MEJO 445.001—Process and Effects of Mass Communication Fall 2019

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**Meeting Times:** Monday & Wednesday, 8am-9:15am, Carroll Hall 143 **Office Hours:** Monday 9:30 am-11 am and by appointment.

**Course Overview:** This course is an introduction to various aspects of the processes and effects that characterize the world of mass communication. This course will adopt an empirical approach to understanding various media phenomena. Through a combination of readings, lecture, and discussion, we will examine the psychological effects of media and the theoretical frameworks that have led to the development of the media effects paradigm as one of the most fascinating and important areas in mass communication. You will also learn to critically analyze and evaluate published research, and design and conduct a project that will demonstrate your understanding of media effects. At the end of the course, you should become more discerning consumers, and perhaps practitioners, of media, with a deeper understanding and appreciation of media effects and the processes governing them in modern society.

**Course Books:**

Ariely, Dan. (2008). *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions.* New York: HarperCollins.

Heath, Chip, and Dan Heath. *Made to stick: Why some ideas survive and others die*. Random House, 2007.

In addition, you will be required to find and I will post selected readings during the course of the semester.

**Contacting me and turning in assignments**

If you have questions, please email me at the address listed above. If I don’t respond to you within 48 hours during weekdays, please assume that I didn’t receive your email, and email me again. I would also be happy to set up an appointment to speak with you in person or by phone.

**Course Work & Grading**:

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| Assignment | Weight |
| Discussion posts | 10% |
| Quizzes | 15% |
| Media reflection midterm | 20% |
| Team Research Proposal | 15% |
| Final Team Research Project | 15% |
| Attendance & participation | 15% |
| Research participation | 5% |
| Peer evaluation | 5% |

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A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- 70-72, D = 60-69, F = 59 or below

**Schedule:** The schedule includes the main topics for each week and the reading required for the meeting. The lectures will not repeat material in the readings; rather, they will add different perspectives to the existing material. Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings BEFORE coming to class.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week & Topic | Day | | Assignments |
| Class overview | 8/21 |  | |
| 1 Intro to Media Effects | 8/26 | See Sakai: pages 1-12 of *The Ambivalent Internet* | |
| The Media Effects Tradition | 8/28 | Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIJDBgAW4L4> (through 53:00) | |
| 2 | 9/2 | NO CLASS – Happy Memorial Day! Sept. 3 is last day to add/drop | |
| Research methods | 9/4 | See Sakai: Wheelan, Naked Statistics, Ch. 2 Descriptive Statistics and Ch. 3 Deceptive Description | |
| 3 Research methods | 9/9 | QUIZ #1  See Sakai: Webster, *The Marketplace of Attention*, Ch 4. Media Measures  Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, “Designing for Trustworthiness,” chap. 6, Interpretive Research Design (Sakai) | |
| Network Model of memory | 9/11 | See Sakai, *Made to Stick*, Chapters 1-3 | |
| 4 Priming and framing | 9/16 | Ariely, Ch 2-3 | |
| Agenda setting | 9/18 | DUE: proposal objective ideas  See Sakai: Francesca R. Dillman Carpentier, “Agenda Setting and Priming Effects Based on Information Presentation” | |
| 5 ELM | 9/23 | QUIZ #2  Guest speaker, Fernanda Mediano Stoltze  Ariely, Ch. 1 The Truth about Relativity | |
| Library research | 9/25 | Guest speaker, Stephanie Brown  Readings: TBD | |
| 6 Interactions with media personae | 9/30 | See Sakai: Horton, D., & Richard Wohl, R. “Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance” | |
| Persuasion | 10/2 | Ariely Ch 4 and 9  See Sakai: Dickerson, C. A., Thibodeau, R., Aronson, E., & Miller, D. “Using Cognitive Dissonance to Encourage Water Conservation” | |
| 7 Persuasion | 10/7 | QUIZ #3  Guest speaker, Meredith Collins  Readings TBD | |
| Violent media | 10/9 | Watch *Tough Guise 2,* available through UNC kanopy | |
| 8 | 10/14 | Research proposal presentations  DUE: Team research proposal | |
|  | 10/16 | Research proposal presentations | |
| 9 Active audience theories | 10/21 | Jenkins, *Fans, Bloggers, and Participatory Culture*, Ch. 13 (available online through UNC Libraries)”  See Sakai for chapter: Webster, *The Marketplace of Attention*, Ch. 2 Media Users | |
| Effects of new media | 10/23 | See Sakai for chapters: Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, Ch. 7 & Ch. 8. | |
| 10 WILD CARD DAY | 10/28 | QUIZ #4  **DUE: Media Reflection Assignment** | |
|  | 10/30 | Final project consultations | |
| 11 | 11/4 | Final project consultations | |
|  | 11/6 | Final project consultations | |
| 12 | 11/11 | Final project consultations | |
|  | 11/13 | Final project consultations | |
| 13 | 11/18 | Final project consultations | |
|  | 11/20 | Final project consultations | |
| 14 | 11/25 | Final project consultations | |
|  | 11/27 | NO CLASS- Happy Thanksgiving! | |
| 15 | 12/2 | **FINAL PROJECT TEAM PRESENTATIONS** | |
|  | 12/4 | **FINAL PROJECT TEAM PRESENTATIONS** | |
|  |  | **FINAL PROJECT REPORT DUE 12/6, 8 AM** | |

