

Middlesex Community College

COM*101 – Introduction to Mass Communication

***On-Line* via Blackboard Learn**

CRN # 3196 / 3 credits

Fall 2015

John Shafer, Professor

Office Hours: M-Th 12-1 PM or by appointment

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SYLLABUS

Course Description:

This course is an examination of the effect and impact of mass media on contemporary life and society. The course covers both the historical evolution of media as well as contemporary developments and issues. Areas of coverage include, newspapers and journalism, magazine and book publishing, radio and television broadcasting, motion pictures, music recording, Internet and social media, cable and satellite communication, advertising and public relations; media law and ethics. Course work will include weekly chapter readings from the course text, quizzes, and regular participation in on-line discussion forums which will require writing and reflection.

Prerequisite:

Placement in ENG*101; completion of ENG*101 or the taking of ENG*101 concurrently, including ENG*101E or ENG*101ALP.

Learning Outcomes:

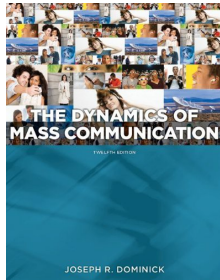
- To increase students' knowledge and understanding of the mass communication process and the mass media industries.
- To increase students' awareness of how they interact with those industries and with media content to create meaning.
- To help students become more skilled and knowledgeable consumers of media content.
- To develop students' understanding of the relationships among communication, mass communication, culture, and those who live in the culture.
- To recognize trends in mass media, especially concentration of ownership and conglomeration, globalization, audience fragmentation, public relations, hyper-commercialism, convergence, and the move toward digital distribution of mass media product.
- To understand the history and development of individual mass media technologies, and the industries and employment opportunities that have grown up around them.
- To apply students' enhanced understanding of mass communication theory toward improving their own media literacy skills.
- To demonstrate students' understanding of freedom, regulatory, and ethical issues as applied to both mass media industries and individual use of the mass media.

Graduation Requirements and Transfer Information:

This course fulfills a core program requirement in both the Broadcast-Cinema and Communication programs at MxCC. It may fulfill a communication elective in other programs (check the on-line catalog carefully) and will also fulfill humanities, liberal arts, and open elective requirements in all programs at MxCC. *Intro to Mass Comm.* is a common program requirement for most Communication programs at bachelor-degree institutions and this course should transfer in and fulfill the requirement. The course may also transfer and fulfill general education requirements in communication, humanities, or liberal arts.

Text:

The text is available for both purchase and rental at the MxCC Bookstore or on-line booksellers such as Amazon.com. A copy is also be available for in-library use from the reserve shelf in the library.



The Dynamics of Mass Communication, 12th edition, by Joseph R. Dominick. McGraw Hill, 2013. \$170 new, \$84 used rental (sorry its so expensive).

A broad overview of the field of mass communication with specific focus on each major media area. This course is based on and designed around the text, which is essential. Quizzes and discussions will be based on weekly chapter readings.

Additional resources are available on the text's web site:

www.mhhe.com/dominick12e

Other Resources:

Other resource materials will be available on Blackboard including relevant articles, videos, links to media-related websites, and the Opposing Viewpoints database that may be used for topic discussions.

Grade Breakdown & Required Work:

- (6) Quizzes @ 8% each (every two weeks) 48%
- (6) Discussion Forums @ 8% each (every two weeks) 48%
- Viewing of Course Media, Materials & Content 4%

IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING TOPICS, QUIZZES AND DISCUSSION FORUMS:

There will be (7) topics covered during the semester on a bi-weekly basis. Each topic covers (2) chapters in the text and includes both a quiz and written responses through discussion forum participation.

However, **students are only required to take (6) quizzes and participate in (6) discussion forums.**

This means you may opt to NOT participate in one topic. You choose which topic you would like to skip. You may still take the quiz and participate for all topics if you want. In this case your lowest grades will be dropped.

(6) Quizzes @ 8% each = 48%

Quizzes will be conducted every two weeks through Blackboard. They will typically cover two chapters each. Quizzes will be available for a period of one week with **deadlines on Wednesdays at midnight** (see due dates listed below and on the course calendar). Quizzes are open book in nature, but are limited to one hour in length. Therefore it is strongly recommended that you read the required chapters ahead of time and prepare for the quiz by outlining key content with page number references, so you can easily look up information, if needed. The glossary and index at the back of the text may also prove useful.

