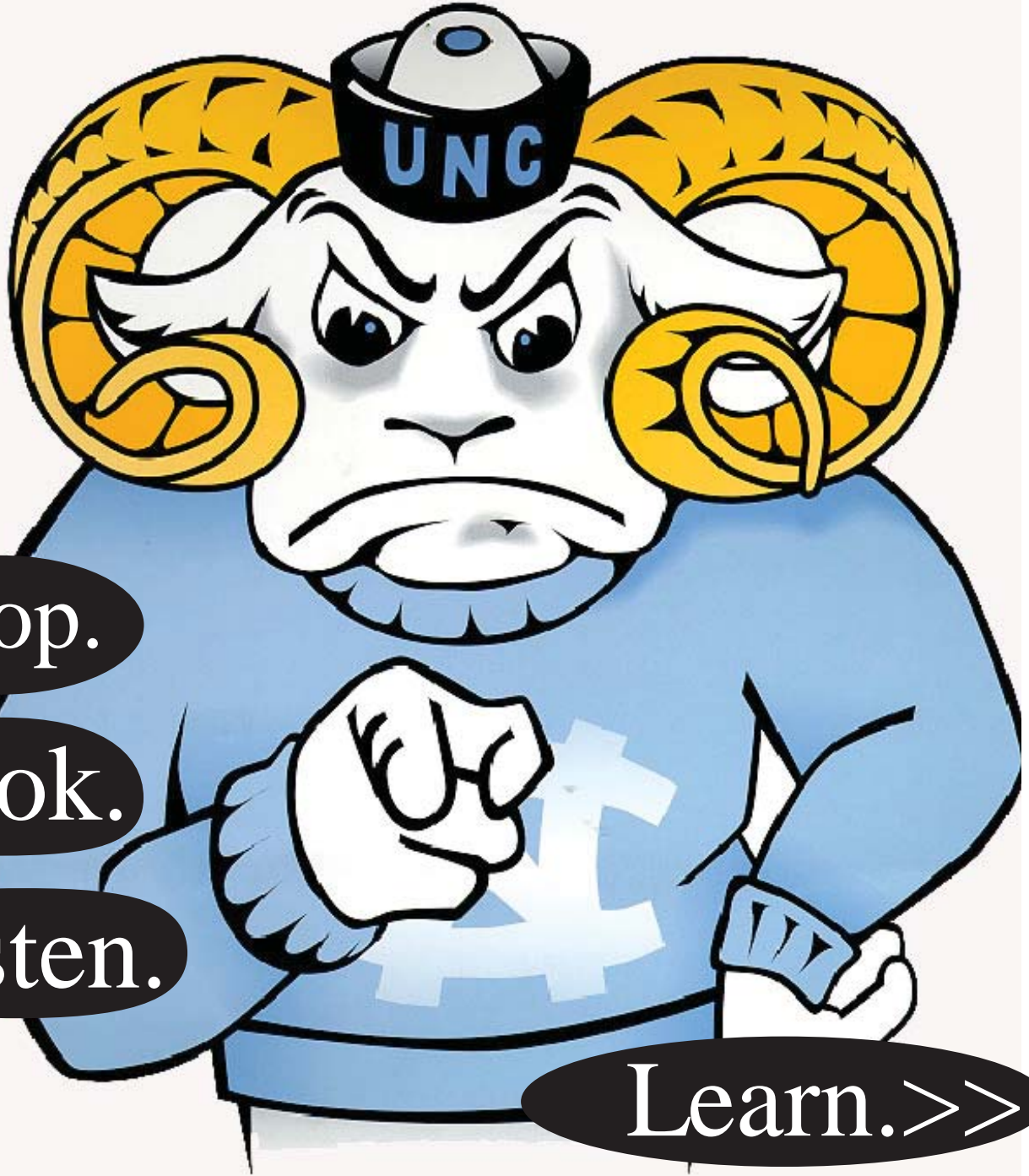




UNC

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
AND MASS COMMUNICATION



Stop.

Look.

Listen.

Learn. >>

JoMC 240: Current Issues in Mass Media explores the *interrelationships* between U. S. *mass media* and the *society they serve*. The course also covers how the *digital revolution* is changing the way we *live, think* and *communicate*.

Syllabus for Spring 2015



★Educate

★Entertain

★Enrich

★Engage

★Empower

★Enlighten

JoMC 240.1: Current Issues in Mass Media

Spring 2015 class session:

5:45 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Wednesday in 143 Carroll Hall

Instructor: **Debashis "Deb" Aikat**, Ph. D.

