

MCOM 3390 - Mass Communication Theory
MWF 10:10 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.
Instructor: Anita Brown
Email: Abrown@uttyler.edu
Phone: 903-566-7364
Best way to contact me: Email
Office: CAS 223
Office Hours: T/Th 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and by appointment

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	25%
Tests (2)	30%
Theory Presentation	10%
Final Paper (3 parts)	35%
1. Proposal	
2. Annotated bibliography and Outline	
3. Final paper	

Total	100%
-------	------

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

1. Assignments (25%) **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
 - b. Discussion posts: Students will participate in online discussions that correspond with in-class activities that analyze and examine different media content and media’s impact on society through different theoretical lenses
2. Tests (30%) **Student learning outcomes - 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7**
 - a. Students will complete two tests during the semester. Each test includes short answer and essay questions that test student’s understanding of different theories, the application of and relationship between the theories in the world, our media systems, and society.
3. Theory Presentation (10%) **Student learning outcomes – 2, 3, 4, 6, 7**
 - a. Students will be assigned a single theory to research. Topics researched will include the history of the theory, the key concepts and issues of the theory, the influence that the theory has had to the development of our communication systems, the epistemological, ontological, and axiological placement of the theory, and the relationship between the theory, society, and practice. The student will “teach” their findings to the class via a presentation.
4. Final Paper (35%) **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 (excluding the theory used in the theory presentation) 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)

Fall 2021 Covid-19 Information

Students are expected to wear face masks covering their nose and mouth in public settings (including classrooms and laboratories). The UT Tyler community of Patriots views adoption of these practices consistent with its [Honor Code \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and a sign of good citizenship and respectful care of fellow classmates, faculty, and staff.

Students who are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing, digestive issues (e.g. nausea, diarrhea), or a higher than normal temperature should stay at home and are encouraged to use the [UT Tyler COVID-19 Information and Procedures \(Links to an external site.\)](#) website to review protocols, check symptoms, and report possible exposure. Students needing additional accommodations may contact the Office of Student Accessibility and Resources at University Center 3150, or call (903) 566-7079 or email saroffice@uttyler.edu.

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. Given the nature and content of this course, there are times that we will discuss current events and politics. There is a strong possibility that you will disagree with something someone says at some point in the semester. 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.
 - 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 will be taken for each meeting. 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). I will not be recording lectures this semester.
 - B. If you must miss an exam period, it is your responsibility to inform me that a make-up exam will be needed. No make-up exams will be allowed if the reason for missing does not fall within the exceptions below.
 - i. Exceptions to this include illness supported by a doctor's note, a school sponsored event that the student has given prior notice for, religious observances that the student has given prior notice for, a death in your family, or an emergency that can be documented. Additional exceptions will be handled on a case by case basis and must be discussed with me.
 - C. See the current UT Tyler catalog for the university's policy on student responsibility for missed classes and assignments. Be familiar with the university's drop policy. Students who anticipate being absent from class due to

religious observance or university-sponsored activities should inform the instructor by the second course meeting.

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. 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.
- D. Spelling, grammar, and neatness count and you will lose points on assignments if your submissions are not edited.
- E. You are required to utilize APA format for any assignment that requires the utilization of outside sources.
- F. 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.
- G. Assignments will be discussed in class, students will be given a course schedule and an assignment list, 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, 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.
- H. 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. 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	Topic	Assign in Class	Due today
M 8/23	<u>Course Introduction</u>	<u>Read:</u> Baran and Davis Preface & Ch. 1 <u>Journal #1:</u> Initial media theory reflection (due on Sunday, 8/29)	
W 8/25	<u>Lecture:</u> Understanding & Evaluating Mass Communication Theory		
F 8/27	<u>Lecture:</u> Understanding & Evaluating Mass Communication Theory		
Sun 8/29			<u>Journal #1:</u> Initial media theory reflection
M 8/30	<u>Lecture:</u> Understanding & Evaluating Mass Communication Theory		
W 9/1	<u>Lecture:</u> Mass Society & Mass Culture Theories	<u>Read:</u> Baran and Davis Ch. 2 <u>Journal #2:</u> Mass Society & Mass Culture (due on Sunday, 9/12) <u>In-Class Activity:</u> Mass Society & Propaganda (on Friday 9/10)	
F 9/3	<u>Lecture:</u> Mass Society & Mass Culture Theories		
M 9/6	<u>No class - Labor Day</u>		
W 9/8	<u>Lecture:</u> Mass Society & Mass Culture Theories		
F 9/10	<u>In-Class Activity:</u> Mass Society & Propaganda	<u>Discussion #1:</u> Mass Society and Propaganda (due on Sunday 9/19) <u>Journal #3:</u> Normative Theory and Ethics (due on Sunday, 9/19)	
Sun 9/12			<u>Journal #2:</u> Mass Society & Mass Culture
M 9/13	<u>Lecture:</u> Normative Theories of Mass Communication	<u>Read:</u> Baran and Davis Ch. 3 <u>In-Class Activity:</u> Normative Theories (on Monday 9/20)	
W 9/15	<u>Lecture:</u> Normative Theories of Mass Communication		

