

## **Approaches to Media Communication (JMC:6700:0001), Fall 2019**

Monday 1:30–4:15 p.m., Moeller Research Lab

**Professor:** Brian Ekdale, brian-ekdale@uiowa.edu, E324 AJB

**Office Hours:** Drop-in hours are Wednesday from 12–3 p.m. You can also make an appointment.

**DEO:** Dr. David Ryfe, david-ryfe@uiowa.edu, E305B AJB

**Course Overview:** In this graduate seminar, students will explore theoretical and methodological perspectives and techniques that allow us to study, interpret, and criticize media. We will examine how media intersect with political, economic, and social shifts through analyzing scholarly works in our field. The goal of the class is to provide students with an understanding of how to pose original, provocative, and clear research questions that lead to rigorous and useful media research.

This course also serves as an introduction to research and graduate study in journalism and mass Communication. It is an entry point for the M.A. thesis and Ph.D. students' degree work. More broadly, the course will provide an overview of various approaches to the study of the media, introducing students to the range of theoretical and methodological currents in our discipline as well as to the culture of academia.

### **Course Objectives:**

- Help students understand connections between ideas covered in class, graduate coursework, and careers
- Develop a set of common experiences for a diverse group of incoming students
- Introduce students to scholarly journals, organizations, opportunities to participate professionally, norms, habits, and ethics of the profession
- Discuss theorists, theories, and major ideas in the field as well as their interrelationships
- Become colleagues and get to know faculty in the department
- Prepare students to conduct original research
- Understand the conventions and techniques of scholarly writing
- Prepare students for success in graduate school and an academic career

**Readings and Required Texts:** This course has three required books. Books can be purchased through online sellers and are available in the SJMC Resource Center on reserve. The other required articles and chapters are available on ICON. Readings are to be completed by the start of class in the week indicated.

- *The Craft of Research, 4th Ed.* (2016). Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, Joseph Williams, Joseph Bizup, William FitzGerald. ISBN: 9780226239736
- *Canonic Texts in Media Research: Are There Any? Should There Be? How About These?* (2002). Elihu Katz, John Durham Peters, Tamar Liebes, Avril Orloff. ISBN: 9780745629346
- Our third required book is TBD. We will discuss options and make a final selection during the first weeks of the semester.

### **Acknowledgements**

This course has been previously taught by my colleagues Gigi Durham, Melissa Tully, and Rachel Young. I have borrowed liberally from their course design and benefited greatly from their syllabi.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Participation (20%):** The success of any seminar depends on the participation of its students. Therefore, you will be graded on your attendance, preparedness, contribution, and cooperation.

- Attendance means showing up. Simply put, you should be in seminar. If you have a legitimate reason for arriving late, leaving early, or missing class, please discuss this with me before the start of class.
- Preparedness means completing all assigned readings prior to the start of class. While I encourage you to draw from your individual experiences and areas of expertise, our discussions should be centered on the ideas explored in the weekly readings.
- Contribution means sharing your ideas. Each of you offers a unique perspective based on your beliefs, upbringing, and areas of expertise. Therefore, it is important that you share your thoughts, opinions, and reactions with each other.
- Cooperation means working well with others. A seminar should be a place where everyone feels comfortable sharing their views, even if those views are uncommon or unpopular. At the same time, you must always be aware of how your words and actions affect those around you. Intolerance, antagonism, and demagoguery have no place in the healthy exchange of ideas.

**Reading Response Points (15%):** To help spark in-class discussion, each week you will write a few notes about the weekly readings. In your response, I want you to write 2-3 “bullet points” for each assigned reading. These bullet points could be any combination of the following:

- What you see as the main contribution(s) of the reading
- Which parts of the reading that resonated with you most (i.e., the argument was most provocative, the evidence was most persuasive, the writing was most compelling, etc.)
- Which parts of the reading that resonated with you most least (i.e., the argument was least provocative, the evidence was least persuasive, the writing was least compelling, etc.)
- Questions you still have about the topic after completing the reading

These briefs should demonstrate that you have attempted to understand the readings, you’ve grappled with their arguments, and you are able to clearly communicate your ideas. I am less interested in the quality of your prose than the thoughtfulness of your response. Upload your response briefs to ICON at least an hour before the start of class. These briefs will be graded as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory as follows:

