

COM 240: Survey of Mass Communication

~ Spring 2014 ~

Mo/We/Fr 1:00PM - 1:50PM

Room: Baldy 110

Instructor: Weiai Xu (Wayne)

Department of Communication, University at Buffalo

Office Hours: 11-12pm M/W or by appointment

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Course Description

COM240 is an introductory course to mass communication, including traditional mass media (print, audio, and visual), and new media (digital, interactive, and social media). A combination of lectures, discussions, group activities, and individual assignments will be used to help students learn about the history and trends in mass communication, understand the role of mass communication in real-life contexts, and apply the knowledge to projects of personal interest and social impact.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

- **Knowledge:** Students will be acquainted with (1) the historical milestones in the development of traditional and new mass media; (2) the unique features of various old and new media platforms; (3) theories and methods used in mass media research, and (4) strategies used in mass media campaign. These learning objectives are evaluated through in-class quizzes and group activities.
- **Skills:** Students will develop intellectual and professional perspectives to analyze the use of mass media and its impact on relationship/business/societal development. Students will convey such perspectives to general and professional audience through written products (campaign proposal or essays). This learning objective is evaluated through individual assignment.

Required Textbook

Pavlik, J. V., & McIntosh, S.(2011). *Converging media: A new introduction to mass communication* (3rd edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This book is available at UB Bookstore and you can find cheaper copies through Amazon or BetterWorldBooks.com. Make sure you purchase the correct edition. Additional readings will be made available in class and/or on the course website.

Class Structure

10 quizzes ----- 100 points
 5 class activities -----200 points
 3 group projects -----200 points
 1 individual report ----- 100 points

Total: 600 points

Quizzes

Throughout the semester there will be ten quizzes, each worth 10 points and a total of 100 points. The questions will be based on readings and class discussions about the topics of that particular week. All of these quizzes will be administered on paper and there will not be any make-up quizzes, except for students with proved medical reasons.

Class Activities

Throughout the semester there will be five in-class activities, the points for each activity may vary but they will add up to a total of 200 points. These activities aim at engaging students to work effectively in small groups and enhance peer-to-peer learning through various discussion formats.

Group Project

Throughout the semester students will work in groups to prepare presentations on different mass media topics. There will be three group presentations, the points for each group project may vary but they will add up to a total of 200 points. Student performance in group projects are evaluated by the instructor as well as by his or her teammates and the audience.

Individual Reports

Towards the end of the semester, students will be given opportunities to observe and analyze issues in the realm of mass media, and then write up an individual report about their observations and analyses. Detailed instructions (including writing formats) will be provided weeks before the deadline. This report is worth 100 points. No late assignments will be accepted.

Extra Credit

There might be different opportunities for students to gain extra credit. One possibility is called Learner's Journals: Students can submit reflective essays using the discussion board features on UBLearns to articulate personal learning experiences in this class. All journal entries will be public. Each entry should be 400-500 words and synthesizes your key learning from class discussions, activities, and/or readings. Each journal entry is worth up to 10 points and each student may submit up to 5 journals. Extra credits can also be granted through research participation. Opportunities for research participation will be announced in class and on UBLearns.

Letter Grades

A = 565-600+, A- = 540-564.5, B+= 520-539.5, B = 500-519.5, B- = 480-499.5, C+ = 460-479.5, C = 440-459.5, C- = 420-439.5, D+ 395-419.5, D 360-394.5, F = 359.5 & below

Professionalism

The primary goal of college education is to prepare students for their career after graduation. Professionalism matters in career development. So students are advised to behave professionally in the class. This policy is to train students to be likable professionals in a competitive and diverse working environment. Professionalism will be evaluated through in-class behavior and after-class communication. Conversation, game playing, cell phone use, or Facebooking is forbidden at class. Laptop use is restricted for note-taking only.

Policies on Missed or Late Work and Absence Due to Illness

You are responsible for your performance in this class and the timely completion of all course assignments. It is also your responsibility to be aware of quiz dates, assignment due dates and other information about course material contained in the class schedule, posted on UB Learns, shared via emails, and announced in class. If faced with illness or another circumstance that impacts your ability to be in class it is your responsibility to act responsibly and to contact the instructor in a timely manner as outlined in the following paragraphs.

