

Syllabus
MCOM 2307 Section 060
Fall 2026

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: M 12:30-1:30 p.m., Th 2-4 p.m., and by appointment or online via Zoom

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:

No required textbook; I will post readings and/or media content for review each week.

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 will be posted on Canvas and will be available from Monday, Dec. 7, at 8 a.m. through Friday, Dec. 11, at 11:59 p.m. **Please note you will have a two-hour time limit to complete the exam once you begin.**

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

1. Online 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: As this is a fully online course, you are expected to keep current with all readings and assignments as outlined in the schedule. If there is a situation preventing you from doing this (e.g. internet access issues, extended electrical outage), please contact me as quickly as possible.

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. Credit will be calculated by the following:

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 Monday and close the following Sunday at 11:59 p.m. (Covers SLOs 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b)

Quizzes (15%): There will be 10 online quizzes via Canvas between Aug. 31 and Nov. 20. 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 posted readings

and other content 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 three (3) 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	Aug. 24-26	Introductions and brief course overview	None	None
		The media world we live in	Course syllabus	Discussion Posts – Your media habits
Week 2	Aug. 31-Sept. 2	The crossroads of media and culture		None
		Convergence and personal technology		Discussion session or posts (each week forward); Quiz 1 due 9/6
Week 3	Sept. 7	Labor Day		Course Census Date 9/8
	Sept. 9	Media theory and research methods		Quiz 2 due, 9/13; Activity 1
Week 4	Sept. 14-16	Books and publishing		
		Books and publishing (cont.)		Quiz 3 due 9/20; Response writing 1
Week 5	Sept. 21-23	Print journalism: From newspapers to news sites		
				Activity 2; Quiz 4 due 9/27
Week 6	Sept. 28-30	Music		
		Music – the digital revolution (cont.)		Quiz 5 due 10/4
Week 7	Oct. 5-7	Radio: Golden age and mid-century rebirth		
		Radio: Digital transition and tribulations		Activity 3; Quiz 6 due 10/11
Week 8	Oct. 12-14	History of movies and cinema		

		Movies in the digital and streaming ages		Response writing 2; Quiz 7 due 10/18
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Week 9	Oct. 19-21	Television		
		From TV to online video		Activity 4; Quiz 8 due 10/25

Week 10	Oct. 26-28	Game On!: The rise of electronic and video games		None
		Video gaming today: Multimedia online consoles; the growth of retrogaming		Quiz 9 due Nov. 1

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Week 11	Nov. 2-4	Connected: The internet as social and cultural force		
		Social media and AI tools		Activity 5; Quiz 10 due 11/8

Week 12	Nov. 9-11	Advertising and Public Relations		
		Advertising and Public Relations (cont.)		Response writing 3; 11/15

Week 13	Nov. 16-18	Digital media and ethics		
		Introduction to Media Law and Copyright		Activity 6; due 11/22

	Nov. 23-27	Thanksgiving Week Break		
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Week 14	Nov. 30-Dec. 2	What happens next in media?		
		Final exam review sheet and online discussion		

Final	Online via Canvas, available Dec. 7 at 8 a.m. through Dec. 11 at 11:59 p.m.			
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