- Satisfactory: Clear evidence of good faith attempt to understand the readings’ contributions; original thoughts; completeness
- Unsatisfactory: Little evidence of good faith attempt to understand the readings’ contributions; unoriginal thoughts; partial or incomplete

**Scholarly Vision Paper (5%):** In a 2-page paper, you will write about the questions, concepts, and/or theories that motivated you to seek a graduate degree in journalism and mass communication. What questions do you most want to answer, and why? What methods do you imagine you will use? What populations (of people or of media texts) do you most want to engage? What applications do you see to the fields of journalism, media, and/or strategic communication? We will revisit these papers at the end of the semester, to see how your vision has changed or become more concrete or contextualized based on the readings done throughout the semester.

**Research Project (60%):** For the final project in this class, you will develop and write an original research paper grounded in theory. Various parts of the project are due throughout the semester so you can receive feedback from me and your colleagues as you develop your research paper. Specific instructions for each portion of the Research Project will be provided later in the semester.

- Research questions (1 page) – 5% (due week 9)
- Bibliography and outline (2-4 pages) – 5% (due week 10)
- Final paper proposal (5-7 pages) – 10% (due week 12)
- Proposal peer review (1-2 pages) – 5% (due week 13)
- Paper presentation (12 minutes) – 10% (due week 15)
- Research paper – 25% (due finals week)

**Grading Scale:**

A	93–100	B-	80–82	D+	67–69
A-	90–92	C+	77–79	D	63–66
B+	87–89	C	73–76	D-	60–62
B	83–86	C-	70–72	F	59 and below

### COURSE SCHEDULE

*Note: Readings are listed in a suggested reading order. Schedule is subject to change.*

<i>Week 1 (8/26)</i> <i>Graduate school</i>	Seligman, A. (2012). Chapter 3: Graduate expectations, (pp. 25-47). <i>Is graduate school really for you?</i>
<i>Week 2 (9/2)</i>	Labor Day – NO CLASS
<i>Week 3 (9/9)</i>  <i>Early mass communication scholarship</i>	<p><b>Scholarly Vision Paper due</b> (by start of class)</p> <p>Katz et al. (2003). Introduction to The Columbia School, (pp. 10-11). <i>Canonic texts in media research.</i></p> <p>Lazarsfeld, P. F., &amp; Merton, R. K. (1948). Mass communication, popular taste, and organized social action. <i>The communication of ideas.</i></p> <p>Simonson, P., &amp; Weimann, G. (2003). Critical research at Columbia: Lazarsfeld's and Merton's "Mass communication, popular taste, and organized social action," (pp. 12-38). <i>Canonic texts in media research.</i></p> <p>Katz et al. (2003). Introduction to The Chicago School, (pp. 104-105). <i>Canonic texts in media research.</i></p> <p>Horton, D., &amp; Wohl, R. R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. <i>Psychiatry, 19</i>(3), 215-229.</p>

	Handelman, D. (2003). Towards the virtual encounter: Horton's and Wohl's "Mass communication and para-social interaction," (pp. 135-151). <i>Canonic texts in media research</i> .
Week 4 (9/16) <i>Media effects</i>	Potter, W.J., Cooper, R., & DuPagne, M. (1993) The three paradigms of mass media research in mainstream communication journals. <i>Communication Theory</i> , 3(4): 317-225.  Lang, A. (2013). Discipline in crisis? The shifting paradigm of mass communication research. <i>Communication Theory</i> , 23, 10-24.  Slater, M. D. (2007). Reinforcing spirals: The mutual influence of media selectivity and media effects and their impact on individual behavior and social identity. <i>Communication Theory</i> , 17(3), 281-303.  Perloff, R. M. (2015). Mass communication research at the crossroads: Definitional issues and theoretical directions for mass and political communication scholarship in an age of online media. <i>Mass Communication and Society</i> , 18(5), 531-556.  Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2006). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. <i>Journal of communication</i> , 57(1), 9-20.
Week 5 (9/23) <i>Media and culture</i>	McQuail, D. (2010). Chapter 5: Mass communication and culture, (pp. 111-132). <i>McQuail's mass communication theory</i> .  Durham, M. G., & Kellner, D. M. (2012). Adventures in media and cultural studies: Introducing the KeyWorks, (pp. 1-23). <i>Media and cultural studies: KeyWorks</i> .  Katz et al. (2003). Introduction to The Frankfurt School, (pp. 56-57). <i>Canonic texts in media research</i> .  Horkheimer, M., & Adorno, T. W. (1944/2012). The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception, (pp. 53-75). Reprinted in <i>Media and cultural studies: KeyWorks</i> .  Peters, J. D. (2003). The subtlety of Horkheimer and Adorno: Reading "The culture industry," (pp. 58-73). <i>Canonic texts in media research</i> .  Parameswaran, R. (2001). Feminist media ethnography in India: Exploring power, gender, and culture in the field. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> , 7(1), 69-103.
Week 6 (9/30) <i>Cultural studies</i>	Katz et al. (2003). Introduction to British cultural studies, (pp. 214-215). <i>Canonic texts in media research</i> .