Note: Based on your input and our progress, I reserve the right to amend and change the syllabus, reading schedules, and grading events during the semester.

**Discussion posts:** You will submit a discussion post via Sakai once a week that expands on an idea from one of the course readings for that week. All discussion posts must be submitted by 8 p.m. the night before class. Submitting extra discussion posts in one week will not make up for missed discussion posts in other weeks. If reading is only assigned for one class session during the week, you must complete the discussion post for that class. The purpose of these discussion posts is to give you the opportunity to think, and more importantly write, about insights gained from the readings so that you will meaningful contribute to the class discussion and coursework. You may critique the reading, write about questions you have, or any other angle you would like. This is not a summary though. Do not summarize any of the readings.

**Media reflection midterm:** The purpose of the assignment is to give you the chance to reflect on your own media consumption, in light of the theoretical concepts we will learn about in class. Please turn in your paper by the start of class on 10/28. Please see Sakai for a more detailed assignment sheet.

**Team research project:** The primary purpose of the team research project is to provide teams the opportunity to fully develop a research design, collect data, and report their results. Student teams will be expected to apply their knowledge of theory and research methods for the process and effects of mass communication to arrive at a well-structured, sound media effects research project that addresses an approved objective. Teams will submit a project proposal and a final report, as well as present the proposals and final reports to the class. Please see Sakai for more detailed assignment sheets.

**Attendance & Classroom Policies:** You are a vital part of the success of this course, so your attendance is desired, welcomed, and expected. This course depends on your ability to critique and discuss the readings and content covered in class. I expect your attention to be on the discussion we’re having in class. Therefore, I will expect that your cell phones and other devices are powered off and that computers are only present in class if you are taking notes or viewing materials as assigned by the instructor.

You should come to class prepared to discuss the readings for that day. That means completing the assigned readings before you arrive to class.

I will take roll every class session at the beginning of class. A student will be considered absent if they arrive to class more than 10 minutes late and/or they leave class early. I do understand that some class absences are unavoidable, so you may take 3 absences without it affecting your grade. Use these wisely, for personal reasons or for reasons that the university defines as excused (religious, family emergency, illness or participation in university sanctioned activities). You decide if you need to take an absence and for what purpose.

**Research participation requirement:** Students in MEJO 445 are required to complete two hours of research participation over the course of the semester. There are two ways you can fulfill this requirement. First, you can participate in two hours of academic research studies in the School of Media and Journalism. Participating in studies is a valuable way for you to receive firsthand experience with research. If you are enrolled in another MEJO class that has a research participation requirement, it may also satisfy the research requirement for this course. Second, you can write 2 one-page summaries and critiques of academic research articles. Each review counts for one hour of research participation, so you can combine participation in the studies with article reviews to fulfill the research requirement. You may summarize any research article published in the past two years in the following journals: Media Psychology, Journal of Advertising, Journal of Public Relations Research, Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, Public Relations Review, or Mass Communication and Society. You must identify the author, date, article title, and journal title on each of your summaries.

**Honor Code:** I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself 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. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor’s responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean Charlie Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

**Seeking Help:** If you need individual assistance, it’s your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

**Diversity:** The School of Media and Journalism adopted Diversity and Inclusion Mission and Vision statements in spring 2016 with accompanying goals - http://www.mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion. UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities based on age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

**Special Accommodations:** If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Services website at https://accessibility.unc.edu/

**Title IX/SAFE at UNC**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here <http://campusconversation.web.unc.edu/resources/>

**Accreditation:** The School of Journalism and Mass Communication’s accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on these six bullet dots under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above:

* demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
* understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
* 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;
* apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.