Syllabus
MMC 6607 Communication and Society
Spring 2008

Meets:
Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Room COM 143D

Instructor: Dan Shaver
Office: Nicholson School of Communication Rm. 227
Office Hours: 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., Wednesday
Other times available by appointment

Contact me at:
Office Phone: 407-823-5958
Mobile Phone: 407-758-7962
Home Phone: 407-909-0085
Email: dshaver@mail.ucf.edu

If these times are not convenient for you, please call or email me and we’ll find a time that works. I am often in my office at times other than scheduled office hours. You may drop by if you are in the building. Feel free to call me at home or on my cellular phone as long as it is after 8 a.m. or before 9 p.m.

Class Web Site: http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~dshaver/ (or Google "Dan Shaver Class")

Course Description and Goals:

This course examines the relationship between mass media, especially the news media, and society. We will consider various theories regarding what the media should (and shouldn’t) be and do. We will explore research and theories regarding how the media may (or may not) influence media consumers and social institutions. We will also examine how social and economic factors influence media content. We will also focus on the impact of digital media technologies on traditional media roles.

During the semester we will also discuss ethical and philosophical issues in the relationship between mass media and society.

Required Texts:

There are no required texts--all readings will be emailed to your e-community address in PDF format. You may read them online or print them from your computer, whichever you prefer.
You are expected to read at least one daily newspaper and regularly watch a news channel such as CNN or MSNBC. Many class discussions will involve current controversies involving mass media and you should be prepared to provide opinions and insights based on your own media consumption.

**Class Format:**

The class will operate as a seminar with a mixture of discussion, presentations and lectures. Whenever you have a question or issue you believe is worth discussion, please raise that issue or ask the question.

It is assumed that the readings assigned for each day will be done prior to class. You will be expected to knowledgeably discuss the assigned readings. For each reading, I will ask a randomly selected class participant to introduce the reading by providing a brief overview of the main themes and suggesting one or more critical questions/issues related to or raised by the reading. Because of the class schedule, some classes will cover two distinct segments of readings. In that case, I will assign half of the class to have primary responsibility for one segment and half of the class for the other.

Although the class format will vary according to the material being covered, the number of reports and presentations scheduled and the availability of guest speakers or other instructional opportunities.

Because of the length of the class, there will be a 15-minute break approximately half-way through the period.

**Assignments and Grading:**

You will be graded upon class attendance and participation, projects and a final paper.

The final grade for the semester will be determined as follows:

- Class participation: 15%
- Consumer Communication Analysis: 15%
- Critical Analysis: 10%
- Oral and Written Topic Report: 25%
- Final Project: 35%

**Class Participation**

Class participation includes your attendance and day-to-day contribution to class discussions of readings and course topics. Your familiarity and comments regarding the discussion questions provided for the readings in the previous class, your apparent degree of familiarity with the reading material, and your willingness to share your views and
insights are all components of class participation. Quality of contribution, however, is more important than mere quantity.

As a component of class participation, you should come to class prepared to discuss each of the assigned readings. If called upon, you should be knowledgeable/thoughtful enough to guide discussion about the reading--outlining key points and issues or questions raised by the reading. You should not attempt to provide a detailed description of all the specifics in the article, merely the key points and the questions that are implied for our understanding of the role of media in social organization. Your attendance, quality of discussion when asked to review a reading and contribution to general class discussion about the readings and related issues will all be factors in the class participation grade.

Consumer Communication Analysis

We tend to assume that our media consumption habits and attitudes are "typical" of other media consumers. Working in teams of two to four, you will spend the scheduled class time on Wednesday, January 23, exploring this issue.

Go to a location where there are lots of different kinds of people--a restaurant, a bar, a mall, etc.--and interview at least four different individuals about their media habits and attitudes. The interviews should be a conversation, not just a mechanical journalistic interview, because your goal is to understand how they view and use various media rather than to write a news story. Interview very different kinds of people based on age, gender, ethnicity.

