**MEJO 445.001 – Processes and Effects of Mass Communication**

**Fall 2021**

**Instructor:** Lee McGuigan, PhD

Assistant Professor

Hussman School of Journalism and Media

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Carroll Hall – Room 355

[leemcg@email.unc.edu](mailto:leemcg@email.unc.edu)

**Meeting Times:** Monday & Wednesday 8:00am-9:15am

**Meeting Place:** Carroll Hall – Room 143

**Office Hours:** Monday 10:00-11:00am, Tuesday 12:30pm-1:30pm, and by appointment

***We will be learning together this semester under ongoing conditions of exceptional difficulty. Please approach each other and yourselves with patience, compassion, and care. We will get through this together as best we can.***

**Course Overview:** This course examines mediated communication as a social process. We’ll look at the forces that shape media systems and the messages they produce and distribute, as well as the effects of those message and media systems on how individuals and groups live their lives and understand the world around them. That means we’ll be dealing with issues of power, identity, technology, business, politics, and more. The starting point for our discussions will be the fact that everyday we engage with complex, industrial systems of storytelling and social interaction.

**Readings**: We will read a mix of academic research, textbook chapters, and essays in popular and literary publications. All readings will be posted to Sakai, unless otherwise noted.

*Please complete the readings* ***before*** *class.*

**Coursework and Grading:** The graded coursework will consist of some writing assignments submitted throughout the semester, a midterm exam, and a debate at the end of the semester. Attendance and participation will also be graded.

**Journal**:

**At the end of each month**, you will submit a journal of mediations about media processes and effects. The idea is to reflect on things you observe in your daily life. You could write about a cultural phenomenon; or something interesting or unusual you notice about how you or someone else is using, interacting with, or responding to media content or media technologies; or just some thoughts about media, culture, and society. As we progress throughout the course, I’ll be looking for you to make an effort at integrating the themes from readings and lectures into your journal entries. **You should make at least three (3) entries per month; the entries for each month should add up to somewhere between 900 – 2,000 words.** For August, just write one entry about your interests in media and communication.

**Debate**:

Working in a group, you will debate another group of your classmates. Each group will defend one paradigm in media effects research and critique another tradition (represented by the other group). That means you will study two paradigms in media effects research. I will provide a reading list for each of those paradigms that you can use to prepare for the debate. We’ll do this at the end of the semester.

**Reading Responses**:

You will write short responses to **three or four** of the readings marked with an asterisk (\*). In your responses, you should restate the main argument in your own words (about one or two paragraphs) and then make a few points about things you liked or didn’t like in the article and why you think it is (or is not) helpful for understanding media processes and effects. If you submit four responses, I will count the top three in your grade; if you submit three responses, each one will count toward your grade. You can submit these any time. **Each response should be approximately 2 double-spaced pages**.

**Assignment Weights:**

Journals 30%

Debate 30%

Midterm exam 25%

Attendance/participation 15%

Reading responses 10%

**Grade Scale:** Your final grade will be calculated using the University’s grading scale: A, B, C, D, F.

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

For detailed descriptions of the grading scale, please see this website: <https://registrar.unc.edu/academic-services/grades/explanation-of-grading-system/>

**Attendance:**

**University Policy:**

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](https://ars.unc.edu/) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](https://eoc.unc.edu/what-we-do/accommodations/) (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](https://odos.unc.edu/), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators,](https://womenscenter.unc.edu/resources/gender-violence-services/) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](https://eoc.unc.edu/what-we-do/accommodations/) (EOC).

**Class Policy**:

If unavoidable circumstances prevent you from attending, please notify me as soon as possible. Please do not come to class if you feel sick or if you think you have come into contact with someone who has COVID-19. *Let me know as soon as possible if you will need to miss class so that we can make the necessary accommodations*.

**Class Schedule:**

***PLEASE check Sakai frequently throughout the semester, as the schedule may change, and new items or information may be added.***

**Week 1**

**August 18**

Welcome and Course overview

No readings

**Week 2**

**August 23**

Introducing media processes and effects

Watch:

PBS, “[War of the Worlds: Chapter 1](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/worlds-chapter-1/),” American Experience (2013).

Read:

Jefferson Pooley and Michael J. Socolow, “[The Myth of the War of the Worlds Panic](https://slate.com/culture/2013/10/orson-welles-war-of-the-worlds-panic-myth-the-infamous-radio-broadcast-did-not-cause-a-nationwide-hysteria.html),” Slate, October 28, 2013.

Nicholas Carr, “[Is Google Making Us Stupid?](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162529)” The Atlantic, July/August (2008)

Tim Hwang, “[The Madness of the Crowd](https://logicmag.io/intelligence/the-madness-of-the-crowd/),” Logic, March 15, 2017.

