Course Description

This class is designed to survey the American mass communication functions with emphasis on development and current trends of print media, advertising, broadcasting, photography and public relations. Students are encouraged to become critical media consumers as well as explore career possibilities in mass communications.

Text, References and Supplies

You will be required to obtain the following textbook:


Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, the student should demonstrate the following:

1. Recognize and analyze current events that will impact the student’s daily lifestyle activities.
2. Research and write a journalistic composition based on one or more primary sources.
3. Apply mass media culture theories to the student’s belief systems.
4. Research and write a critical review of a movie, art show or other public-venue event.
5. Evaluate opportunities for careers and avocations among the network of mass communication fields.
6. Analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces as they relate to world-wide media processes.
7. Analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems.
8. Recognize and assume responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy.
9. Use a word processor to create works done according to a professional format.
10. Navigate the Internet effectively for enrichment in and continuing study of Humanities and use e-mail for clear communication. (internet course)
11. Submit course work electronically as required. (internet course)

Student Contributions and Class Policies

**General Instruction:** Instruction involves a variety of issues-based assignments, lecture notes, Web site references, discussion board questions, field visits to electronic and print media outlets, and other assorted resources.

**Current Events Quizzes:** (In Assignments) Students are encouraged to read one daily newspaper (preferably the Midland Reporter-Telegram) on a regular basis and tune in to other media to stay well informed on news and feature stories. The local newspaper, broadcast media and the Mywesttexas.com will help you stay informed on local news.

**Book Report:** Students are required to develop a three-page, double-spaced review of a documentary book from subjects related to Mass Communications such as: photography, public relations, advertising, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, communications theory and modern technologies (Internet).

**Article Assignment:** Students will be given an in-class writing handbook and instruction in producing an original article based on one or more interviews of college-related sources relating to current issues such as free speech on the campus, high cost of textbooks, sports vs. academics, or struggles of working/parenting students. Adequate preparation for this assignment will be given through in-class exercises. All students are required to produce at least one publishable piece for the Midland College newspaper or magazine.

**Make-Up Work:** Missed tests and writing assignments turned in after deadlines will only be made-up or accepted at the discretion of the instructor with possibility of one letter grade reduction for each late assignment.

**Absence Policy:** three consecutive classroom hours of unexcused absences or a total of six for the semester can result in a forced drop per MC catalog provisions. **However, students are responsible for initiating their own withdrawal from class if they get behind in course work.** Students must inform the instructor of unexcused absences as soon after they occur as possible.

**Course Ethics:** Students must be seriously attentive to providing the instructor with original work. Most assignments involve a degree of personal examples and course-specific information that will alert the instructor to any plagiarism (copy and paste of website or other source material not properly credited) or other attempts to misrepresent your work. Such work will receive a “0” grade. All
students must treat the instructor and other students with courtesy and professionalism.

**Grading Policy**: The semester grades will be based on these point totals:

- **Written Assignments**: 20%
  - Article (12%)
  - Film Review (8%)
- **2 Exams**: 35%
- **Book Report**: 15%
- **Current events; In-class work**: 10%
- **Final Exam**: 20%
- **Total**: 100%

**Note**: Instructor will reduce by one letter grade any late assignments. Grades will be assigned as follows: 90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; 59 and below = F. W’s will be given at the discretion of instructor. Each letter grade is converted to numeric grades as follows: A+, 95; A, 95; A-, 90; B+, 89; B, 85; B-, 80; C+, 79; C, 75; C-, 70; D+, 69; D, 65; and F’s, 59 and below. Some assignments start out with letter grades, but all grades are recorded in numeric form in grade book. Final semester grades are determined by an accumulative total of the above weighted grades carried out to two decimal points. For instance, grades received in the order the above assignments might appear as: 7.8, 8, 7, 6.2, 5, 7.5 (written assignments); 7.2, 8, 5.5 (the essay exams); 10 (the current events quizzes); 7.5 (discussion exercises); 1% (1st Assignment); and 8.5 (book report). Added up, these total 88.2 or a “B” course grade.

**Course Schedule**

(Note: Each graded assignment is in boldface type and each due date is in all caps, boldface, ital type.)

**Introduction to Course** (First Class): orientation, class structure and policies

**Journalism Development** (3 weeks): Activities include discussion of history of journalism and mass communications. Studies include the SMCR Model, the cone process, the global village concept, agenda-setting and other media-relevant material. **Test on class discussion and textbook material**. Resources include lecture notes, and Textbook, chapters 1, 2, 13-16.

**Writing and Newspapers** (2 weeks): Activities include reading materials related to different types of journalistic writing such as editorial, news writing, feature writing, reviews and columns. Studies include an extended review of libel/slander and media ethics. **Write a source-based (interviewing an authority figure) article on a special-interest topic, event or issue decided jointly by student**
and instructor. Resources include discussions with instructor, media materials and textbook, chapter 4.

**Magazine and Special Interest Publications** (1 week): Activities include analysis of magazine and newsletter contents and production. Resources include small-group discussions, handouts and textbook, chapter 3.

**Broadcasting and Recording Industry** (3 weeks): Activities include a visit to a local radio or TV station, Internet exploration and textbook essay studies. Studies include the Nielsen, Arbitron ratings system, media gratifications criteria, media convergence, and the effect of the all-powerful Federal Communications Commission. **Test on broadcasting and recording studies.** Resources include guest speaker, possible media visit, video presentations, lecture notes, and textbook, chapters 5, 6, and 8.

**Computer Media and the Internet** (1 week): Brief study of media’s most modern format. Resources include web searches and textbook, chapter 9.

**Photography** (2 weeks): Activities include studying photo editing and composition techniques and camera applications. Resources include darkroom demonstration, lecture notes, instructor and student photo examples, and handouts.

**Film Appreciation** (1 week): Activities include study of film trends, history and production. **Write a 500-word review of a film released in the last two years.** Resources include viewing a currently released film, handout form, video presentation and textbook, chapter 7.

**Advertising and Public Relations** (2 weeks): Activities include comparison of different media advertising formats, study of effective and ineffective advertising, and evaluation of advertising and PR campaigns. Studies will include the ethics of the highly manipulative advertising/public relations practices and propaganda/persuasive techniques. **Test on film, photo, PR and advertising studies.** Resources include media advertising, lecture notes and textbook, chapters 10 and 11.

**Instructor Information**

Name:
Office phone:
Office hours:
Office location:
E-mail address:
Division Secretary: Lula Lee, 141 AFA
Office phone: 685-4624
Note: Students are encouraged to contact the instructor at any time; however, making an appointment will guarantee the instructor's availability at a specific time.