

# COMM 1307 088 Introduction to Mass Communication

## Course Syllabus: Summer I, 2017



“Northeast Texas Community College exists to provide responsible, exemplary learning opportunities.”

### Jodi Weber

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Office Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Online
	8-6	8-6	8-6	8-6	Online only	8-9 p.m.

*The information contained in this syllabus is subject to change without notice. Students are expected to be aware of any additional course policies presented by the instructor during the course.*

**Catalog Course Description:** Comm 1307, Introduction to Mass Communication: This is a freshman course in the development of the mass media in America with emphasis on newspapers, magazines, radio and television; brief study of the historical development of the mass media; social, economic and cultural responsibilities of the mass media.

**Required Textbook(s):** Open source text: *Understanding Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication*. (2017). Retrieved from <http://open.lib.umn.edu/mediaandculture/>

**Publisher:** University of Minnesota Libraries under Creative Commons License

### Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Upon successful completion of this course:
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the cultural, political and historical role that mass communication plays in a democratic society.
3. Students will demonstrate media literacy skills by participating in exercises that encourage critical evaluation and analysis of the impact of mass media messages on the individual, society and culture.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the influence mass media has on human behavior and culture.
5. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the significant role that advertising plays in print and broadcast media.

### Course Expectations:

To complete this course successfully, you should do the following:

- Have reliable, consistent access to a high-speed Internet connection
- Participate in the course activities.
- Participate actively and meaningfully in all discussions.
- Prepare and submit all assignments on time.

## **Course Schedule/Due Dates**

Week 1 – All activities due by June 11

- Log into course.
- Read all information in the Start Here section
- Post Introduction in Discussion Board (this item due by Wednesday, June 7 to establish participation in the course)
- Read Chapters 1-4
- Assignment 1, Discussion 1 due

Week 2 – All activities due by June 18

- Exam 1 (Chapters 1-4)
- Exam Review included in Week 2 folder
- Read Chapters 5-7
- Assignment 2 due

Week 3 – All activities due by June 25

- Exam 2 (Chapters 5-7)
- *Exam 2 Review included in the Week 3 section*
- Read Chapters 8-11
- Assignment 3 and Discussion 2 due

Week 4 – All activities due by July 2

- Exam 3 (Chapters 8-11)
- *Exam 3 Review in Week 4 section*
- Extra Credit Assignment Due (optional)

Week 5 – Final paper due July 5

## **Evaluation/Grading Policy:**

2 online discussions @ 75pts each

3 written unit assignments @ 75 pts. each

3 online exams @150 pts.each

1 final paper @ 175 pts.

You will have the opportunity to do one extra credit assignment (50 points)

The total number of points you earn in the course will determine your letter grade. The point ranges are as follows: A:900-1000;B: 800-899;C:700-799;D:600-699;F:below600

***Due to the abbreviated nature of summer courses, late work will not generally be accepted.***

## **Tests/Exams:**

There will be three exams. They are open book and multiple choice. Students will have 75 minutes to complete each exam.

### **Coursework:**

## **DISCUSSION BOARD**

Discussion is an important part of the learning process. Just as in a face-to-face class, students are required to interact with peers and/or the instructor on topics relevant to the subject material. There are 2 Discussion assignments in this course. These will be graded based on the following criteria:

- 1. Original Post (50% of assignment points) (150-300 words) addressing the discussion topic. Posts should be written in a formal style (APA or MLA) and be free of errors. The goal is to indicate a practical understanding of the course content. Good discussion posts include relevant examples, outside sources, and 1-2 thought-provoking questions posed to peers to encourage conversation.**
- 2. 2 Peer Responses (50% of assignment) (at least 100 words each) that comment on classmates' original posts. Responses should be relevant to the original post and attempt to answer/discuss questions posed by the student.**

Lively debate is encouraged in discussion board posts! However, please keep your comments respectful and refrain from using offensive language.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

This course has three assignments due throughout the course. These short writing assignments should be around 200-300 words in length and should be written in a formal style. While not as long or comprehensive as a formal paper, you are still expected to use proper MLA or APA formatting and cite any outside sources referenced.

### **Assignment 1 (due June 11): Mass Media in Your Life**

#### **Watch This Video: [Media Consumption: How Much Is Too Much?](#)**

Sometimes we don't even realize how prevalent media consumption is in our own lives. How often do we find ourselves checking our cell phones before we even get out of bed in the morning? For your first assignment, I'd like for you to watch the above video and then keep an informal log of how/when you consume media throughout an entire day. This should include everything from listening to the radio on the way to work to reading a news item on Facebook. Try to get a good idea of how much of your day is spent consuming media and what types of media you rely on the most. Write 200-300 words describing your media habits. Were you surprised by how much or how little you rely on media? Based on the statistics in the video, do you feel your media habits are below average, average, or above average? Explain.