Foreseeable Circumstances: If you will not be present for a quiz or to turn in an assignment due to foreseeable circumstances, you must notify the instructor well in advance (at least one week prior), or no make-up arrangements.

Illness: As long as reasonable notice is provided via e-mail as outlined below, the instructor will try to make accommodations.

Unforeseeable Emergencies: Generally the procedures for unforeseeable emergencies (e.g. getting in a car accident on the way to an exam) are similar to those that apply to illness, except in the case of approval and documentation. Approval for make-ups due to unforeseeable emergencies will be determined on a case by case basis. Notification of any such circumstance as soon as reasonably possible is required and in all cases legitimate documentation must also be provided.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability (physical, learning, or psychological) which makes it difficult for you to carry out the course work as outlined, and/or, requires accommodations such as recruiting note takers, readers, or extended time on exams, please contact the Office of Accessibility, 25 Capen Hall, 645-2680, and also me during the first two weeks of class. The Office of Accessibility can provide you with information and review arrangements for reasonable accommodations

Plagiarism & Academic Dishonesty Policy

The Department of Communication takes academic integrity seriously, and will not tolerate plagiarism or any other form of cheating. Cheating on exams, papers, or forgery of course materials is unacceptable. Any work you submit for any assignment **MUST** be your own.

You commit plagiarism when you make use of others' work without proper attribution. Any time you use someone's unique ideas, you must properly cite the printed, electronic, or other source of that work. If you use a phrase (any non-obvious combination of a few words) from another person's work, you must also place these words within quotation marks and cite the source. You must turn in your own original work for an assignment. You may not, except with explicit permission from your instructor, turn in work that has been turned in for other classes. During examinations and other assignments you must present your own work, and must follow all of the rules provided by the instructor or other administrators in the class. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating, even if unintentional, will result in sanctions that can include an F in the class and a notation in your academic record.

The instructor has the further ability to press charges and impose sanctions at the university level, up to and including expulsion. In addition, if you are aware that another student in the class is guilty of academic dishonesty, and fail to inform the instructor, you are also subject to sanctions.

If you are ever unsure about whether something constitutes cheating or plagiarism, please approach your instructor before turning in your work. He or she will happily help you to understand how to avoid academic dishonesty. For further information, these resources on proper citation and avoiding plagiarism may be of help:

- UB Libraries Plagiarism Guide—
<http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/asl/guides/plagiarism.html>
- Plagiarism Discussion & Resources (Plagiarism.org)
http://www.turnitin.com/research_site/e_what_is_plagiarism.html

In addition to the previously referenced departmental policy, all students are also subject to UB's University Policy on Academic Dishonesty.

COM240 Tentative Schedule

*Schedule is subject to changes, depending on progress

Date	Topic	To-do
WEEK 1- Warming up and Media Convergence		
1/27 Mon.	Discuss course syllabus and schedule Speed Networking Lecture: <i>Mass Communication and Convergence Culture</i>	Reading (Ch1) assigned: <i>Mass Communication and Its Digital Transformation</i>
1/29 Wed.	Lecture (continued): <i>Mass Communication and Convergence Culture</i>	Reading (Ch2 & Ch12) assigned: Media Literacy and Ethics (p. 36-50, 376-384)
1/31 Fr.	Lecture (continued): <i>Mass Communication and Convergence Culture</i> Quiz #1	
WEEK 2 – Traditional Mass Media		
2/3 Mon.	Lecture: <i>Media Literacy and Ethics</i> Activity #1: Tracking your media use	Reading (Ch3) assigned: <i>Print Media: Books, Newspapers, and Magazines</i>
2/5 Wed.	Lecture (continued): <i>Media Literacy and Ethics</i> TED talk and in-class discussions Quiz #2	
2/7 Fri.	Lecture: <i>Print Media</i>	Group project 1 assigned
WEEK 3 – Traditional Mass Media		
2/10 Mon.	Lecture (continued): <i>Print Media</i> Quiz #3	Reading (Ch4) assigned: <i>Audio Media: Music Recordings, Radio</i> Reading (Ch5) assigned: <i>Visual Media: Photography, Movies and Television</i>
2/12 Wed.	Lecture: <i>Audio and Visual Media</i>	

