

SYLLABUS

ComS 183

Senior Seminar in Media Issues and Ethics

Fall 2021

Office Hours: M&W 1:00-1:30

Dr. Fred Molitor

fred.molitor@csus.edu

Course Description: This is a three unit seminar course on the functions and roles of communication media in contemporary society. Includes issues and ethical considerations associated with freedom, responsibility and control examined from the points of view of the media, the government, and the public.

Prerequisite: ComS 55 or Jour 55; completion of 12 units of upper division ComS courses including ComS 100A.

Course Objectives:

- Understand the potential positive and negative effects of the mass media.
- Learn how to critique research articles published in peer-reviewed journals.
- Continue to improve small group communication skills.
- Continue to develop critical thinking skills.

The emphasis in this class is the mass media, which includes electronic communication content available to the general public. This definition includes television, radio, movie, newspaper, web-based, video game, and Facebook content.

Course Requirements and Evaluations: The central focus of this class is on the discussion among students of mass media-related research articles. Attendance and participation are important. Five points will be deducted from your Attendance/Participation grade for each absence (1 class = 95 = A; 2 classes = 90 = A-; 3 classes = 85 = B, etc.). Attendance is defined as joining class via ZOOM at 1:30 and remaining online through 2:45. Partial class attendance (joining late; leaving early) will be considered an absence. You are required to participate in up to 25 discussions with quizzes with different groups of students. Students will be asked to grade the assigned facilitator for each group discussion.

It is each student's responsibility to keep track of the date that he or she has selected to facilitate a discussion, and review the selected articles to prepare for the group discussions.

Students are required to facilitate two group discussions during the course of the semester. The discussions are based on questions pertaining to selected, published research articles. For each round of facilitations, each student must identify a research article and post it on our Canvas "Discussion" page. For Facilitation #1, students may select one of the articles provided by the instructor. For Facilitation #2, students must locate and post an article published in a professional journal on a study related to mass media. The instructor will provide all questions for the quizzes. Facilitation also requires a presentation on the article discussed in his or her group.

The agenda for classes September 08 onward will be:

1. Check-in & Limited Questions: 1:30 to 1:40 (10 minutes)
2. Article Facilitation & Discussion: 1:40 to 2:05 (25 minutes)
3. Article Presentation & Quiz: 2:05 to 2:25 (20 minutes)
4. Discussion of Selected Concepts (20 minutes)

A 3-to-5 page Research Paper is also required for this class.

The weight of each assignment towards your final grade is as follows:

Attendance/Participation	20%
Quizzes	20%
Facilitation #1	15%
Facilitation #2	15%
Peer Grade of Facilitations	10%
Research Paper	<u>20%</u>
	100%

Students can receive extra credit equating to 10% of your final grade.

Email: The expectation in this class is that you participate in professional email communications. Acceptable email communications include those sent and received through Canvas or email programs (e.g., Outlook) using your @csus.edu assigned email address. Emails sent using your personal email address (e.g., @gmail) do not represent professional email communications and I will not respond to emails from students who write me using their personal email address. Professional email communications also include checking and responding to email messages in a timely manner, and acknowledging that you received a reply to a question that you asked.

I strongly suggest that you modify your Notifications settings in Canvas to be sure that you receive timely emails and announcements.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACILITATION ASSIGNMENTS

You are required to facilitate the discussion of two published research articles on mass media.

Requirements for Facilitation #1 & #2

- Step 1: Identify a peer-reviewed article.*
- Step 2: Title a .pdf version of your article with the facilitation number (1-2) and date (e.g., Article1 27Sept21).
- Step 3: By the end of the day on the Friday before the Monday or Wednesday that you are scheduled to facilitate, you must post on Canvas as a Discussion a .pdf of your selected article.
- Step 4: Carefully review the article prior to the class that you are scheduled to facilitate.
- Step 5: Lead your group in a discussion to answer the quiz questions provided by the instructor.
- Step 6: Present your article to the class and address the following items:

1. What is the title of the study?
2. What is the title of the journal in which the study was published?
3. What is the overall purpose/objective(s)/research question(s), or hypothesis(es) of the study?
4. What is the independent variable(s)?
5. What is the dependent variable(s)?
6. What is the study methodology (e.g., survey, experiment, content analysis)?
7. What are the primary findings (based on the independent and dependent variable)?
8. What are the stated limitations of the study?
9. What are the correct answers to the quiz questions?

