

**Introduction to Mass Communications - COMM 1154–E05**  
Spring Semester 2016 - 100% online

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Friday, 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm  
(D2L email or Google Voice call/text)

### **Overview**

COMM 1154 is an introductory, yet critical examination of the origin and development of paramount economic, legal/policy, ethical, political, and social effects issues facing print, telecommunication, and electronic media as well as advertising and public relations industries. It is hoped that this course will stimulate understanding and critical thinking about mass media's impact on society as well as society's impact on mass media. Particular attention will be given to implications of competition and convergence of traditional and digital mass media.

### **Department of Mass Communications Learning Outcomes**

1. Awareness: Students will demonstrate *awareness* of mass communications scholarship, i.e., theory/research; paramount economic, ethical, legal/policy, social, and technological issues; and the role of principle personalities and stakeholders within the context of freedom of speech, freedom of press, media competition, media convergence, diversity, and/or social responsibility. ACEJMC defines awareness as familiarity with facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
2. Understanding: Students will demonstrate *understanding* of mass communications scholarship, i.e., theory/research; paramount economic, ethical, legal/policy, social, and technological issues; and the role of principle personalities and stakeholders within the context of freedom of speech, freedom of press, media competition, media convergence, diversity, and/or social responsibility. ACEJMC defines understanding as assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.
3. Application: Students will demonstrate effective application of mass communications scholarship, i.e., relate and/or apply concepts, theory/research, and professional principles to analyze and synthesize information, create, develop, produce, and/or write for converging digital, multi-media, and traditional media. ACEJMC defines application as competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

## Course Learning Objectives

To identify and describe the origin and development of mass media<sup>1</sup> and support media<sup>2</sup>  
(*Awareness/Understanding*)

To define and explain paramount economic, legal/policy, ethical, political, and social effects issues facing mass media (*Awareness/Understanding*)

To identify and discuss competition and convergence involving traditional and digital mass media  
(*Awareness/Understanding*)

## Required Materials

Biagi, Shirley. (2015). *Media/Impact: An Introduction to Mass Media* (11<sup>th</sup> Edition). Boston, MA: CENGAGE Learning.

NOTE: There is a very low likelihood of passing this course without access to this textbook. There have been notable updates between the 10th and 11th edition of the textbook, although much of the content is the same. You are expected to be familiar with the content in the 11th edition of the textbook for exams in this course.

## CourseDen Resources & Technical Support

For CourseDen assistance, including tutorials, troubleshooting, and online support resources, I encourage you to reference the *CourseDen Desire2Learn (D2L) Resources* link on the course homepage, or contact the UWG Online Helpdesk Services via email at [online@westga.edu](mailto:online@westga.edu), or via the Internet at <http://uwgonline.westga.edu/students.php>.

Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm EST, you may also visit the Distance Education & Distributed Center at the Honors House or call the staff at 678.839.6248 or 1.855.933.8946 (UWGO). Additionally, you may contact the GeorgiaVIEW D2L Help Center for assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year via the Internet at <https://d2lhelp.view.usg.edu> or via its support hotline at 1.855.772.0423.

If you experience technical difficulties, it is very important that you contact CourseDen support staff - Distance Education & Distributed Center (first choice) or GeorgiaVIEW D2L Help Center. The staff will document your case, and verify whether it is a personal or campus technology issue. Personal technology issues do not justify due date extensions; and due dates will be extended only in cases of campus technology issues or cases of unavoidable situations substantiated with documentation. To request an extension for qualified cases, you should e-mail me within two hours of due date. However, if you do not contact CourseDen support staff, late online assignments or exams may not qualify for credit or will be subject to late penalties.

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<sup>1</sup> Mass media are defined as books, newspapers, magazines, recordings, radio, movies, television, and mass communication aspects of the Internet. Note that the Internet functions as both an interpersonal and mass communication tool. Refer to textbook definitions to distinguish between functions.

<sup>2</sup> Support media are defined as advertising and public relations.

## Important CourseDen Tools

**Grades:** Use the *Grades* tool to view your grades. Exam scores will be automatically posted as soon as online exams are completed.

**CourseDen Email:** The *Email* tool allows you to send email to, and receive email from, me and your classmates. It is important to check your email on a regular basis. With the exception of Friday afternoons, weekends, and holidays, I will respond to emails through CourseDen within 24 hours. If you send me email late on Friday afternoons, or on weekends or holidays, I will process your email by 5:00 pm the following weekend day. DO NOT send email to my westga.edu email address (unless CourseDen is unavailable).