2/14 Fr.	Lecture (continued): <i>Audio and Visual Media</i> Quiz#4	
WEEK 4 – Traditional Mass Media		
2/17 Mon.	Lecture (continued): <i>Audio and Visual Media</i> Discuss progress in group project	
2/19 Wed.	Group project presentations (first half)	Reading (Ch6) assigned: <i>Digital Media; Information Overload, Usability, and Interactive Media</i>
2/21 Fr,	Group project presentations (second half)	
WEEK 5 – Social Media		
2/24 Mon.	Lecture: <i>Digital & Interactive Media</i>	
2/26 Wed.	Lecture (continued): <i>Digital & Interactive Media</i> Ted Talks Quiz #5	Group project 2 assigned
2/28 Fri.	Lecture (continued): <i>Digital & Interactive Media</i> Ted Talks Activity #2: The evolution of digital media	Readings assigned (Ch7): <i>Networks and Distributing Digital Content</i>
WEEK 6 – Social Media		
3/3	Lecture: <i>Network Distribution</i> Quiz#6	Reading (Ch8) assigned: <i>Social Media and Web 2.0</i>
3/5	Lecture: <i>Social media and Web 2.0</i>	
3/7	Lecture (continued): <i>Social Media and Web 2.0</i> Quiz#7 Discuss progress in group project 2	
WEEK 7 – Social Media		
3/10	Lecture (continued): <i>Social Media and Web 2.0</i> Activity#3: Issues in social media and Web 2.0	

3/12	Group Project 2 presentations (first half)	
3/14	Group Project 2 presentations (second half)	Reading (Ch9) assigned: <i>Journalism: From Information to Participation</i>
WEEK 8-Spring break		
Week 9 – Journalism		
3/24	Lecture: <i>Journalism in Transformation</i>	
3/26	Lecture (continued): <i>Journalism in Transformation</i> Quiz #8	
3/28	Ted Talks Topic pending	Reading (Ch11) assigned: <i>Advertising and Public Relations: The Power of Persuasion</i>
WEEK 10 – Mass Media for Profit		
3/31	Lecture: <i>Traditional and New Media in Strategic Communications</i>	Reading (Ch11) assigned for entertainment education
4/2	Lecture (continued): <i>Traditional and New Media in Strategic Communications</i> Quiz #9	
4/4	Lecture: <i>Mass Media and Entertainment Education</i>	Reading (Ch15) assigned: <i>Mass Communication and Politics in Digital Age</i>
WEEK 11 – Mass Media for Changes		
4/7	Lecture: <i>Traditional and New Media in Politics and Societal Changes</i> Activity #4	
4/9	Lecture (continued): <i>Traditional and New Media in Politics and Societal Changes</i> Quiz #10	Reading (Ch13) assigned: <i>Communication Law and Regulations in Digital Age</i>
4/11	Lecture (continued): <i>Media Law</i>	Group project 3 assigned

WEEK 12 – International Mass Media		
4/14	Lecture: <i>A Global Perspective of Mass Media</i>	Reading pending
4/16	Lecture (continued): <i>A Global Perspective of Mass Media</i>	Reading (Ch14) assigned: <i>Media Theory and Research</i>
4/18	Lecture: <i>Mass Communication Research: Methods</i>	
WEEK 13		
4/21	Lecture: <i>Mass Communication Research: Theories</i>	
4/23	Lecture: <i>Mass Communication Research: ELH Project</i> Activity#5	
4/25	Sessions: <i>What You Can Do with A Degree in Communication</i>	
WEEK 14		
4/28	Ted Talks Topic pending	
4/30	Explain final individual report Discuss group project 3	
5/2	Group project 3 presentation (part 1)	
WEEK 15		
5/5	Group project 3 presentation (part 2)	
5/7	Group project 3 presentation (part 3)	
5/9	Final individual report due	