

COMM 3351: Media Effects

Instructor: Dr. Mu Hu

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Class time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 am. – 12:15 pm.

Classroom: Central Academic Building 218

Office hours: <https://tamus.webex.com/meet/mhu>, and Monday and Wednesday, 11:00 am. – 12:00 pm, by appointments.

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to a) examine the social scientific origins of media effects research; b) understand the temporal and spatial dimensions of media and media effects research; c) introduce a variety of contemporary theories of media effects, including their history, recent development and criticism; d) encourage students to develop and refine their research interests; e) develop students' ability of critical thinking; f) develop students' ability to express their ideas through scientific writing, formal presentations, and informal discussion; and g) improve students' library research skills.

Learning objectives

By taking this course, students should be able to

- 1) Be familiar with the social scientific traditions of the key theories and research methods of media effects research.
- 2) Understand the temporal and spatial dimensions of media and media effects research
- 3) Develop the ability to critically review and analyze the milestone and contemporary studies in media effects research.
- 4) Recognize the influence of historical context on media effects and interpret the media research findings via the lens of historical materialism.
- 5) Understand the multifaceted nature of media effects and thus identify the similarities and connections of different media effects research via the lens of dialectical materialism.
- 6) Apply the knowledge of media effect research to the analysis of various media effect phenomena at individual and collective levels.

Required Readings

Oliver, M., Raney, A. A., & Bryant, J. (Eds.) (2020). *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Grade breakdown

A = 90% and above, B = 80% to 89%, C = 70% to 79%, D = 60% to 69%, F = 59% and below.

Grading

Participation in class discussion	20 points
Reading analysis papers (20 points each)	60 points
Midterm	50 points
Final	50 points
Total	180 points

Grade record (excluding tardiness, absence, etc.)

Participation	/20
Reading analysis paper 1	/20
Reading analysis paper 2	/20
Reading analysis paper 3	/20
Midterm	/50
Final	/50
Total	/180

Brief description of assignments

Reading Analysis Papers (20 points each)

Each student should submit three reading analysis papers. Each reading analysis paper should be individual work. Each of these papers should be no less than three and a half pages long (excluding the title page). You are required to describe your reactions to the media events, the thoughts the events provoked, and their relevance to particular media effects phenomena and theoretical issues. Detailed instructions will be given in class.

Requirements of assignments

All the assignments should be in word document format. For the assignments, you should include a cover page, with the title of the paper, your name, as well as the course name. Each paper should be carefully proofread and demonstrate a high level of competence in written communication. Please use double space, 1-inch margins, and 12-point Times New Roman font in your papers. Use proper APA citations. Have a reference page in APA format if needed. Details of the instructions will be given in class.

Assignment Policy

You are expected to turn in all assignments on time. Each assignment should be turned in by 11:59 pm. on the due date in the Dropbox in Blackboard. Late written assignments will be reduced by 20% per 24 hours they are late (note that weekend days are counted as late days). If an assignment is 72 hours or more late it will not be accepted.

Computer and/or printer problems are NOT valid excuses for late assignments, so please leave enough time for such problems just in case.

If you are asked to rewrite your paper, you need to turn in the rewritten paper at the beginning of the class meeting immediately after the class meeting when your original paper is given back. You can earn up to 75% of the full grade for the rewritten paper.

Tardiness Policy

Our class starts at 11:00 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please be in class on time. Tardiness without prior notice of legitimate reasons will negatively influence your participation grade.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. Missing class meetings without prior notice of legitimate reasons will negatively influence your participation grade.

Participation Policy

Participation is a must in class. There are in-class discussions, assignments, and activities in almost all the class meetings. Your participation grade is decided by the quantity and quality of your contribution to the class discussions and activities. Missing class meetings and leaving class meetings early without prior notices mean that you miss the class discussions and activities and therefore will negatively influence your participation grade.

If you don't get involved in class activities but instead do other things unrelated to class (including but not limited to: disruptive talking, working on your homework, using cell phones for activities unrelated to class, and sleeping), you will be asked to leave the classroom immediately and receive a zero on your participation grade.