	<p>Williams, R. (1980/2012). Base and superstructure in Marxist cultural theory, (pp. 115-124). Reprinted in <i>Media and cultural studies: KeyWorks</i>.</p> <p>Peters, J. D. (2003). Retroactive enrichment: Raymond William's <i>Culture and Society</i>, (pp. 217-230). <i>Canonic texts in media research</i>.</p> <p>Hall, S. (1980/2012). Encoding/decoding, (pp. 137-144). Reprinted in <i>Media and cultural studies: KeyWorks</i>.</p> <p>Gurevitch, M., &amp; Scannell, P. (2003). Canonization achieved? Stuart Hall's "Encoding/decoding," (pp. 231-247). <i>Canonic texts in media research</i>.</p> <p>Ang, I. (1991/2012). On the politics of empirical audience research, (pp. 145-159). Reprinted in <i>Media and cultural studies: KeyWorks</i>.</p>
Week 7 (10/7)  Reassessing the field	<p>Chakravarthy, P., Kuo, R., Grubbs, V., &amp; McIlwain, C. (2018). #CommunicationSoWhite. <i>Journal of Communication</i>, 68(2), 254-266.</p> <p>Mayer, V., Press, A., Verhoeven, D., &amp; Sterne, J. (2017). How do we intervene in the stubborn persistence of patriarchy in communication research? In D. T. Scott &amp; A. Shaw (Eds.), <i>Interventions: Communication theory and practice</i>. New York, NY: Peter Lang.</p> <p>Wasserman, H., &amp; de Beer, A. S. (2009). Towards de-westernizing journalism studies. In <i>The handbook of journalism studies</i>, edited by K. Wahl-Jorgensen &amp; T. Hanitzsch, (pp. 448-458). Routledge.</p> <p>Baym, N. (2015). Connect with your audience! The relational labor of connection. <i>The Communication Review</i>, 18, 14-22.</p> <p>Martineau, P. (2019, May 5). The existential crisis plaguing online extremist researchers. <i>Wired</i>.</p>
Week 8 (10/14)  Conducting research	<p>Booth, W. C. et al. (2016). Part I: Research, Researchers, and Readers, (pp. 1-26) and Part II: Asking Questions, Finding Answers, (pp. 27-104). <i>The craft of research</i>.</p> <p>Agee, J. (2009) Developing qualitative research questions: A reflective process. <i>International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education</i>, 22(4), 431-447.</p> <p><b>Guests: Kajsa Dalrymple &amp; Frank Durham</b></p> <p>Dalrymple, K. E., &amp; Scheufele, D. A. (2007). Finally informing the electorate? How the Internet got people thinking about presidential politics in 2004. <i>Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics</i>, 12(3), 96-111.</p> <p>Durham, F. (2007). The last true believers: <i>The Knoxville Journal</i> in the late civil</p>

