



COMM 2985

Media and Well-Being

Summer 2026 – Online & Asynchronous

COURSE OVERVIEW

Instructor

Kate Stewart

stewart.2337@osu.edu

Office hours: By appointment [[zoom link](#)]

Course description

Questions about media's effect on well-being are common among both researchers and the general public. However, there tends to be a disconnect between what the research says and what becomes known in the zeitgeist. This course will take a critical look at historic and present-day claims about media's effect on well-being - such as whether violent videogames incite violence and whether smartphones are addictive. The main goals for this class are (1) to be able to critically assess claims about media's effect on well-being, and (2) to effectively communicate your own stance on media topics.

The course will be broken into three units, each focused on a different dimension of well-being and angle of critical assessment. Unit one will focus on media's effect on physical wellness, and the issue of media effects being largely dependent on individual differences. Unit two will examine media's effect on social wellness, and the issue of context in determining whether social media is harmful or helpful. Unit three will focus on intellectual wellness and how knowledge of media effects is created.

Each week, students will watch lecture videos with accompanying quizzes. There will also be weekly check-in assignments to aid in thinking through the media topics and angles of critical assessment discussed each week. Finally, there will be cumulative assignments building towards the final paper in which students will find evidence in support of their opinion on smartphones, while also navigating the counterargument to their own stance and forming recommendations.

Course learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students should successfully be able to:

- Critically assess claims about media's effect on well-being
- Effectively communicate their own stance on various media topics

General education goals and expected learning outcomes

As part of the new General education (GEN) curriculum, Health and Well-Being Theme of the General Education curriculum, this course is designed to prepare students to be able to do the following:

1. Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than in the Foundations component. [Note: In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.]
2. Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.
3. Students will explore and analyze health and wellbeing through attention to at least two dimensions of wellbeing. (e.g., physical, mental, emotional, career, environmental, spiritual, intellectual, creative, financial, etc.)

Health and Well-Being: Expected Learning Outcomes

ELO 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking

ELO 1.2 Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or ideas within this theme

ELO 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences

ELO 2.2 Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts

ELO 3.1 Explore and analyze health and wellbeing from theoretical, socio-economic, scientific, historical, cultural, technological, policy, and/or personal perspectives

ELO 3.2 Identify, reflect on, or apply strategies for promoting health and wellbeing

This course will achieve the above outcomes through watching lecture videos (and taking comprehension quizzes) to learn the main concepts. Weekly check-in assignments will ask students to pull from their personal experience, and what they may have learned in past classes, in their evaluation of media effects. Students will also find, evaluate, and cite information from peer-reviewed and popular press sources, that both supports and refutes their stance on a media topic. Students will be asked to form their own opinions, evaluate both supporting evidence and counterarguments, and make evidence-based recommendations.

HOW THIS 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 unlock each week at 12:00am on Monday. All assignments for a week are due the following Sunday at 11:59pm. Students are expected to keep pace with weekly deadlines but may schedule their efforts freely within each 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.

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 everyone's expected participation:

- **Participating in online activities: 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*.
 - **Weekly lecture videos:**
Each week, there will be two lecture videos posted. One video will be a content video discussing the existing research on an issue related to media's effect on well-being. The second video will be a skill video discussing different skills needed to effectively articulate a well-informed opinion on media effects research.
 - **Weekly lecture quizzes:**
Each week, there will be a brief quiz on the two lecture videos.
 - **Weekly check-ins:**
Each week, there will be a check-in assignment related to the lecture videos. Check-in assignments will rotate between 'skill checks' and 'content reflections.' At the end of each unit (every other week), students will be asked to write a brief paper reflecting on the two content videos from that unit. Skill checks will be every other week and will reinforce what was covered in the skill videos from that unit.
 - **Stance assignments:**

The final paper for this course asks students to take a stance on smartphones (a. harmful or b. a moral panic). Students will find evidence that both supports and challenges their stance and provide evidence-based recommendations to the general public. Each week, there will be a stance assignment that focusses on one part of the final paper, so that students can build towards the final product throughout the semester.

COURSE MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Textbooks

REQUIRED

- None – all reading material will be available through Carmen

Course technology

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 <https://it.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24/7.

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

BASELINE TECHNICAL SKILLS FOR ONLINE COURSES

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen: for questions about specific functionality, see the [Canvas Student Guide](#).

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

- **Computer:** current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- **Other:** a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) or landline to use for BuckeyePass authentication

REQUIRED SOFTWARE

- **Microsoft Office 365:** All Ohio State students are now eligible for free Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus through Microsoft's Student Advantage program. Full instructions for downloading and installation can be found [at go.osu.edu/office365help](http://go.osu.edu/office365help).

CARMEN ACCESS

You will need to use [BuckeyePass](#) 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.
- Download the [Duo Mobile application](#) 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
Lecture quizzes	7 quizzes 5 points each	35 points
Check-in assignments	7 check-ins 3 points each	21 points
Stance assignments	5 assignments 3 points each	15 points
Course feedback	2 surveys 2 points each	4 points
Final Paper	1 paper 25 points	25 points
Total		100

See course schedule below for due dates.

