

JTC 414: Media Effects
Fall 2023
Lectures: T, R 11 am -12.15 pm, Clark C 238

Instructor: Dr. Gayathri (Gaya) Sivakumar
Office: Clark C 233
Phone: 970-491-5556
E-mail: gayathri.sivakumar@colostate.edu
Office Hours (in person): W 12 – 2 pm

Course Description

This course explores the role and effect of mass media on our lives. While there are different approaches one can take to the matter, this course takes a social scientific approach. We will consider social scientific theories and empirical studies on people's use of media and the consequences of such usage. The aim of this course is to provide you with a general understanding of scientific research on media use and effects and familiarize you with reading and interpreting peer-reviewed research articles. This course meets the following professional values and competencies as outlined by The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications.

In this course, you will

- *demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;*
- *demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;*
- *demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;*
- *understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;*
- *demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity;*
- *think critically, creatively, and independently;*
- *conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to social science research*
- *write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for communication research*
- *critically evaluate your own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style, and grammatical correctness;*
- *apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;*

Class Format

This class is designated as a face-to-face class. Most of the instruction will be provided in form of lectures. There will also be some components of videos, group discussions, and group work to complement the lectures. I will upload PowerPoint slides before each lecture and the students are expected to complete the assigned reading before they turn up for the class.

Requirements

Attendance. You are expected to attend all class lectures. Keep in mind that absence or lateness does not excuse you from required course work. Attendance will be taken in lectures and will influence your participation points. There will be no penalty for the first two unexcused absences. Every unexcused absence after that will impact your participation point for that week.

Excuses will be provided for absences only if the absences are due to medical emergencies (doctor note is needed for all medical excuses), because you are traveling with a university-affiliated team or group, or because some unavoidable circumstances arise. Please note that holiday travel arrangements, which are under your control, are not considered unavoidable circumstances! If any due date falls on the religious holiday that you observe, you should come and see me as early as you can for a workable arrangement.

If you know you will be absent from class on a specific day (especially on exam or assignment due days), you should speak to me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you can make appropriate arrangements.

Participation. You are expected and encouraged to participate in class discussions actively. Asking questions, making observations, introducing issues for debate, and even engaging in a little self-disclosure are all good ways to start. Your participation grade, worth 16.67% of the total grade, will be assigned based on your attendance and the amount and quality of your participation in class. You may lose points on your participation grade for more than one unexcused absence, regular tardiness, and disrespect of others in the class. **Also, if you never speak up in class, you cannot expect to receive a full participation score.**

Readings. Readings for this course will be from the assigned textbook *Fundamentals of Media Effects (Third Edition)*. While I'll discuss some parts of the reading during class you are expected to be familiar with the content provided in the textbook even if they are not covered in the lecture. You will also be assigned to read through journal articles in the area of media effects research. Such articles are meant to not only broaden your exposure to the scholarly literature in this area but also demonstrate to you how to summarize and evaluate a scientific study. I will provide a pdf version of the articles on Canvas for you to download and read.

It is important to keep up with the readings in this course. The lectures are designed to supplement, not to replace, the readings. I'll prepare each week's lectures based on the assumption that you have done the required readings for the week. You will be tested on the materials from both the lectures and the readings. Readings are to be completed by the date listed in the course schedule. When completing the readings, you should aim at:

- (1) developing familiarity with the key ideas or theories discussed,
- (2) understanding the key concepts and the logic of arguments,
- (3) understanding how each study connects theoretical arguments with empirical evidence (i.e., what methods were used and how the study was carried out), and
- (4) being able to recall and interpret the key findings.

You will be tested on all these aspects.

Grade Reviews. After tests and assignments have been returned, you will have **five school days** to make an appointment with me to discuss any concerns you have about how your grade was calculated. After that time, grades are final

Class Rules. I expect all students to pay attention to the lectures and make contributions to the class discussions. Disruptive behaviors like talking during lectures, texting in class, surfing the web, reading newspapers, etc. will not be tolerated. Students engaging in such behaviors will be asked to leave the class. I expect the students to **not** use their laptops or smartphones during lecture. I encourage students to take notes using pen and paper. Students who have trouble doing so are encouraged to discuss your concerns with me in person.

Special Needs. If you have a disability and need special assistance during class sessions or tests, you must register with the Resources for Disabled Students Office. I will be happy to work with this office to ensure that your needs are met.

Academic misconduct. You are strongly encouraged to work with other students during the semester if it helps you master the materials in this course but I will not tolerate any act of deception, including cheating, plagiarism, using Chat GPT for your assignment, making up or falsifying information, or buying a paper and representing that paper as if you did the work. Evidence of academic dishonesty may result in failure of the assignment, and, possibly, this course. Acts of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to the Academic Integrity Policy of the CSU General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code. At a minimum, a grading penalty will be assessed, and a report will be sent to the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services. You may grieve this action through the appropriate channels.

Grading. Final grades in this course will be based on the +/- grading system.

Note: A = excellent, B = good, C = average, D = poor, and F = failing.

Assignment Type	% of Total Grade	Total Points	Notes
<i>Exams</i>	<i>26.67%</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>*In Class Exams</i>
Exam 1		100	
Exam 2		100	
Exam 3		100	

Exam 4		100	
Assignments	46.67%	700	*Canvas Submission
Agenda- Setting		200	Individual Assignment
Research Topic & Hypotheses		100	Group Assignment
Research Methodology		100	Group Assignment
Group Presentation		300	Group Assignment
Discussion Questions	10%	150	*Canvas Submission
Impact of Media Violence		50	
Impact of Online Health Communication		50	
Impact of Social Media Use		50	
Participation	16.67%	250	*Based on in-class participation, attendance, group participation
Total	100%	1500	

Exams. There will be four exams during the semester. The exams are not cumulative. In other words, in the second exam, you will not be tested directly on any material already covered in the previous test. You will, however, be expected to apply the fundamental skills and understanding acquired earlier in the course. All exams will be administered in the classroom only.

