

University of Pittsburgh
COMMRC 0320: Mass Communication Process Recitations
Fall 2010

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Office hours: Thurs. and Friday noon-1 p.m., and by appt.

Course Description and Objectives:

This course introduces students to an overview of the issues and theories central to the study of mediated forms of communication. In short, we will study what it means to live in our mediated age.

After the completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Use the basic vocabulary of media scholarship
- Examine some economic, ideological, and organizational factors that influence the media
- Begin to analyze the influence of the media on social attitudes and value systems, particularly as they intersect with race, class, gender, and sexuality

In this Recitation section, you will:

- Have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss any issues that arise during lecture.
- Study topics more fully than you might have a chance to do during lecture.
- Get to know your classmates and interact with important theories and issues in conversations with classmates.

Course Policies

Class participation: I expect every student to help keep class interesting by adding his or her own perspective and research to class time. All students must do their homework and be prepared to contribute during class time. I enjoy hearing what you have to say, and I'm sure your fellow students will appreciate your participation also, since it means hearing less of your instructor's voice.

Ground Rules for Class Discussion and Participation: Class discussion relies on students feeling comfortable expressing a variety of viewpoints, and sometimes those viewpoints may be controversial. Therefore, in order to build a supportive class environment that encourages student participation and camaraderie, please observe these ground rules:

1. Please show respect to both me and your fellow classmates by avoiding offensive language.
2. Please offer your input for class discussions when it is appropriate. This will help the class to see different viewpoints.
3. Be an active listener and respectfully listen to viewpoints that you both agree with and disagree with.

4. Remember that we do not need to agree at all points in time. Sometimes we can agree to disagree.
5. You may question your fellow students in a respectful manner if you want to understand their standpoint better.
6. You do not need to answer any question if it makes you uncomfortable.
7. If you feel uncomfortable speaking in class, it is your responsibility to speak with me outside of class time.

Attendance and tardiness: Because this class hinges on your involvement, attendance is mandatory. You are allowed two absences without penalty, with no questions asked. After the second absence, your final grade will begin to go down by ½ letter grade for each additional absence (i.e. A- to B+, B-to C+, etc.). Absences that are excused per university policies require written notice from an activity/athletics advisor in advance of the absence. More than four absences (the equivalent of one month of class) could be grounds for automatically failing the course. Please also be considerate and show up for class on time. **If you miss a day of class, it is your responsibility to get notes from another member of the class. Please find a class partner whom you can contact in the event that you must miss a class period.**

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: According to University policy, “Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh’s Policy on Academic Integrity [<https://www.pitt.edu/~provost/ai1.html>]. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity.”

More specifically: Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. Plagiarism is a form of academic theft. It is defined as using another person’s unique words or ideas without giving that person credit. Academic dishonesty is a slightly broader category encompassing a range of issues, including double-dipping without instructor approval, cheating on an exam, fabricating information or sources, or helping another student to cheat (aiding and abetting).

This class has a no-tolerance policy on plagiarism. The first time a student is caught in either plagiarism or academic dishonesty, he or she will receive an automatic F on that assignment. If the plagiarism is on a major assignment or is particularly egregious, you will automatically fail the course. A second offense also will result in automatic failure as well. All instances of plagiarism that result in course failure will be reported to the Dean’s office. Two documented instance of plagiarism during your college career will result in your expulsion from the university. If you have questions about anything you think might be a grey area, please talk to me immediately. I’m happy to discuss anything you think is unclear before it becomes a problem for your grade.

My disclaimer: Please be aware that I want you to follow simple rules. Deadlines and specifications are part of my grading system. When I give 10 questions for a group project, I expect to see a group answer all 10 questions unless otherwise noted. Please refer to your assignment sheets for information on what I expect and feel free to contact me about anything that is unclear.

Late Work: All work is due at the beginning of the class period on the day for which it is assigned, and presentations must be delivered on the day you are scheduled. Presentations may not be missed for any reason except documented illness or family emergency.

Standard grade deductions for missed assignments are as follows: Any assignment that is missed without a documented illness or family emergency will receive an automatic deduction of 10 points per 24 hour period until the student comes to my office hours with the assignment. The first deduction is taken immediately after the class during which the assignment was due. The next deduction is then taken at the time class might begin the next day. (For example, if you’re in a Monday 9 a.m. section, your next grade

deduction will be taken Tuesday at 9 a.m.) The deductions continue every 24 hours as outlined above. **An assignment will not be accepted if a student has not come to my office hours or arranged a makeup time within a week after the original due date.**

It is your responsibility to get homework assignments for any class you miss. An excused absence does not excuse a late homework assignment. Also, all homework must be in a format that I can accept. I cannot accept your laptop computer because your printer died an hour before class. (Yes, this has actually been tried.)

