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### **Course Description and Purposes**

This course introduces students to mass media, particularly how communication advancements have influenced revolutions in society. The course emphasizes the content-dissemination and information-gathering abilities of media. The history, development and current structure of the media are covered as well. UGS 302 is most concerned with creating an understanding of how media develop, change, operate, and influence the greater world.

Students will of course explore the history and current role of mass media from a multicultural perspective, including how mass media can offer – and deny – a voice for various groups within society. We will pay particular attention to the impact that technology and regulation have had on shaping various media and the implications for society and its citizens. Students will be asked to identify how different media have affected their own development as individuals.

Students should leave the course as wiser consumers of mass media and more engaged citizens. Those considering a career in mass media should have a deeper understanding of the field. Non-majors will have a better understanding of the mass media they encounter daily.

### **Course Objectives**

At the end of the course, each student should be able to:

- Handle the examination and evaluation of ideas
- Present an overview of communication history and its place in society
- Present ideas in writing and through effective presentations

### **Required Readings**

- No standard text is required.
- Course readings will be posted on Canvas and consist of book chapters, research articles, magazine articles, and other relevant texts.

### **Course Requirements**

The class will consist of our regularly scheduled meetings, information delivered through online technologies, as well as your personal and team participation—all to enrich the experience and enhance your understanding of the issues and themes explored during the course. Your grade will be based on three elements: (1) regular papers, (2) a final presentation project, and (3) class participation. Each of the four papers will be worth 15 percent of the final grade; the final presentation will be worth 30 percent, and class participation will be 10 percent. There are no plans for quizzes, other homework, or a final exam, but the instructor reserves the right to institute such tests if necessary.

### Grade composition:

Regular papers:	15% X 4
Final presentation:	30%
Class participation:	10%

Grades are on a plus/minus basis, as required by the university. “Plus” grades will be the top three scores within each range, and “minus” scores will be the bottom three results. For example, between 87 and 89 is a B-plus and between 80 and 82 is a B-minus.

**Regular papers:** These are essays assigned every few weeks through October to demonstrate student consideration of the class and reading material. They are intended to demonstrate the ability to make a cogent argument supported by evidence. Students will be encouraged to take the feedback offered and re-submit further versions of their essays.

**Final presentation project:** This assignment is a group project and oral presentation intended to show students’ ability to consider the ideas presented in class and do individual research to respond to the presented question. Students will receive this assignment on 10 October.

**Class participation:** Attendance is expected as a starting point. Class participation does include showing up for regular class sessions and also participating in conversations. It covers attendance during class visits to special UT institutions such as the Ransom Center and Blanton Museum, which will play a role in our early semester lessons.

### **Signature Course Essential Information**

The Signature Courses at the University of Texas at Austin will connect students with distinguished faculty members in unique learning environments. By way of this rigorous intellectual experience, students will develop college-level skills in research, writing, speaking, and discussion through an approach that is interdisciplinary, collaborative, experiential and contemporary.

This course will address the Signature Course essentials in the following ways:

- Information literacy assignments
- University gem visits, including the Blanton Museum
- Writing through regular essays
- Oral communication, such a brief in-class speeches related to essay development
- University Lecture Series attendance

### **Academic Honesty**

All students are expected to demonstrate high ethical behavior and conform to the terms and conditions of The University of Texas at Austin Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Violating university rules on academic honesty can lead to disciplinary penalties, including failing grades and/or dismissal from the university. Because such dishonesty harms the individual, fellow students, and the integrity of the university, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. The Student Judicial Services Web site has more information in the Office of the Dean of Students section at: <http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>.

## **Plagiarism**

Part of maintaining academic honesty includes avoiding plagiarism. In your work for this class and all others, you must cite sources if you use words or ideas that are not your own. This obviously includes quoted material, but it also covers works that may have inspired your thinking or ideas you build upon.

## **Writing Flag**

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

## **Undergraduate Writing Center**

I strongly encourage you to use the Undergraduate Writing Center in the PCL Library (PCL 2.330, <http://uwc.utexas.edu>). The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Any undergraduate enrolled in a course at UT can visit the UWC for assistance with any writing project. They work with students from every department on campus, for both academic and non-academic writing. Whether you are writing a lab report, a resume, a term paper, a statement for an application, or your own poetry, UWC consultants will be happy to work with you. Their services are not just for writing with "problems." Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. The assistance they provide is intended to foster independence. Each student determines how to use the consultant's advice. The consultants are trained to help you work on your writing in ways that preserve the integrity of your work.

## **Disability Documentation**

Any student requiring special accommodations must obtain documentation from the Services for Students with Disabilities in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (<http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/> or 512-471-6259 or VP: 512-232-2937). Please present the letter as soon as possible so that optimal accommodations can be developed.

**Religious Holidays:** UT policy requires students to notify the professor of an upcoming absence due to a religious holiday at least fourteen days prior to the holy day. Work missed as a result of the holiday can be made up within a reasonable period of time following the absence.

## **Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students as well as Canvas for Course Materials:**

Plan on both being an essential part of how you keep up to date about course happenings. E-mail is an official mode of university correspondence. This means that students must monitor their e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. This also means you have to be sure that UT has an accurate and functioning e-mail address.

**Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL: 512-232-5050):** BCAL is a phone-in resource that allows UT community members to discuss concerns about another person's behavior. Staff members will work with the caller to explore options and provide referrals to appropriate resources. The line is

intended as “a central resource to anyone who is concerned about an individual and may not be sure about how best to help” and operates around the clock, 365 days a year. Callers’ identities remain confidential to the extent allowed by law. Emergencies, of course, should still be directed to 911. The BCAL line is 512-232-5050, and more information is available at: <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Month	Day	Module	Topic	Essays & final	Readings & Notes
Aug.	30	Humanity/ learning	Intro/ writing & research		Assign This American Life refugee podcast
Sept.	4		UT intro/ Comm. as revol./writing	Assign: Blanton essay	Assign: print readings
	6		UT intro/Medici meeting		Meet at Medici
	11		Blanton meeting		Meet at Blanton museum
	13		Writing clinic	Due: Blanton essay; Assign: most impt. tech. essay	
	18		Offset print/writing		Discuss: print readings
	20		Writing clinic	Due: most impt. tech.	Assign: wireless & radio readings
	25	Social/ Culture	Radio—development & culture	Assign: radio essay	Discuss: radio;
	27		2 <sup>nd</sup> Radio: Murrow & more rubric		Assign: paper readings
Oct.	2		Hist. of papers		Discuss: paper readings
	4		Innovations & research	Due: radio essay	Assign: movie readings
	9	Archive/ Memory	Movie indus.	Assign: final project	
	11		Team idea generation time		Due: movie readings; Assign: trend articles
	16		Trends/essay meetings	Assign: trend essay	
	18		Group meetings		Discuss: trend reading; Assign: TV
	23		Group meetings		
	25		Public speaking	Due: trend essay	
	30	Identity/ Reflection	Television		Assign: Internet readings
Nov.	1		Early digital tech. & WWW	Assign: suppr. tech.	Discuss: Internet readings
	6		Emerging digital tech.		
	8		Group meetings		
	13		Group meetings	Due: suppr. tech.	
	15		Group meetings		
	20		Pres. work		
	22		No class	Thanksgiving	

	27	Final pres.	Due: final project	
	29	Final pres.		
Dec.	4	Pres. review		
	6	Course re-cap	Last Class Day	