

MCOM 3390 - Mass Communication Theory
T/Th 3:30 p.m. – 4:50 p.m.
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Course Description: This course is an overview of mass communication theories emphasizing their development and application in practicum and research. Theories will include those concerning effects, audience psychology and sociological aspects of mass media.

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand a broad range of approaches to mass communication theory and models.
2. Describe the ideas that influence the practice and development of communication systems (i.e., print, radio, television, internet, etc.).
3. Develop competence in library research for literature specific to mass communication theory and research.
4. Analyze key concepts and issues in mass communication theory.
5. Determine their own positions concerning media influence and management and review practical applications of those theories.
6. Identify the epistemological, ontological, and axiological placement of the various mass communication theories.
7. Describe the relationship between theory, ethics, and practice.

Course Requirements

1. Required Readings/Media Consumption:

- A. As assigned in class – will be provided on Canvas

1. Required Programs/Software/Technology

- A. Microsoft Word or comparable word processing software.

1. You may use Google Docs or Pages but your assignment **MUST** be exported to a .DOC or .DOCX format before submission.
2. You **may not** utilize notepad or notes on your phone. If you submit a screenshot of your notepad on your phone or tablet, you will receive a zero for the assignment.

Evaluation and Grade Calculation -

Assignments	70%
Final Paper	30%
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Total	100%
Percent	Letter Grade
90% - 100%	A
80% - 89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59% and below	F

1. **Assignments (70%) Student learning outcomes - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7**
 - a. **Discussions:** Students will participate in online discussions that address and analyze different applications and historical contexts of media theory in our media and in society. The purpose of the discussions is to give students an opportunity to explore their personal thoughts on mass communication theory and compare/contrast their thoughts to those of their classmates. Each discussion post and required responses will be required to be of a minimum length, utilize sources, and adhere to the posted topic.
 - b. **Activity reflections:** Throughout the semester, we will complete a variety of in-class activities where we examine media through the lens of different theories. Students will be required to write reflections on each activity to better understand the activity and their thoughts on the topics. If a student misses class during an in-class activity, they will be required to complete the reflection utilizing the provided material outside of class or they will receive a zero for the assignment.
2. **Final Paper (30%) Student learning outcomes – 3, 4, 6, & 7**
 - a. Students will complete a major paper that analyzes a chosen media phenomenon through the lens of different theories. Students will be required to utilize academic, scholarly research to examine the history and key concepts of the theory and media phenomenon, complete an analysis of the phenomenon using the chosen theories, and compare/contrast the application of the chosen theories to the media phenomenon. Students will also be required to upload a summary of their paper to a discussion post and read/respond to a minimum of 2 classmate’s summaries.

Class Policies and Expectations

1. Classroom Policies and Expectations

- A. Work hard - learning requires constant reading, researching, thinking, discussing, and working with your classmates and me. Everyone has something important to contribute. My job is to present new information and prepare a climate in which you can contribute your own special knowledge. Your job is to be prepared to contribute.
- B. Participate – you must be an active part of the course to succeed. You will also

have to give effort outside of class.

- C. Treat each other with respect and display common classroom courtesies.
 - 1. You are responsible for your attitude and how you treat others. I will not tolerate name calling, fighting, students belittling each other for differing opinions, etc. I expect you to act like adults, show each other respect, and to challenge yourself and each other to learn/understand opinions you may not agree with. If you are not treating individuals with respect or are causing a distraction, you will be asked to leave the classroom.
- D. The use of cellphones, tablets, or other device use during class times is not allowed unless the need is specified by me (i.e. during an activity). You are not permitted to use cellphones for note taking, check social media, view/work on material for another course, or simply browse the internet during class times.
 - 1. I understand emergencies and the need to take a call or text. If this must happen, be discreet, do not disturb others, do not let it get in the way of your learning, and DO NOT abuse this.
 - 2. If the only device you have to take notes on is your phone, I will provide you with a notebook to take notes during class.
- E. I use Canvas and email to communicate, post assignments and readings, present feedback and provide a space for you to communicate with your classmates. I expect you to check both daily and stay aware of what is coming up.
- F. Communicate - If you have a problem with anything throughout the semester... getting an assignment in on time, needing to be absent from a class, getting your book, checking out equipment, or anything I'm doing as a professor... talk to me about it. I cannot help you or fix the problem if I am unaware of it.

2. Attendance Policy

- A. Attendance in this course is crucial to student success and students are expected to attend class each time it meets.
 - 1. If you miss class during an in-class activity, it is your responsibility to complete any assignment pertaining to the activity outside of class time. We will not go back over the material in class. Failure to complete the assignment will result in a zero.

