

Murray State University
Department: Journalism & Mass Communications
Course Number: JMC 630 Credit Hours: 3

- I. **Title:** THEORIES OF MASS COMMUNICATION (graduate)
- II. **Catalog Description:** The communication process examined through the perspectives of social science research, with a particular emphasis upon empirical areas such as selective attention; perception and reception; uses and gratifications of media; persuasion; agenda setting; effects of violent media content; and effects of advertising.
- III. **Purpose:** To acquaint students with the major principles, research, theoretical orientations, and consequences of mass communication from a behavioral science perspective.
- IV. **Course Objectives:** To gain an appreciation of the social science method and related approaches to the study of mass media, as well as an awareness of the primary research results as they apply to the communications field.
- V. **Content Outline:** Includes the following topic areas: communication research models; information theory; semiotics; propaganda; inter- and intra-personal communication; attitude theories; effects of mass communications upon receivers; uses and gratifications; political communication; public opinion; theories of power and social change; media agenda setting, violence and erotica; new technology; cultural and alternative theoretical viewpoints; and uses and implications of new media.
- VI. **Instructional Activities:** Lecture, discussion, class presentations, research, readings. Some class time will be spent in seminar-type discussions where students will discuss research articles they have read. Some interaction will occur using the Blackboard computer platform.
- VII. **Resources:** Main text: *Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment & Future, 4th Ed.* by S. Baran and D. Davis. (2006; Wadsworth Pub.) Other resources will include handouts, computer projections for class use, class video presentations, and materials available at and through the library.

Try <http://list.msu.edu/archives/aejmc.html> (Michigan State) for research papers available online through the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. **Browse AEJMC !**

VIII. **Grading Procedure:** A total of 1,000 points may be garnered through successful completion of course components. The scale is:

900 - 1,000 = "A" 800 - 899 = "B"

700 - 799 = "C" 600 - 699 = "D"

Below 600 = "E"

IX. **JMC Department Attendance Policy:** Attendance and punctuality are required. Just as your punctuality and presence would be expected on a professional job, you are expected to attend all classes and to be there on time. A legitimate reason for absence, such as illness or a university-related trip, should be brought to the instructor's attention by notifying the instructor of an absence ahead of time, just as you would notify a professional employer. Work missed because of an excused absence may be made up as provided elsewhere in this syllabus, but work missed because of an unexcused absence may not. Unexcused absences will thus negatively affect a student's final grade.

- Absence from more than 25% of classes will result in automatic failure of the course, no matter the reason for the absences.

Substantial latenesses to class (more than 15 minutes) will each count as an absence.

X. **Academic Honesty:** Cheating, plagiarism (submitting another person's material as one's own), or doing work for another person who will receive academic credit are all impermissible. This includes the use of unauthorized books, notes, or other sources in order to help oneself or a classmate during examinations; the unauthorized copying of examinations, assignments, reports, or term papers; or the submission of unacknowledged material as if it were the student's own work.

Disciplinary action may be taken beyond JMC 630 — see the MSU Graduate Student Bulletin. **Note:** *Faculty reserve the right to invalidate any examination or other evaluative measures if there is significant evidence that the integrity of the work has been compromised.*

XI. **Prerequisites:** Graduate standing. Typing proficiency is strongly urged, since the final paper and written abstracts must be word-processed.

Certain exams given in class can be word-processed. *Verbal and written proficiency in the English language are essential.*

Itemized Course Components:

There will be three exams (including the final), each worth 150 points. One research paper counts for 250 points. Three abstracts of research articles from communications journals count for 50 points apiece. Class and Blackboard involvement, assessed at end-term, is worth 150 points:

Exams.....	450 pts.
Abstracts Presented in Class / posted on BBoard (3).....	150
Class and Interactive Involvement on BBoard.....	150
Research Paper.....	250 = 1,000 pts.

Exams: Are generally non-comprehensive and taken in class. They are, for the most part, comprised of 50 objective questions requiring multiple choice as well as one long essay response (400 > words) per answer).

By way of background, the following journals are often useful. This list is not all-inclusive, but be sure to consult REFEREED JOURNALS for your abstracts and final paper. In journals whose scope is broad (example: *Journal of Social Psychology*), choose articles about mass communications:

- Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* *;
- Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*
- Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* *;
- Journal of Social Psychology* *;
- American Journal of Political Science*;
- American Behavioral Scientist*;
- Critical Studies in Media Communication*;
- Newspaper Research Journal*;
- Communication Monographs*;
- The Web Journal of Mass Communication Research*;
- Communication Research* * ;
- Mass Communication & Society* *;
- Journal of Marketing Research*;
- Journalism & Communication Monographs*;
- Political Science Quarterly* *;
- Political Communication*;
- Human Communication Research* *;
- Journal of Advertising Research* * ;
- Journal of Communication* * ;
- Journal of Applied Psychology*;
- Communication Methods & Measures*;

* = often a good choice

Final Research Paper: The research paper is due near the end of the semester. Paper requirements will be discussed further in class, but you will have the latitude to pursue a line of mass comm research that interests you. **Remember that this class is about *theories*, so your paper should underscore theoretical impact.**

Murray State University Non-Discrimination Policy Statement:

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