

COMM/MM 4355 Effects and Ethics of Mass Communications

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Office Hours: To be announced once the semester gets started. However, you are urged to make an appointment regardless of when they are. Check my door or ask for updates.

Text: *Fundamentals of Media Effects*, Jennings Bryant and Susan Thompson. McGraw-Hill.

Catalog Description: An in-depth study of the impacts of mass media on a changing America, including a study of the effects of mass media on government, demographic groups and the military. The study of moral reasoning and ethical decision making as they relate to the mass media.

To accomplish the course description, we will discuss the effects of mass media on audiences and how that information is gathered., current theories and models of mass-mediated communication and the responsibility of mass media practitioners in a free society as well as individuals' responsibility to each other and society.

Course objectives: By the end of this course, it is hoped you will gain an appreciation for and an understanding of the problems associated with theorizing on the effects of mass media. Also, it is hoped you will gain an understanding of the responsibilities of working in an industry with so many moral and ethical implications for people in the news.

Specifically, it is hoped we reach these objectives by:

Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories.

Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Departmental Learning Goals

Communication Learning Goal 2 says that students will recognize and understand key issues related to communication theory and media/speech ethics. The class will attempt to meet this learning goal by exposing students to several mass media theories as well as the methods researchers use to formulate theory.

Mass Media Learning Goal 3 says that students should be able to recognize and understand key legal and ethical implications of synthesizing and producing information for transmission to the public through media channels. We will discuss the ethical portion of this learning goal by studying, discussing and applying to the real world the concepts involved in media ethics.

Evaluation: The departmental learning goals listed above will be assessed through the average of several examinations throughout the semester. Students earning 90 percent or more of the total available points will receive grades of A. Students earning 80 to 89 percent, 70 to 79 percent and 60 to 69 percent will receive grades of B, C or D, respectively. Students earning less than 60 percent will not pass the course.

Attendance: As per the policy of Angelo State University, attendance will be taken each day. If you do not miss any classes, three points will be added to your final grade. Other points will be awarded as follows: one absence, two points; two absences, one point. Roll will be taken by a roll sheet passed out at the beginning of each class period. If you come late or, for some reason, miss the roll sheet, please see me AFTER class to sign. Please do not interrupt class to find and sign the roll sheet.

Examinations will not be made up unless you let me know at least one class period ahead of time. The only absences that will be "excused" are school-related trips. You must notify me ahead of time to be "excused."

OVER

Academic Honesty Code: Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both the print and web versions for the *Student Handbook*. The current student handbook is found on the ASU web site under publications at the <https://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/code-of-student-conduct/>

Americans with Disabilities: Persons with disabilities which may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any accommodations being implemented. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so appropriate arrangements can be made.

Academic Advising: The College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Communication, Mass Media and Theatre require that students meet with a faculty adviser as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Faculty Adviser will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, faculty Adviser, and the department chair. Communication or Mass Media majors who have questions about advising or declaring a major in the department, can call 942-2031.

Grade Appeal Process. As stated in Angelo State University Operating Policy and Procedure (OP 10.03 Student Grade Grievances), a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see Operating Procedure 10.03 at <https://www.angelo.edu/content/files/14196-op-1003-grade-grievance>

Title IX at Angelo State University: The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance.

Class Schedule:

Scientific method, lecture notes, Chpt. 1.

Exam 1

History of the study of media effects, lecture notes, Chpts. 2, 3

Exam 2

Theory and concepts of media effects, lecture notes, Chpts. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Exam 3

Key areas of media research, lecture notes, Chpts. 11, 12 and 15

Exam 4

Ethics, lecture notes

Final exam: Tuesday, May 5

“Do not do what I do; rather, take whatever I have to offer and do with it what I could never imagine doing and then come back and tell me about it.”