

MCOM 3070-940: Media & Society

Semester: Fall 2020

Online

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Virtual office hours by appointment only

COVID-19 Statement:

While this class is online only, please be aware that ETSU is taking the COVID-19 pandemic and your safety seriously. So with that in mind, please wear a mask or other appropriate face covering to classes, in offices, and anywhere on campus. Wearing a mask that covers your nose and mouth communicates the care and respect you have for yourself, the care and respect you have for those you live with, and the care and respect you have for other members of this classroom community. The best evidence we have, from public health professionals, is that wearing masks is one of the best ways to protect against the spread of COVID-19 and other airborne illnesses. If you choose not to wear a mask, you will not be able to attend classes face to face. Students with medical conditions that inhibit their ability to wear masks should register through disability services.

For more information on ETSU's response to COVID-19, please visit the official university website:

<https://www.etsu.edu/coronavirus/>

Required Textbook:

Bryant, J., Thompson, S., & Finklea, B. W. (2012). *Fundamentals of Media Effects*. Waveland Press Inc.

Additional required readings may be added, and will be posted on the class web site. All handouts and additional resources provided by the instructor.

Course Purpose:

This course is designed to increase your understanding of research and theory on the impact of media on individuals and on society. It will help you become a more aware and critical consumer of media.

Course Goals:

We will begin with an overview of the scientific approach to the study of media. Then, we will review theory and research on media effects within a variety of areas, including media violence, sexual media content, frightening images, news, political media content, media stereotypes, and new media technologies.

Additionally, this course will give you information to help you:

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to communication professionals,
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for communications professionals, their audiences and the purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate your own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for communications professionals.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to recognize the major theories that define media effects research and identify both strengths and weaknesses within those theories. This knowledge, in turn, will allow students (1) to analyze and evaluate past, present, and future research in the field and (2) to design their own original research.

To that end, students will be assigned regular readings that should be completed prior to the class for when it will be discussed. To facilitate that discussion, students should bring ideas for one academic application and one practical application for each theory discussed.

Students will take **four tests** that will assess their knowledge of the theories presented in class, the purposes and applications of those theories, the strengths and weaknesses of those theories and the major findings from studies that have researched those theories.

Student Responsibilities:

You are responsible for all material from the book and video lectures. Reading assignments are to be read prior to class and lectures will not necessarily be a recap of all text material. If you have questions about text-related material not covered in class, please ask. All exams should be accessed via D2L.

Students are responsible for checking D2L and for all emails sent to student accounts. You must use your @etsu.edu account. This is my only way to communicate with the entire class outside of the classroom. **YOU MUST CHECK D2L AND YOUR STUDENT EMAIL ACCOUNT DAILY. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Course Requirements & Grading:

Tests (100% of your final grade)

Students will take four tests that will assess their knowledge of course content. Tests will cover material discussed in class as well as all required readings (textbook and other D2L materials). You are required to take these tests on D2L using the Respondus Lockdown Browser. All exams are 50 questions in length and timed at 50 minutes. At that time the exam will close, with all unanswered questions graded as incorrect. *Therefore, study and prepare well before beginning!*

Tests:

There will be four tests, which will be posted four days before they are due in the calendar. Due dates end at 11:30 p.m. All tests are timed, administered through D2L, and will use Respondus LockDown Browser software, which you will need to download to your computer or to use in any number of on-campus computer labs equipped with Respondus LockDown Browser. For more information about this program, see the Respondus LockDown Browser link under the Syllabus module on our D2L class site. Or visit this website:

<http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=932712521>

Major Assignments/Method of Assigning Grades:

| | |
|--------|-----|
| Test 1 | 25% |
| Test 2 | 25% |
| Test 3 | 25% |
| Test 4 | 25% |

Grading Scale:

Letter grades match number grades as follows:

A=95+; A- = 90-94; B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82; C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; C- = 70-72; D+ = 65-69; D = 60-64; F = 59-0 or eight or more absences.