**August 25**

Introduction to the study of media effects

Read:

Jennings Bryant et al, “[Understanding Media Effects](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162531),” in Fundamentals of Media Effects, 2nd edition (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2009), pp. 3-20

Jennings Bryant et al, “[Media Effects: Historical Overview](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162532),” in Fundamentals of Media Effects, 2nd edition (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2009), pp. 21-34.

**Week 3**

**August 30**

Framing and priming

Read:

Jennings Bryant et al, “[Priming](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162533),” in Fundamentals of Media Effects, 2nd edition (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2009), pp. 74-86.

Jennings Bryant et al, “[Framing](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162534),” in Fundamentals of Media Effects, 2nd edition (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2009), pp. 100-107.

**JOURNALS DUE 08/31**

**September 1**

Agenda setting

Renita Coleman et al., “[Agenda Setting](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162535),” in The Handbook of Journalism Studies, eds. Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsh (New York: Routledge, 2009), 147-160

Oscar H. Gandy, Jr., “[Information in Health: Subsidised News](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162536),” Media, Culture & Society 2, no. 2 (1980): 103-115.

**Week 4**

**September 6 (No class - Labor Day)**

**September 8**

Cultivation analysis

Michael Morgan, “[Cultivation Analysis and Media Effects](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162537),” in The SAGE Handbook of Media Processes and Effects, eds. Robin L. Nabi and Mary Beth Oliver (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2009), 69-82.

OPTIONAL: George Gerbner, “[Cultivation Analysis: An Overview](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162538),” Mass Communication & Society 1, no. 3-4 (1998): 175-194. \*

**Week 5**

**September 13**

Uses and gratifications

Read:

Alan M. Rubin, “[The Uses-and-Gratifications Perspective of Media Effects](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162539),” in Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research, eds., Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillman (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), pp. 525-548.

**September 15**

Encoding/decoding

Read:

Stuart Hall, “[Encoding/Decoding](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162540),” in Culture, Media, Language, eds. Stuart Hall et al. (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 117-127.

**Week 6**

**September 20**

Medium Theory

Read:

Joshua Meyrowitz, “[Medium Theory: An Alternative to the Dominant Paradigm of Media Effects](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162541),” in The SAGE Handbook of Media Processes and Effects, pp. 517-530.

**September 22**

New Media: Electricity and the telephone

Read:

Carolyn Marvin, “[Community and Class Order](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll/plink?u-https%3A%2F%2Febookcentral-proquest-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu%2Flib%2Func%2Freader.action%3FdocID%3D273386%26ppg%3D74),” in When Old Technologies Were New (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 63-108. (at least make it to p. 92)

**Week 7**

**September 27**

New Media: Broadcast television

Lynn Spigel, “[Introduction](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162543)” and “[Women’s Work](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162544),” in Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 1-10, 73-98.

**September 29**

Critiquing the classic tradition of media effects research

Todd Gitlin, “[Media Sociology: The Dominant Paradigm](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162545),” Theory & Society 6, no. 2 (1978): 205-253. \*

**JOURNALS DUE 09/30**

**Week 8**

**October 4**

An updated critique of media effects research

Read:

Sonia Livingstone, “[Audiences in an Age of Datafication: Critical Questions for Media Research](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162546),” Television & New Media 20, no. 2 (2019): 170-183. \*

**October 6**

**\*\*\*Midterm exam\*\*\***

**Week 9**

**October 11**

How media systems construct and organize populations

Read:

Oscar H. Gandy, Jr., “Information and Power,” in The Panoptic Sort: A Political Economy of Personal Information, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 29-50. \*

OPTIONAL: Marcel Rosa-Salas, “[Making the Mass White: How Racial Segregation Shaped Consumer Segmentation](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109164622),” in Race in the Marketplace, eds. Guillaume D. Johnson, Kevin D. Thomas, Anthony Kwame Harrison, and Sonya A. Grier (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 21-38. \*

**October 13**

Brand culture and the discourse through and about objects

Read:

Sarah Banet-Wiser, “[Branding the Authentic](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162547),” in Authentic™: The Politics of Ambivalence in a Brand Culture (New York: NYU Press, 2012), pp. 1-14.

William Leiss et al., “Introduction,” in Social Communication in Advertising: Consumption in the Mediated Marketplace, 4th edition (New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 1-4.

**Week 10**

**October 18**

Social media, processes, and influence

Read:

Alice Marwick, “[Instafame: Luxury Selfies in the Attention Economy](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162549" \t "_blank),” Public Culture 27, no. 1 (2015): 137-160. \*

Sophie Bishop, “[The Safety Dance](https://reallifemag.com/the-safety-dance/),” Real Life, January 11, 2021 \*

Sam Biddle, Paulo Victor Ribeiro, and Tatiana Dias, “[Invisible Censorship: TikTok Told Moderators to Suppress Posts by ‘Ugly People’ and the Poor to Attract Users](https://theintercept.com/2020/03/16/tiktok-app-moderators-users-discrimination/),” The Intercept, March 16, 2020.

