

COM 320 Mass Communication & Society

Fall Term 2009—(section E01)

Professor: Dr. Martin Hatton

Office: Cromwell Communication CC 100

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E-Mail: Please use the WebCT email system first to communicate with your professor about this course.

Homepage: <http://www2.muw.edu/~mhatton>

Office Hours: M-TH: 10 – 11am, 1 – 2pm; Other times by appointment

Notes: Section E03 is an online-only section;
Section 004 is classroom-based with online WebCT supplementation

Required Texts:

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American*

Psychological Association (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

[ISBN-10: 1557987912 if planning to order online; Note: The 6th ed. is fine, but I'd rather we use the 5th ed.]

Perry, D. K. (2002). *Theory and research in Mass Communication* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. [ISBN-10: 0805839380 if planning to order online]

WebCT: All Course Materials – Review frequently.

Nature of Course Content: This is one of our program's required theory courses that provides a particular focus on mass communication's relationship within contemporary society.

Goals of the Course:

This course is designed with three primary components: (1) Provide students with an overview of mass communication theory relevant to research and practice; (2) Provide students with an overview of research methods commonly used in communication-based research; and (3) Provide a forum for review and discussion of media related social issues relevant to all media users and that typically confront media practitioners employed in communication-based industries.

To do this we must focus on all of the following:

- (1) what is meant by theory and review primary mass communication theories;
- (2) what is meant by research and review the basics of research design;
- (3) how to report research using the APA style manual;
- (4) analyze critically media related social issues & develop well-supported positions in relation to those issues.

General Policies and Procedures

Introduction:

The following policies and procedures will govern the conducted of this course.

Ethical Requirements:

Students who “make up” or “create” sources for a speech and cannot produce the original source or a photocopy of that source upon request will fail this course. Students who plagiarize material will fail this course. Please consult with the course professor with any questions or concerns regarding source falsification or plagiarism. Students may be required to provide photocopies of the publication information or copies of the actual electronic recordings of all sources used in projects. NOTE: University policy requires that professors report all instances of plagiarizing, fabricating or cheating to the appropriate university authorities. Please review Webster’s Dictionary and the policies of Mississippi University for Women in the Student Bulletin and Student Handbook for further clarification.

Students with disabilities:

It is the responsibility of students who have professionally diagnosed disabilities to notify the instructor so that necessary and appropriate modifications can be made to meet any special learning needs.

Privacy and Student Grades:

It is the policy of the Department of Communication that grades are not reported via telephone, e-mail, or other unsecured telecommunication media due to privacy concerns. Grades will be reported in the university’s WebCT and Banner systems.

Additional Information:

REMEMBER: ALL deadlines are final. Students are encouraged STRONGLY to submit work as promptly as possible once the course professor indicates that submissions will be accepted for that particular assignment.

Policies for Online WebCT Participation

Online Attendance:

Students should enter the course in WebCT a minimum of three times per week; more will probably be necessary. Please follow the course schedule for the specifics of attendance, participation and assignment deadlines. *Students are responsible for keeping up with all course-related deficiencies.*

Submission of Assignments:

Each assignment posted in WebCT will be accompanied by a deadline for completion. All assignments for this course MUST be completed and submitted in WebCT (or to a private view You Tube site) to be assessed and graded by the course professor. Uploaded assignments sent directly to WebCT must be received by the assignment deadline. Any assignment received late in WebCT will lose one point (-1pt) for each minute it is late

past the assigned deadline in accordance with the WebCT timekeeping system (not the professor's or students' clocks).

Exams:

Chapter-based course content modules will require completion of a chapter quiz before students will have access to the remaining content of that module (e.g., other assignments and professor's notes). Students also should expect quizzes based upon additional content posted in WebCT course modules but not necessarily found in the primary textbook. Each quiz will be graded, and the average of all quizzes will count as one major grade (see "Quizzes" listed under "Requirements of Course and Methods of Evaluation" below). Content from chapter quizzes and other notes posted in WebCT become, essentially, the study guides for the midterm and final exams.

Requirements of Course and Methods of Evaluation:

- Abstracts (averaged) 100 points
- Position Papers (averaged) 100 points
- Final Paper Presentation 100 points
- Quizzes (averaged) 100 points
- Participation (averaged) 100 points
- Midterm Exam 100 points
- Final Exam 100 points

The following 8-point scale will be applied to all student work for this course:

- A = 100-93
- B = 92-85
- C = 84-77
- D = 76-69
- F = 68-0

Details of Key Course Requirements:

NOTE: All writing must adhere strictly to APA style guidelines.

Abstracts

Students are expected to demonstrate both initiative and a certain degree of expertise concerning each topic by preparing two abstracts of scholarly articles (from any discipline), highly relevant popular press items, and significant websites. Each student should provide a one-page handout with two abstracts of significant information related to that week's topic. Abstracts are to be posted in WebCT. No fewer than five (5) should be from academic peer-reviewed journal articles or chapters in edited books.

NOTE: The body of each abstract should be 50-100 words (no less; no more) and single-spaced. Writing errors will reduce your grade significantly; proof your writing carefully (each error found reduces your grade for that assignment by five points). Each abstract should provide all pertinent information and an overall summary concerning the source of

information. Students are expected to review and be familiar with each other's abstracts. Students are encouraged to reference the original sources of any abstracts they use for their final papers.

Position Papers

Initial positions papers will be brief and provide students an opportunity to test their argumentation, basic writing, and APA skills. Each paper should be at least 1-page in length and must include both in-text references and full citations for both sources abstracted for that topic (reference to other students' sources is encouraged—please read the primary material; do not make reference only to students' actual abstracts).

Final Paper Presentation

Each student will write and present a position paper at the conclusion of the course. The text-body of this paper should be seven to ten (7-10) complete double-spaced pages, 10 academic peer-reviewed sources are required as a minimum, and strict adherence to APA style guidelines is expected. I expect zero writing errors; proof very carefully (each writing error reduces your grade for the written paper by five points). The actual paper accounts for 80% of this assignment.

Each student should prepare for a four-six minute oral report of her or his paper. Prepare carefully. Prepare as though you would be speaking at a conference before peers who have substantial expertise in your field. The goal is to present the highlights of your paper, not to read your paper to your peers. Your presentation should be essentially complete while designed to entice your peers to want to read your paper. Paper presentations must be video recorded and uploaded to a private view You Tube site accessible only by members of our class.

Participation

Participation includes simple factors such as logging into the course site and completing assignments on time. Participation also includes participation in any discussion board or chat room activities such as topic debates. I will provide advance notices of upcoming participation activities, but please remember to check for activity in all of the course online tools.