Associate Professor

Office: 374 Carroll Hall

Phone: Office: (919) 962-4090

E-mail: da@unc.edu

Home Page: <http://jomc.unc.edu/directory/faculty/debashis-aikat>

Office hours: 5:10 p.m. to 5:40 p.m., Wednesday,
8:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., Wednesday, and by appointment.
Walk-ins welcome.

The Fine Print

We care for the environment: Please join us in our initiative to reduce paper use. Paper reduction saves money and the environment. To save paper and printing costs, a significant part of the course content will be communicated online. So it is important for you to access the online schedule and check email regularly to get class updates. Please inform me if you do not receive emails from the class mailing list.

Course changes: We reserve the right to change course content, requirements for assignments, grading procedures and other alterations, as appropriate, to the course. While such changes will be discussed and decided in class, under exceptional circumstances, we may incorporate changes without notice.

Grade issues: We are committed toward grades that are fair and appropriate. It is important for you to know that the final grade is an average of several grades that are earned over the semester. Final grades are not negotiable. Doing extra work to improve a final grade is not an option because that would not be fair to other students in the course. If you wish to earn a good grade, work hard from the beginning of the semester.

Access JoMC 240.1 resources with your UNC Onyen and password at : <http://sakai.unc.edu/>



Introduction

JoMC 240: Current Issues in Mass Media will analyze interrelationships between United States mass media and the society they serve. While encouraging students to be active media consumers, this course will cover emergent issues in mass communication with special emphasis on, but not limited to, the assessment of theories and theoretical framework for research questions in mass communication. The course will also cover how the digital revolution has transformed the way we live, think and communicate.

This course will cover readings, discussion and research projects that advance an understanding of the role and function (and dysfunctions) of mass media and mass communication in society and the world.



Objectives

This course covers the on-going transformations in mass media and offers accessible insight into the important issues through lively examples, case studies, and conceptual analyses. This course thus provides a deeper understanding of the media's role in shaping and reflecting society. Based on this media perspective, we seek to understand and appreciate how audience members are as much a part of the mass communication process as are the media producers, technologies, and industries.

JoMC 240 will also provide a theoretical and conceptual understanding of the present state of the rapidly-evolving digital age and a research map for the future to address how our lives will be shaped and enhanced by mass communication. We will analyze how advancements in communication have transformed workplaces, households, businesses, educational institutions and the government.

What You Will Learn

This course is not designed to teach everything, but it should help you improve your conceptual grasp of communication issues and their impact. The course goals are:

- To improve our understanding of the impact of mass communication on various facets of our lives; learn about legal and policy obstacles and possible solutions;
- To learn a variety of research techniques employing traditional and modern tools;
- To gain a better appreciation of the impact of mass communication on society; and
- To examine the impact of mass communication on major sectors of society (business, law, health care, government, media, education, etc.) and discuss major concerns.





How Much Work Is This Course, Anyway ?

You should count on spending at least six hours a week outside class working on assignments/projects. You should also complete the assigned readings on time. This course may require a lot of your time, depending on how well you plan your work schedule. The major projects should be completed outside class and will comprise library work, research, and writing.

Pick Your Project Topics Now!

We will work on a phased sequence of research projects, some relating a topic of your choice.



- Pick a topic you like so the tasks are meaningful for you.
- You are encouraged to do research that might be useful for real-life situations or toward completing your dissertation or or thesis or a professional project that you can include in your portfolio.
- Consider your selection carefully for feasibility because you will be working on the research paper/professional project all semester, and it may be time-consuming to change later.

Specific requirements for the research paper/professional project and writing a proposal will be discussed during the second week of class. If you need help selecting a topic, please let me know.

Class Presentations

You may be assigned to collect and present information on specific aspects of mass communication. This will help you and our class gain more information on a specific issue. You may put all the information on Web pages to share the information with other interested scholars around the world. You may be asked to provide a structured self-assessment of your learning experience. The specific details about the project, including format, deadlines, will be announced later.

Grade Appeal

You have the right to appeal any grade in this course. You are free to talk with me about a grade in this course and discuss my determination of that grade.

If you are not satisfied, you may submit your appeal in writing along with the assignment or project in question. I will respond to your appeal. If you are not satisfied, you may appeal to your academic dean.

The academic dean will consider the merits of the grade appeal. After careful consideration, the dean may reject or accept your grade appeal. The dean may also appoint a grade-appeal committee to consider your complaint and will recommend action to the dean who appointed the committee.

Once reported, permanent grades may not be changed except for clerical or arithmetical error or by a successful grade appeal, as outlined above. The grade appeal must be filed no later than the last day for late registration of the next succeeding regular semester.