Assignments

This class requires you to take exams, complete both individual and group assignments (including a group presentation towards the end of the semester) and turn in discussion questions that would aid in class discussions. Detailed descriptions of all individual and group assignments are available on the assignments page of Canvas.

Assignment Submissions. The deadlines for turning in assignments are provided in the syllabus. All assignments must be turned in through Canvas. I will **NOT** accept any late submission. If an emergency keeps you from turning in your work before the deadline, email me as soon as you can. If you have trouble turning in your assignments on Canvas due to unexpected technical difficulties, you can email the assignment to me **BEFORE** the deadline expires.

Research Project & Presentation. You will be asked to work in groups of four on a cutting-edge topic related to media effects. Your group can pick your own topic (after getting my approval) based on your interest. Once the topic is chosen, every member of the group will have to choose three published original research papers related to the topic. There can be no overlap of articles among group members. The group members will then work together to synthesize the literature on the topic (based on the information provided in the individual research papers selected by their members). The group will then design a study to test their hypothesis, collect data, and present their findings in front of the class.

Discussion Questions. Every time a journal article is assigned to the class, I expect everyone to read it a couple of times (at least) before class and come to ready to discuss the article during the

class time. To aid class discussions, everyone is expected to post **one** discussion question each on canvas that is directly related to the journal article. Each question has to be unique and not be a duplicate of the question posed by any other student before you. The question cannot be a simple yes or no question and should be designed to encourage discussion.

Extra Credit Opportunities. You will have opportunities to earn up to 2.5% of the total grade through extra credit opportunities provided via SONA.

Course Schedule and Readings (subject to change)

Week 1

Tuesday, Aug 22 - Course introduction: Syllabus, Assignments, & Class Rules

Thursday, Aug 24 – Process of Communication & Communication Models
Reading: Chapter 1: Understanding Media Effects

Week 2

Tuesday, Aug 29 - Introduction to Media Effects Research & Methodologies
Reading: Chapter 1: Understanding Media Effects

Thursday, Aug 31 – Scientific Study of Media Effects
Reading: Chapter 3: History of the Scientific Study of Media Effects

Week 3

Tuesday, Sept 5 – Understanding Media Effects Through Theories- Part 1
Reading: Chapter 6: Agenda – Setting

Thursday, Sept 7 – Understanding Media Effects Through Theories- Part 2
Assignment 1: Agenda- Setting

Week 4

Tuesday, Sept 12 – Watch: Shaw, D. (Academic). (2016). *Agendamelding* [Video]. Sage Knowledge. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473992481>

Deadline: Agenda Setting Assignment due in Canvas today

Thursday, Sept 14- Exam 1

Week 5

Tuesday, Sept 19 – Understanding the Impact of Media Violence – Part 1
Reading: Chapter 8: Cultivation

Thursday, Sept 21- Understanding the Impact of Media Violence – Part 2
Reading: Chapter 11: Effects of Media Violence

Week 6

Tuesday, Sept 26 – Class Discussion: Pollock, W., Tapia, N. D., & Sibila, D. (2022). Cultivation theory: The impact of crime media's portrayal of race on the desire to become a US police officer. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 24(1), 42-52.

Thursday, Sept 28 – Mass Media and Health

Reading: Chapter 15: Effects of Mass Media on Health

Week 7

Tuesday, Oct 3 – Watch: Metsa, K. (Academic). (2019). *Analyzing information diffusion in a public health crisis using google, news media & twitter data* [Video]. Sage Research Methods. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526499967>

Thursday, Oct 5 – Class Discussion: Sivakumar, G., & Mares, M. L. (2017). The doctor versus the internet: Effects of low-, medium-, and high-quality websites on intentions to follow the doctor's advice. *Health communication*, 32(12), 1454-1462.

Week 8

Tuesday, Oct 10 – Exam 2

Thursday, Oct 12 – Media Effects on Gender, Sexuality and Race – Part 1

Reading: Chapter 12: Effects of Sexual Media Content

Week 9

Tuesday, Oct 17 - Watch: Killing us Softly 4

Thursday, Oct 19 – Watch: Tough Guise Violence, Media, and the Crisis in Masculinity.

Week 10

Tuesday, Oct 24- Media Effects on Gender, Sexuality and Race – Part 2

Reading: Chapter 16: Effects of Media Stereotyping

Thursday, Oct 26- Exam 3

Week 11

Tuesday, Oct 31 – New Media Effects – Part 1

Reading: Chapter 19: Effects of Internet and Social Media

Thursday, Nov 2 – New Media Effects – Part 2

Reading: Chapter 19: Effects of Mobile Communication

Week 12

Tuesday, Nov 7- New Media Effects – Part 3
Reading: Chapter 19: Effects of Video Games

Thursday, Nov 9 – Class Discussion: Marciano, L., Ostroumova, M., Schulz, P. J., & Camerini, A. L. (2022). Digital media use and adolescents' mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in public health, 9*, 793868.

Week 13

Tuesday, Nov 14 – Exam 4

Thursday, Nov 16 – Introduction to Research Project
Deadline: Finalize topic idea and hypotheses

Week 14

Tuesday, Nov 21 – No Class: Fall Recess

Thursday, Nov 23 – No Class: Fall Recess

Week 15

Tuesday, Nov 28 – Group Work: Finalizing Methodology

Thursday, Nov 30 – Group Work: Data Collection

Week 16

Tuesday, Dec 5 – Group Presentations

Thursday, Dec 7 – Group Presentations