Quiz #	Chapters	Topics	Quiz Active Dates
1	1, 2	Mass Communication overview & perspectives	Sep. 8-16
2	3, 4	Media History / The Internet & Social Media	Sep. 21-30
3	5, 13	Newspapers & News Gathering	Oct. 5-14
4	6, 7	Magazine & Book Publishing	Oct. 19-28
5	8, 9	Radio Broadcasting & The Music Industry	Nov. 2-11
6	10, 11	Motion Pictures & Television	Nov. 16-25
7	16, 17	Media Laws & Ethics	Nov. 30 - Dec. 9

Discussion Forum Participation (6) Topics @ 8% each = 48%

You are required to participate in the on-line discussion forum on Blackboard every two weeks. This is both an equivalent to class discussion and a form of written expression, and is an essential part of this class. You are required to contribute a minimum of (4) posts per discussion topic, which covers two chapters following the same structure as the quizzes listed above. You should make at least one original post on something relevant to each of the two chapter topics, and you should respond to at least two student posts (not necessarily for each chapter). Posts should run a minimum of a full paragraph in length and will receive credit based on their depth, insight, and relevance. Posts for each discussion forum are graded together cumulatively on a 10-point scale ranging from 5-10 points.

Points roughly equate to letter grades as follows:

10 points	A+	7 points	C
9 points	A	6 points	D
8 points	B	5 points	

Percentage equivalents correspond to the course grading scale below:

Course Grading Scale:

The following percentage scale is used for converting numerical scores into letter grades. Note that this scale is somewhat modified from the standard 100-point scale. Any grades below 50% will automatically be converted to 50% for final grade calculations.

Grades Between	Will Equal	Grades Between	Will Equal
96% and 100%	A+	68% and 71%	C
92% and 95%	A	64% and 67%	C-
88% and 91%	A-	60% and 63%	D+
84% and 87%	B+	56% and 59%	D
80% and 83%	B	52% and 55%	D-
76% and 79%	B-	0% and 51%	F
72% and 75%	C+		

Blackboard - Course Web Site / Grade Info

This on-line course is administered through Blackboard Learn. To access Blackboard go to: <http://my.commmnet.edu/>. If you've never logged on to *MyCommnet* before, follow the link below the LOGIN box "*Need Your Initial Password*" for login directions. After logging in, look for the Blackboard link. If you have problems logging on or using Blackboard, call tech support at 860-343-5756.

Withdrawals and Incomplete Grades:**Fall 2015 Withdrawal Deadline: Friday, November 13**

If for some reason you are unable to complete the course and do not wish to receive a grade, you may withdraw from the course and receive a "W" by picking up a withdrawal form from the records office before the deadline above. You may also send me an email requesting to withdraw. Otherwise, I will assign a grade based on the work you have completed and will have no choice but to assign an "F" if there is little or no work or attendance. A grade of "W" does not affect your grade point average so that would definitely be preferable to an "F" which does affect your GPA. If you have completed a substantial amount of work but are unable to finish before the end of the semester due to unavoidable circumstances, I am usually willing to give an incomplete grade, which will give you an additional semester to complete the work. Again this is provided you speak to me before the end of the semester. Incomplete grades require a form to be filled out and signed by both of us.

Grading Concerns:

Grades will be posted on Blackboard. Please check your grades carefully. Though I take great care to be accurate, occasionally a mistake is made. If you have any questions about the grade you received on an assignment or your final grade for the course, please ask me about it. If a mistake is discovered, I will change your grade appropriately. For this reason, it is important that you always save any written evaluations returned to you until well after the semester is over.

Additional College Policies

For further information and a complete description of relevant college policies for students, go to the following page on the college's web site:

www.mxcc.edu/catalog/syllabus-policies/

Course Calendar

Week Topic/Readings/Assignments

AUG 30 Course Overview / Introductions

SEP 7 Read chapters 1&2: Mass Communication (overview) / Quiz 1 active: Sep. 8-16

14 Discussion Forum on Mass Communication (overview), ch. 1&2

21 Read chapters 3&4: History / Internet & Social Media / Quiz 2 active: Sep 21-30

28 Discussion Forum on History & The Internet (ch. 3-4)

OCT 5 Read chapters 5&13 Newspapers and News / Quiz 3 active: Oct 5-14

12 Discussion Forum on news (ch. 5&13)

19 Read chapters 6&7: Magazines & Books / Quiz 4 active: Oct. 19-28

26 Discussion Forum on magazines & books (ch. 6&7)

NOV 2 Read chapters 8&9: Radio & Music / Quiz 5 active: Nov. 2-11

9 Discussion Forum on Radio & Music (ch. 8&9)

16 Read chapters 10&11: Motion Pictures & Television / Quiz 6 active: Nov. 16-25

23 Discussion Forum on Motion Pictures & TV (ch.10&11)

30 Read chapters 16&17: media law and ethics / Quiz 7 active: Nov. 30 - Dec. 9

DEC 7 Discussion Forum on media law & ethics (ch. 16-17)