Carolina's Most Valued Tradition: Academic Integrity

All work will be done in a professional environment. Although the structure of this course prevents many of the usual opportunities for dishonesty, it is important that you know the University regulations state: "It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and to support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating or stealing when actions involve academic processes of University, student or academic personnel acting in an official capacity."



How We Grade Projects

In most disciplines the aim of research is to generate new knowledge. The purpose of this class is to inspire critical thinking on theories and concepts relating to current issues in mass communication. You will be expected to learn and use a variety of research strategies discussed in the assigned reading and in class. As you might guess, evaluating research papers and professional projects is subjective in many ways. All research projects will be evaluated on the following considerations:

- All projects should be based on critical thinking.
- Your research should be based on theoretical integrations.
- You should explore research that contributes new knowledge.
- Your projects should be based on originality and indepth research.

Students With Special Needs

If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of learning disabilities or other types of disabilities, please feel free to come and discuss this with me.

Class Format

This course is specifically designed to hone your research skills. To this end, the structure of the course is based on the following assumptions:

- That research is a skill needed in all sequences.
- That research is creative, not a mechanical process; it takes imagination to do well.
- That developing research skills also means developing abilities to evaluate, analyze, synthesize and conceptualize.
- That research is best learned by doing research.
- That much can be learned about research from fellow students.

Assumptions

Each class session will provide an overview of an aspect of mass communication. This will include a introduction to related theories and their impact on society. You may be assigned to prepare presentations or share your experience with the class. In order to better understand different sides of communication issues, students may occasionally be asked to engage in class debate.



ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), evaluates professional journalism and mass communications programs in colleges and universities. The ACEJMC requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies. This course covers the following values and competencies:

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;

This course is designed to build your abilities in each of these areas depending on your research interests and specific area of specialization. We will also address the values and competencies, as outlined above, in the course content.

We Cherish Diversity

We cherish diversity in communication and scholarship. Diversity is vital to journalism and communication. This class prohibits in its policies, procedures, or practices relating to willful discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. This class seeks to create and maintain a positive atmosphere of nondiscrimination. Acts of discrimination, harassment and insensitivity hurt and degrade all members of the learning community whether victim, perpetrator, or observer. As a community of scholars, this class affirms its commitment to equal opportunity for all.



Debashis "Deb" Aikat, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
CB# 3365, 374 Carroll Hall
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3365, U. S. A.



Work: (919) 962-4090
and (919) 962-1204
Fax: (919) 962-0620
Email: da@unc.edu
Home Page: <http://goo.gl/EqUxm>

A FINAL NOTE

Dear Students in JoMC 240 Spring 2015:

Welcome to JoMC 240 - Current Issues in Mass Media! Thank you for choosing this class as part of your coursework. *You have paid your hard-earned money for enriching academic experience.* Thus, our job is to ensure that when you leave this class in May, you truly feel *you have received your money's worth.*

You are the most important part of this University. You do not depend on me - I depend on you. *You are not an interruption of my work - you are the purpose of it.* I am not doing you a favor by serving you - you are doing me a favor by giving me the opportunity to work with you.

My job is to make your educational experience as *stimulating and rewarding* as I can and to create an environment conducive to facilitating your learning experience. *However, I cannot perform my job alone.*

I need your help. *Your job is to attend class with an open mind and with enthusiasm* because I cannot teach you anything unless you are willing to learn.

If at any time during the course of your semester *you feel that you are not getting your money's worth, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me.* I look forward to spending the next several weeks with you. I will give 130% toward making this *a unique and valuable learning experience for you.*

In conclusion, as we begin our journey together this semester I would like you to consider the following words:

"The only limitations in our lives are those we place on ourselves."

Here's wishing you the very best for the Spring semester!

- I firmly believe in the value of *an informal and flexible learning environment.* Feel free to make suggestions about *what you would like to get out of this class.* I believe in a team effort and your ideas are as valuable as mine.
- I view my responsibility as working with you to learn about mass communication issues, to *produce high quality work* and to achieve *a good grade* for your efforts. If you need help, I am here to provide it. *Do not wait until it is too late.* If you have a problem, please communicate with me and we will see what we can do about it.





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Dr. Debashis “Deb” Aikat

Associate Professor
UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism
and Mass Communication

A former journalist, **DEBASHIS “DEB” AIKAT** (pronounced EYE-kat) has been a faculty member since 1995 in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-Chapel Hill), which is classified as a leading research university by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

An award-winning researcher and teacher, Dr. Aikat theorizes on the role of social media, international communication, news media and the future of communication in the digital age.

