

COMM 3342
Communication Processes, Mass Media and Information Technology
Fall 2015
ATC 1.305
TTH 1-2:15pm

Contact Information

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Course Description

Communication is an indispensable part of human life, and communication scholars have long examined the ways in which mass media, new media technology and ordinary people influence, and are influenced, by one another. This course will offer an overview of such influences, and students are expected to go away from the course with knowledge of how communication shapes our perception, how mass media affect our attitudes and behaviors, and how the rise of new media technology complicates our understanding of the relationship between mass media and everyday citizens.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will:

- Learn how different communication processes influence human interactions and relationships by examining prominent theories in the field of mass communication;
- Become mindful of how mass media, emerging media technology and ordinary people influence, and are influenced, by one another through a series of in-class exercises;
- Develop critical thinking and presentation skills by participating in class discussions and team debates.

Required Readings

There are no assigned textbooks for students to purchase. Instead, all of the readings are available online and their links can be found on the course calendar below. Be sure to check the course calendar regularly and complete all assigned readings *before* class.

Additional Course Requirements

- Access to a computer (some in-class exercises may require that you bring a laptop to class)

- Check your UTD email regularly
- Be in class on time

Course Policies

- Students should familiarize themselves with official UTD course policies, which can be found here: <http://provost.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/>
- **No plagiarism.** In particular, you should familiarize yourself with the concept of plagiarism – see the “Avoiding Plagiarism” section from the link above. Plagiarism is NOT tolerated in this course. If you have any questions about this, ask me before you turn in an assignment.
- **No late assignment.** Many assignments are due in class. Unless otherwise arranged with me *prior to* the deadline, late assignments are not accepted and will automatically result in a zero.
- **Attendance.** Our class meetings are an integral part of the learning experience for the students. As such, you are expected to attend class, complete in-class exercises or quizzes, and participate actively in class discussions. Arriving more than 30 minutes late or leaving more than 30 minutes early will be marked as absent.
- **Religious holidays.** You must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.
- **Disruptive behavior.** Disruptive behavior is defined as “behavior that interrupts or interferes with daily functions of the University of the education processes” by the Dean of Students at UTD. To create a safe and welcoming environment for learning, no disruptive behavior is allowed in this class. Students who make inappropriate (e.g., hostile or threatening) remarks in class will be reported to the Dean of Students.
- **No digital devices.** Mutual respect is essential in this class. Therefore, use of electronic devices (e.g., laptops, tablets and smartphones, etc.) is not permitted in the classroom unless requested by the instructor.
- **Communication.** In this class, e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You are responsible for checking your school e-mail every day for class work and announcements.

Grading Policy

- **Class Participation (25%)** – This course is designed to be interactive and participatory. Students are expected to attend class, arrive on time, participate in class discussions and debates, and respond to class readings regularly. All students are permitted three class absences over the course of the semester, no questions asked, but there will be no make-ups for in-class exercises or quizzes. Students who miss more than five class meetings will receive a zero for

participation. Students caught using electronic devices in the classroom will lose participation points for the day.

- **Reading responses (20%)** – You are expected to write at least 5 reading responses throughout the semester. There is only one rule for the reading responses—do NOT summarize the readings. Please feel free to use these opportunities to share your view on, or raise questions about, the readings, discuss issues related to or inspired by the readings, and/or bring up reading-related topics for class discussion, etc. You are encouraged to synthesize the readings in your responses. Because your reading responses will be incorporated into the lecture, they are due at noon the day before class (i.e., if you want to respond to Sept 3's readings, your response will be due at noon on Sept 2). Please keep in mind that there are only 17 opportunities to do the reading responses this semester and plan accordingly. No late responses are accepted, and you will need to add a "label" to your responses on Blogger in order to receive credit.
- **In-class Exam (25%) – Nov. 10 (Tue.)**, To assess your understanding of class materials, this closed-book exam will cover major concepts covered in lecture and readings. No make-up exam is allowed unless it is for medical reasons, which requires a doctor's note. The exam comprises of multiple choice and T/F questions. Make-up exams, on the other hand, may entail fill-in-the-blanks and short answer questions in addition to a different set of multiple choice and T/F questions to ensure that the exam is fair to all students.
- **Team Debate (30%)** – Fostering critical thinking skills is important to this class. As such, you will participate in a team debate at the end of the semester. To help with debate preparation, you and your team are expected to turn in a written report that outlines your key arguments and counter-arguments. The written report should demonstrate your understanding and application of different persuasive strategies and/or communication theories covered in this class. The written report is due on **Dec. 1 (Tue.)** and accounts for half of the points in this category.