### **Assignment 2 (due June 18): What's "News"?**

#### **Read This Article: [Fake Or Real? How To Self-Check The News And Get The Facts](#)**

Today's mass media climate makes it increasingly difficult to discern quality journalism from "fake news". Social media has made it very common for fake stories to go viral – sometimes even being picked up by legitimate news sources. If seasoned journalists are being fooled by fake news, how to regular people determine what is truth and what is fiction? It's not as easy as you might think. For Assignment 2, read the article linked above that discusses tactics for spotting fake news stories. Go online and find an article that you suspect might be fake and apply the tactics listed in the story to the article you chose. Please answer the following questions:

1. What is the article that you are discussing? (include link)
2. What made you suspect it was fake news in the first place?
3. After analyzing the article and the source, do you still believe the story is fake? Why or why not?
4. Give examples of times when you, or people you know, have been fooled by fake news?
5. To what extent do you think the spread of fake news is a problem today?

Remember, your responses should be at least 200-300 words in order to receive full points.

### **Assignment 3 (due June 25):**

Consider the practice of product placement in films. Discuss the product placement you noticed in a **specific movie (give the title)** that you have seen recently at the theatre, on DVD, or on television. Be sure you understand what product placement is before you begin this assignment (see textbook).

If you do not recall seeing product placement in the movie, do some research on the Internet-- there are sites that will tell you what products were featured in a particular movie and there are few movies these days made without some product placement.

### **Consider the following questions in your 200-300-word assignment:**

1. Does it bother you that content of the movie is sometimes altered to allow for these brand identifications?
2. Do you ever find product placements intrusive or do you ever feel they disrupt the flow of the movie?
3. Do you think it is fair or honest for moviemakers to promise you entertainment you have paid for and then give you essentially commercials?
4. Should movie viewers be told, perhaps at the end of the movie, with the credits, that companies have paid to have their products appear in the movie?

### **Extra Credit Assignment (optional – due July 2):**

*"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."*--The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which gives citizens of this country the rights to freedom of speech and expression, protects us from having that freedom challenged on

religious, racial, or sexual grounds. However, in the United States, books are constantly being challenged (although not officially "banned") for various reasons. Access the American Library Association's website and explore the information about Banned Books Week, which is celebrated in September each year. From the Frequently Challenged Books of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, <http://www.ala.org/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10#2013>, select one of the titles that has been frequently challenged (preferably a book you have read) and research it on the Internet to see why it has been challenged. Submit 200-300 words--explaining the reasons books are challenged and giving your thoughts about what you have discovered about your selected book.

### **FINAL PAPER: (COUNTS AS FINAL EXAM)**

In this course you have learned about the evolution of mass media all the way from the invention of the printing press to the rise of the Internet. For your final paper, please choose a topic concerning mass communication that you find interesting and investigate it further. Some

example topics might explore questions like:

- How did fake news impact the 2016 election?
- How does social media impact your life? Is it a good or bad thing?
- Has online interaction changed the way people socialize? How?
- What is media literacy and what are ways to achieve it?
- Is it ethical to digitally-modify models in advertisements? Why or why not?
- Does mass media play a role in modern terrorism?
- What is the future of newspapers?

You may use one of these topics or choose one of your own that interests you. Please keep in mind that the topic should focus on something pertaining to mass communication. If you are unsure about your topic, please send it to your instructor for guidance. **Your essay should be 3-5 full pages** and explore your topic in-depth. While this is not a full research paper, you should use credible outside sources to support the thesis of your essay. You should **cite at least three** sources in your paper. Please follow these instructions when writing your papers:

- Writing assignments must be typed in MLA or APA format and **MUST include a Works Cited page and proper in-text citations according to MLA or APA style. Minimum of three sources.**
- Use Times New Roman 12 pt. font.
- Double-space.
- Pay attention to spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- **Submit your paper by 11 p.m. CST on July 5 via e-mail the link in Blackboard**
- Your work will be graded on the following criteria: a) does it meet length and formatting

requirements? b) how well does it cover the chosen topic? c) are the proper number of legitimate outside sources cited? d) does the paper reflect critical reflection on the topic?

### **NTCC Academic Honesty Statement:**

"Students are expected to complete course work in an honest manner, using their intellects and resources designated as allowable by the course instructor. Students are responsible for addressing questions about allowable resources with the course instructor. NTCC upholds the highest standards of academic integrity. This course will follow the NTCC Academic Honesty policy stated in the Student Handbook."

**Academic Ethics**

The college expects all students to engage in academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuit. Academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, and collusion is unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action. Refer to the student handbook for more information on this subject.

**ADA Statement:**

It is the policy of NTCC to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals who are students with disabilities. This College will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. An appointment can be made with John Coleman, Academic Advisor/Coordinator of Special Populations located in the College Connection. He can be reached at 903-434-8104. For more information and to obtain a copy of the Request for Accommodations, please refer to the [NTCC website - Special Populations](#).

**Family Educational Rights And Privacy Act (FERPA):**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's educational records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are considered "eligible students." In essence, a parent has no legal right to obtain information concerning the child's college records without the written consent of the student. In compliance with FERPA, information classified as "directory information" may be released to the general public without the written consent of the student unless the student makes a request in writing. Directory information is defined as: the student's name, permanent address and/or local address, telephone listing, dates of attendance, most recent previous education institution attended, other information including major, field of study, degrees, awards received, and participation in officially recognized activities/sports.