	rights movement. <i>Journal of Communication Inquiry</i> , 31(4), 347-365.
Week 9 (10/21) <i>Developing an argument</i>	<p><b>Research questions due</b> (by start of class)</p> <p>Booth, W. C. et al. (2016). Part III: Making an Argument, (pp. 105-172). <i>The craft of research</i>.</p> <p>Healy, K. (2017). Fuck nuance. <i>Sociological Theory</i>, 35(2), 118-127.</p> <p><b>Guests: Jessica Moorman &amp; Tom Oates</b></p> <p>Moorman, J. D., &amp; Harrison, K. (2019). Beyond Access and Exposure: Implications of Sneaky Media Use for Preschoolers' Sleep Behavior. <i>Health communication</i>, 34(5), 529-536.</p> <p>Oates, T. P. (2007). The erotic gaze in the NFL draft. <i>Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies</i>, 4(1), 74-90.</p>
Week 10 (10/28) <i>Writing arguments</i>	<p><b>Bibliography and outline due</b> (by start of class)</p> <p>Booth, W. C. et al. (2016). Part IV: Writing your argument, (pp. 173-267). <i>The craft of research</i>.</p> <p><b>Guests: Sujatha Sosale &amp; Travis Vogan</b></p> <p>Carpenter, J., &amp; Sosale, S. (2019). The Role of Language in a Journalistic Interpretive Community, <i>Journalism Practice</i>, 13(3), 280-297.</p> <p>Vogan, T. (2018). Exhibiting Ali's Super Fights: The Contested Politics and Brief History of Closed-Circuit Boxing Broadcasts. <i>Film History</i>, 30(3), 1-31.</p>
Week 11 (11/4) <i>Critical reading</i>	Roberts, S. T. (2019). <i>Behind the screen: Content moderation in the shadows of social media</i> . Yale University Press.
Week 12 (11/11)	<b>Final paper proposal due</b> (by the start of class) workshop and peer review
Week 13 (11/18)	<b>Proposal peer review due</b> (by the start of class) session and revision strategies
<b><u>Thanksgiving break – no class</u></b>	
Week 14 (12/2) <i>Independent research</i>	<p>Bell, K. (2014, June 17). The really obvious (but all-too-often ignored) guide to getting published. <i>Vitae</i>.</p> <p>Bell, K. (2014, July 14). Random reflections on getting published. <i>Vitae</i>.</p>

	<b>Guests: Venise Berry &amp; Kylah Hedding</b>  Berry, V., & White-Langhorn, K. (2018). Do You Know? Edutainment, HIV/AIDS, and African Americans. <i>Howard Journal of Communications</i> , 29(4), 299-317.  Hedding, K. J., Miller, K. C., Abdenour, J., & Blankenship, J. C. (2019). The Sinclair Effect: Comparing ownership influences on bias in local TV News Content. <i>Journal of Broadcasting &amp; Electronic Media</i> , 63(3), 474-493.
<i>Week 15 (12/9)</i>  <i>Presentations</i>	<b>Research paper presentations</b>  Final thoughts and end-of-semester celebration
<i>Finals Week</i>	<b>Final papers due by the end of our final exam time (TBD)</b>

## The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: Policies and Resources

### Absences and Attendance

Students are responsible for attending class and for contributing to the learning environment of a course. Students are also responsible for knowing their course absence policies, which will vary by instructor. All absence policies, however, must uphold the UI policy related to student illness, mandatory religious obligations, including Holy Day obligations, unavoidable circumstances, or University authorized activities (<https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences>). Students may use this absence form to aid communication; the instructor will decide if the absence is excused or unexcused (<https://clas.uiowa.edu/sites/default/files/ABSENCE%20EXPLANATION%20FORM2019.pdf>).

### Academic Integrity

All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty. Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through the UI email address (<https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code>).

### Accommodations for Disabilities

UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student is then responsible for discussing specific accommodations with the instructor. More information is at <https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/>.

### Administrative Home of the Course

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and related policies. Other colleges may have different policies. CLAS policies may be found here: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook>.

### Communication and the Required Use of UI Email

Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to the UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

## **Complaints**

Students with a complaint about an academic issue should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the Chair of the department or program offering the course; students may next bring the issue to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. For more information, see <https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities>.

## **Final Examination Policies**

The final exam schedule is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals. Visit <https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies>.

## **Nondiscrimination in the Classroom**

UI is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University's Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity ([diversity.uiowa.edu](http://diversity.uiowa.edu)).

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, please see <https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/>.