Late assignments

The assignments throughout this semester are meant to build on each other. Implementing the feedback you receive from assignment to assignment will be crucial. As such, assignments need to be submitted in a timely fashion. For all assignments, the submission portal *will no longer be accessible* one week after the deadline. This allows you one week of flexibility, should something come up. However, after the submission portal has locked, I will not accept late submissions for any reason. Due to deadlines for submitting final grades, the final stance paper must be submitted by the deadline.

Grading scale

93–100: A
 90–92.9: A-
 87–89.9: B+
 83–86.9: B
 80–82.9: B-
 77–79.9: C+
 73–76.9: C
 70–72.9: C-
 67–69.9: D+
 60–66.9: D
 Below 60: E

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-HELP** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

- **Grading and feedback:** For weekly assignments, you can generally expect feedback within **7 days**.
- **Email:** I will reply to emails between the hours of 9am to 5pm on weekdays. You are welcome to send me an email any time, but please do not expect a response after 5pm or over the weekend.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS

At various points throughout the semester, I will demonstrate how AI can be a useful jumping off point for finding evidence that supports your claims. However, I will also demonstrate why it should not be used as your entire evidence gathering process. As such, you are welcome to use AI in the ways modeled in lecture, and as a brainstorming assistant. However, all written assignments must be your own original work.

OHIO STATE'S ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the

Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the university's *Code of Student Conduct*, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the university's *Code of Student Conduct* and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the university's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the *Code of Student Conduct* and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

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:

- The Committee on Academic Misconduct web pages ([COAM Home](#))
- *Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity* ([Ten Suggestions](#))
- *Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity* (www.northwestern.edu/uacc/8cards.htm)

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.

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.

Intellectual Diversity

Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

Grievances and Solving Problems

A student who encounters a problem related to his/her educational program has a variety of avenues available to seek resolution. (Note: the procedures for grade grievances are explicitly covered in the faculty rules) Typically, a student is advised to resolve any dispute, disagreement, or grievance as directly as possible, engaging with the person or persons most closely involved. The faculty and staff of the departments and colleges are available to work with students in this regard. If this step does not produce acceptable results, the student should follow a logical stepwise progression to address the academic concerns.

According to University Policies, if you have a problem with this class, you should seek to resolve the grievance concerning a grade or academic practice by speaking first with the instructor or professor. Then, if necessary, take your case to the department chairperson, college dean or associate dean, and to the provost, in that order. Specific procedures are outlined in Faculty Rule 3335-8-23. Grievances against graduate, research, and teaching assistants should be submitted first to the supervising instructor, then to the chairperson of the assistant's department.

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 find yourself feeling isolated, anxious or overwhelmed, please know that there are resources to help: ccs.osu.edu. 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.

Religious accommodations

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement **and** the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the [Civil Rights Compliance Office](#). Policy: [Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances](#)

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 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.

- [CarmenCanvas accessibility](#)
- Streaming audio and video
- [CarmenZoom accessibility](#)
- Collaborative course tools

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Dates	Topic	Tasks
1	6/8 – 6/14	Course Intro	<p>Due 6/14 at 11:59pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: Course Overview • Watch: Media Effects History • Lecture Quiz #1 • Week 1 Check-In
2	6/15 – 6/21	Violence & Media	<p>Due 6/21 at 11:59pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: Violence & Media • Watch: APA • Lecture Quiz #2 • Week 2 Skill Check • Stance Assignment 1
3	6/22 – 6/28	Body Image & Media	<p>Due 6/28 at 11:59pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: Body Image & Media • Watch: Reading Peer-Reviewed • Lecture Quiz #3 • Week 3 Content Reflection • Stance Assignment 2
4	6/29 – 7/5	The Manosphere	<p>Due 7/5 at 11:59pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: Manosphere • Watch: Finding Peer-Reviewed • Lecture Quiz #4 • Week 4 Skill Check • Stance Assignment 3 • Mid-Semester Feedback
5	7/6 – 7/12	Community & Inspiration Online	<p>Due 7/12 at 11:59pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: Community & Inspiration • Watch: Assessing Popular Press • Lecture Quiz #5

Week	Dates	Topic	Tasks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 5 Content Reflection • Stance Assignment 4
6	7/13 – 7/19	Scholarly Disagreeemnt	<p>Due 7/19 at 11:59pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: Research Disagreement • Watch: Crafting an Argument • Lecture Quiz #6 • Week 6 Skill Check • Stance Assignment 5
7	7/20 – 7/26	Popular Press Coverage	<p>Due 7/26 at 11:59pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: Press Coverage • Watch: Final Stance Paper • Lecture Quiz #7 • Week 7 Content Reflection • End of Semester Feedback
8	7/27 – 7/30	Course Wrap-Up	<p>Due 7/30 at 11:59pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Stance Paper