

Fall 2011
Mass Communication & Society
CJT 608
Wednesdays, 1-3:30pm
223 Grehan

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Office Hours:
1:30-2:30pm TTh
& by appointment

Seminar Description and Overview:

This graduate seminar is designed to introduce students to various approaches to the study of mass communication. In this class, students will address the strengths and weaknesses of major theoretical approaches, their usefulness and validity, as well as their potential for practical application to media studies.

Broadly speaking, this is a course that examines the influence of mass media on social life. In this course you will examine the role of the mass communication in society, and in your own life, from the perspective of social scientific theory and research. Topics to be explored include the forces which influence mass media content, the uses which audience members make of media channels, and the social, psychological and behavioral effects of exposure to mass communication on individuals, groups, and society. Particular emphasis will be given to the application of relevant media theory and research to the solution of important social problems. To help you reach this goal, this class will (1) explore in-depth the foundational and most current theories surrounding the effects of media on the lives' of consumers, (2) examine from a personal perspective the roles media has played in the social and psychological development of class members, (3) examine the rapidly changing and evolving context of today's media markets and hypothesize about future directions, and (4) apply knowledge gained from the class and readings to the critical analysis of a public health campaign addressing a relevant social problem of the student's choice.

Objectives: Students will focus on integrating theory with practice, will synthesize and analyze the work of media scholars and articulate those key discussions, and will learn how to complete a full-blown literature review and fully develop relevant and meaningful research questions and hypotheses of their choice.

Required Texts:

- Harris, R. J. (2009). *A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication* (5th ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- McQuail, Denis. (2010). *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory* (6th ed.). London: Sage.

The electronic readings for this course and the most current copy of the syllabus will be distributed in PDF form electronically from the following website (note – this is NOT a UKY website):

<http://public.me.com/dhelme>

password: helmefiles

Assignments:

Discussion. 10%. As with many graduate-level courses, a seminar format will be followed in which everyone is expected to engage in thoughtful and critical discussion of the major ideas, theories, and positions advanced in the readings. To assist you with this, each week, you should prepare a list of five questions or statements about the readings. You will hand these in at the end of the class session. These must be typed; handwritten work will not be accepted. This list will serve as a springboard for our discussions in class. While your discussion leaders (see next paragraph) are largely responsible for directing and guiding the flow of conversation, your comments will help by providing us with a more-informed discussion.

Discussion Leader. 20%. Each week, individuals are responsible for leading class discussions for one session. Discussants should also help facilitate classroom engagement. I will have my own observations to make at the beginning of class and through the session. But the discussion leaders will regulate most of the flow and direction of discussion. Discussion leaders should e-mail a typed outline of their discussion plan by noon on the Friday before their assigned class. I will review the outline and get back to the discussion leader(s) promptly. The discussion leader(s) should also plan to visit with me at some point during the week (prior to class) to review the plan for class. In short, I don't want our discussions to be a free-for-all.

Discussion leaders should address the following general questions:

- What contribution has this approach made to the field of mass communication?
- What are the theory's strengths and weaknesses? or What are the argument's strengths and weaknesses?
- What is the (theoretical) significance of the research?
- What are the practical applications of this approach to media studies?

By 5 p.m. Friday after his/her presentation, each discussant must provide me with an annotated bibliography, in APA style, of at least 5-7 additional readings on the topic that was used to facilitate the discussion on the prior day. The readings may address further discussion/explanation regarding the theoretical approach or they may be representative examples of research using the concept under discussion. The annotated bibliography must include: author(s), title of article, chapter, or book, publication name, volume and/or issue of publication, page numbers, date published, and two paragraphs of commentary for each source included. The first paragraph should summarize the article, chapter, or book and the second paragraph should explain the usefulness of the source to the research topic.

During the presentation, each discussant should provide the class with a brief overview of the topic, address the assigned readings and other related research, and should help lead the class in a group discussion of the topic. Remember, each discussant must go beyond the assigned readings for the week and should consider using related audio-visual materials to enhance the class session. Handouts and PowerPoint presentations are also useful. Each discussant should attempt to reflect and respond to class members' discussion questions for his/her session.

Midterm Essay Exam. 35%. A series of questions will be distributed on October 19th. Your responses to these questions will be **due on Friday, October 21st by noon**. You can place a hard copy in my mailbox if you can't find me physically. These questions will cover the first half of the course - which I consider to be the fundamentals of any detailed course on mass communication and society. Details for your typed response will be provided with the questions.

Course Project Paper. 35%.

Project Proposals:

A proposal that addresses the research topic that you would like to study is due at the beginning of class on September 14. All students must have their proposals approved by the instructor before they can proceed with their literature reviews.