Dr. Aikat’s research interests range across the mass media. His research has been published in book chapters and refereed journals such as *First Amendment Studies*, *Health Communication*, *International Journal of Interactive Communication Systems and Technologies*, *Global Media and Communication*, *Electronic Journal of Communication*, *Popular Music and Society*, *Convergence: The Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, and publications of the Association for Computing Machinery, Microsoft Corporation, and the International Radio and Television Society (IRTS). He has reviewed manuscripts for the *Journalism and Communication Monographs*, *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Communication* and leading publishers such as Sage, Wiley, Routledge, McGraw-Hill, and Oxford University Press.

The Scripps Howard Foundation recognized Dr. Aikat as the inaugural winner of the “National Journalism Teacher of the Year award” (2003) for his “distinguished service to journalism education.” The IRTS named him the Coltrin Communications Professor of the Year (1997). Dr. Aikat served from 2007 through 2013 as an elected member of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), which evaluates journalism and mass communications programs in universities. He chaired in 2009-10 the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)’s Committee on Teaching. He has served since 2011 as an elected member of the AEJMC’s Committee on Professional Freedom & Responsibility, which addresses freedom, ethics, media criticism and accountability, racial, gender, cultural inclusiveness, and public service.

Besides teaching on-campus classes, Dr. Aikat has taught online courses since 1997. He conceptualized in 1997 UNC’s first online course in journalism and developed in 2003 a graduate-level online certificate program in “Technology and Communication.” He has won fellowships from renowned research institutions such as the Institute for the Arts and Humanities (2000 & 2003) and the Journalism Leadership Institute in Diversity (2004-05) of the AEJMC and the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication (ASJMC).

His awards for excellence in research and teaching (*see vita for a full list*) include AEJMC Communication Technology Division Top Paper Award (2003), a Distinguished Teaching Award for Post-Baccalaureate Instruction (2003), UNC-Chapel Hill’s highest honor for excellence in graduate studies, the David Brinkley Teaching Excellence Award (2000), AEJMC’s Baskett Mosse Award (1999), the Tanner Faculty Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (1999), the UNC-Chapel Hill Students’ Undergraduate Teaching Award (1998), and an IBM Research Fund Award (1995). Several UNC-Chapel Hill senior classes have honored him with the Edward Kidder Graham-Favorite Faculty Awards from 1997 through 2005.

Dr. Aikat earned in 1995 a Ph. D. in Mass Communication and Journalism from Ohio University’s Scripps School of Journalism. He completed in 1990 a Certificate in American Political Culture from the New York University. He has lectured in Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Americas.

He graduated with distinction, attaining first rank in M. A. Journalism in 1990, from the University of Calcutta, India, where he also earned a B. A. with honors in English literature in 1984. He worked as a journalist in India for the Ananda Bazar Patrika’s *The Telegraph* newspaper from 1984 through 1992. He also reported for the BBC World Service.

Born in India, Dr. Aikat and his wife, Jay, became U.S. citizens in 2003. Jay is a faculty member in the Department of Computer Science at UNC-Chapel Hill. Before earning a Ph.D. in computer science, Jay led for eight years information technology initiatives at UNC-Chapel Hill, Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, a full service law firm, and Ohio University. They live in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, with their two children.

• Student Survey for JOMC 240.1 •

7.) Rate from 1 to 18 (in order of your interest) the following areas relating to communication technology.
(Put "1" for the most important and "18" for the least important)

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> business | <input type="checkbox"/> politics | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> gender issues | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> media | <input type="checkbox"/> electronic communities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> racial issues | <input type="checkbox"/> pornography | <input type="checkbox"/> government | <input type="checkbox"/> international issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> digital divide | <input type="checkbox"/> net history | <input type="checkbox"/> net trivia | <input type="checkbox"/> information overload |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ | | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ | |

8.) What would you like to get out of this class, besides a good grade and three credits?

9.) How did you first come to know about this course? Please be specific.

Name(s) of person(s), if any, who recommended the course _____

Name(s) of former students, if any, who told you about this course _____

10.) What are some of your concerns/aspirations about this course? We'll try our best to address them. Feel free to discuss them with us.

Your concerns:

Your aspirations:

Thank You! We appreciate your comments.
Please submit this form before you leave.

Important Note: The course schedule (as outlined here) may change as the semester evolves to create the best learning environment for you.

Course Calendar for JoMC 240: Current Issues in Mass Media

[\[Read JoMC 240 course syllabus for Spring 2015\]](#)



~~ Course Schedule **Weeks 1 through 17** (*Scroll to the bottom of this page*).