**October 20**

Social media, processes, and influence

Read:

Siva Vaidhyanathan, “[Making Sense of the Facebook Menace](https://newrepublic.com/article/160661/facebook-menace-making-platform-safe-democracy),” The New Republic, January 5, 2021. \*

Robin Mansell, “[The Social Dilemma: A Contradictory Narrative About Platform Power](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162551),” The Political Economy of Communication 8, no. 2 (2020): 82-88. \*

Elinor Carmi, “[The Organic Myth](https://reallifemag.com/the-organic-myth/),” Real Life, December 14, 2020. \*

Crystal Abidin and Jing Zeng, “[Feeling Asian Together: Coping With #COVIDRacism on Subtle Asian Traits](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162550),” Social Media + Society, July-September (2020): 1-5. \*

**Week 11**

**October 25**

Algorithms and media

Read:

Safiya Noble, “Searching for Black Girls,” in Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism (New York: NYU Press, 2018), pp. 64-109. \*

**October 27**

Algorithms and society

Read:

Jenna Burrell and Marion Fourcade, “[The Society of Algorithms](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162554),” Annual Review of Sociology 47 (2021): 1-25. \*

**JOURNALS DUE 10/31**

**Week 12**

**November 1**

Media and politics

Read:

Markus Prior, “[Media and Political Polarization](https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-polisci-100711-135242),” Annual Review of Political Science 16 (2013): 101-127. \*

Daniel Kreiss and Shannon McGregor, “[Polarization Isn’t America’s Biggest Problem—or Facebook’s](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162565),” Wired, 2021

**November 3**

Media and politics

Read:

Reece Peck, “[Introduction](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162556),” Fox Populism: Branding Conservatism as Working Class (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 1-37. \*

**Week 13**

**November 8**

Identity: Gender Stereotypes and Sexuality

Read:

Sut Jhally, “[Advertising, Gender, and Sex: What’s Wrong with a Little Objectification?](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162557)” in The Spectacle of Accumulation: Essays in Culture, Media & Politics (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), pp. 163-175.

Watch (in class):

Jean Kilbourne, [Killing Us Softly 4: Advertising’s Image of Women](https://unc.kanopy.com/video/killing-us-softly) (Media Education Foundation, 2010)

**November 10**

Identity: Self-presentation and participatory culture

Read:

Alice Marwick, “[Why Do People Share Fake News? A Sociotechnical Model of Media Effects](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162558),” Georgetown Law Technology Review 474 (2018): 474-510. \*

**Week 14**

**November 15**

Design Values and Effects

Read:

Helen Nissenbaum, “[How Computer Systems Embody Values](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162559),” Computer 34, no. 3 (2001): 120-119. (3 pages)

Natasha Dow Schüll, “[Digital Gambling: The Coincidence of Desire and Design](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109164621),” The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 597 (2005): 65-81. \*

**November 17**

Online radicalization?

Read:

Becca Lewis, “[Alternative Influence](https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=G083248653L&Action=10&Type=10&Value=109162561),” Data & Society Research Institute, 2018 \*

**Week 15**

**November 22**

Debate prep

No readings

**November 24 (\*\*\*No class – Thanksgiving Day break\*\*\*)**

**Week 16**

**November 29**

Debates – day 1

**December 1**

Debates – day 2

**JOURNALS DUE 12/03**

**ALL READING RESPONSES DUE BY 12/03 (or earlier)**

**Final Exam:** 8 a.m., December 3 (\*\*\*No exam\*\*\*)

**Additional University and Class Policies**

**HONOR CODE:**  
I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system ([http://honor.unc.edu](https://outlook.unc.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=_PwXhu5wkEKfdEIVTpil9KJAr6RORM8IBwmgW7JyZPUuO4or7Dri_9D4gXEkBO0Z0IIreRKEjIQ.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fhonor.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 C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

**Syllabus Changes**

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

**ARS**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: [https://ars.unc.edu](https://ars.unc.edu/) or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

(source: <https://ars.unc.edu/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement>)

**Counseling and Psychological Services**

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more. 

***TITLE IX***

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University’s Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim – [titleixcoordinator@unc.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu/).

**POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION**

 The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals’ abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University’s [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](https://unc.policystat.com/policy/4467906/latest/) offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.  Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at  [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu/)) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](http://eoc.unc.edu/), or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

**DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students.  Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions.  More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion [mission and vision statements](http://hussman.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion) with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on [prohibiting harrassment and discrimination](https://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/).  In summary, 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 on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University’s nondiscrimination policies.

**MASK USE**

All enrolled students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community -- your classmates and me – as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave immediately, and I will submit a report to the [Office of Student Conduct](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UNCChapelHill&layout_id=23). At that point you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception. For additional information, see <https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/university-guidelines-for-facemasks/>.