

S Y L L A B U S
THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ROME

Department of Communication and English

The learning goals for students pursuing a degree in Communication are meant to develop and enhance their writing skills, whether expository, reflective or analytical; or journalistic; or creative. The program also aims to develop students' conceptual analysis skills and critical thinking; and train them in the use of the appropriate/required tools and technology related to the field of Communication, in selected courses. The Communication degree program also offers students the opportunity to benefit from the Rome location, and prepares them to work and operate successfully in a global environment characterized by diversity and intercultural understanding and respect.

Course Title: Introduction to Mass Media

Course Number: COM200

Period: Spring 2008

Credits: Three hours

Professor: Antonio Lopez

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Class URL: <http://worldbridgermedia.com/aur-comm200/>

Teacher URL: <http://worldbridgermedia.com>

Time: Mondays & Wednesdays 9AM – 10:25 AM

Room: B/106

Office hours:

By appointment. Office is located on the first floor of the Carini Building near the Multimedia Lab.

Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to the history and functioning of the mass media based on lectures, reading, and analysis of various media products. Students will gain an understanding of the forces, origins, and principles that shaped mass media, explore some ethical and legal issues that media users and practitioners may face, and learn how the mass media are changing in the 21st century.

Course Learning Objectives:

In this course students will:

1. Learn how to distinguish mass media from other types of media and gain a better understanding of various forms of communication developed by humans over time.
2. Develop an understanding of the origins, forces, and principles that helped shape the mass media.
3. Examine their own relationship to mass media and record their daily usage of mass media for analysis and discussion.
4. Develop an awareness of legal and ethical issues that media users and practitioners may face.
5. Examine current and future trends in mass media and how the mass media are changing in the 21st century.
6. Gain a better understanding of mass media's effects on themselves, society, culture, religion, politics, and populations.

Course Learning Activities:

Class lectures, class discussions, multimedia presentations, video documentaries, guest lectures, reading and analysis of media products: CLO: 1-6.

Writing Assignments and the Keeping of a Media Journal: CLO: 3, 5, & 6.

Term Project: An 8 to 10-page research paper on a topic related to material covered in the course. CLO: 1-6.

Assessment Tools

Students will be assessed by the following:

Periodic quizzes on course material, writing assignments, the media journal, class participation in discussions, the midterm and final exam, and the term project.

Grade Tabulation:

The term project will be rubric graded.

Midterm Exam 20%

Final Exam 20%

Term Project 25%

Writing Assignments/Media Journal 15%

Participation 10%

Attendance 10%

AUR Grade Values

94 – 100 points = A “Excellent”

90 – 93.99 pts = A-

87 – 89.99 = B+

83 – 86.99 = B “Good”

80 – 82.99 = B-

77 – 79.99 = C+

70 – 76.99 = C “Satisfactory”

60 – 69.99 = D “Poor”

59.99 – 0 = F “Failing”

Grade Dispute Policy:

Please note that grades are given according to AUR Grade Values. This means average work will receive a C, good work a B, excellent work an A, etc. The reasons for each grade will be spelled out clearly in rubrics and on corrected exams. If students feel that they were given an incorrect grade, please address the issue with me personally after class in a respectful way. More often than not students are given the highest grade possible for the quality of work submitted and grade disputes are not encouraged unless a glaring discrepancy was made. Please also note that the final grade for the semester also includes scores for overall participation, attendance, and punctuality.

Course Textbook:

Understanding Mass Communication (7th edition.) by M. DeFleur & E.Dennis.

Houghton Mifflin, Boston 2002.

Additional readings from handouts and online sources.

Courtesy Policy:

Make sure your cell phone is turned off. If you have an emergency situation that requires your phone to be on, please speak with me first.

Ringling cell phones, late arrival, leaving early, and walking in and out of class while class is in session is disrespectful to your Professor and to your fellow classmates and will result in the lowering of your Class Participation Grade and Overall Grade.