F 9/17	Lecture: Normative Theories of Mass Communication		
Sun 9/19			Discussion #1: Mass Society and Propaganda Journal #3: Normative Theory
M 9/20	In-Class Activity: Normative Theories	Discussion #2: Normative Theories (due on Sunday 9/26)	
W 9/22	Discuss: Final paper and test format	Paper: Theory paper pitch (due on Sunday, 10/3)	
F 9/24	Lecture: The Emergence and Consolidation of the Media Effects Trend	Read: Baran and Davis Ch. 4 & 5 Journal #4: Media and Influence (due on Sunday, 10/3)	
Sun 9/26			Discussion #2: Normative Theories
M 9/27	Lecture: The Emergence and Consolidation of the Media Effects Trend		
W 9/29	Lecture: The Emergence and Consolidation of the Media Effects Trend		
F 10/1	Lecture: Critical Culture Trend	Read: Baran and Davis Ch. 6 In-Class Activity: Critical Culture (on Friday, 10/8) Major: Test #1 (opens on Monday, 10/4 and is due by Sunday, 10/10)	
Sun 10/3			Paper: Theory paper pitch Journal #4: Media and Influence
M 10/4	Lecture: Critical Culture Trend Major: Test #1 open		
W 10/6	Lecture: Critical Culture Trend		
F 10/8	In-Class Activity: Critical Culture	Discussion #3: Critical Culture (due on Sunday, 10/17)	

Sun 10/10			Major: Test #1 Paper: Theory pitch second submission (if needed)
M 10/11	Discuss: Final paper outline & annotated bibliography Discuss: Theory presentation project and assign theories	Paper: Outline & annotated bibliography (due on Sunday, 10/31) Project: Theory presentation material (due Wednesday, November 10 by the start of class) Project: Presentations – November 10, 12, 15, 17, & 19	
W 10/13	Lecture: Theories of Media, Social Learning, and Human Development	Read: Baran and Davis Ch. 7 & 8 In-Class Activity: Media, Social Learning, and Human Development (on Wednesday, 10/20) Journal #5: Online Videos and Adolescents (due Sunday, 10/24)	
F 10/15	Lecture: Theories of Media, Social Learning, and Human Development		
Sun 10/17			Discussion #3: Critical Culture
M 10/18	Lecture: Theories of Media, Social Learning, and Human Development		
W 10/20	In-Class Activity: Media, Social Learning, and Human Development	Discussion #4: Media, Social Learning, and Human Development (due on Sunday, 10/31)	
F 10/22	Lecture: Media Cognition, Information Processing, and Meaning-Making	Read: Baran and Davis Ch. 10 & 13 In-Class Activity: Media Cognition, Information Processing, and Meaning-Making (on Friday, 10/29)	
Sun 10/24			Journal #5: Online Videos and Adolescents
M 10/25	Lecture: Media Cognition, Information Processing, and Meaning-Making		
W 10/27	Lecture: Media Cognition, Information Processing, and Meaning-Making		

F 10/29	<u>In-Class Activity:</u> Media Cognition, Information Processing, and Meaning-Making	<u>Discussion #5:</u> Media Cognition, Information Processing, and Meaning-Making (due on Sunday, 11/7) <u>Journal #6:</u> Journalism, Public Relations, and Audiences (due on Sunday 11/7)	
Sun 10/31			<u>Discussion #4:</u> Media, Social Learning, and Human Development <u>Paper:</u> Outline & annotated bibliography
M 11/1	<u>Lecture:</u> Theories of the Effect of Media on Society	<u>Read:</u> Baran and Davis Ch. 11 & 12 <u>Paper:</u> Final paper (due on Sunday, 12/5)	
W 11/3	<u>Lecture:</u> Theories of the Effect of Media on Society		
F 11/5	<u>Lecture:</u> Theories of the Effect of Media on Society		
Sun 11/7			<u>Discussion #5:</u> Media Cognition, Information Processing, and Meaning Making <u>Journal #6:</u> Journalism, Public Relations, and Audiences
M 11/8	<u>Lecture:</u> Theories of the Effect of Media on Society		
W 11/10	<u>Project:</u> Theory Presentations		<u>Project:</u> Theory presentations and material (due by the start of class)
F 11/12	<u>Project:</u> Theory Presentations		
M 11/15	<u>Project:</u> Theory Presentations		
W 11/17	<u>Project:</u> Theory Presentations		
F 11/19	<u>Project:</u> Theory Presentations	<u>Major:</u> Test #2 (opens on Monday, 11/29 and is due by Friday, 12/10)	
Monday 11/22 – Friday 11/26 Thanksgiving Break			

M 11/29	Lecture: Audience Theories: Uses and Receptions Major: Test two opens on Canvas (due on Friday, 12/10)	Read: Baran and Davis Ch. 9 & 14 Journal #7: Media Theory Reflection Revisited (due Friday, 12/10)	
W 12/1	Lecture: Audience Theories: Uses and Receptions		
F 12/3	Lecture: Audience Theories: Uses and Receptions		
Sun 12/5			Major: Final theory paper
M 12/6	Finals Week – No Class		
W 12/8	Finals Week – No Class		
F 12/10	Finals Week – No Class		Journal #7: Media Theory Reflection Revisited Major: Test #2