

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

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Survey of basic content and structural elements of mass media and their functions and influences on society.

**REQUIRED PARTICIPATION IN AN ONLINE CLASS**

Students must actively participate in an online class by completing an academic assignment required by the instructor by the official census date. Students who do not do so will be reported as never attended and dropped from the course.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate understanding of the fundamental types, purposes, and relevance of mass communication.
2. Demonstrate understanding of mass media in historic, economic, political, and cultural realms.
3. Demonstrate understanding of the business aspects of mass media and the influence of commercialism.
4. Demonstrate understanding of evolving media technologies and relevant issues and trends.
5. Demonstrate understanding of mass media values, ethics, laws, and industry guidelines.
6. Demonstrate understanding of globalization of mass media.
7. Demonstrate understanding of media effects on society.

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS** (Text may vary)

*Media Now: Communications Media in the Information Age*; Straubhaar and LaRose; 5th edition; Wadsworth/Thomson Learning; 2006. ISBN: 0-534-64708-1.

**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.....	<u>20%</u>
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-, 85; B+, 80; B, 75; B-, 70; C+, 65; C, 60; C-, 55; D+, 50; D, 45; 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% (1<sup>st</sup> 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.

## **ATTENDANCE IN IVC CLASSES**

Early College High School and Dual Credit students must show themselves on camera at least once AND turn in that day's classtime tasks to be counted presented.

## **PROHIBITION OF AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING OF INSTRUCTOR AND CLASS ACTIVITIES**

Students may not make audio or visual recordings of any face-to-face or electronic class activities, including, for example, discussions, conferences, and lectures. **The only exception is for students with a disability documented according to Midland College ADA Statement and Midland College-ordered accommodations specifically authorizing such recording.**

## **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 in MyMCPortal.**

## **2022-2023 WITHDRAWAL DATES**

<b>Fall</b>	November 10
<b>Fall First 8-Week Session</b>	September 29
<b>Fall Second 8-Week Session</b>	November 28
<b>December Mini-Semester</b>	December 26
<b>Spring</b>	April 13
<b>Spring First 8-Week Session</b>	February 23
<b>Spring Second 8-Week Session</b>	April 27
<b>May Mini-Semester</b>	May 25
<b>Summer I</b>	June 29
<b>Summer II</b>	August 3

## **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](#).**

### **Academic Database Access**

1. Go to [Midland College Fasken Learning Resource Center](#).
2. Click on big green box labeled “A-Z Databases.”
3. Click on “EBSCO”
4. Then click on “EBSCO” database. **You will be taken to the Midland College Microsoft 365 site, and from there you will be taken directly to EBSCO.**
5. **Sign in to Microsoft 365.**

## **TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

1. Navigate to the page in Canvas where the problem exists
2. Click the Help icon in the dark green toolbar on the left
3. Select “Report a Problem”, complete the short form and Submit
4. Check your MC student email account for responses to your ticket.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement:**

Midland College provides services for students with disabilities through Student Services. In order to receive accommodations, students must visit [www.midland.edu/accommodation](http://www.midland.edu/accommodation) and complete the Application for Accommodation Services located under the Apply for Accommodations tab. Services or accommodations are not automatic, each student must apply and be approved to receive them. All documentation submitted will be reviewed and a “Notice of Accommodations” letter will be sent to instructors outlining any reasonable accommodations.

**Phone, Midland College Special Needs Counselor: 432-685-5598**

**[Midland College Disability Services](#)**

**[Microsoft Accessibility](#)**

**[Canvas Accessibility](#)**

**[Turnitin Accessibility](#)**

**[Adobe Reader Accessibility](#)**

**[Google Reader Accessibility](#)**

## **ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES**

**[Academics and Student Services](#)**

**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](#)**

## **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](#)

[Canvas Privacy Policy](#)

[YouTube Privacy Policy](#)

[Canvas Student Guide](#)

[Turnitin Privacy Policy](#)

## **Instructor Information:**

Instructor Name:

Email:

Office Location:

Office Phone:

Office Hours:

Department Chair: Amy Post-McCorkle

Division Dean, Fine Arts

and Communications: Dr. William Feeler

Secretary: Ms. Lula Lee

Division Office: 135 AFA

Phone: 432-685-4624

Division Office hours: 8-5, Monday-Friday

## **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 individual has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

### **Tana Baker**

Title IX Coordinator/Compliance Officer

3600 N. Garfield, SSC 131

Midland, Texas 79705

(432) 685-4781

[tbaker@midland.edu](mailto:tbaker@midland.edu)

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit the ED.gov Office of Civil Rights website, or call 1 (800) 421-3481.

**UPDATED AUGUST 2022**