

Critical Issues in Mass Comm

COMM-4455

Fall 2020 Section 01 3 Credits 08/12/2020 to 12/05/2020 Modified 07/29/2020

Description

Exploration and analysis of critical, contemporary issues concerned with the relationship between mass media and society. Emphasis on critical, creative, and collaborative thinking to reach considered judgments and position students to be media literate, responsible, and responsive 21st century mass media and public relations professionals.

Requisites

Prerequisites:

COMM 1154 Minimum Grade: C and ENGL 1102 Minimum Grade: C

Corequisites:

Contact Information

Dr. John Sewell

Email: For this class, contact me using the CourseDen email tool ONLY.

Office: Humanities 147

Phone: 423-741-1474

Office Hours

By phone (423)-741-1474

Virtual office hours will be held via phone (423) 741-1474 on Mondays from 10:30 am. until 12:30 p.m. and on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (noon). You are welcome to call me during those times. Bear in mind, I may be on the phone with another student when you call. If so, leave me a clearly worded voicemail message with your phone number. I am also potentially available at other times BY APPOINTMENT. To schedule virtual office hours BY APPOINTMENT, contact me via CourseDen email.

Instructor: Dr. John Sewell

Email: For this class, contact me using the CourseDen email tool ONLY.

Office: Humanities 147

Phone: 423-741-1474

Virtual office hours will be held via phone (423) 741-1474 on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (noon). You are welcome to call me during those times. Bear in mind, I may be on the phone with another student when you call. If so, leave me a clearly worded voicemail message with your phone number. I am also potentially available at other times BY APPOINTMENT. To schedule virtual office hours BY APPOINTMENT, contact me via CourseDen email.

Meeting Times

Dual modality is in full effect at the University of West Georgia for fall 2020. This means there is an opportunity for in-person learning and online learning for classes not listed as fully online.

With dual modality, all course content will be available online for all students to ensure everyone has access to the materials and

assignments for these courses. Based on the current plan, you will be assigned to an in-person learning opportunity one day a week for each class, and you will have access to necessary course content online throughout the semester. I encourage you to connect with me to express your concerns about the in-person portion of the course and work with me to determine a viable alternative, if necessary.

IN-PERSON LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:

Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m.-10:45 a.m.: Last names A-Maddox

Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.-10:45 a.m.: Last names McGee-Z

ONLINE CONTENT:

LEARNING MODULES—SEQUENCE AND LIMITATIONS: There are two learning modules per week in this class. Each learning module will be open for a 48 hour period within which you can view PowerPoint lectures, take quizzes and/or turn in assignments on deadline. Even numbered learning modules will begin at 12 a.m. on Mondays and will remain open until 11:59 p.m. on the following Tuesday. Odd numbered learning modules will begin at 12 a.m. on Wednesdays and will remain open until 11:59 p.m. on the following Thursday.

IMPORTANT: This class is sequentially ordered and is best learned over time. Each learning module will be open for a 48 hour period. After the 48 hour period is over, you will no longer have access to the PowerPoint lecture content and/or assignment content (exams) available during the given learning module. As such, you will only be able to access course content sequentially and in evenly dispersed time increments spanning the semester.

Materials

An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture

Author: Strinati, D.

Publisher: Routledge

Edition: 2nd

Media and Cultural Studies Keywords

Author: Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, and Kellner, Douglas M., editors.

Publisher: Blackwell Publishing

Additional readings will be posted on CourseDen and/or available through UWG library online.

Outcomes

Learning Outcomes: *By the end of the course the student should be able to...*

- Recognize the roles of media and popular culture as sites for complex identity negotiation (SLO2, SLO3, SLO4)
- Increase media literacy skills (SLO2, SLO3, SLO4)
- Understand, interpret, and criticize the meanings of mass media and popular culture (SLO2, SLO3, SLO4)

Mass Communications Program Learning Outcomes

ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies: As a unit seeking accreditation from the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), the Department of Mass Communications is committed to preparing students with the requisite knowledge and skills to be successful in the media and communications industries after graduation. The Department has adopted as its degree program learning outcomes ACEJMC's 12 professional values and competencies that all graduates of an

ACEJMC accredited program should be aware of and able to demonstrate as scholars and professionals in the discipline. These include the six (6) values and six (6) competencies listed below. For the detailed list of the ACEJMC professional values and competencies, see the [UWG Undergraduate Catalog](#) or [ACEJMC - Standard 2. Curriculum and Instruction](#).

6 x 6 MASS COMM SUCCESS

Six Values...

- Freedom of Speech and Press) Think Critically and Creatively
- History) Research and Evaluate
- Diversity) Write Effectively
- Global Impact) Self-Evaluate
- Theory) Apply Numbers & Stats
- Ethics) Apply Technology

Six Competencies...

☰ Assignments

Course Requirements:

- View all content posted online (narrated PowerPoint lectures) for each learning module.
- Read assigned materials *before* viewing the PowerPoint lectures. (The lectures will concern assigned readings. To understand the lectures, *you will need to have FIRST read the assigned material*. Without having read the assigned materials, you will not be able to understand what is being discussed in the lectures.)
- Two exams (multiple choice and discussion questions)
- Five abstracts (*at least* 200 word summary of the assigned text—plus an additional questions/concerns segment [see handout for examples]) for assigned readings.