3. Assignment Policies

- A. Assignments have deadlines and these deadlines need to be met. It is your responsibility to utilize time outside of class in an effective manner so you can ensure that you submit each assignment before the due date and time.
 - a. For many assignments, not all, the submission folder will stay open for one week after the due date. Any assignments turned in after the due date will receive a point per day deduction. Specific point values that will be deducted each day can be found on the assignment overviews on Canvas. It is your responsibility to know when the assignment is due for full credit, when the assignment closes, and the number of points that will be deducted each day for late submissions. Assignments will not be accepted after this final date.
- B. Assignments and due dates may be changed at the instructor's discretion with fair notice to students.
- C. I will not accept assignments via email unless there are issues with Canvas and

the email includes your assignment and a screenshot of the Canvas malfunction.

- D. Merely completing all assignments does not guarantee that you will pass the course. You must put forth effort and show an understanding of the material to earn a satisfactory grade.
 - E. I will not accept screenshots of assignments. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments must be typed, formatted to be a .DOC or .DOCX (Pages, Google Drive, and other online word processors must be exported to this specific format), and submitted via Canvas.
 - F. Assignments will be discussed in class, students will be given a course schedule, Canvas includes a syllabus function that outlines upcoming due dates, due dates can be seen listed on each assignment under the assignment tab in Canvas, assignment due dates can be added to your Canvas calendar, and each due date will be listed in the course modules. There are SEVERAL ways to determine what is coming up due in class. It is your responsibility to be aware of what is coming up due and to stay on top of your assignments.
 - G. It is your responsibility to ensure that your assignments are being submitted correctly to Canvas by the due date and time. If an assignment appears to be not submitted beyond the assignment closing, it will receive a zero. If you do not regularly check your grades or check Canvas for technical errors, there is little that can be done at the end of the semester. If you do experience technical difficulties submitting assignments, you must email me before the assignment closes.
 - H. All assignments will be checked by TurnItIn – a plagiarism and AI detection software.
 - I. Students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. A student who is caught doing either will earn a “0” for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. If a student is caught a second time, they will automatically fail the course.
 - a. In addition to UT Tyler’s Student Conduct and Discipline policy, plagiarism/cheating includes:
 - i. Self-plagiarism - the use of papers or other materials previously submitted elsewhere. I expect you to submit work created specifically for this class during this semester.
 - ii. AI generated content – the purpose of my assignments is for you to explore your understanding of the material on a deeper level, not have a computer explore it for you.
 - iii. Utilizing blank posts or random lines of text on discussion posts to gain access to the thread before creating your original post.
- 1. UT Tyler AI Statement**
- A. UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools’ ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT

Tyler’s Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler’s Academic Integrity Policy.

1. Students can use AI platforms to help prepare for assignments and projects (i.e., brainstorming) and to revise and edit their work (i.e., identify flaws in reasoning, spot confusing or underdeveloped paragraphs, or correct citations).
2. Students may not use AI to generate/create work for submission. All work submitted must come from the student. Assignments are designed so that students explore their own thoughts and understanding of the content, not the thoughts and understanding of the AI platform.
3. While AI can be a good starting point for research, the AI platform utilized does not count as an academic source because it can be incorreced or incomplete. It will not be accepted as a source for citing information.

Course Schedule

Date	Agenda	Due today
Week One		
Tu 8/27	<u>Course introduction:</u> Syllabus, schedule, etc. <u>Topic:</u> Understanding & evaluating mass communication theory Assign: <u>Read:</u> Understanding and Evaluating Mass Communication Theory (on Canvas) <u>Discussion:</u> Initial media theory reflection due Tuesday, 9/3	
Th 8/29	<u>Topic:</u> Understanding & evaluating mass communication theory	
Week Two		
Tu 9/3	<u>Topic:</u> Understanding & evaluating mass communication theory	<u>Discussion:</u> Initial media theory reflection