What kinds of media do they consume? Why do they choose the media mix that they prefer? What kinds of media do they prefer for news and information? For entertainment? What media do they trust (or not)? Why or why not? What roles/contributions do their selected media content play in their lives? How have their media habits changed in the past ten years? Why?

Prepare a report of approximately five (double-spaced) pages identifying the questions about media and media use that your group identified as a result of your interviews. What kinds of differences exist in attitudes and consumption patterns between various kinds of consumers (recognizing that your sample size is inadequate for statistical generalization)? What kinds of questions and issues does the information you obtained raise about the role of various kinds of media in society? What kinds of issues are suggested for media content creators? Include (on a separate sheet rather than in your report) the basic demographic information about each of the individuals you interviewed. This is an analytical project, not a journalistic report. Focus on trends, patterns, issues and ideas. Use quotes or interview information to support your analysis, but the analysis—not the interviews—should be the focus of your writing.

Be prepared to discuss your report and findings in class on January 30.
Critical Analysis

You will critically analyze a piece of media content from a print, radio, television, film or online source. The analysis should be between 300 and 500 words. The analysis should discuss (as appropriate) accuracy, bias, balance, fairness and any social or ethical issues as well as deal with the quality of writing, editing, videography, etc. You will present the analysis to the class and lead any related discussion following the presentation. Presentations and discussion should take 10-15 minutes. The written analysis will be due at the class in which the presentation is made.

The purpose of the Critical Analysis assignments is to stimulate thinking and discussion of issues related to current media content. The focus of your oral presentation—which should include discussion questions for the class—should reflect this purpose.

Topic Report

Each student will lead a class discussion and write a report on a topic relevant to some aspect of the focus of their assigned class. Please check with me about the appropriateness of your suggested topic before you began. This can be done through discussion or via email.

Each topic report has both an oral and a written component.

The oral portion of the report should be about 20 minutes long. You are encouraged to use visual aids in your presentation. If you have any questions about equipment, please check with me ahead of time.

The report should have four sections:
- Introduction
- Research into the Topic
- Conclusions
- Implications

The Introduction section states the issue and why it is important. It should be relatively short and have one or more explicit questions that research can address. For example, Do advertising images reinforce negative stereotypes about minority groups, and how?

The Research section examines relevant peer-reviewed research not included in the syllabus. Journalism criticism, scholarly books, commentary or first-person accounts may be used as appropriate. This section should include the most important research, as well as an assessment of the most recent research on the topic. Non-peer reviewed works that suggest possible questions or answers for your topic may be included. If the research is inconclusive or inconsistent, discuss this and some of the possible reasons. Try to summarize related studies where possible.
The Conclusions section should include an overall evaluation of the research in an effort to answer the questions posed in the introduction. Usually these answers will be tentative. If you reach an answer, how strongly does research support it? What still remains to be explored in future research?

The Implications section deals with the meaning of what you've found for the relationships between mass media and society. Do they reflect negative impacts from social forces on media performance? Are the media impacts on society harmful? If something in the press/society relationship needs to be fixed, how and by whom should the issue be addressed? What role, if any, do journalists, the public and the government plan in this fix?

The written version of the report should be organized similar to the oral report and should cover the same material. It should be typed and double-spaced. It should be 8-10 pages in length.

Obviously, the written report must follow appropriate rules, including appropriate citation of research in the text, in footnotes or endnotes and in the bibliography. Any standard style is acceptable (APA, Chicago, etc.) If you don’t have a style guide for one of the standard styles, there are a number of web sites that offer style guidelines. It should go without saying that grammar, spelling, style, punctuation and syntax, as well as the clarity and precision of the writing, will be taken into consideration in the grade.

Pay attention to the "aesthetics" of the written report. Give it a good title and a professional title page. Include graphics and tables if they will enhance clarity.

Final Project

The Final Project is a longer paper written on a topic chosen by you and approved by me. You may do this by talking with me or by emailing me a one- or two-paragraph summary of your idea. (Note: The Topic Report and Final Project must be on different subjects unless explicitly approved by the instructor.)