Homework: Handwritten homework is not acceptable. Please submit all homework in 12-point Times New Roman font, and remember that double spacing is important for written work. Homework will not be accepted via e-mail. It must be submitted in hard copy during recitation.

Grade Grievances: If you would like to dispute a grade, please allow at least 24 hours after receiving the grade sheet. All disputes must be addressed in person during my office hours or at another time that we arrange.

Cell phones and laptops: As you enter the class, please turn off your phone as a courtesy to your fellow classmates. A student whose phone rings during class will have to endure either myself or a fellow class member answering the phone and taking a message. If you don't know how to turn your cell phone off, please either leave it at home or read the owner's manual.

Please remember that having a laptop in class is a privilege. Laptops can be a useful educational tool, but they're often misused. On an average day, you should not need a laptop in this class. If you find that you need one on a particular day, you're welcome to use it. However, I will feel free to frequently check that you are not surfing the net, doing homework for other classes, e-mailing, or IMing friends. If I catch anyone doing any of these activities, I will revoke the privilege of laptops on average class days for everyone. (Laptops will still be allowed for presentations.)

Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability for which you may need or want accommodations, you will need to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 (telephone), 412-383-7355 (TDD), or 412-624-3346 (Fax). DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. NOTE: Your instructor cannot make accommodations for your disability unless you contact DRS and receive instructions from that office. You must accomplish this within the first two weeks of class, or your instructor may not be able to accommodate your disability to your satisfaction.

Office hours: Please think of my office hours as your time to discuss your concerns with me. My office hours are free and no appointment is required. Please feel free to drop by. I'd love to speak with each of you. Remember, it's easier to discuss something before it becomes a crisis than it is to troubleshoot a problem after it has become a major issue.

E-mail policy: Please allow me 24-48 hours to respond to your e-mail. I will usually get back to you before that time. If I have not responded within that time, assume that I have *not* received your e-mail and resend it.

Final notes: Have fun! I want this class to be a place where you learn enjoy debating important topics in media studies. If you're having fun and contributing, I guarantee we'll have a great class.

Campus Resources

The Oral Communication Lab: Offers assistance with speech anxiety, delivery, organization, choosing topics, and other speaking-related issues.
1109 Cathedral of Learning.
Call 412-624-6570 or e-mail mbannon@pitt.edu

The Writing Center: Offers writing consultation services for undergraduates, graduates and faculty. Papers in all stages, from brainstorming to “final” product, are welcome.
www.english.pitt.edu/writingcenter 412-624-6556

Disability Resources and Services: Offers assistance to students who need documentation of and accommodations for disabilities of any kind.
www.drs.pitt.edu 412-648-7890

The Office of International Studies: Offers support for international students and students studying abroad. <http://www.ois.pitt.edu/>

Writing and Citation Resources

The University of Pittsburgh RefWorks training: Pitt provides its students with a free, online citation tool that allows students to build and maintain their own reference dictionaries. To sign up for training, go to http://www.library.pitt.edu/services/classes/infoliteracy/refworks_training.html.

The Purdue University OWL: One of the most comprehensive citation and writing resources available on the web. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>.

Duke University Library Citation site: My favorite citation Web site because it puts five citation styles side by side. <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/>.

Recitation Schedule

Week 1: No recitation this week

Week 2: Introduction to recitation

Week 3: Learn about the “Who Owns What” assignment. Discuss weekly reading.

Week 4: “Who Owns What” assignment due. You will discuss the assignment in recitation as part of your participation grade.

Week 5: TBA [test review in Tuesday lecture; TEST ONE in Thursday lecture]

Week 6: Introduce the Annotated Bibliography Assignment and brainstorm possible topics. Discuss weekly reading.

Week 7: Topics for Annotated Bibliography due. Your topic will be approved in recitation. Discuss weekly reading.

Week 8: Discuss Chicago Citation Style. Discuss weekly reading.

Week 9: TBA [test review in Tuesday lecture; TEST TWO in Thursday lecture]

Week 10: Magazine Activity (see assignment sheet). Discuss weekly reading.

Week 11: News Activity (see assignment sheet). Discuss weekly reading.

Week 12: Annotated Bibliography Rough Drafts Due. Turn in at least four (4) sources.

Week 13: NO RECITATION Go to the library and work on your annotated bibliography!

Week 14: Sitcom Activity (see assignment sheet). Discuss weekly reading.

Week 15: Annotated Bibliographies due. Discuss weekly reading.