rains, S. A., Levine, T. R., & Weber, R. (2018). Sixty years of quantitative communication research summarized: Lessons from 149 meta-analyses. Annals of the International Communication Association, 42(2), 105-124. 	5M #5 (June 11) Quiz 4 (June 13)
Week 7:	Week 7:	1. Guernsey, L. G. (2017).	Exam 2
Communicating	Communicatin	Don't take away your teen's	(June 22)

about Media	g about Media	phone: Smartphones are *Research
Effects	Effects	linked to problems, but they Synthesis #2 will
		haven't "destroyed a be available from
		generation." <i>Slate</i> . this week if you
		Retrieved from: would like to start
		http://www.slate.com/article early on this
		s/technology/future_tense/2
		017/08/smartphones_hav
		en_t_destroyed_a_generati on.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> , <i>128</i> (4), 644-649.
		3. French, N. (2011). Will
		SpongeBob make you gay?
		No, but he might make you
		stupid. National Review.
		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. New Scientist.
		Retrieved from:
		https://www.newscientist.co
		m/article/dn20914-
		spongebob-drains-
		attention-but-doesnt-harm-
		brains/
		5. Reilly, G. (2011). It's official:
		SpongeBob SquarePants is
		making our children stupid.
		Business Insider. Retrieved
		from:
		https://www.businessinsider
		.com/its-official- spongebob-
		squarepants-is-making-our- children-stupid-2011-9
		Grillaren-stapia-2011-8
	<u> </u>	

Week 8: Final Refection	No lectures	No readings	Checkpoint #6 (June 25) Research Synthesis #2 (June 27)