The Final Project should follow the guidelines specified for the written portion of the Topic Report. It should be 15-20 double-spaced pages. The major difference between the short and the long papers is depth. The long paper should ask a series of related questions about the selected topic. It should have a more extensive review of the peer-reviewed research. The Conclusions and Implications sections should refer back to that literature, noting your own suggestions for theory building, modification or rejection, as well as your own suggestions for questions to be addressed by future research or policy.

The paper may be written as an individual effort or as a co-authored paper with one other individual from the class. If the paper is co-authored, both contributors will receive the same grade on the paper.
Late Papers and Missed Presentations:

Papers and presentations are due when assigned. Missed presentations cannot normally be delivered at a later time because they are related to the content of a specific class. If you are absolutely prevented from a scheduled presentation, university policy for being excused will apply. Illness, death in the family, war, and acts of God may be accepted. If excused, we will decide together whether your presentation might be appropriate to another class or to simply base your have your final grade on the remaining class components. Students wishing to be excused must contact me before the scheduled presentation and be ready to provide documents establishing the reason for missing.

Papers turned in after they are due will lose one-half point for each day they are late. (For example, a paper that is deemed to merit a 3.5 will receive a 3.0 if it is one day late and a 2.5 if it is two days late.) Papers that are more than three days late will not be accepted and a grade of "0.0" will be assigned.

Class Policies:

- The School of Communication is covered by the UCF Golden Rule. Academic dishonesty in any form—including plagiarism or falsification of information—is punishable by an "F" in the class and may be referred to Student Legal Services.

- No assignments should be e-mailed without advance permission. Assignments should be delivered at the beginning of class in hard copy.