Grading Scheme

A = 93 or above

A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89

B = 83-86

B- = 80-82

C+ = 77-79

C = 73-76

C- = 70-72

D+ = 67-69

D = 63-66

D- = 60-62

F = 59 or below

Please form a study group of three and write down the contact information of two other members here (Name, email and/or cell).

1.

2.

Our course blog's URL is: comm3342f15.blogspot.com

Course Calendar & Readings

Week 1	Aug 25 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction 	
	Aug 27 (Thur) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to Communication 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A learning secret: don't take notes with a laptop: http://bit.ly/May_learning • 6 degrees of plagiarism and the crisis of originality: Why so many just can't stop: bit.ly/Stackstreet_6degrees
Week 2	Sept 1 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persuasion • Inoculation 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you want to win an argument, ask "how," not "why": http://bit.ly/Baer_how • How to win every argument: http://bit.ly/Barker_win • "Robert Cialdini explains the six ways to influence people": bit.ly/Cialdini_influence
	Sept 3 (Thur) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framing 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Veronika Decides to Die" Ch.2 - http://bit.ly/Coelho_VeronikaCh2 • "Brene Brown on how to reckon with emotion and change your narrative": http://bit.ly/Brown_narratives • "Suicide contagion and social media/ The dangers of sharing 'Genie, you're free'": http://bit.ly/Dewey_Genie • "How Western media would cover Baltimore if it happened elsewhere in the world": http://bit.ly/Attiah_Baltimore
Week 3	Sept 8 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framing (continued) • In-class Exercise - 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Everyone's trying really hard not to call the Germanwings co-pilot a terrorist": http://bit.ly/Cheney-Rice_terrorists • "One tweet shows the hypocrisy of America's reaction to white people rioting at Ohio State": http://bit.ly/Cheney-Rice_riots • "Is the professor bossy or brilliant? Much depends on gender": http://bit.ly/Miller_professors • "The financial consequences of saying "Black," vs. "African American"

Week 3	Sept 8 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Framing (continued) In-class Exercise - 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Everyone’s trying really hard not to call the Germanwings co-pilot a terrorist”: http://bit.ly/Cheney-Rice_terrorists “One tweet shows the hypocrisy of America’s reaction to white people rioting at Ohio State”: http://bit.ly/Cheney-Rice_riots “Is the professor bossy or brilliant? Much depends on gender”: http://bit.ly/Miller_professors “The financial consequences of saying “Black,” vs. “African American” http://bit.ly/Pinsker_framing_black Due in class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring your framing examples to class <p>✓ Please bring your laptop or tablet to class for today’s exercise</p>
	Sept 10 (Thur) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> News consumption and millennials 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Are you a young dude interested in news? All else equal, this study says you’re a top paywall target”: http://bit.ly/Lee_Chyl_pay “The difficulties of consuming news”: http://bit.ly/deBotton_difficulties “Study finds that papers lead in providing new information”: http://bit.ly/Perez-Pena_newspapers “How do Americans use Twitter for news?”: http://bit.ly/Pew_Twitternews
Week 4	Sept 15 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selective exposure Confirmation bias 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Political polarization & media habits”: http://bit.ly/Pew_polarization “Republicans go for golf channel, Democrats pick E!...” (Charts): http://bit.ly/Polarized_ad_spending “The real media divide”: http://bit.ly/Prior_mediadivide “How ‘confirmation bias’ can lead to war”: http://bit.ly/Wright_cbwar “The confirmation bias”: Why it’s hard to change your mind”: http://bit.ly/cb_changemind
	Sept 17 (Thur) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selective perception 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selective perception chapter 1:

Week 5	Sept 22 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of media effects research 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Media effects in context” http://bit.ly/ONeill_effects “What is a media effect?” http://bit.ly/Potter_mediaeffects “Parents & frequent moviegoers are desensitized to violence, sex in film; likely so is MPAA ratings board: study”: http://bit.ly/Busch_movie
	Sept 24 (Thur) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of media effects research (Continued) In-class Exercise 	Due in class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media effects examples for in-class exercise <p>✓ Please bring your laptop or tablet to class for today’s exercise</p>
Week 6	Sept 29 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda-setting 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Agenda-setting function of Maxwell McCombs & Donald Shaw”: http://bit.ly/ch31_agendasetting “Research in India suggests Google search results can influence an election - The Washington Post”: http://bit.ly/Timber_google “More than buzz: social media and the news agenda”: http://bit.ly/George_Buzzfeed
	Oct 1 (Thur) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priming 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Mind games: Sometimes a white coat isn’t just a white coat”: http://bit.ly/Blakeslee_whitecoat “Opinion: Dress well, test well mantra gives confidence, results on exam day”: http://bit.ly/Chenetski_dresswell “Mom was right: “You are what you eat”: http://bit.ly/Katz_momwasright
Week 7	Oct 6 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9/11 and the power of the press 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> President Bush addresses to the nation: http://bit.ly/Bush_911address “Popular opinion in the U.S. on the invasion of Iraq”: http://bit.ly/USonIraq
	Oct 8 (Thur) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Buying the War” (Continued) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish watching Buying the War at home: http://vimeo.com/33033186
	Oct 13 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PBS documentary discussion 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The Influence of Presumed Media Influence: Origins and Implications of the

Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Third-person effect 	<p>Third-Person Perception” http://www.scribd.com/doc/237372883/The-Influence-of-Presumed-Media-Influence-Origins-and-Implications-of-the-Third-Person-Perception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Persuasion – Third-person effect”: http://bit.ly/psyblog_3rdperson “The third person effect”: http://bit.ly/Moss_3rdperson
	<p>Oct 15 (Thur)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spiral of silence – mass media & social media 	<p>Read before class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spiral of silence chapter: http://bit.ly/ch29_spiralofsilence “The ‘spiral of silence’: How social media encourages self-censorship online”: http://bit.ly/Vincent_spiral “Penn professor shows how ‘spontaneous’ social norms emerge”: http://bit.ly/Penn_spontaneity
Week 9	<p>Oct 20 (Tue)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern technology and contemporary life 	<p>Read before class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Hit the reset button in your brain”: http://bit.ly/NYT_reset “No time to think”: http://bit.ly/NYT_notime “Teens care about online privacy—just not the same way you do”: http://bit.ly/Keller_privacy “The selfie-stick backlash involves awkward photos of people using selfie sticks”: http://bit.ly/Hill_selfieculture
	<p>Oct 22 (Thur)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media and personal well-being 	<p>Read before class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Will Facebook make you sad? Depends on how you use it”: http://bit.ly/Bohannon_facebook “The likely cause of addiction has been discovered, and it’s not what you think”: http://bit.ly/Hari_addiction “How social media affect our self-perception”: http://bit.ly/Sunstrum_instagram “The problem isn’t oversharing, it’s overfollowing”: http://bit.ly/Drexler_oversharing
Week	Oct 27 (Tue)	Read before class

Week 10	Oct 27 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media and online experiments 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “How much should you know about how Facebook works?” http://bit.ly/LaFrance_Facebook “Everything we know about Facebook’s secret mood manipulation experiment”: http://bit.ly/Meyer_Facebook “OKCupid reveals it’s been lying to some of its users. Just to see what’ll happen”: http://bit.ly/Fung_OKCupid “Facebook conducted another secret experiment on users”: http://bit.ly/Smith_fbexperiment
	Oct 29 (Thur) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google, Facebook, Amazon... what’s next? 	Read before class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Google, Facebook and Amazon race to blur lines between man and machine”: http://bit.ly/Garside_blurlines “Giants behaving badly: Google, Facebook and Amazon show us the downside of monopolies and black-box algorithms”: http://bit.ly/Ingram_Badgiants “Facebook’s fatal weakness: Why the social network is losing to Amazon, Apple & Google”: http://bit.ly/Leonard_FBweakness “How social bias creeps into web technology”: http://bit.ly/Dwoskin_biastech
Week 11	Nov 3 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conceptual amalgamation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-class Exercise 	✓ Please bring your laptop or tablet to class for today’s exercise
	Nov 5 (Thur) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exam Q&A 	
Week 12	Nov 10 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-class exam 	
	Nov 12 (Thur) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debate prep – mandatory team consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group consultations will take place in Dr. Lee’s office (ATC1.907). The rest of the class should meet and work on debate prep in the classroom ✓ Please bring your laptop or tablet to class for debate prep
Week 13	Nov 17 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debate prep – mandatory team consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group consultations will take place in Dr. Lee’s office (ATC1.907). The rest of the class should meet and work on debate prep

	Nov 19 (Thur) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debate prep – optional consultation available by appointment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All debate teams should have at least an outline of the written report completed by the end of class. Reminder: Written report are due Dec 1— see instructions on course blog ✓ Please bring your laptop or tablet to class for debate prep
Week 14	Nov 23 (Tue) Fall break	No class
	Nov 26 (Thur) Thanksgiving break	No class
Week 15	Dec 1 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class debate Part I 	Due in class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written reports from all debate teams Debate assessment from non-debaters
	Dec 3 (Thur) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class debate Part II 	Due in class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debate assessment from non-debaters
Week 16	Dec 8 (Tue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class debate Part III Wrap-up 	Due in class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debate assessment from non-debaters

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.