

MCOM 3390 - Mass Communication Theory
MWF 10:10 a.m. – 11:05 a.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:

- A. Baran, S. & Davis, D. (2020), Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future, Eighth Edition
 1. Text must be this edition – older editions do not contain updated research and chapters are in a different order.

2. 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, 4, 5, & 7**
 - a. Journals: Students will write journals that address and analyze different applications and historical contexts of media theory in our media and in society. The purpose of the journals is to help students explore their understanding and application of the various mass communication theories.
 - b. Reading outlines/discussions: Students will complete reading outlines and participate in discussions that correspond with each assigned reading. The purpose of the outlines is for students to create material that helps further their understanding of the contents of the course and to help them gain insight from their classmates through discussions.
2. Final Paper (30%) **Student learning outcomes – 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7**
 - a. Students will complete a major paper that examines a specific theory (or theories) of their choice in relation to an observed phenomenon. The focus of the paper will be an examination of the relationship between the theory and their chosen observed phenomenon. Students will seek to answer a chosen research question about the theory in relation to the observed phenomenon utilizing academic, scholarly research that examines the history of the theory and issue/topic, key concepts of the theory and issue/topic, the influence that the theory has had regarding the phenomenon, and the epistemological, ontological, and axiological placements of the theory. An example paper topic that has been used in previous semesters: “What is the relationship between social media usage in younger audience members and sense of self?” (Theories utilized: two-step flow and media system dependency)

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. Grading – The grading process begins with the assumption that the work is good, which earns a grade within the range of a “B.” To earn an A, you must show exceptional understanding of the material, utilizing additional sources, examples, and original thought. This means going beyond stating the obvious, the simple answer, or what Google says. Additionally, poor organization, not following assignment instructions, grammar/spelling, lack of depth and thought, failing to illustrate an understanding of the material, etc. will result in your grade being lowered.
 - E. 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.
 - F. 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.
 - 1. It is highly recommended that you download the Canvas application and adjust your settings to allow for notifications.
 - G. 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.
 - H. Hold me to the same standards and expectations that I hold you to.
- 2. Attendance Policy**
- A. Attendance in this course is required and students are expected to attend class during each scheduled meeting. If you miss a meeting, it is your responsibility to make up anything you may have missed outside of meeting times, such as completing in-class activities at home, getting any material that may have been

handed out during class, and ensuring you are aware of anything that may have been assigned or discussed. Additionally, if you miss a class and want lecture notes, you are responsible for getting these from a classmate (with the exception of special accommodations set up through the university).

3. Assignment Policies

- A. Assignments do 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. Spelling, grammar, and neatness count and you will lose points on assignments if your submissions are not edited.
- F. You are required to utilize APA format for any assignment that requires the utilization of outside sources.
- G. 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.
- H. 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.
- 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 the use of papers or other materials previously submitted in my classes or other professor's classes, as well as video and

audio recordings. I expect you to submit work created specifically for this class during this semester.

Course Schedule

Date	Agenda	Due today
Week One		
M 8/22	<u>Course introduction:</u> Syllabus, schedule, assignment overview, etc. Assign: <u>Read:</u> Baran & Davis Preface & Ch. 1 <u>Journal:</u> Initial media theory reflection - due Monday, 8/29 <u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 1 - due Wednesday, 8/31 by the start of class	
W 8/24	<u>Lecture:</u> Understanding & evaluating mass communication theory	
F 8/26	<u>Lecture:</u> Understanding & Evaluating Mass Communication Theory	
Week Two		
M 8/29	<u>Lecture:</u> Understanding & evaluating mass communication theory	<u>Journal:</u> Initial media theory reflection
W 8/31	<u>Lecture:</u> Understanding & evaluating mass communication theory	<u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 1 – due by the start of class
F 9/2	<u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 1 <u>Lecture:</u> Mass society & mass culture theories Assign: <u>Read:</u> Baran & Davis Ch. 2 <u>Journal:</u> Mass society & mass culture - due Monday, 9/12 <u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 2 - due Monday, 9/12 by the start of class	

Week Three		
M 9/5	Labor Day – No classes	
W 9/7	<u>Lecture:</u> Mass society & mass culture theories	
F 9/9	<u>Lecture:</u> Mass society & mass culture theories Assign: <u>Activity:</u> Mass society & propaganda on Monday, September 12	
Week Four		
M 9/12	<u>Activity:</u> Mass society & propaganda	<u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 2 – due by the start of class <u>Journal:</u> Mass society & mass culture
W 9/14	<u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 2 and activity <u>Lecture:</u> Normative theories of mass communication Assign: <u>Read:</u> Baran & Davis Ch. 3 <u>Journal:</u> Normative theory - due Monday, 9/26 <u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 3 - due Friday, 9/23 by the start of class	
F 9/16	<u>Lecture:</u> Normative theories of mass communication	
Week Five		
M 9/19	<u>Lecture:</u> Normative theories of mass communication	
W 9/21	<u>Lecture:</u> Normative theories of mass communication Assign: <u>Activity:</u> Normative theories on Friday, 9/23	