Reading Assignments:

COMM4455 is an upper level mass communication course that will introduce the student to a number of contemporary communication theories. These theories will be used as conceptual “tools” to understand critical issues in mass communication. The reading material is complex, dense and highly theoretical. It is utterly crucial that you have read and taken notes on the assigned readings prior to the class meeting. **Suggested reading strategies:** 1.) Make notes on each assigned reading—not only the readings with abstract assignments. There is a *lot* of material and you will not be able to remember it all unless you make notes as you read. Use your reading notes and abstracts as source material when studying for the exams. 2.) Don’t be afraid to write in your books. Highlight passages that you find interesting, challenging or particularly difficult.

Abstract Assignments:

There are five abstract assignments during the semester. The abstract is a brief summary/synopsis of the assigned reading. First, you should offer a summary of the assigned reading that is around 200 words in length (*at least* two substantial paragraphs). Then, you should have a brief subsection labeled Questions/Concerns where you (briefly) critique the assigned reading. What did you like or dislike about it? What was challenging? How might the information in the article be used to analyze contemporary issues in mass media? I will explain the abstract assignments in greater detail in the PowerPoint lectures.

Formatting for Abstracts:

Abstracts are to be single-spaced, using an 11 or 12 point font. Submit abstracts as enclosed MS Word documents only through the turn-in portals provided in the learning module that corresponds with the assignment deadline.

Deadline Policy for Abstract Assignments:

Deadlines are absolute. Abstracts are due at the beginning of class for each assigned date. **Abstract assignments will not be accepted after deadlines.**

Missed Exam Policy: Exams are mandatory. Make-up exams are allowed only in unavoidable situations substantiated with documentation. If you miss an exam, contact me *immediately*.

Schedule

Schedules for Online Learning and In-Person Opportunities will be provided in separate documents (COMM 4455 Online Learning Schedule & COMM 4455 In-Person Opportunities) in CourseDen Module 1.

Institutional Policies

Academic Support

Accessibility Services: Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact [Accessibility Services \(https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php\)](https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php).

Center for Academic Success: The [Center for Academic Success \(http://www.westga.edu/cas/\)](http://www.westga.edu/cas/) provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu.

University Writing Center: The [University Writing Center \(https://www.westga.edu/writing/\)](https://www.westga.edu/writing/) assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or writing@westga.edu.

Online Courses

UWG takes students' privacy concerns seriously: technology-enhanced and partially and fully online courses use sites and entities beyond UWG and students have the right to know the privacy policies of these entities. For more information on privacy and accessibility for the most commonly used sites, as well as technology requirements visit the [UWG Online \(https://uwgonline.westga.edu/\)](https://uwgonline.westga.edu/) site.

Students enrolled in online courses can find answers to many of their questions in the [Online/Off-Campus Student Guide \(http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php\)](http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php).

If a student is experiencing distress and needs help, please see the resources available at the [UWG Cares \(http://www.westga.edu/UWGCares/\)](http://www.westga.edu/UWGCares/) site. [Online counseling \(https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/index.php\)](https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/index.php) is also available for online students.

Honor Code

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database

collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student's account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the [Student Handbook \(https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpsa/handbook-code-of-conduct.php\)](https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpsa/handbook-code-of-conduct.php).

UWG Email Policy

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to check his or her email.

Credit Hour Policy

The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

HB 280 (Campus Carry)

UWG follows University System of Georgia (USG) guidance: http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information# (http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information)

You may also visit our website for help with USG Guidance: <https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php> (<https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php>)

Mental Health Support

If you or another student find that you are experiencing a mental health issue, free confidential services are available on campus in the [Counseling Center](#). Students who have experienced sexual or domestic violence may receive confidential medical and advocacy services with the Patient Advocates in [Health Services](#). To report a concern anonymously, please go to [UWGcares](#).

ELL Resources

If you are a student having difficulty with English language skills, and / or U.S. culture is not your home culture, specialized resources are available to help you succeed. Please visit the [E.L.L. resource page](#) for more information.

COVID-19

Proctored Exams/Online Instruction: Students should be aware and plan ahead for the possibility of having to complete all courses and/or exams online or in a proctored environment. This means talking with your instructors about what minimum technical requirements (software and hardware) will be required should your class move online or a student's personal needs dictate. This also includes making plans for internet access at whatever location participation may occur.

Virtual or in-person proctored exams, if your instructor should require them, may result in an additional cost to the student. Please discuss these details with your instructor or see the information provided here.

Face Coverings: Effective July 15, 2020, University System of Georgia institutions, including the University of West Georgia, will require all faculty, staff, students, and visitors to wear an appropriate face covering while inside campus facilities/buildings where six feet social distancing may not always be possible. Face covering use will be in addition to and is not a substitute for social distancing.

Face coverings are not required in campus outdoor settings where social distancing requirements are met. Anyone not using a face covering when required will be asked to wear one or must leave the area.

Reasonable accommodations may be made for those who are unable to wear a face covering for documented health reasons.

Student FAQs: For more information about UWG COVID-19 guidance for students visit the [Student FAQ webpage](https://www.westga.edu/student-services/health/coronavirus-info/return-to-campus/students-faq-return-to-campus.php) (<https://www.westga.edu/student-services/health/coronavirus-info/return-to-campus/students-faq-return-to-campus.php>).