Extra Credit

You may earn up to a maximum of **20 points of extra credit** in this class to be added to your lowest test score/scores. You may earn this by voluntarily participating in research approved by the Department of Psychology and the ETSU Institutional Review Board (IRB). The system ensures you remain anonymous and all your ID info is secure and secret. I will award you 5 extra credit points for every whole credit (1.0) you earn for participating in research studies. So you will earn all 20 extra credit points by earning 4.0 Sona credits. **You must complete all participation and assign credits to the classes by 11:59 p.m. Friday, Dec. 4.** There are also Alternative Assignments (readings and summaries for those under 18, or who don't want to do research participation). If you want Alternative Assignments, you should email me. **The deadline to submit alternate assignments is 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 2.**

How to Do Research Participation for Extra Credit

You need to establish an account at <http://etsu.sona-systems.com/> to sign up for studies and receive extra credit. You go to the “**Request an account here**” link at the bottom left of the <http://etsu.sona-systems.com/> home page. **Use your real name and student ID number** (assigned to you by ETSU) so your instructor will get your credit. You will be assigned a tracking number which experimenters will see. **Fill in a username that you will remember. Fill in the email address you check most** as you will get email info you need to attend to. **Your username and password will be emailed to you.** Login to the system, go into your profile, and change your password if you like. Once logged in, you may now view studies and sign up. Read the criteria and description to help you decide whether to participate. Allow researchers up to 2 days to give credit before contacting them directly to ask about unassigned credit.

Students are only allowed **TWO unexcused no shows for Sona** during the semester. After two unexcused no shows, students are no longer allowed to participate in Sona studies for the remainder of the semester. Students receive an automated warning email from Sona after the first unexcused no show. They will also receive an automated email from Sona if they have two unexcused no shows informing them that they will no longer be able to participate in Sona studies for the remainder of the semester.

Exams:

Examinations will cover material discussed in class as well as all required readings (textbook, class notes, and other handouts). Exams must be taken on the day and at the time scheduled, unless the student can document a serious illness or emergency. You cannot make up an exam that has been missed unless you have made a prior arrangement. Grades for missed exams will be recorded as "0/F."

Diversity Statement:

Neither I nor East Tennessee State University discriminate on the basis of race, class, linguistic background, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age or physical ability. Further, as professionals, you will be exposed to a wide diversity of people and ideas in the workforce. Therefore, it is imperative that your instruction reflects that diversity.

Students with Special Needs:

It is the policy of ETSU to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal law, state law and the University's commitment to equal educational opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example arrangement for examinations or seating placement, should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Faculty accommodation forms are provided to eligible students by Disability Services. Disability Services is located in the D.P. Culp Center, Room 326, telephone 439-8346. <http://www.etsu.edu/disable/>

Mental Health:

Students often have questions about mental health resources, whether for themselves or a friend or family member. There are many resources available on the ETSU Campus, including: ETSU Counseling Center (423) 439-4841; ETSU Behavioral Health & Wellness Clinic (423) 439-7777; ETSU Community Counseling Clinic: (423) 439-4187. If you or a friend are in immediate crisis, call 911.

Available 24 hours per day is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Academic Misconduct:

Academic misconduct will be subject to disciplinary action. Any act of dishonesty in academic work constitutes academic misconduct. This includes plagiarism, the changing or falsifying of any academic documents or materials, cheating, and the giving or receiving of unauthorized aid in tests, examinations, or other assigned school work. Penalties for academic misconduct will vary with the seriousness of the offense and may include, but are not limited to: a grade of “F” on the work in question, a grade of “F” for the course, reprimand, probation, suspension, and expulsion. For a second academic offense the penalty is permanent expulsion.

