Midland College  
Syllabus  
COMM 1307  
Introduction to Mass Communications  
Semester and Year  
SCH (3-0)  
Instructor Name

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.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Upon successful completion of this course, students will:
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.
REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS (Text may vary)

Adobe Reader (Links to an external site)

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Plagiarism is defined as the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one’s own written work offered for credit. A student commits plagiarism if he/she:

1. **fails to acknowledge the sources of any information** in a paper which is not either common knowledge or personal knowledge. A student can acknowledge a source through in-text citations, attribution lines, footnotes, or other forms of documentation approved by the instructor. (Common knowledge is the basic information within a field or discipline, as well as most historical dates and facts, and many ordinary observations.)

2. **fails to acknowledge direct quotation either by using quotation marks or (for longer passages) indentation.** Without the quotation marks or indentation, passages copied directly from a source might be considered plagiarized even if it is followed by an in-text citation or a footnote. The citation or footnote acknowledges that there is a source, but it does not indicate that the writer has borrowed someone else’s exact words. If a writer uses the language of a source, word-for-word, he/she must use quotation marks or block indentation.

3. **merely paraphrases the original words of the source.** Some students think they can avoid a charge of plagiarism by changing a few words in each sentence they copy or by rearranging the shape of phrases or the order of sentences in a paragraph. This is not true. When taking notes students must be careful to put ideas in their own words or to use direct quotations when relying on phrases directly borrowed from a source.

4. **borrows the ideas, examples, or structure of the source without acknowledging it.** A student can be guilty of plagiarism if he/she systematically borrows the ideas and organization of a source even if the language of the piece is on a major news event by using exactly the same ideas in the same order as they appear in an article in any popular news magazine.

5. **takes, buys, or receives a paper written by someone else and presents it as the student’s own.**

6. **uses one paper for two different courses, or re-uses a paper previously submitted for credit, without the prior approval of the instructor or instructors.**

Plagiarism will result in a failing grade on that assignment. A second plagiarized paper may result in an F for the course.
COURSE 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.
EVALUATION OF STUDENTS

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, 90; A-, 89; B+, 85; B, 80; B-, 79; C+, 75; C, 70; C-, 69; D+, 65; D, 60; 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.

**DROP / WITHDRAWAL**

The student is responsible for initiating a drop or withdrawal, not the instructor.

**Withdrawal from course**: The instructor is not able to withdraw a student from the course after the census date. A student wishing to withdraw must fill out the withdrawal form (Links to an external site) online.
2018-2019 WITHDRAWAL DATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>November 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall First 8-Week Session</td>
<td>October 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall Second 8-Week Session</td>
<td>November 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December Mini-Semester</td>
<td>December 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>April 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring First 8-Week Session</td>
<td>February 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Second 8-Week Session</td>
<td>April 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May Mini-Semester</td>
<td>May 23</td>
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<td>Summer I</td>
<td>June 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer II</td>
<td>August 6</td>
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ACADEMIC RESEARCH

For Research information, tutorials, library information, web links and more, access the Distance Learning Webpage for the Midland College Fasken Learning Resource Center (Links to an external site).

Academic Database Access

EBSCO (Links to an external site)
User name: mc72cc
Password: mc#chaps1mc

For the Gale Database use this username/password combination:
User name: txshracd2528
Password: chaps

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

If you experience technical difficulties with Canvas, click the Help link at the bottom of the Canvas login page (Links to an external site), or in the top-right green toolbar from any page within Canvas, select Report a Problem, provide details, and submit the ticket. Your request will automatically be sent to the Midland College information technology support center. Check your email for support updates.

FREE ACCESS TO MICROSOFT 365

All Midland College students have a free Microsoft Office 365 account via the Midland College website https://www.midland.edu/audiences/current-students/office365.php.
Students should go to that website for instructions for accessing their account to create Word, Excel, and other Microsoft documents.

INSTITUTIONAL ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

ADA Statement-- The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination by any program or activity provided by an institution or entity receiving federal financial assistance. It is this Section 504 mandate that has promoted the development of disability support service programs in colleges and universities across the country. Subpart E of Section 504 deals specifically with this mandate for institutions of higher education. While it does not require that special educational programming be developed for students with disabilities, it does require that an institution (public or private) be prepared to make appropriate academic adjustments and reasonable accommodations in order to allow the full participation of students with disabilities in the same programs and activities available to nondisabled students.

Midland College provides services for students with disabilities through Student Services. In order to receive accommodations, students must place documentation on file with the Counselor/Disability Specialist. Students with disabilities should notify Midland College prior to the beginning of each semester. Student Services will provide each student with a letter outlining any reasonable accommodations. The student must present the letter to the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Phone, Midland College Special Needs Counselor: 432-685-5598
Midland College Disability Services (Links to an external site)
Microsoft Accessibility (Links to an external site)
Canvas Accessibility (Links to an external site)
Turnitin Accessibility (Links to an external site)
Adobe Reader Accessibility (Links to an external site)
Google Reader Accessibility (Links to an external site)

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

Academics and Student Services (Links to an external site)

Phone, Midland College Testing Center: 432-685-4735

Phone, LanguageHub, Midland College On-Campus Writing Center: 432-685-4811, 182 TC
Language Hub Online (available to all students in Canvas)
STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUE PROCESS

Midland College Student Rights and Responsibilities (Links to an external site)

PRIVACY POLICIES
The below privacy policies apply to this course, as they are applicable to your conduct on this online platform.

Midland College Website Privacy Policy (Links to an external site)
Canvas Privacy Policy (Links to an external site)
YouTube Privacy Policy (Links to an external site)
Canvas Student Guide (Links to an external site)
Turnitin Privacy Policy (Links to an external site)

Instructor Information:
Instructor Name:
Email:
Office Location:
Office Phone:
Office Hours:
Fine Arts and Communications Division Dean: Dr. William Feeler
Secretary: Ms. Lula Lee
Division Office: 141 AFA
Phone: 432/685-4624
Division Office hours: 8-5, M-F

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Midland College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. The following individuals have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Tana Baker
Title IX Coordinator/Compliance Officer
3600 N. Garfield, SSC 242
Midland, Texas 79705
(432) 685-4781
tbaker@midland.edu

Or
Natasha Morgan  
Human Resources/Payroll Director  
3600 N. Garfield, PAD 104  
Midland, Texas 79705  
(432) 685-4534  
nmorgan@midland.edu

For more information on notice of non-discrimination, visit the Office of Civil Rights website for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.

UPDATED AUGUST 2018