



COMM 1500

Division: Humanities

Department: Communication

Course: COMM 1500

Title: Introduction to Mass Media

Catalog Description:

This course is an introduction to the theories, structures, functions, and impact of the mass media industries in today's society. Those industries include newspaper, television, radio and sound recording, magazines, motion pictures, books, and the Internet. 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.

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 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.

Courses similar to this are taught at every college and university in the state. Comparable courses include COMM 1500 *Introduction to Mass Communication* at the University of Utah, JCom 1000 *Introduction to Mass Communication* at Utah State University, COMM 1120 *Introduction to Mass Communication* at Weber State University, COMM 2050 *Mass Media and Society* at Southern Utah University and others.

This course will transfer to those school as a GE credit, a communication pre-major requirement, and a rerequisite to other major courses. It is also a basic course that 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

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" or "Amos 'n' Andy"
- watch excerpts from critically acclaimed motion pictures such as "Citizen Kane" or "Singing in the Rain"
- read excerpts from the works of notable authors such as "Common Sense" by Thomas Paine or "Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain

General Education Outcomes:

2) Write clearly, informatively, and persuasively.

Students will write essays relating to their personal experiences with mass media. Students have multiple opportunities to practice their writing skills and receive suggestions for improving them.

4) Retrieve, evaluate, interpret, and deliver information through a variety of traditional and electronic media.

Students will learn how to retrieve and evaluate information from the Internet, electronic databases, as well as traditional print resources as part of a group research project which will then be presented to the class.

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

The history of the mass media and their effects on culture are central to the course content. For example, we talk about the political ramifications of the Watergate investigation by the Washington Post and we discuss how television and movies affect the way people talk, dress, socialize, etc.

8) Apply ethical reasoning to a variety of contexts.

The course teaches strategies for evaluating behaviors, policies, and ethics of mass media industries. For

example, how has the presentation of news changed over the years and is it fair, accurate and objective? How can we evaluate mass media before issuing a value judgement on individual products or the medium as a whole?

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.

Key Performance Indicators:

Student performance in class will be evaluated through

- 10 - 15 quizzes on new terminology: 35%
- four exams: 40%
- four essays (2 pages each): 20%
- a group research project that will be presented orally to the class: 5%

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)