

Fall 2012
Mass Communication & Society
CJT 608
Mondays, 1-3:30pm
223 Grehan

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Office Hours:
10:00am-12:00noon Mon
& 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.

Online Access to Course Notes and Syllabi:

***NOTE: After each lecture class period the notes for the day along with any relevant assignment sheets will be posted online at**

<http://comm.uky.edu/helme/readings/>

The username for the site is “helme” and the password for the website is "readings" without the quotes (of course). The directory for this class will be named “CJT_608_Fall2012”.

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. (10% x 2) 20%. Each week, individuals are responsible for leading class discussions for one session. Discussants should also help facilitate classroom engagement. **Each person will be responsible for leading discussion twice.** 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.

Group Media Study. 35%. The major project/product for this course is in 2 parts. Part 1 will happen this fall, Part 2 in the spring (where those who wish to continue can take hours under my direction as an independent study). **Part 1 will be for you and your fellow students to conceptualize, design, and gain IRB approval for an actual study concerning some element/aspect of media and its relation or impacts on society or individuals.** We will begin discussions regarding developing the study informally on the first day, but will start formulating questions/ideas/problems/rationale for the study starting the second week. Over the course of the semester you and your colleagues will go through the process of designing a study – from the first (what I like to call “napkin” discussions) to formulating hypotheses and/or research questions, coming up with a study design (that is actually doable – because you WILL conduct it in the spring), designing/finding measures, writing it all up as a proposal, AND getting IRB approval for the study so that data collection can begin in January. Those of you who are so inclined can (and I encourage you) sign up for an independent study under my direction in the Spring 2013 semester. **In the Spring we will conduct the study and at the end you and your fellow students will have an actual dataset of YOUR OWN DATA from which (as a team) you can write up papers for conference presentation and publication.** How cool is that???

Individual Course Paper. 35%.

Critical Review Paper:

This 20-page paper will be **due on Monday, December 3rd, at noon.** In this paper, you conduct a critical evaluation of the work in three areas of media research covered in the class – and how that research is either right on the mark or lacking/undeveloped in some respects. There is some leeway in what you turn in for this critical paper, so I strongly suggest you discuss your ideas with me IN PERSON before you begin. Use APA style and include appropriate references. As part of this assignment you will need to conduct a review the literature of what research has been done (so that you can either tear it apart or talk about how wonderful it is). Many of the readings for this course include excellent reviews of relevant literature, which may be used as a model for this part of the assignment. Quality of ideas, reasoning, and writing will be the major criteria in grading.

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 27th: Introduction, Discussion of Mass Communication/Media & Society

Week 2 Sept 3rd: Academic Holiday – no classes

Week 3 Sept 10th: Conceptual & Methodological issues to studying media and communication: social structure and cognitive approaches to mass communication

Discussion Leader:

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 4 September 17th: Media theories I: concepts and models for understanding media and society & normative theories of media and society – Cultivation, Framing, Agenda Setting

Discussion Leader:

Harris, Chapter 3 [text](#)

McQuail, Chapters 3-5 [text](#)

Potter, J.W. (2011). Conceptualizing mass media effect. *Journal of Communication*, 61, 896-915. [PDF](#)

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

Week 5 September 24th: Media Theories 2

Discussion Leader:

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 6: October 1st: Reality TV, Video Games, & Internet

Discussion Leader:

Harris, Chapter 6 [text](#)

McQuail, Chapters 13-14 [text](#)

Media Processes & Effects, Chapter 28, 30, 37 [PDF](#)

Week 7 October 8th: Stereotyping of Social Groups

Discussion Leader:

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 8 October 15th: Media Persuasion

Discussion Leader:

Harris, Chapter 5 [text](#)

McQuail, Chapters 15-16 [text](#)

Media Processes & Effects, Chapter 18, 19, 23 [PDF](#)

Video: *The Persuaders*

Week 9 October 22nd: Mass Communication & Children

Discussion Leader:

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 10 October 29th: News, Media, and Democracy

Discussion Leader:

Harris, Chapter 7-8 [text](#)

McQuail, Chapter 8, 10, 11, 19 [text](#)

Chapters 1 & 2, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (4th edition). [PDF](#)

Shah, D.V., Cho, J., Nah, S., Gotlieb, M.R., Hwang, H., Lee, N.J., 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 11 November 5th: Health Communication Campaigns

Discussion Leader:

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 12 November 12th: Media Violence

Discussion Leader:

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 13 November 19th: NCA (No class)

Week 14 November 26th: Persuasive Messages & Unintended Effects

Discussion Leader:

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 15 December 3rd: Sexuality in Media

Discussion Leader:

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*

****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**