If you miss a class meeting (especially when the instructions of the assignments are given), it is your responsibility to find out what you miss. If you miss the class meeting(s) due to legitimate reasons, feel free to contact me. You are responsible for the loss of points for not knowing the instructions because of your absence.

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights protection for individuals with disabilities. Title II of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that students with disabilities be guaranteed equal access to the

learning environment through the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations of their disability. If you have a disability that may require an accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. The phone number for DSS is (210) 784-1335 and email is dss@tamus.edu.

AI Use Policy

This class assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves individually. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

Academic Learning Center

All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center is an appointment based center where appointments are made through the Navigate platform. Students access Navigate through Jagwire in the Student Services tab. The Center is active on campus outreaching to students to highlight services offered. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamus.edu or calling (210)-784-1332. Appointments can also be made through JagWire under the services tab.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources:

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services.

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2'). For more information and self-help resources, please visit www.tamus.edu/studentcounseling

Emergency Preparedness

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff, and faculty who are registered in JagE Alert, will have the option to receive a text message, email, and/or phone call with

instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>. More information about Emergency Preparedness and the Emergency Response Guide can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/upd/index.html>.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance

According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Jaguar Writing Center

The Jaguar Writing Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Students can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in JagWire under the student services tab. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at www.tamusa.edu/Writing-Center. The Writing Center can also be reached by emailing wldcc@tamusa.edu.

Meeting Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamusa.edu) for support. In addition, you may notify the instructor if you are comfortable doing so.

Military Affairs

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, about special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots' Casa in-person, Room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances

Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under A&M System policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule

Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, diversity, pluralism, and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the university. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and other healthcare providers) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about an incident of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related

misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331, Modular C.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

The purpose of the following statement is to enumerate the essential provisions of students' freedoms and responsibilities to learn at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. All students are required to follow all policies and regulations as set forth by The Texas A&M University System, including the A&M-San Antonio Student Code of Conduct.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no university rule or procedure that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition, and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the university, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty and staff, and the administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted and compliant with the University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and in the University Catalog.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their University email for any updates or official University notifications.
6. We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious

background, sexual orientation, or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Grade Grievance

Any grade grievance needs to be submitted to me in written form, including a print-out copy of the argument, the assignment or exam in question, and the evidence supporting your grievance.

Tentative Class Schedule

(Subject to change. Any change will be announced in class)

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
January 20	Introduction		
January 22	Where is our discipline from?	Chapter 1	
January 27	The temporal and spatial dimensions of media and media effects theories	Chapter 2	
January 29	An overview of media effects theories	Chapter 2	
February 3	How media and politics are intertwined	Chapter 3	
February 5	Framing and selection	Chapter 4	
February 10	Cultivation theory, media, stories, processes, and reality	Chapter 5	
February 12	Parasocial experiences: Bond through the screen	Parasocial interaction: A review (Giles, 2002)	
February 17	Media priming	Chapter 6	
February 19	Social cognitive theory	Chapter 7	
February 24	Persuasion as media effects	Chapter 8	Reading analysis paper 1
February 26	Narrative effects: Transportation	Chapter 9	
March 3	Media choice and selective exposure	Chapter 10	
March 5	Media and emotion	Chapter 11	

March 17	Imagined interaction as a media effect	Reading	
March 19	No class meeting		Midterm
March 24	Media, identity, and self	Chapter 12	
March 26	Psychophysiology and neuroscience	Chapter 13	
March 31	Media violence	Chapter 14	
April 2	Media and gender roles	Reading	
April 7	Fan fiction	Chapter 27	
April 9	Stereotype in media	Chapter 16	Reading analysis paper 2
April 14	Artificial intelligence	Reading	
April 16	Advertising effects	Chapter 18	
April 21	Education media as entertainment for children	Chapter 19	
April 23	Nostalgia and media I	Reading	
April 28	Nostalgia and media II	Reading	
April 30	Media figures' influences on interpersonal relationships	Reading	Reading analysis paper 3

The final exam will be arranged in the final's week.