The proposal in brief should include a development of your research idea, significance of project, introduction of theoretical/conceptual framework and possible research questions/hypotheses.

Annotated Bibliography, Literature Review and Final Paper:

The literature review will help students to synthesize a variety of material on a particular topic. I will discuss the mechanics of completing a literature review in class. Many of the readings for this course include excellent reviews of relevant literature, which may be used as a model for this assignment.

An annotated bibliography of the sources each student plans to use in his/her literature review is due at the beginning of class on November 2nd. The annotated bibliography must include: author(s), title of article, chapter, or book, publication name, volume and/or issue of publication, page numbers, date published, and two paragraphs of commentary for each source included. The first paragraph should summarize the article, chapter, or book and the second paragraph should explain the usefulness of the source to the research topic.

Each student's final paper is due at the beginning of the class session on December 7th. Your final paper should include a detailed description of the topic, further developed significance section of your research as it relates to the mass communication concepts and frameworks discussed in class, detailed literature review, statement of fully developed research questions and/or hypotheses, and brief methods section. Please follow APA Style 6th edition.

Attendance:

Attendance is required, of course, in a seminar that meets only once a week – especially a graduate level class. Unexcused absences will be reflected in your grade. Contact me *prior* to class if you are not going to attend.

Schedule of Readings****Week 1 August 24th: Introduction, Discussion of Mass Communication/Media & Society****Week 2 August 31st: Conceptual & Methodological issues to studying media and communication: social structure and cognitive approaches to mass communication**

Discussion Leader: Lindsay Dillingham

Harris, Chapters 1-2 **text**

McQuail, Chapters 1-2 **text**

Lang, A. (2011). The shifting paradigm of mass communication research. **PDF**

Slater, M.D., & Rouner, D. (2002). Entertainment-Education and Elaboration-Likelihood: Understanding the Processing of Narrative Persuasion. *Communication Theory*, 12 (2), 173-191. **PDF**

Week 3 September 7th: Media theories I: concepts and models for understanding media and society & normative theories of media and society – Cultivation, Framing, Agenda Setting

Discussion Leader: Matthew Pavelek

Harris, Chapter 3 **text**

McQuail, Chapters 3-5 **text**

Segrin, C. & Nabi, R.L. (2002). Does television viewing cultivate unrealistic expectations about marriage? *Journal of Communication*. **PDF**

Week 4 September 14th: Media Theories 2

Discussion Leader: Cara Franke

McQuail, Chapters 6-7 **text**

Wartella, E. A., & Stout, P. A. (2002). The evolution of mass media and health persuasion models. In W. D. Crano & M. Burgoon (Eds.), *Mass media and drug prevention: Classic and contemporary theories and research* (pp. 19-34). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. **PDF**

Shrum, L.J. (2004). The cognitive processes underlying cultivation effects are a function of whether the judgments are on-line or memory based. *Communications*, 29, 327-344. **PDF**

Shrum, L.J., Lee, J., Burroughs, J.E., & Rindfleisch, A. (2011). An online process model of second-order cultivation effects: How television cultivates materialism and its consequences for online satisfaction. *Human Communication Research*, 37, 34-57. **PDF**

Week 5: September 21st: Reality TV, Video Games, & Internet

Discussion Leader: Kaitlin Black

Harris, Chapter 6 [text](#)
McQuail, Chapters 13-14 [text](#)
Media Processes & Effects, Chapter 28, 30, 37 [PDF](#)

Week 6 September 28th: Stereotyping of Social Groups

Harris, Chapters 4 [text](#)
Media Processes & Effects, Chapter 25 [PDF](#)
Video: *Mean World Syndrome*
Smith, M.M., & Smith, B.P. (2009). Race and gender as peripheral cues on political campaign web sites. *Communication Research Reports*, 26(4), 347-360. [PDF](#)

Week 7 October 5th: Media Persuasion

Harris, Chapter 5 [text](#)
McQuail, Chapters 15-16 [text](#)
Media Processes & Effects, Chapter 18, 19, 23 [PDF](#)
Video: *The Persuaders*

Week 8 October 12th: Mass Communication & Children

Discussion Leader: Ivelin Denev
McQuail, Chapter 12 [text](#)
Media Processes & Effects, Chapter 31 [PDF](#)
Carnagey, N.L., Anderson, C.A., & Bushman, B.J. (2007). The effect of video game violence on physiological desensitization to real-life violence. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 43, 489-496. [PDF](#)
Drabman, R.S. & Thomas, M.H. (1975). Does TV violence breed indifference? *Journal of Communication*. [PDF](#)