[http://catalog.etsu.edu/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=613#ACADEMIC AND CLASSROOM MISCONDUCT_0240-3-2-03](http://catalog.etsu.edu/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=613#ACADEMIC_AND_CLASSROOM_MISCONDUCT_0240-3-2-03)

Plagiarism is defined as follows by Black, Henry Campbell, Black's Law Dictionary, West Publishing Company, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1968 (p. 1308): "The act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of his writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the product of one's own mind." Moreover, to be liable for 'plagiarism' it is not necessary to exactly duplicate another's literary work it being sufficient if unfair use of such work is made by lifting of substantial portion thereof, but even an exact counterpart of another's work does not constitute 'plagiarism' if such counterpart was arrived at independently (O'Rourke vs. RKO Radio Pictures, D. C, Mass., 44F. Supp. 480, 482, 483).

ETSU Honor Code:

East Tennessee State University is committed to developing the intellect and moral character of its students. To that end, all instances of plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct shall be punished in accord with Tennessee Board of Regents Policy. Any knowledge of conduct of this nature should be reported to the proper authorities. Not reporting instances of academic misconduct represents a fundamental break with honor code policy, and although this offense is not punishable, reflects a callous disregard for yourself, your classmates, and your professors. Penalties for academic misconduct will vary with the seriousness of the offense and may include, but are not limited to: a grade of F on the work in question, a grade of F for the course, reprimand, probation, suspension, and expulsion. For a second academic misconduct offense, the penalty is permanent expulsion. We want you to succeed at ETSU.

University policies and procedures:

As reflected in its Values Statement, East Tennessee State University is committed to a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity that extends to all members of the University Community. Any student with a special need for an accommodation in course activities should make arrangements with the instructor.

Please see the syllabus attachment (<http://www.etsu.edu/reg/academics/syllabus.aspx>) for additional student information and guidelines.

Technical Resources may be found here:

http://www.etsu.edu/onlinehelp/student_help/tech_resources.php

Additional ETSU Services may be found here:

http://www.etsu.edu/onlinehelp/student_help/services.php

Class Schedule:**WEEK ONE**

Topics: Introduction to course. Review syllabus, discuss expectations
Brief Overview of Media Effects Research (Chapters 1-2)

WEEK TWO

Topics: The Scientific Study of Media Effects and Research Methods (Chapter 3 plus Extra PowerPoint)

WEEK THREE

Topics: Contributions from Political Science, Psychology, Sociology (Extra PPT)

TEST 1 Available from Friday, Sept. 11, until 11:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 14**WEEK FOUR**

Topics: Social Cognitive Theory & Priming (Chapters 4-5)

WEEK FIVE

Topics: Gatekeeping, Agenda Setting and Framing (Chapters 6-7)

WEEK SIX

Topics: Cultivation and Third-Person Effect (Chapter 8 plus extra PPT)

WEEK SEVEN

Topics: Effects of Media Violence and Sexual Content (Chapters 11-12)

TEST 2 Available from Friday, Oct. 9, until 11:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 12**WEEK EIGHT**

Topics: Reactions to Frightening Media Content & Media Effects on Health (Chapters 13 & 15)

WEEK NINE

Topics: Diversity, Body Image, and the Effects of Stereotyping (Chapter 16 plus extra PPT)

WEEK TEN

Topics: Persuasion & Political Communication Effects (Chapters 10 & 14)

Spiral of Silence & the Excellence Theory of Public Relations (Extra PPTs)

TEST 3 Available from Friday, Oct. 30, until 11:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 2

WEEK ELEVEN

Topics: Diffusion of Innovations, Digital Divide, Knowledge Gap, and the (Extra PPT)
Uses and Gratifications & Effects of Computer Video Games (Chapters 9 & 18)

WEEK TWELVE

Topics: Effects of Children's Media & Effects of Communication Technology (Chapter 17 & Extra PPT)

WEEK THIRTEEN

Topics: Effects of the Internet and Mobile Communication (Chapters 19-20)

TEST 4 Available from Thursday, Nov. 19, until 11:30 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 22

The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments to the schedule as necessary. Changes will be announced in class or on D2L. In case of weather cancellation, class will resume schedule as indicated by the instructor.