Th 9/5	<u>Topic:</u> Mass society & mass culture theories Assign: <u>Discussion:</u> Mass society & mass culture due Thursday, 9/12	
Week Three		
Tu 9/10	<u>Topic:</u> Mass society & mass culture theories	
Th 9/12	<u>Topic:</u> Mass society & mass culture theories Assign: <u>Activity:</u> Propaganda in class on Tuesday, 9/17	<u>Discussion:</u> Mass society & mass culture
Week Four		
Tu 9/17	<u>Activity:</u> Propaganda Assign: <u>Activity reflection:</u> Propaganda due Tuesday, 9/24	
Th 9/19	<u>Topic:</u> Normative theories of mass communication Assign: <u>Discussion:</u> Normative theories due on Thursday, 9/26	
Week Five		
Tu 9/24	<u>Topic:</u> Normative theories of mass communication	<u>Activity reflection:</u> Propaganda
Th 9/26	<u>Topic:</u> Normative theories of mass communication Assign: <u>Activity:</u> Normative theories in class on Tuesday, 10/1	<u>Discussion:</u> Normative theories
Week Six		
Tu 10/1	<u>Activity:</u> Normative theories Assign: <u>Activity reflection:</u> Normative theories due Tuesday, 10/8	
Th 10/3	<u>Topic:</u> Limited effects Assign: <u>Discussion:</u> Media & influence due on Thursday, 10/10	

Week Seven		
Tu 10/8	<p><u>Topic:</u> Limited effects</p> <p>Assign: Major paper overview in class on Thursday, 10/10</p>	<u>Activity reflection:</u> Normative theories
Th 10/10	<p><u>Topic:</u> Media theory paper</p> <p>Assign: <u>Major:</u> Paper pitch due on Thursday, 10/17 <u>Major:</u> Final paper due on Friday, 11/22 <u>Major:</u> Research discussion due on Friday, 12/1</p>	<u>Discussion:</u> Media & influence
Week Eight		
Tu 10/15	<p><u>Topic:</u> Critical and cultural theories</p> <p>Assign: <u>Discussion:</u> Media & culture due on Tuesday, 10/22</p>	
Th 10/17	<p><u>Topic:</u> Critical and cultural theories</p> <p>Assign: <u>Major:</u> Pitch rewrite (if required) due Thursday, 10/31</p>	<u>Major:</u> Paper pitch
Week Nine		
Tu 10/22	<p><u>Topic:</u> Critical and cultural theories</p> <p>Assign: <u>Activity:</u> Critical and cultural theories in class on Thursday, 10/24</p>	<u>Discussion:</u> Media & culture
Th 10/24	<p><u>Activity:</u> Critical and cultural theories</p> <p>Assign: <u>Activity reflection:</u> Critical and cultural theories due Thursday, 10/31</p>	
Week Ten		

Tu 10/29	<p><u>Topic:</u> Media cognition, information processing, and meaning making</p> <p>Assign:</p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> Journalism, public relations, & audiences due Tuesday, 11/5</p>	
Th 10/31	<p><u>Topic:</u> Media cognition, information processing, and meaning making</p>	<p><u>Major:</u> Pitch rewrite (if required)</p> <p><u>Activity reflection:</u> Critical and cultural theories</p>
Week Eleven		
Tu 11/5	<p><u>Topic:</u> Media cognition, information processing, and meaning making</p> <p>Assign:</p> <p><u>Activity:</u> Media cognition, information processing, and meaning making in class on Thursday, 11/7</p>	<p><u>Discussion:</u> Journalism, public relations, & audiences</p>
Th 11/7	<p><u>Activity:</u> Media cognition, information processing, and meaning making</p> <p>Assign:</p> <p><u>Activity reflection:</u> Media cognition, information processing, and meaning making due Thursday, 11/14</p>	
Week Twelve		
Tu 11/12	<p><u>Topic:</u> Contemporary theories of the effect of media</p> <p>Assign:</p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> The effects of media on culture due Tuesday, 11/19</p>	
Th 11/14	<p><u>Topic:</u> Contemporary theories of the effect of media</p>	<p><u>Activity reflection:</u> Media cognition, information processing, and meaning making</p>
Week Thirteen		
Tu 11/19	<p><u>Topic:</u> Contemporary theories of the effect of media</p>	<p><u>Discussion:</u> The effects of media on culture</p>
Th 11/21	<p><u>Workday for final paper – no class meeting</u></p>	
F 11/22		<p><u>Major:</u> Final paper</p>

Week Fourteen		
Thanksgiving break – No class meetings Monday, 11/25 – Friday 11/29		
Week Fifteen		
Tu 12/3	<u>Topic:</u> Theories of Media & Cognitive Development Assign: <u>Discussion:</u> Online videos & adolescents due on Friday, 12/13	
Th 12/5	<u>Topic:</u> Theories of Media & Cognitive Development	
F 12/1		<u>Major:</u> Research discussion
Week Sixteen		
Finals Week – No class meetings Monday, 12/9 – Friday 12/13		<u>Discussion:</u> Online videos & adolescents due on Friday, 12/13