

Mass Communication Theory & Research
COMM 5313
Fall 2015

Instructor: Dr. Esther Rumsey

Office: FAB 203 A

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm (other times available by appointment)

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Readings (Required): You are expected to complete all assigned readings for each week. Your discussion question answers should reflect the fact that you have read and processed the assignments.

Textbook: Bryant, J., Thompson, S., and Finklea, B. (2013). Fundamentals of Media Effects. Waveland Press ISBN: 978-1-57766-785-8 You may purchase the textbook from the Sul Ross Bookstore or an online vendor, but you will need to have the book available for the first day of classes.

Articles: Journal and newspaper articles may be posted on Blackboard to supplement the book chapters.

Course Overview:

This course is designed to explore the research and theory that attempt to explain the effect of mass communication on individuals and society. The course will primarily concentrate on the mass media of the last two centuries, considering how they have been shaped by society and how they have affected society by reviewing relevant theory and research.

This course will help students to:

- Understand the essentials of mass media and information technologies and industries.
- Understand the process and effects of mass media and be a critical consumer of media.
- Be able to critically respond to media productions
- Anticipate how information and media technology will affect your career in media and other fields.
- Be able to locate and explain the relevance of scholarly research investigating media effects.

Course Design:

This course is designed as a stand-alone web course, which means you can complete the course entirely online.

Course Documents: a folder for each of the 6 weeks of the session will be posted in the course content. Each folder will contain: the reading assignments for the week; the lectures for the week; video links (when applicable) to supplement the readings and lecture; and the discussion question(s) for the week. There will be one discussion question for each textbook chapter. There are 20 chapters to the textbook and only 6 weeks in the semester, so necessarily, all weeks we will cover more than one chapter, however, all the assignments for the week will be found in the folder for that week.

Quiz/Tests: Each week there will be chapter quizzes posted in the folder for each week. You will need to complete the week's quizzes by the end of each week. I recommend that you read the chapter and view the lecture before attempting the quiz because you will have limited time to complete the quiz and will be allowed only one attempt.

Discussion Board: You are expected to respond to the discussion board question for each chapter by posting your answer on the board. You are also expected to read your classmates contributions and where appropriate comment. As the name indicates, this is a space for discussion and the course will be much more interesting and educational if we actually discuss.

Journal Articles: Each week you will also be expected to locate a research based journal article related to one of the topics covered for the week. You will write a summary of the article that explains how it related to the topic and attach a PDF copy of the article. A forum on the discussion board will be made available each week for your journal article assignment.

Unit Exams: There will be a short answer exam for each of the units. The unit exam will be available one week before the completion of the unit and will be due at the end of the week.

ADA Needs:

It is Sul Ross University policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you would like to request such accommodations because of a physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact instructor.

Grading:

Grades will be based on attendance and participation in class, completion of questions for critical thinking associated with each chapter and unit exams.

Discussion Board Questions	30%
Chapter Concept Quizzes	20%
Journal Articles	20%
Unit Exams	30%

Attendance:

You are expected to log onto Blackboard regularly to complete the assignments. Discussion board questions and concept quizzes must be completed in the week they are assigned so it is important that you attend class regularly. Additionally, it is important that you post your initial response to the discussion questions early enough in the week for your classmates to have time to respond to your comments and for you to respond to their comments. A general rule of thumb would be to have your initial comments posted by Wednesday or Thursday each week, leaving Friday through Sunday for open discussion.

Reading Schedule:

Unit One	Aug 24 – Sept 13	Overview and History
	Chapter 1- Chapter 3 (one chapter per week)	
Unit Two	Sept 14 – Oct 25	Theory and Concepts
	Chapter 4 – Chapter 10 (one chapter per week)	
Unit Three	Oct 26 – Nov 29	Media Effects
	Chapter 11 – Chapter 17 (one chapter per week)	
Wrap Up	Nov 30 – Dec 9	New Media
	Chapter 18 – Chapter 20 (brief overview)	