

Syllabus
MCOM 2307 Section 001
Spring 2025

Class meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:50 a.m., CAS 102 (studio classroom)

Instructor: Dr. Terry L. Britt (Ph.D. 2018, University of Missouri School of Journalism)

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(The best way to contact me is by email.)

Office Hours: Tu 2-3 p.m., W 10 a.m.-noon, and by appointment

Note: Syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be posted under “Announcements” on the class Canvas site and by email through Canvas.

Course Overview: Examines the relationship between mass communication processes and both the individual and society; their influence on knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. In addition, this course explores interrelationship between social, economic, political, and cultural change and media outlets.

Student Learning Outcomes:

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

1. Competency: Critical thinking

- a) Develop an understanding of current and historical mass media structures and their various impacts upon society and culture.
- b) Identify characteristics of various media platforms.
- c) Demonstrate proficiency in writing, including basic grammar and style, from prompts distributed by the instructor and relevant to the content of the course.

2. Competency: Analysis and Systematic Inquiry

a) Research and Evaluation

- i. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to public relations/integrated communication or multimedia journalism professions.
- ii. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the history and roles of professionals and institutions in shaping the field of mass and mediated communication.

b) Legal and Ethical Principles

- i. Demonstrate an understanding of and be able to apply the First Amendment and

other legal principles for public relations/integrated communication and/or multimedia journalism ii. Recognize what constitutes libel, appropriation, intrusion, false light, and publicity about private facts.

iii. Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and issues for public relations/integrated communication and/or multimedia journalism.

iv. Demonstrate an understanding of ethical behavior in mass media industries.

3. Competency: Mediated Presentation

a) Apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information using tools and technologies appropriate for public relations/integrated communication or multimedia journalism.

b) Identify the different formats used in the various media covered.

Required Textbooks and Readings:

1. Lule, J. (2022). Understanding Media and Culture in the 2020s: An Introduction to Mass Communication v3.0 (3rd ed.). FlatWorld - VitalSource eBooks.
<https://bookshelf.vitalsource.com/books/9781453339152>
2. Other reading assignments as distributed by the instructor.

Recommended Media:

UT Tyler students can register for free full access to the New York Times online: Go to <https://nytimesineducation.com/access-nyt/> and search for University of Texas at Tyler in the dropdown menu.

Amusing Ourselves to Death (book) by Neil Postman

Understanding Media (book) by Marshall McLuhan

1) Final Exam: The final exam is scheduled to take place in person in CAS 102 on **Thursday, May 1, 9:30-11:30 a.m.**

2) I strongly recommend you back up electronic notes, assignment files, and other important content to (A) your device's onboard storage, (B) a removable storage device (portable hard drive, USB flash drive), and (C) a cloud-based storage account like Dropbox, iCloud, or Microsoft OneDrive.

Assignments and weights/point values

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|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Attendance and participation | 15% |
| 2. Quizzes | 15% |
| 3. Course activities | 20% |
| 4. Response writings | 25% |
| 5. Final Exam | 25% |

Grading Scale:

A	90% or greater
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	below 60%

Note: Department of Communication majors must pass all MCOM courses with a grade of “C” or higher in order to receive credit toward the degree.

Late Work and Make-Up Exams: Assignments will be accepted up to three days past the due date at a penalty of 10 points per day late. No late assignments will be accepted beyond three days past the due date and will be scored with a zero. If you have extenuating circumstances that make you unable to submit course assignments by the due date, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss the matter.

No make-up dates will be offered on the final exam.

Attendance Policy: You are expected to attend every class session scheduled. I will excuse an absence for one of the following reasons: A documented illness that prevents the student from attending, a death (documented with an obituary or service program) in the immediate family or first line of relatives (aunts, uncles, first cousins), or a university-sponsored activity or academic conference.

Excused absences will be capped at five for the semester. Attendance is part of the “Attendance and Participation” assignment group. You can expect a 5-point deduction in your grade for this assignment group for each unexcused absence or total absences beyond five.

Graded Course Requirements Information:

Graded assignments for this course are as follows, with the weighted total for that group in parentheses:

Attendance and Participation (15%): This is to accurately measure your involvement and contribution to this course, as well to help me determine whether you are keeping pace with assigned readings. Attendance is expected for each class session; class participation credit can be earned in one of two ways:

1. Actively contribute discussion, respectful debate, and/or illustrative experiences in class on the topic of the day;

OR

2. Post at least three (3) fully developed and relevant comments, discussion points, or responses on the course's weekly Discussion Board sections on Canvas. These posts need to be far more than whether you agree or disagree with someone about something; explain why or offer a vivid description of your own experiences with the topic at hand. Off-topic posts will not be counted for participation credit. **Note: The discussion boards are for use by students enrolled in this course only and are not for any kind of off-topic debate or promotion of goods or services. Abuse or misuse of the discussion boards or posting of content that violates university academic conduct standards is subject to disciplinary action.**

Discussion boards for each week will open at 8 a.m. each Saturday and close the following Friday night at 11:59 p.m. (Covers SLOs 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b)

Quizzes (15%): There will be 12 weekly online quizzes via Canvas starting Jan. 21 and ending April 25 (not including spring break week). Each of these quizzes will contain questions taken from the assigned readings and the major points and concepts from those readings. The quizzes are open-book, so you may use the textbook or notes you have made to answer each question. Late quiz submissions will not be accepted unless you have made prior arrangement with me due to an emergency, illness, or unforeseen circumstance. (Covers SLOs 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, and 3b)