## Assignments

### Orientation Module Discussion Post/Orientation Module Quiz (5 percent each)

See course website and class schedule for more information on these two assignments that should be completed during the first week of class.

### Exams (3 exams: Exam1=15%, Exam2=15%, Exam3=20%= = 50 percent total)

You are expected to complete three online exams (in the *Quizzes* area in D2L). Each exam will cover the equivalent of five to six chapters, and will include 50 - 60 multiple-choice/true-false/matching questions. You will have 80 minutes to complete each exam. I encourage you to use the *Review, Analyze, Investigate* pages at the end of each chapter to prepare for exams.

**NOTE: A study guide will NOT be provided.** See “key terms” and “critical questions” at the end of each chapter as your review. Your understanding of the material can be broadened if you understand these terms and answer these questions.

Early or make-up exams will be permitted only in cases of unavoidable situations outside of your control that are substantiated with documentation. Requests for early exams must be made at least 48 hours prior to the start of the online exam. Requests for make-up exams must be made no later than 2 hours before the start of the exam. To request an early or make-up exam, e-mail me or leave a message and contact number at 678.839.4931.

### Media Usage Diary Blog Post (10 percent of grade)

Media are part of our everyday lives; many of us are “saturated” in media. This assignment will allow you to be creative in recording your media usage for a 24 hour period and creating a blog post where you describe that usage, adding hyperlinks, photos, and videos to help illustrate your story. You will post the URL of your blog in a designated Discussion area, giving the instructor and your classmates access to the blog you created. Further details will be distributed later in the semester.

## **Chapter Article Summary Posts and Replies** (15 posts @ 2% each = 30 percent total)

For each chapter in the textbook, you will search for, locate, and summarize an online article or blog post that refers to or expands on a narrow topic/company/person in the chapter that interests you. Create a new post under the discussion topic for that chapter (e.g, "Chapter 4 Summaries") and complete **ALL of the following steps**:

1. Create a new post with a title that is relevant to your topic. For example, in the Newspaper chapter, you might use the title "Update on Sale of Washington Post" if you were summarizing an article updating the sale of that paper to Jeff Bezos of Amazon.
2. Describe the topic/company/person in the textbook chapter that is of interest to you and explain why you have this interest (25 - 50 words)
2. Summarize the article that you found online about your topic/issue/person. (30 - 50 words)
3. Highlight one point from or about the article that you think is the most interesting or important point (MIP) for your classmates to know (15 - 40 words)
4. Insert a clickable hyperlink to the article in your summary so that others can easily find the original article. (See separate video for a demonstration of creating a hyperlink.)
5. Reply to one of your classmates posts that interests you and describe briefly (a) why the issue/company/person interests you (20 - 40 words) and (b) whether you agree or disagree with the Most Important Point (MIP) that was identified, and explain why.

**WARNING** - If you move ahead of the readings to complete your chapter summaries and are the first person to post, remember to come back later when your classmates have posted in order to find a posting to which you can reply.

### **Late Work Policy**

All assignments will be available at least one week before the deadline. Thus, there will be NO acceptance of unexcused late work, including the media usage blog post, discussion questions, or online exams. If you miss an exam, discussion, or other assignment, you will receive zero points. Also, there will be no make-up of exams, discussions, or other assignments unless the absence is excused prior to the missed work and arrangements have been made for completing the work.

### **Grading Policy**

3 online exams (Exam1=15%, Exam2=15%, Exam3=20%)	50%
Chapter Article Summary Posts and Replies (CASPAR)	30%
Media Usage Diary Blog Post	10%
Orientation Module Discussion Post	5%
<u>Orientation Module Quiz</u>	<u>5%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Assignment of final grades will be based on the following scale:

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = below 60%

In the interest of academic integrity and fairness, please note that I do not entertain individual requests for extra credit work at the end of the semester.

You earn your grade. Grades are evaluations of your performance on the assignments in this course. A final grade 0.5 percent below the next higher letter grade will be rounded up.

### **Other Important Policies**

#### **University Policies**

The following link contains standards about important issues such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the UWG email policy, the university credit hour policy, and the Honor Code. Please review the information carefully at:

[http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common\\_Language\\_for\\_Course\\_Syllabi.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf). It contains important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class.

Because these statements are updated as federal, state, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.

[END OF SYLLABUS -- WEEKLY SCHEDULE IN SEPARATE DOCUMENT]