AUR attendance policy

“Attendance is required in all classes at The American University of Rome and attendance records are maintained. More than two unexcused absences from any class may have a negative effect on student grades. Absences documented by a medical certificate or an obvious case of emergency may be excused by the Office of the Provost. If the Registrar determines that the student’s attendance record is unacceptable, the student will be required to withdraw from the class with a grade of WD. The criteria upon which grades are determined, including the attendance policy, are outlined in each course syllabus.” — AUR Student Handbook, 2006/2007, p. 17.

Please Note: An unexcused absence is one without a valid medical justification, or a written note from the Provost. No make-up exams or quizzes will be given without a documented medical excuse. Incomplete grades are not given.

Attendance is taken at the start of each class. Late arrival will be marked as such. Each 2 late arrivals count as an absence. Students with more than two unexcused absences will see a reduction in their overall final grade.

If You Miss Class: Please use the class contact sheet (given out after the add/drop period) to email or phone a classmate who can lend you their notes and help you get back on track. In this course it is important to stay on top of material since so much is covered. *Please do not email your professor for a briefing on what you missed, as it’s not possible to sum up a one and a half hour class in a short email. After you have made an effort to contact a classmate and catch up, your professor will be happy to give you individual help by appointment.

AUR Academic Integrity Code & Policy against Plagiarism

“Integrity is fundamental to the academic enterprise. It is violated by such acts as borrowing or purchasing assignments, including but not limited to term papers, essays, and reports; lending to or producing assignments for others (either for or without payment); using concealed notes or crib sheets during examinations, copying the work of others and submitting it as one’s own; and otherwise misappropriating the knowledge of others. Such acts are both dishonest and deceptive: the work submitted to instructors is not the work of the person whose name it bears. In consequence, the sources from which one derives one’s ideas, statements, terms, and facts, including internet sources, must be fully and specifically acknowledged in the appropriate form. Failure to do so,

intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes plagiarism.” — AUR Student Handbook, 2006/2007, p. 15.

COURSE OUTLINE

*This outline is subject to change. Tentative: Guest speaker or field trip. TBD.

Week 1 – Introduction to Mass Communications
Jan. 28 and 30

Day 1: Introduction to mass comm. and mass media.

Day 2: The Nature of Mass Communication.
Read Ch.1

Part One: Forms of Mass Media

Week 2 – Invention of Writing and Books
Feb. 4 and 6

Day 1: Writing and Visuality
Read Handout

Day 2: Books
Read Ch. 2

Week 3 – Newspapers and Magazines
Feb. 11 and 13

Days 1: Newspapers
Read Ch. 3

Day 2: Magazines
Read Ch. 4

Week 4 – Film and Radio
Feb. 18 and 20

Day 1: Film
Read Ch. 5

Day 2: Radio
Read Ch. 6

Week 5 – TV and New Media
Feb. 25 and 27

Day 1: TV
Read Ch. 7

Day 2: New Media
Read Ch. 8

Part 2: Content of Mass Media

Week 6 – Advertising and Popular Culture
March 3 and 27

Day 1: Advertising
Read Ch. 11

Day 2: Popular Culture
Read Ch. 10

Week 7 – Media Literacy and Review
March 10 and 12

Day 1: Media Literacy
Day 2: Midterm Review

Week 8 – **Midterm** and Audience Studies
March 17 and 19

Day 1: Midterm Exam

Day 2: Audience Studies
Read Ch. 13
Final paper proposal with rough outline due

Spring Break March 21- March 30

Week 9 – Controls: Politics, Policies and Economics
March 31 and April 2

Day 1: Controls
Read Ch. 14

Day 2: Controls cont.

Week 10 – Public Relations and Propaganda

April 7 and 9

Day 1: PR
Read Ch. 12

Day 2: Propaganda

Week 11 – Media Effects
April 14 and 16

Days 1: Effects
Read Ch. 15

Day 2: Effects cont.

Week 12 – Media Ethics and Activism
April 21 and 23

Days 1: Ethics
Read Ch. 16
Paper Due

Day 2: Activism

Week 13 – The Future of Media and Review
April 28 and 30

Day 1: Future of Media
Day 2: Review for Final Exam.

Week 14 - Final Exam
May 5

Final Exam

Room: B/106

10:00 AM-12:00 PM