~~ **Week 1: Jan 7 (Wed.):**

Introduction to Current Issues in Mass Media

[click link to visit module]

Read or view before class:

*** Complete in class the [Spring 2015 JoMC 240 Survey](#).

*** [Read JoMC 240 course syllabus for Spring 2015](#)

~~ **Week 2: Jan. 14, (Wed.):**

The Evolution of Media Theories

[click link to visit module]

Read or view before class:

*** Access JoMC 240.1 resources at: <http://sakai.unc.edu/> with your UNC Onyen and password

~~ **Week 3: Jan. 21 (Wed.):**

Media Reflect the Society They Serve

[click link to visit module]

{MLK Holiday >> Jan 19, Mon.}

Read or view before class:

*** Access JoMC 240.1 resources at: <http://sakai.unc.edu/> with your UNC Onyen and password

~~ **Week 4: Jan. 28 (Wed.):**

Media Trends: Information Overload

[click link to visit module]

Read or view before class:

*** Access JoMC 240.1 resources at: <http://sakai.unc.edu/> with your UNC Onyen and password

Important Note: The course schedule (as outlined here) may change as the semester evolves to create the best learning environment for you.

~~ Week 5: Feb. 4. (Wed):

[The Verbal and the Visual](#)

[click link to visit module]

Read or view before class:

*** Access JoMC 240.1 resources at: <http://sakai.unc.edu/> with your UNC Onyen and password

~~ Week 6: Feb. 11. (Wed):

[Disruptive Innovations Transform Media](#)

[click link to visit module]

Read or view before class:

*** Access JoMC 240.1 resources at: <http://sakai.unc.edu/> with your UNC Onyen and password

~~ Week 7: Feb. 18. (Wed):

[The Media as a Source of Knowledge](#) *[click link to visit module]*

Read or view before class:

Project tips: Act as a curator of the best and worst sources on your research topic!

*** Access JoMC 240.1 resources at: <http://sakai.unc.edu/> with your UNC Onyen and password

~~ Week 8: Feb. 25 (Wed):

[Disruptive Innovations Transform Media](#)

[click link to visit module]

Read or view before class:

*** Access JoMC 240.1 resources at: <http://sakai.unc.edu/> with your UNC Onyen and password

~~ Week 9: Mar. 4. (Wed):

[Theorizing Media](#)

[click link to visit module]

Read or view before class:

*** Access JoMC 240.1 resources at: <http://sakai.unc.edu/> with your UNC Onyen and password

Important Note: The course schedule (as outlined here) may change as the semester evolves to create the best learning environment for you.

~~ Week 10: No class on March 11
{Spring Break >> 5 p.m., Mar. 6, Fri., through Mar.. 15, Sun.}

~~ Week 11: Mar. 18 (Wed):
[The Social Media of the Future](#)
[click link to visit module]

Read or view before class:

*** Access JoMC 240.1 resources at: <http://sakai.unc.edu/> with your UNC Onyen and password

~~ Week 12: Mar. 25, (Wed):
[Dark Side of the Media](#)
[click link to visit module]

Read or view before class:

*** Access JoMC 240.1 resources at: <http://sakai.unc.edu/> with your UNC Onyen and password

~~ Week 13: Apr. 1, (Wed):
[The News Media Revolution](#)
[click link to visit module]

Read or view before class:

*** Access JoMC 240.1 resources at: <http://sakai.unc.edu/> with your UNC Onyen and password

~~ Week 14: Apr. 8, (Wed):
[Sexist Media Images](#)
[click link to visit module]

Read or view before class:

*** Access JoMC 240.1 resources at: <http://sakai.unc.edu/> with your UNC Onyen and password

~~ Week 15: Apr. 15, (Wed):
[Each One Teach One](#)
[click link to visit module]

Important Note: The course schedule (as outlined here) may change as the semester evolves to create the best learning environment for you.

~~ Week 16: Apr. 22, (Wed):

[Role of Media in Society](#)

[click link to visit module]

Read or view before class:

*** Submit your Final Project by 6 pm EST, Tue., Apr. 22, 2015 (100 points).

*** Access JoMC 240.1 resources at: <http://sakai.unc.edu/> with your UNC Onyen and password

*** April 17, Friday: Email invitation to evaluate this course.

*** April 28, Tuesday: Complete evaluations (course evaluation site closes midnight, April 29, Wednesday).

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~ Classes End: Fri., April. 24, 2015

~ First day of Exams: Mon., April 27, 2015

~ Reading Day#1: Wed., April 29, 2015

~ Reading Day#2: Sat., May 2, 2015

~ Last day of Exams: Tue., May 5, 2015

~ Spring Commencement: Sun., May 10, 2015

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**End of course calendar**