

Middlesex Community College

COM*101 – Introduction to Mass Communication

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

CRN # 2164 / 3 credits

Summer 2016: Session IV - June 13 – August 3

John Shafer, Professor

Office Hours: by appointment

Office: Rm. 606 Chapman; *Phone:* 860-343-5811

email: jshafer@mxcc.edu

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, viewing of media materials, 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:

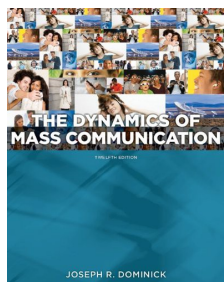
- To increase students' knowledge and understanding of the mass communication process and the mass media industries.
- To increase students' awareness of how they interact with those industries and with media content to create meaning.
- To help students become more skilled and knowledgeable consumers 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 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 website:

www.mhhe.com/dominick12e

Other Resources:

Other resource materials will be available on Blackboard including relevant articles, videos, and links to media-related websites.

Grade Breakdown & Required Work:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • (10) Quizzes @ 5% each | 50% |
| • (7) Discussion Forum Questions @ 6% each | 42% |
| • Final Exam | 8% |

IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING ACCELARRATED SUMMER SCHEDULE & WORKLOAD:

This summer course condenses a normal 15-week semester into 7½ weeks. The normal expectation for a regular semester course is that students would be putting in a minimum of 6 hours per week. For this course students should expect to put in **a minimum of 12 hours of time per week on the course.**

IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING QUIZZES AND DISCUSSION FORUM QUESTIONS:

There will be (14) topics covered during the session – two per week. Each topic includes both a quiz and a short written response question submitted through the discussion forum. However, **students are only required to take (10) quizzes and answer (7) discussion forum questions**, out of the 14. This means you may opt NOT to take (4) Quizzes and NOT to answer (7) Discussion Forum questions. You choose which quizzes you would like to skip. You are supposed to answer one of the two discussion questions each week. You may still take all the quizzes and answer all the discussion questions if you want. In this case your lowest grades will be dropped.

(10) Quizzes @ 5% each = 50%

There will be (2) short quizzes due every week through Blackboard – one quiz per chapter. Each quiz has (20) multiple-choice questions. **Quizzes are normally due on Tuesdays and Thursdays at midnight.** And will be available anytime prior to the due date (in case you'd like to work ahead (see due dates listed below and on the course calendar). Quizzes are open book in nature with a time limit of (3) hours for each attempt. You are allowed two attempts for each quiz and may check which questions you missed before taking a second attempt. It is strongly recommended that you read the required chapters ahead of time and prepare for the quizzes 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 are also useful.

QUIZ Schedule (10 required)

| Quiz # | Chapter | Topics | Quiz Due Date |
|---------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | 1 | Communication: Mass and Other | June 17 |
| 2 | 3 | Historical & Cultural Context | June 17 |
| 3 | 4 | The Internet & Social Media | June 21 |
| 4 | 15 | Advertising | June 23 |
| 5 | 5 | Newspapers | June 28 |
| 6 | 13 | News Gathering & Reporting | June 30 |
| 7 | 6 | Magazines | July 5 |
| 8 | 7 | Books | July 7 |
| 9 | 8 | Radio | July 12 |
| 10 | 9 | Sound Recording & Music | July 14 |
| 11 | 10 | Motion Pictures | July 19 |
| 12 | 11 | Television | July 21 |
| 13 | 16 | Media Laws, Rules, Regulations | July 26 |
| 14 | 17 | Media Ethics | July 28 |

Discussion Forum Participation Questions - (7) Responses @ 6% each = 42%

You are required to participate in the on-line discussion forum on Blackboard every week. This is both an equivalent to class discussion and a form of written expression, and is an essential part of the class. You are required to contribute a minimum of (2) posts per week on one of the two topics covered each week following the same structure as the quizzes. Specific questions will be provided and you need to choose one of the questions to answer. Some questions are based on media materials in the media gallery. You should make at least one original post answering the question and you should respond to at least one student post for your chosen chapter topic. Original posts should run a minimum of a full paragraph in length and will receive credit based on their depth, insight, and relevance. All posts for each discussion forum topic are graded together cumulatively. **Topic question responses are due on Sundays by midnight.** Responses to other students' posts are due the following night, **Monday by midnight.** See schedule below:

| Chapters | Topics | Response Due |
|-----------------|---|---------------------|
| 1, 3 | Communication / Media History | June 19 |
| 4, 15 | The Internet & Social Media / Advertising | June 26 |
| 5, 13 | Newspapers / News Gathering | July 3 |
| 6, 7 | Magazines / Books | July 10 |
| 8, 9 | Radio / Sound Recording & Music | July 17 |
| 10, 11 | Motion Pictures / Television | July 24 |
| 16, 17 | Media Laws & Ethics | July 31 |

Final Exam - 8% - Due by Tuesday, August 2

There will be a brief final exam consisting of two short-answer questions that will ask you to identify and summarize important things that you've learned during the course. The exam will be provided the week before it is due.

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, based on 12-points per grade, instead of 10. Any grades below 46% (including missed assignments) will automatically be converted to 46% as the numerical value for "F" 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.comnet.edu/>. If you've never logged on to *MyComnet* 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:**Summer 2016 Session IV Withdrawal Deadline: Friday, July 15**

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. 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 session 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 session. 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 & Quizzes

- JUN 13 Read chapters 1 & 3: Communication / History & Culture / **Quizzes 1 & 2**
- 20 Read chapters 4 & 15: Internet & Social Media / Advertising / **Quizzes 3 & 4**
- 27 Read chapters 5 & 13: Newspapers and News / **Quizzes 5 & 6**
- JUL 4 Read chapters 6-7: Magazines & Books / **Quizzes 7 & 8**
- 11 Read chapters 8-9: Radio / Sound & Music / **Quizzes 9 & 10**
- 18 Read chapters 10-11: Motion Pictures & Television / **Quizzes 11 & 12**
- 25 Read chapters 16-17: Media Law and Ethics / **Quizzes 13 & 14**
- AUG 1 **Final Exam due Aug. 2 by midnight**