<p>F 9/23</p>	<p><u>Activity:</u> Normative theories</p> <p>Assign: <u>Read:</u> Baran & Davis Ch. 4 & 5 <u>Journal:</u> Media and influence - due Monday, 10/3 <u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 4 & 5 - due Friday, 9/30 by the start of class</p>	<p><u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 3 – due by the start of class</p>
Week Six		
<p>M 9/26</p>	<p><u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 3</p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> The emergence and consolidation of the media effects trend</p>	<p><u>Journal:</u> Normative theory and ethics</p>
<p>W 9/28</p>	<p><u>Lecture:</u> The emergence and consolidation of the media effects trend</p>	
<p>F 9/30</p>	<p><u>Lecture:</u> The emergence and consolidation of the media effects trend</p>	<p><u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 4 & 5 - due by the start of class</p>
Week Seven		
<p>M 10/3</p>	<p><u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 4 & 5</p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> Media and culture</p> <p>Assign: <u>Read:</u> Baran & Davis Ch. 6 & 14 <u>Journal:</u> Media and culture - due Monday, 10/10 <u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 6 & 14 - due Monday, 10/10 by the start of class</p>	<p><u>Journal:</u> Media and influence</p>
<p>W 10/5</p>	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Media and culture</p>	
<p>F 10/7</p>	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Media and culture</p>	

Week Eight		
M 10/10	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Media and culture</p> <p><u>Discuss:</u> Media theory research paper</p> <p>Assign: <u>Activity:</u> Media and culture on Wednesday, 10/12 <u>Major:</u> Media theory research paper pitch due Monday, 10/17 <u>Major:</u> Media theory research paper outline & annotated bibliography due Friday, 11/11 <u>Major:</u> Media theory research paper due Wednesday, 12/7</p>	<p><u>Journal:</u> Media and culture</p> <p><u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 6 & 14 - due by the start of class</p>
W 10/12	<p><u>Activity:</u> Media and culture</p>	
F 10/14	<p><u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 6 & 14</p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> Theories of media, social learning, and human development</p> <p>Assign: <u>Read:</u> Baran & Davis Ch. 7 & 8 <u>Journal:</u> Online videos & adolescents - due Monday, 10/24 <u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 7 & 8 – due Friday, 10/21 by the start of class</p>	
Week Nine		
M 10/17	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Theories of media, social learning, and human development</p> <p><u>Activity:</u> Start stop continue</p>	<p><u>Major:</u> Media theory research paper pitch</p>
W 10/19	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Theories of media, social learning, and human development</p>	
F 10/21	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Theories of media, social learning, and human development</p> <p>Assign: <u>Activity:</u> Media, social learning, and human development on Monday, 10/24</p>	<p><u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 7 & 8 – due by the start of class</p>

Week Ten		
M 10/24	<u>Activity:</u> Media, social learning, and human development	<u>Journal:</u> Online videos & adolescents
W 10/26	<u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 7 & 8 <u>Lecture:</u> Media cognition, information processing, and meaning making Assign: <u>Read:</u> Baran & Davis Ch. 10 & 13 <u>Journal:</u> Journalism, public relations, & audiences - due Monday, 11/7 <u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 10 & 13 – due Wednesday, 11/2 by the start of class	
F 10/28	<u>Lecture:</u> Media cognition, information processing, and meaning making	
Week Eleven		
M 10/31	<u>Lecture:</u> Media cognition, information processing, and meaning making	
W 11/2	<u>Lecture:</u> Media cognition, information processing, and meaning making Assign: <u>Activity:</u> Media cognition, information processing, and meaning making on Friday, 11/4	<u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 10 & 13 – due by the start of class
F 11/4	<u>Activity:</u> Media cognition, information processing, and meaning making	
Week Twelve		
M 11/7	<u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 10 & 13 <u>Lecture:</u> Theories of the effect of media on society Assign: <u>Read:</u> Baran & Davis Ch. 11 & 12 <u>Journal:</u> The effect of media on society - due Monday, 11/14 <u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 11 & 12 – due Monday, 11/14 by the start of class	<u>Journal:</u> Journalism, public relations, & audiences
W 11/9	<u>Lecture:</u> Theories of the effect of media on society	

F 11/11	<u>Lecture:</u> Theories of the effect of media on society	<u>Major:</u> Media theory research paper outline
Week Thirteen		
M 11/14	<u>Lecture:</u> Theories of the effect of media on society Assign: <u>Activity:</u> The effect of media on society on Wednesday, 11/16	<u>Journal:</u> The effect of media on society <u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 11 & 12 – due by the start of class
W 11/16	<u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 11 & 12 <u>Activity:</u> The effect of media on society Assign: <u>Read:</u> Baran & Davis Ch. 9 <u>Journal:</u> Uses & receptions - due Friday, 12/2 <u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 9 - due Friday, 12/2 by the start of class	
F 11/18	Workday for final paper	
Week Fourteen		
Thanksgiving break – No class meetings Monday, 11/21 – Friday 11/25		
Week Fifteen		
M 11/28	<u>Lecture:</u> Audience theories - uses and receptions	
W 11/30	<u>Lecture:</u> Audience theories - uses and receptions	
F 12/2	<u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 9 <u>Lecture:</u> Audience theories - uses and receptions	<u>Journal:</u> Uses & receptions <u>Reading Outline:</u> Ch. 9 - due by the start of class
Week Sixteen		
Final's Week – No class meetings Monday, 12/5 – Friday, 12/9		<u>Major:</u> Media theory research paper due Wednesday, 12/7