* For Facilitation #1, you may select from those posted on Canvas. For Facilitation #2, your selected study must use the survey, experimental, or content analysis methodology unless approved by the instructor.

RESEARCH PAPER

Due on Dec. 08 is a five-page Research Paper to be submitted through Canvas (not as an email attachment). Late paper will not be accepted.

During the semester we will have critiqued and discussed articles related to the mass media's potential influence on topics such as eating behaviors/obesity; sleep deprivation/fatigue; smoking; ADHD; desensitization to real-life violence; alcohol consumption; mental health; sexual behaviors; and reinforcing or fostering stereotypical attitudes toward racial/ethnic groups. Research Papers can focus on one of these areas, or any other topic of interest to students. The Research Paper must pertain to the mass media.

A literature review of your selected topic will represent the bulk of your Research Paper. The literature review is a summary of at least four published research studies related to your topic. Do not cite editorials or other published literature reviews. You must find and summarize articles of studies that collected quantitative or qualitative data, analyzed these data, and include interpretations and/or recommendations based on the findings.

Do not personalize the topic and do not write in the first person. Do not include any direct quotes in your paper.

All studies must be cited according to the requirements of the APA style. You are strongly encouraged to review the document "Citing References in Scientific Research Papers" available on our Canvas Home page.

A one- or two-paragraph summary of the overall findings should then be included in your Research Paper. The Research Paper must conclude with your assessment of the topic in terms of responsibility and control by the media, the government, and/or the public based on the overall findings from your literature review. If the summary of the overall findings suggests that the media have positive effects, then explain how the media, the government, and/or the public might use this information to improve society. If the summary of the overall findings suggests that the media have negative effects, then explain how the media, the government, and/or the public might use this information to improve society.

Include a cover page with your name and the title of your Research Paper. The cover page does not count as page 1.

Course Calendar:*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Discussion/Event</i>	<i>Quiz</i>	<i>Extra Credit Opportunity</i>
Aug. 30	Introduction to Course		
Sept. 01	Independent v. Dependent Variables Probability v. Nonprobability Sampling Levels of Measurement Sampling Unit v. Unit of Analysis Criteria for Causality		
Sept. 06	No Class		
Sept. 08	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation	Quiz #1	
Sept. 13	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation	Quiz #2	X
Sept. 15	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation	Quiz #3	
Sept. 20	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation	Quiz #4	X
Sept. 22	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation	Quiz #5	
Sept. 27	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation	Quiz #6	X
Sept. 29	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation	Quiz #7	
Oct. 04	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation	Quiz #8	X
Oct. 06	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation	Quiz #9	
Oct. 11	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation	Quiz #10	X
Oct. 13	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation	Quiz #11	
Oct. 18	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation	Quiz #12	X
Oct. 20	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation	Quiz #13	
Oct. 25	Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation EVEN Research Article Facilitation #1 & Presentation ODD	Quiz #14	
Oct. 27	Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation	Quiz #15	
Nov. 01	Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation	Quiz #16	X
Nov. 03	Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation	Quiz #17	
Nov. 08	Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation	Quiz #18	X
Nov. 10	Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation	Quiz #19	
Nov. 15	Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation	Quiz #20	X
Nov. 17	Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation	Quiz #21	
Nov. 22	Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation		X
Nov. 24	No Class		
Nov. 29	Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation	Quiz #22	X
Dec. 01	Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation EVEN Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation ODD	Quiz #23	
Dec. 06	Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation EVEN Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation ODD	Quiz #24	X
Dec. 08	Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation EVEN Research Article Facilitation #2 & Presentation ODD	Quiz #25	

Due: Research Paper

* May be modified based on enrollment.