JOMC 240

Current Issues in Mass Media

5:30-8:15 p.m. Mondays

Carroll 143

**Instructor**: John Robinson

**Office**: Carroll 221

**Office Hours:** 11 a.m.-5 p.m. M; 10:30 a.m.-noon W -- Ask for help. That's why I'm here.

**Phone**: 336-312-1018

**Emails:** robinsjl@email.unc.edu

25johnrobinson@gmail.com

**Twitter:** @johnrobinson -- Follow me

**Blog:** johnlrobinson.com -- Bookmark it

Netflix. TV. Facebook. Twitter. Instagram. Movies. Pinterest. Newspapers. Snapchat. Radio. Google. The world of mass media has changed since your parents were your age. It has changed since you walked into class. In fact, it's more than a simple change; it's a media tsunami. Nothing will stop it. Everything is being rethought, re-engineered and newly created. This course will analyze the dramatic fracturing and evolution of mass media, the growth of social media, the erosion of personal privacy, and the obscuring of truth as it hits the media. And that's just Day 1.

**Course objectives:**

\* To help you develop your skills and strengthen your knowledge concerning the media, their content and their effects on society as well as on us as individuals.

\* To learn how to analyze the quality of the media messages that bombard us.

**\*** To leap onto this fast-moving train, to scramble to the front and to learn to steer this locomotive.

**Required text:** There is not one. Each week you will be assigned significant readings and videos to watch before the class.

**Your assignments**:

\* Participation: Active participation is vital to the success of the class. If you want to sit and listen to a lecture, take another class. Effective participation is achieved two ways: in-class discussion and out-of-class blogging.

> In class: Much of the class time will involve students discussing issues of the day and how the media are dealing with them. Come with ideas based on the reading and your personal experiences.

## > Out of class: Each student will create a blog and post a minimum of three media observations with links per week. The number of entries, the level of your insight, and your interactivity with others will determine your grade. Your posts should be related to developments in mass media or to your personal reflections of how media are affecting you. For instance, you could link to and write about the disruption of media on business, government, relationships or media itself. You could write about the NSA, privacy, credibility and truth in the media. The best blogs will be a mix. This is not a journal of the day's news events. It is a blog of media developments.

> Out of class/in class: In each class two students will lead a discussion on mass media developments that they've found interesting. Dates will be assigned on Day 1.

\* Readings: Keeping up with the assigned reading/videos is required. As such, there will be a 10-question test at the beginning of each class. The test will serve to assure accountability and verify that you're come to class prepared for discussions. If you have completed the homework, you will have no problem answering the questions.

\* Research project: This will serve as your final. You will be given your topic on the first day of class. You will have all semester to work on it. Because of that, I have high expectations for your research and insight. Procrastinate at your own peril. It can take a variety of forms. A paper: 10 pages with at least 10 sources. If it is a video or recording, make a proposal to me. If you think you have an idea for the next Twitter, let's hear it.

**Grades**: Grading will be done on a 10-point scale.

\* Participation -- 40 percent

\* Weekly quizzes -- 30 percent

\*Research project -- 30 percent

**Attendance:** With only one class per week, attendance is mandatory. More than one absence will result in lowering your grade, and I hate to lower a grade for this reason so don't make me. There will also be exercises in class that cannot be made up by those who are absent.

**Class behavior:** The class will be broken into segments that include some lecture, some discussion, some presentation, some activity and some video.

\* Class will start at 5:30 p.m. Don't disrespect me or your fellow classmates by deciding that you don't need to be there from the start. If you're rushing from a class elsewhere that ends at 5:30, let me know.

\* Mute your phone.

\* We will have a 10-minute break halfway through the class to recharge.

\* During class discussions, disagreement is expected. Heck, some of you may want to disagree just to make things interesting. I certainly will. In those cases, show respect. It's the Carolina way.

\* Some days you will need a laptop in class to complete activities. However, whenever someone is addressing the class, laptops are to be closed.

**Syllabus**: Because the title of this course is "Current Issues in Mass Media," I reserve the right to change the syllabus throughout the semester as news and needs arise. You will be given plenty of advance notice.

**Honor Code:** I expect that you conduct yourself within the guidelines of the university honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this university demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class.

**Diversity:** The university’s policy statements on Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination are outlined in the 2012-2013 Undergraduate Bulletin (<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/intro.html>). In summary, UNC does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression or disabilities.

**Harassment:** UNC does not tolerate harassment based on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, disability or for any other reason. It is also a violation of the Honor Code and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Title IX of the Educational Amendments. If you need assistance with a harassment issue or problem, bring it to my attention or The Office of the Dean of Students, [dos@unc.edu](mailto:dos@unc.edu) or 919.966.4042.

## Professional values and competencies:

## The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is accredited via the Accrediting Council on Journalism and Mass Communications, which requires students to learn key values and competencies (see the full list here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>). Those that are most applicable to JOMC 101 are:

* 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.
* think critically, creatively and independently

**Special Accommodations:** If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let us know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Department of Disability Services website at [http://disabilityservices.unc.edu](http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/) or call 919/962-8300. If you need assistance or services from the Academic Success Program for Students with LD/ADHD please contact them at 919/962-7227 or <http://www.unc.edu/asp/>.

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