

Introduction to Mass Communication - COMM 100-02

Fall Semester 2015



Instructor

Dr. Ronen Shay

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Phone: 585-385-7293

Office Location: William A. Fay Building, Room 209

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 1:45pm– 3:45pm, or by appointment

Meetings

COMM 100-02 meets on TR 3:10pm – 4:30pm: Basil Hall, Room 119

Website

Check our Blackboard site via mySJFC regularly for course materials and announcements.

<https://cas.sjfc.edu/>

Course Description:

Media in the 21st century have undergone tremendous change as a result of the growth of the Internet and the rising popularity of social media and mobile technologies. In this course, students will study the technological, political/regulatory, economical, and social/cultural influences of television, film, radio, print, and game industries. Course content will focus on the unique considerations facing each individual platform in addition to broader concepts like audiences as users and producers of content, the changes occurring within entertainment-based and journalism-focused media entities, and the discourse surrounding whether technology dictates culture, or culture dictates innovations. At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to analyze contemporary and historic developments in mass communication in order to better understand the present state of media industries in the U.S.; describe their interactive and collaborative nature; and anticipate their future direction.

Required Texts

Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport. Media Now: Understanding Media, Culture, and Technology, 9th edition. Cengage Learning, 2015. ISBN: 1305080351

Course Goals:

- Students will demonstrate the ability to think critically and analytically about the field of mass communication and issues with in, both from contemporary and historical perspectives.
- Relate historical events in mass communication to current trends to better understand and predict future changes in the industry.
- Demonstrate an understanding of mass communication as a form of culture that influences cultural norms, political attitudes, and ethical choices.

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- Develop an understanding of the role of technological advances in changing the meaning, reception, and interpretation of media messages.
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze media through the application of appropriate theoretical models.
- Students will demonstrate writing, speech, and technological presentation skills suited to a convergent media environment.
- Students will meet the writing standards required of professional communicators, specifically in regards to English grammar and writing mechanics.

Grading Scheme:

Exam 1	20%
Media Firm Report + Presentation	15%
Exam 2	20%
Media Issue Response Paper	15%
Exam 3	20%
Participation + Professionalism	10%

Assignment Descriptions:

Exams and assignments will be based on the materials from lectures, discussions, and assigned readings. Below is an overview of what to expect from each assignment. A detailed description of each assignment will be distributed in class as the semester continues.

Exams: There will be three exams administered over the course of the semester. The content on the exams will be drawn from lecture and classroom activities, as well as reading assignments.

Media Firm Report + Presentation: Your first assignment in this class will be to research and report on the history and present day performance of a telecom/media organization. Your report must include at least 1x table, and 1x graph, and all sources of outside information must be cited using embedded citations (i.e., APA style guidelines). Some examples of appropriate firms include: Comcast, Time Warner, Disney, NBC, CBS, FOX, and HBO.

While students will be provided a list of companies to choose from, they can also propose their own. Students proposing their own media firm must have it approved by the instructor before proceeding. All companies will be assigned on a first-come, first served basis, and no company can be repeated by multiple students.

In addition to your written report, you will deliver an informative PowerPoint presentation that will teach your classmates about the organization you researched. When a student is not presenting they are expected to be actively listening to the presentations being delivered in a

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professional and courteous manner. The behavior of individual students in the audience will be noted and taken into account when determining their participation + professionalism grade.

Media Issue Response Paper: Each student will select a contemporary issue in mass communication, research that topic, and write a response paper that argues in favor of or against a particular perspective. Examples of topics could include:

- Technological Determinism: Does technology determine culture or does culture determine innovation?
- Violence in the Media: Does violent video content have an adverse effect on people's behavior in society?
- Net Neutrality: Should Internet Service Providers be subject to regulations on the technological infrastructure that they built?

While students will be provided a list of topics to choose from, they can also propose their own topic. Students proposing their own topic must have it approved by the instructor before proceeding. All topics will be assigned on a first-come, first served basis, and no topic can be repeated by multiple students. All sources of outside information must be cited using embedded citations (i.e., APA style guidelines).

Participation + Professionalism: We will have both lectures and discussions in this class. You are required to participate in the discussions of assigned readings. You are strongly encouraged to ask questions and respond to the lectures. Participation will be assessed based on attendance, contribution to group assignments, and most importantly your involvement in class discussions that should arise during lectures.

As this is a business oriented class the classroom should be viewed as a simulated work environment. Accordingly, students are required to demonstrate respect and professionalism in all course related activities. Professionalism will be assessed based on appropriate technology use, behavior as an audience member, respect towards your peers and instructor, and proper email/course communication etiquette.

Academic Integrity: The St. John Fisher College Academic Integrity Policy states, "Every student is expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all academic pursuits at all times." The policy located at <http://catalog.sjfc.edu/undergraduate/2014-2015/academic-information/integrity.dot> specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. It goes on to state that, "Any finding of responsibility and associated sanctions for a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is retained per the College records policy." Ultimately, you are responsible to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor of this class.