Week 9 October 19th: News, Media, and Democracy I

Discussion Leader: Erin Berger
Harris, Chapter 7-8 [text](#)
McQuail, Chapter 11, 19 [text](#)
Shah, D.V., Cho, J., Nah, S., Gotlieb, M.R., Hwang, H., Lee, NJ, Scholl, R.M., & McLeod, D.M. (2007). Campaign ads, online messaging, and participation: extending the communication mediation model. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 676-703. [PDF](#)

Week 10 October 26th: News, Media, and Democracy II

Discussion Leader: Cara Franke
McQuail, Chapters 8-10 [text](#)
Chapters 1 & 2, Propaganda and Persuasion (4th edition). [PDF](#)
Video: *News War*

Week 11 November 2nd: Media Violence

Discussion Leader: Lindsey Dillingham
Harris, Chapter 9 [text](#)
McQuail, Chapter 17-18 [text](#)

Media Processes & Effects, Chapter 24 [PDF](#)

Signorielli, Nancy. (2003). Prime-Time Violence 1993-2001: Has the Picture Really Changed?" *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 47 (1), 36-57. [PDF](#)

Scharrer, E. (2005). Hypermasculinity, aggression, and television violence: An experiment. *Media Psychology*, 7, 353-376. [PDF](#)

Week 12 November 9th: Persuasive Messages & Unintended Effects

Discussion Leader: Matthew Pavelek

Krcmar, M., Giles, S., Helme, D. (2008). Understanding the process: How mediated and peer norms affect young women's body esteem. *Communication Quarterly*, 56(2), 111-130. [PDF](#)

Cho, H., & Witte, K. (2005). Managing fear in public health campaigns: A theory-based formative evaluation process. *Health Promotion Practice*, 6, 482-490. [PDF](#)

Cho, H., & Salmon, C.T. (2007). Unintended effects of health communication campaigns. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 293-317. [PDF](#)

Dillard, J.P., & Shen, L. (2005). On the nature of reactance and its role in persuasive health communication. *Communication Monographs*, 72(2), 144-168. [PDF](#)

Week 13 November 16th: NCA (No class)

Week 14 November 23rd: Sexuality in Media

Discussion Leader: Kaitlin Black

Harris, Chapter 10 [text](#)

Brown, J.D., L'Engle, K.L., Pardun, C.J., Guo, G., Kenneavy, K. & Jackson, C. (2006). Sexy media matter: Exposure to sexual content in music, movies, television, and magazines predicts black and white adolescents' sexual behavior. *Pediatrics*, 117, 1018-1027. [PDF](#)

Video: *Killing Us Softly 4*

Week 15 November 30th: Health Communication Campaigns

Discussion Leader: Erin Berger

Harris, Chapter 11 [text](#)

Helme, D.W., Noar, S.M., Allard, S., Zimmerman, R.S., Palmgreen, P., & McClanahan, K.J. (2011). In-Depth Investigation of Interpersonal Discussions in Response to a Safer-Sex Mass Media Campaign. *Health Communication*, 26(4): 366-378. [PDF](#)

Slater, M. (1999). Integrating application of media effects, persuasion, and behavior change theories to communication campaigns: A stages-of-change framework. *Health Communication*, 11, 335-354. [PDF](#)

Helme, D.W., Donohew, R.L., Baier, M., Zittleman, L. (2007). A classroom-administered simulation of a television campaign on adolescent smoking: Testing an activation model of information exposure. *Journal of Health Communication*, 12(4): 399-415. [PDF](#)

Henriksen, L., Dauphinee, A.L., Wang, Y. (2006). Industry sponsored anti-smoking ads and adolescent reactance: test of a boomerang effect. *Tobacco Control*, 15, 13-18. [PDF](#)

Hornik, R., Jacobsohn, L., Orwin, R., Piesse, A. & Kalton, G. (2008). Effects of the national youth anti-drug media campaign on youths. *American Journal of Public Health*, 98(12), 2229-2236. [PDF](#)

Evers, K.E., Prochaska, J.O., Johnson, J.L., Mauriello, L.M., Padula, J.A., & Prochaska, J.M. (2006). A randomized clinical trial of a population and transtheoretical model-based stress-management intervention. *Health Psychology*, 25(4), 521-529. [PDF](#)

Week 16 December 7th: Future of Mass Communication

Discussion Leader: Ivelin Denev

McQuail, Chapter 20

Neuman, R.W & Guggenheim, L. (2011). The evolution of media effects theory: A six-stage model of cumulative research. *Communication Theory*, 21, 169-196. [PDF](#)

Sherry, J.L. (2004). Media effects theory and the nature/nurture debate: A historical overview and directions for future research. *Media Psychology*, 6, 83-109. [PDF](#)

****NOTE: This syllabus can and will change as the course progresses. I reserve the right to modify at any time. In such situations I will make the most current copy available on the website from which you download the readings**