



COMM 1500

Division: Humanities

Department: Communication

Course: COMM 1500

Title: Introduction to Mass Media

Catalog Description:

This course is an introduction to the history, theories, structures, functions, and impact of the mass media industries in today's society. Those industries include advertising, newspaper, television, radio and sound recording, magazines, motion pictures, books, the Internet and new technologies. The course is also designed to help students become critical consumers of mass media, and to understand how their lives are affected by the media and advertising.

General Education Requirements: Humanities

Semesters Offered: Fall, Spring

Credit/Time Requirement: Credit: 3; Lecture: 3; Lab: 0

Clock/Hour Requirements: 0

Offered for Non-Credit: No

Prerequisites: N/A

Corequisites: N/A

Justification:

The mass media and emerging new technologies are the tools that shape and transmit our culture in today's world. This course can be an important component of any student's educational experience because it will help him or her better understand and function in this information age.

Similar courses are taught at every college and university in the state of Utah. This course will transfer to those school as a GE credit, a communication pre-major requirement, and/or a prerequisite to other major courses. It will count as GE credit at Snow College in the Humanities Group. It will help communication majors decide where their interests lie in the field of mass communication.

Student Learning Outcomes:

As a result of taking this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the role and impact of mass media in today's society
- Be informed and critical consumers of mass media
- Make informed decisions regarding further study in the field
- Develop an appreciation for the artistic and historical impact of mass media

Content:

The following topics will be covered in this course:

- Mass communication theories and processes
- Media literacy and culture
- History and development of seven major mass media industries
- History and development of support industries to mass media including public relations and advertising
- Effects of and legal constraints on mass media in today's society.

As part of their exposure to mass media, students will:

- listen to excerpts from well-known and influential radio broadcasts such as War of the Worlds and/or Amos 'n' Andy
- watch excerpts from critically acclaimed motion pictures such as Citizen Kane and/or Singing in the Rain
- read excerpts from the works of notable authors such as Common Sense by Thomas Paine and/or Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain
- watch excerpts from well-known and influential TV programs such as I Love Lucy and/or All In The Family

General Education Outcomes:

5) Apply a cultural and historical awareness to a variety of phenomena.

Students will know the history of mass media and their effects on culture. For example, students discuss and are assessed on their understanding of the political ramifications of the Watergate investigation by the *Washington Post* and how television and movies affect the way people talk, dress, and socialize.

8) Apply ethical reasoning to a variety of contexts.

Students learn strategies for evaluating behaviors, policies, and ethics of mass media industries. For example, students discuss and are assessed on their understanding of how the presentation of news has changed over the years and whether it is fair, accurate and objective.

9) Respond with informed sensitivity to an artistic work or experience.

The course exposes students to various specific artistic works (critically acclaimed books, movies, radio and television broadcasts), and discusses the artistic impact of those works, such as camera work and lighting in movies, page layout and design in newspapers, and how these artistic works sometimes are parodied in popular culture. Student understanding is assessed through discussion, tests, and writing projects.

Key Performance Indicators:

Student performance in class will be evaluated through

- 10 - 15 quizzes lecture and book content: 15%
- six exams: 50%
- six essays (1-2 pages each) on artistic and historical impact of mass media: 15%
- a group research project that will be presented orally to the class: 10%
- class participation in discussions: 10%

Percentages are approximate .

Representative Text and/or Supplies:

Baran, Stanley J. *Introduction to Mass Communication*. Current edition. Pub: McGraw Hill.

Optimum Class Size: 25

Maximum Class Size: 30

Signatures:

I hereby submit this course syllabus:

Elaine Compton, MS, Assistant Professor

I hereby find this course consistent with the goals and resources of the Communication Department:

Elaine Compton, MS, Assistant Professor, Chair

I hereby find this course consistent with the goals and resources of the Humanities Division:

Sheryl James Bodrero, PhD, Associate Professor, Dean

I have discussed the need for library resources related to this class with the person submitting the syllabus:

Lynn Anderson, MLIS, Technical Services Librarian (Main Campus)

Michelle Olsen, MLS, Campus Librarian (Richfield Campus)