- Failure to turn in an assignment within one week of the due date results in an F for that assignment.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Please note that this schedule is subject to modification through the semester subject to availability of guest speakers and class progress in a specific subject area. Listed readings are tentative and final assignments will be posted on the class website. Any changes affecting presentations or paper deadlines will be announced at least two class periods before the scheduled event. Readings will be posted at least one week before the class in which they will be discussed. Readings noted below are subject to change as we move through the semester depending on the availability of more appropriate alternatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Reading Assignment</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 9</td>
<td>Introduction, organization, assignment of presentation dates. Discussion: What is mediated communication?</td>
<td>Assignments for next week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 16</td>
<td><strong>The Libertarian View of the Press</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Readings:&lt;br&gt;  • The Libertarian Theory by Fred S. Siebert (<em>Four Theories of the Press</em>)&lt;br&gt;  • Three Libertarian Myths by John C. Merrill (<em>The Imperative of Freedom</em>)&lt;br&gt;  • The First Amendment&lt;br&gt;<strong>The Social Responsibility View of the Press</strong>&lt;br&gt;  • Readings:&lt;br&gt;  • The Social Responsibility Theory of the Press by Theodore Peterson (<em>Four Theories of the Press</em>)&lt;br&gt;  • Chapters 2 (The Requirements) and 6 (What Can Be Done) by The Commission on Freedom of the Press (<em>A Free and Responsible Press</em>)&lt;br&gt;  • A Criticism of Social Responsibility Theory: An Ethical Perspective by Scott Lloyd (<em>Journal of Mass Media Ethics</em>)</td>
<td>• Media Interview team formation&lt;br&gt;  • Pick Topic Report Dates/Assignments&lt;br&gt;  • Pick Critical Analysis Dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 23</td>
<td><strong>Media Use Interviews and Report Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 30</td>
<td><strong>The Media Standards and Ethics</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Readings:&lt;br&gt;  • Codes of Ethics by Philip Meyer (<em>Ethical Journalism</em>)&lt;br&gt;  • The Case Against Mass Media Codes of Ethics (Jay Black &amp; Ralph Barney)&lt;br&gt;  • Enforcing Media Codes (Clifford Christians)&lt;br&gt;  • Ministers or Panderers: Issues Raised by the Public Relations Society Code of Ethics (M. Olasky)</td>
<td>• Media Use Reports and presentation&lt;br&gt;  • Pick a Final Paper topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 6</td>
<td>Understanding the Relationship Between Media and Society – The Roles of Social Science Research and Communications Theory</td>
<td>• Readings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Theory and Research in Mass Communication (Jennings Bryant and Dorina Miron in Journal of Communications—2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication Models—McQuail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mass Communication Theory and Research: Concepts and Models (Greenberg and Salwen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 13</td>
<td>The Role of the Journalist and Media and Politics</td>
<td>• Readings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Voter Learning in the 1996 Presidential Election: Did the Media Matter (Drew and Weaver—Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Differences Among Newspapers, Television and Radio in Their Contribution to Knowledge of the Contract with America (Stamm, Johnson &amp; Martin—Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Political Communication (Kaid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Values, Communication Behavior and Political Participation (Satirovic &amp; McLeod, Political Communication)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 20</td>
<td>The Role of the Journalist and Media and Politics (Continued)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 27</td>
<td>The Media, The Arts and Popular Culture</td>
<td>• Readings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Violence and Sex in the Media (Bryant and Zillmann)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The Politics of Studying Media Violence: Reflections 30 Years After the Violence Commission (Ball-Rokeach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Equally Super?: Gender-Role Stereotyping of Superheroes in Children’s Animated Programs (Baker and Raney)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The Impact of Sexually Objectifying Media Exposure on Negative Body Emotions and Sexual Self-Perceptions: Investigating the Mediating Role of Body Self-Consciousness (Aubrey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>The Media as a Business</td>
<td>• Readings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o The Endless Chain by Ben H. Bagdikian (The Media Monopoly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o The Effects of Public Ownership on the Financial Performance of Newspaper Corporations by William B. Blankenburg and Gary W. Ozanich (Journalism Quarterly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o First the Bad News by Joseph Ungaro (Media Studies Journal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o The Telecommunications Act of 1996 and Radio Market Structure by Bruce E. Drushel (Journal of Media Economics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Concentration of Mass Media Ownership by Garrett W. Ray (Contemporary Media Issues)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o The Rise and Fall of Communication Empires by Robert G. Picard (Journal of Media Economics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 12</td>
<td>Spring Break—No Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| March 19 | *The Media as a Business (Continued)* | • Topic Report 9  
• Topic Report 10  
• Critical Analysis 9  
• Critical Analysis 10 |
| March 26 | **Media Markets and Media Audiences**  
• **Readings:**  
  • *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*  
  ▪ Chapter 27  
  ▪ *TV Makes a Too-Close Call* by James Poniewozik *(Time Magazine)*  
  ▪ *Nightly News Blues* by Paul Farhi *(American Journalism Review)*  
  ▪ *Cohort Trends in Media Use in the United States* by Wolfram Peiser *(Mass Communication & Society)*  
• Topic Report 12  
• Critical Analysis 11  
• Critical Analysis 12 |
| April 2 | **Public Relations and Advertising**  
• **Readings from An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research**  
  • Chapters 14 and 29  
• **Other Readings:**  
  • *Public Relations Practitioner Role Enactment in Issues Management* by Martha M. Lauzen *(Journalism Quarterly)*  
  • *Sex, Lies & Advertising* by Gloria Steinem *(Ms. Magazine)* | • Topic Report 13  
• Topic Report 14  
• Critical Analysis 13  
• Critical Analysis 14 |
| April 9 | **New Media and the Internet**  
| Readings: | • Mediamorphosis, or the Transformation of Newspapers into a New Medium by Roger Fidler (Media Studies Journal)  
| | • The World Wide Web as a Functional Alternative to Television by Douglas A. Ferguson and Elizabeth M. Perse (Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media)  
| | • Displacement Effects of Online Media in the Socio-Technical Contexts of Households by Joseph M. Kayany and Paul Yelsma (Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media)  
| | • The Post Information Age by Nicholas Negroponte (being digital)  
| | • Into the Electronic Millennium by Sven Birkerts (The Gutenberg Elegies)  
| | • The Internet Economy by Barbara K. Kaye and Norman J. Medoff (Just a Click Away)  
| April 16 | **Conclusions, Presentations and Wrapup**  
| | • Topic Report 15  
| | • Critical Analysis 15  
| | Final Project Due |