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Attendance: Students should understand that class attendance will be taken into consideration in calculating their final grade. The content addressed in this class encompasses a lot of interactive concepts, and so much of what can be learned is a direct result of attending lecture, participating in group and sole authored assignments, and your involvement in any class discussion that should arise. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with the St. John Fisher College Attendance Policy that can be found at: <http://catalog.sjfc.edu/undergraduate/2014-2015/academic-information/courses/attendance.dot>

College Policy Concerning Students with Disabilities: In compliance with St. John Fisher College policy and applicable laws, appropriate academic accommodations are available to students with disabilities. All requests for accommodations must be supported by appropriate documentation/diagnosis and determined reasonable by St. John Fisher College. Students with documented disabilities (physical, learning, psychological) who may need academic accommodations are advised to refer to the Disability Services website located at: <http://home.sjfc.edu/AcademicAffairs/Disabilities/DisabilityOverview.asp>

Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations as per the Online Course Evaluation Process located at <http://www.sjfc.edu/campus-services/ed-tech/online/evaluation.dot>. Evaluations are typically opened at the end of the term, and students will be made aware of the specific times in which they can be completed. Results will only be made available to faculty members, department chairs, the dean, and the provost after final grades have been submitted.

Grading:

A 93-100%	C 73-76.99
A- 90-92.99	C- 70-72.99
B+ 87-89.99	D+ 67-69.99
B 83-86.99	D 63-66.99
B- 80-82.99	D- 60-62.99
C+ 77-79.99	F Below 60

Grading in this course is consistent with the St. John Fisher College grading policies that can be found at: <http://catalog.sjfc.edu/undergraduate/2012-2013/academic-information/grading/>

Health, Wellness, Safety and Security:

The Health and Wellness Center provides medical, mental health services, and wellness education to students.

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Contact information for the Health and Wellness Center:

<http://www.sjfc.edu/campus-services/wellness/about/>

(585) 385-8280

healthcenter@sjfc.edu

The Safety and Security Department operates 24 hours a day and 365 days a year with the goal to provide a safe and secure environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors to live, work and study.

Contact information for the Safety and Security Department:

<http://www.sjfc.edu/campus-services/safety/>

Non-emergency number: (585) 385-8025

Emergency number: (585) 385-8111

Late Assignments: Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified on the syllabus. Late assignments will be accepted within 24 hours of the end of class period in which the assignment is due, with a 10% penalty for the individual student on a solo assignment, or for all group members on a group assignment. Assignments turned in after this 24-hour period will not be accepted. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with the St. John Fisher College Attendance Policy that can be found at: <http://catalog.sjfc.edu/undergraduate/2014-2015/academic-information/courses/attendance.dot>

Lecture: I will not repeat material missed by absent students. It is the responsibility of the students who fail to attend class to get notes from their classmates. Such second-hand exposure seldom provides a fully satisfactory substitute for class attendance. Missing class will not serve as an excuse for failing to submit assigned work on time.

Exam Schedule: Exams must be taken on the assigned date. Failure to show up for an exam will result in a zero. If an emergency arises and prior to commencing the exam you realize you will not be in attendance on the date specified, you must get the instructor's permission for the absence to be authorized, and this must be discussed ahead of time with appropriate documentation provided. Should a student unexpectedly miss an exam due to illness or a family emergency without making proper arrangements ahead of time, a makeup exam will only be granted if the student provides official documentation. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with the St. John Fisher College Attendance Policy that can be found at: <http://catalog.sjfc.edu/undergraduate/2014-2015/academic-information/courses/attendance.dot>

Syllabus Changes: The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus or course schedule as the need arises.

Tips for Getting Good Grades:

- Review assignment requirements carefully
- Focus on quality, not just completion
- Ask questions
- Cite your work when appropriate
- Come to every class
- Complete the readings
- Participate

COMM 100 Course Schedule

WEEK	Topic	Assigned Reading	Tentative Deadlines
Week 1 Sept. 8-10	- Course Introduction - The Changing Media	Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport Chapter 1	
Week 2 Sept. 15-17	- Media & Society	Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport Chapter 2	
Week 3 Sept. 22- 24	- Books and Magazines - Print to Digital Newspapers - Exam 1 Review	Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport Chapter 3 & 4	
Week 4 Sept. 29 – Oct. 1	- Recorded Music - Radio - Exam 1 in class	Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport Chapter 5 & 6	Exam 1 Tues. Sept 29 th
Week 5 Oct. 6 – 8	- Film & Home Video	Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport Chapter 7	
Week 6 Oct. 13 – 15	- Television - Media Firm Presentations	Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport Chapter 8	Media Firm Report + Presentation due Tues. Oct. 13 th
Week 7 Oct. 20 – 22	- The Internet	Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport Chapter 9	
Week 8 Oct. 27 – 29	- The Third Screen: Smartphones and Tablets - Exam 2 Review	Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport Chapter 12	

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Week 9 Nov. 3 – 5	- Video Games - Exam 2 in class	Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport Chapter 13	Exam 2 Tues. Nov. 3 rd
Week 10 Nov. 10 - 12	- Media Uses and Impacts	Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport Chapter 14	
Week 11 Nov. 17 – 19	- Media Policy and Law	Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport Chapter 15	
Week 12 Nov. 24	TBD	TBD	Media Issue Response Paper due Tues. Nov. 24 th
THANKSGIVING BREAK			
Week 13 Dec. 1 – Dec. 3	- Media Ethics	Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport Chapter 16	
Week 14 Dec. 8 - 10	- Global Communications Media - Exam 3 Review	Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport Chapter 17	
Exam Week COMM100-02 Tues. Dec. 15th 3pm-5:30pm	- Exam 3 during exam week, on Tues. Dec. 15th	N/A	Exam 3 Tues. Dec. 15 th