Course Activities (20%): About every two weeks, you'll be assigned a different course activity connected to the topic(s) we've covered in that time. These are simple assignments that are intended to help you connect with the material we're covering each week. Examples include constructing a "best-liked" list of a given type of media content, an online scavenger hunt of interesting facts, or a journal of media content you've consumed on a given day. Each of these course activities will be graded simply on completeness and timely submission; the only reason points would be deducted is for an incomplete submission (for instance, if I asked for five examples of a type of media content and the submission contains only three or four). Submission of each course activity will be via Canvas. (Covers SLOs 3a and 3b)

Response writings (25%): There will be four (4) short response writing assignments – essentially one per month - on a topic covered during that period. I will provide you with prompt options for your paper. Your submission should be between 500-750 words (approximately 1-2 double-spaced pages). I'll return each submission with a brief comment and grade. (Covers SLOs 1a, 1b, 1c, and 2a)

What I'm looking for in the response writings: Essentially, I want each of your response writings to be clearly connected to the prompt I will provide each week on the respective submission link. Each prompt will be connected to something from the assigned readings. You are welcome to draw from personal experience and memory in writing your response paper; comparison and contrast of examples or ideas is also a great way to knock out about 400 words of writing. Beyond that, I'd like your response writing to be well-organized along points, much like any type

of essay or composition writing you would be assigned in other courses. Content and organization will account for 80% of your grade on the writing assignment, with writing mechanics (spelling, punctuation, grammar) accounting for the other 20%. I don't expect perfection each week in grammar and punctuation, but glaring mistakes like incorrect subject-verb agreement, sentence fragments or incomplete sentences, and misspelled words (hint: use your spellcheck function on your writing before submitting) will result in points lost from the overall grade.

Final Exam (25%): The questions on the final exam will be a mix of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions. For short answer questions, I may ask you to list concepts or examples of something indicated in the question, or I may ask you to identify a person and briefly describe his/her importance or contributions within media. (Covers all SLOs)

Calendar of Topics, Readings, and Due Dates

<i>Week #</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Class Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Assignments Due</i>
Week 1	Tu 1/14	Introductions and brief course overview	None	None
Week 2	Th 1/16	Your childhood media memories (and mine); syllabus specifics	Course syllabus	None
	Tu 1/21	The crossroads of media and culture	Lule, Ch. 1	None
	Th 1/23	Convergence and personal technology	Lule, Ch. 1	Online discussion posts; Quiz 1 due 1/26
	Week 3	Tu 1/28	Tik-Tok and mediated messages	Lule, Ch. 2
	Th 1/30	Media theory and research methods	Lule, Ch. 2	Quiz 2 due, 2/2
Week 4	Tu 2/4	Books and publishing	Lule, Ch. 3	Response writing 1
	Th 2/6	Books and publishing (cont.)	Lule, Ch. 3	Online discussion posts; Quiz 3 due 2/9

Week 5	Tu 2/11	Newspapers and print journalism	Lule, Ch. 4 and 5	Activity 2
	Th 2/13	Magazines and electronic journalism	Lule, Ch. 4 and 5	Online discussion posts; Quiz 4 due 2/16
Week 6	Tu 2/18	Music	Lule, Ch. 6	None
	Th 2/20	Music – the digital revolution (cont.)	Lule, Ch. 6	Online discussion posts; Quiz 5 due 2/23
Week 7	Tu 2/25	Radio: Golden age and mid-century rebirth	Lule, Ch. 7	None
	Th 2/27	Radio: Digital transition and tribulations	Lule, Ch. 7	Activity 3; online discussion posts; Quiz 6 due 3/2
Week 8	Tu 3/4	History of movies and cinema	Lule, Ch. 8	Response writing 2
	Th 3/6	Movies in the digital and streaming ages	Lule, Ch. 8	Online discussion posts; Quiz 7 due 3/9

Week 9	Tu 3/11	Television	Lule, Ch. 9	Activity 4
	Th 3/13	From TV to online video	Lule, Ch. 9	Online discussion posts; Quiz 8 due 3/16
3/17-21	Spring break			
Week 10	Tu 3/25	Game On!: The rise of electronic and video games	Lule, Ch. 10	None
	Th 3/27	Video gaming today: Multimedia online consoles; the growth of retrogaming	Lule, Ch. 10	Online discussion posts; Quiz 9 due 3/30

Monday, 3/31 – Last day to withdraw from course				
Week 11	Tu 4/1	Connected: The internet as social and cultural force	Lule, Ch. 11	Activity 5
	Th 4/3	Social media and AI tools	Lule, Ch. 11	Online discussion posts; Quiz 10 due 4/6
Week 12	Tu 4/8	Advertising and Public Relations	Lule, Ch. 12	Response writing 3
	Th 4/10	Advertising and Public Relations (cont.)	Lule, Ch. 12	Online discussion posts; Quiz 11 due 4/13
Week 13	Tu 4/15	Digital media and ethics	Lule, Ch. 13	None
	Th 4/17	Introduction to Media Law and Copyright	Lule, Ch. 13	Online discussion posts; Quiz 12 due 4/20
Week 14	Tu 4/22	What happens next in media?	Lule, Ch. 16	Activity 6
	Th 4/24	Final exam review session	Lule, Ch. 16	Response Writing 4
Final	Thursday, May 1, 9:30-11:30 a.m., CAS 102			