

## **MMC 6936 – Applied Communication Theory (Spring 2022)**

**Instructor:** Dr. Matthew Cretul, Ph.D.

**Course Section/Number:** 8999

**Room/Meeting time:** Weimer 1092 /W periods 10-E1 (5:10 PM - 8:10 PM)

**Office Hours:** Wed after class & virtually by appointment as needed

**E-mail:** [matthew.cretul@ufl.edu](mailto:matthew.cretul@ufl.edu)

**Socials:** Twitter: [CretulTweets](#) Instagram: [Instacretul](#) Snapchat: Snapcretul TikTok: CretulTok  
(I refuse to accept the excuse you couldn't get ahold of me if necessary!)

### **Course Description, Purpose, and Objectives**

#### **Course Description**

*Applied Theories in Mass Communication aims to bridge theory with practice in mass communication industries. The course objective is to help students understand mass communication theories, as well as media law and ethics, and use them to address contemporary issues. The course focuses on theories that can be utilized as the foundation for effective communication strategies using traditional and new media. In a final project, students will apply mass communication theories in their development of strategies to solve problems or capitalize on opportunities.*

#### **Purpose**

*The purpose of this course is to provide students with a greater understanding of how communication theories can be employed to investigate, analyze, and well-founded recommendations for solving real-world problems, particularly those pertinent to mass communications contexts, practices, processes, and industries.*

#### **Objectives**

- *Identify, explain, and critique major paradigms, theories, and conceptual frameworks that have shaped the field of mass communications*
- *Demonstrate an appreciation for the ethical and social responsibility considerations for those engaged in the mass communications professions*
- *Interpret, critique, and evaluate the published research of others as a step to develop one's research hypotheses.*
- *Articulate in-depth understanding of conceptual foundations presented in scholarly writing and oral communication*
- *Design and facilitate applied communication activities (i.e., presentations, groups discussions, interpersonal exchange) in professional contexts utilizing the conceptual foundations relevant to mass communications research*

#### **Course Evaluation**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback professionally and respectfully.](#) Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email

they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.](#)

### **Textbooks**

- **Required textbook:** *Applied Mass Communication Theory: A guide for media practitioners (3rd ed.)* by Jack Rosenberry and Lauren A. Vicker (2022). Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group
- Supplemental readings and presentation materials also will be made available through the CANVAS course site and via UF course reserves throughout the semester.
- To access, select “e-Learning in Canvas,” and log in using your Gatorlink ID. If you have problems with Canvas or any computer problems, please contact the UF Helpdesk by email (helpdesk@ufl.edu) or by phone (352-392-4357).

### **Class demeanor expected**

Class periods are meant to be interactive. I aspire for students to gain confidence enough to make their points with professionalism and conviction, yet to not be so thoroughly entrenched in “right-fighting” that they are not willing to be coached on alternative approaches to thinking through the problem-solving process. You always have the right to disagree with the instructor or your peers, as long as it is done in a civilized manner. However, respect for the views of the instructor and your classmates is mandatory. I will not accept behavior that makes others in the class feel inferior or uncomfortable. For the two-period lecture block, the class will have a short break about halfway through the discussion. Attendance, if taken, will generally occur in the second half of class.

### **Attendance**

This skills-based, professional training course meets once a week and is founded on student engagement and hands-on work. Much can be missed if an individual is absent. Although emergencies, illness (self or dependent others), and unforeseen circumstances can not be anticipated in advance, I do encourage students to do all necessary to commit to reliable, on-time attendance every week. Students should be cautioned that his/her/their record of attendance has a direct impact on his/her/their understanding of the course materials, and excessive unexcused absence will affect their final grade.

Each student is allowed one “free” missed class without penalty. Keep in mind that the free absence does not automatically excuse the student from assignment due dates, points awarded for in-class participation, or other point-based activities. Routine unexcused absences over the one-missed-class minimum will result in a loss of one-half point per absence and may directly affect the student’s grade. This does not apply, however, to excused absences due to activities sponsored by the College or endorsed CJC organizations or that require student participation in official University business.

### **Late/Makeup Work**

All work is expected to be turned in on or before the posted due date. Although, I do understand sometimes life happens. If for any reason you feel your work will be late, PLEASE approach me before the due date if possible to work out an acceptable alternative timeline. In general,

acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, and professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate, absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena). This is not an exhaustive list, and other reasons not listed may be approved as needed. **Unless extenuating circumstances exist, any work presented without prior alternative plans or official university, legal, or medical documentation will not be accepted.** If an assignment (or assignments) is (are) missed for an acceptable reason, I will work with you individually to come up with an alternative timeline for completing the assignment(s), ensuring that adequate time is allowed for completion.

**The University of Florida Honor Code** was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the Fall 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows:

**Preamble:** In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the university commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

**The Honor Code:** *"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."*

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

***"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."***

For more information about academic honesty, contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

## UNIVERSITY-PROVIDED STUDENT RESOURCES

*If you feel at any time as though the semester is getting too rough or beyond your control and you need to access any of the university-provided counseling services, please don't hesitate to contact the instructor if you are unsure how to proceed. You can find additional info below:*

### **U Matter, We Care:**

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

### **Counseling and Wellness Center:**

Phone: 352-392-1575

Website: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>

### **University Police Department:**

Phone: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Website: <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

### **Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)**

Student Health Care Center

Phone 392-1161

## **Academic Resources**

### **E-learning technical support**

Phone: 352-392-4357 (select option 2)

E-mail: [Learningsupport@ufl.edu](mailto:Learningsupport@ufl.edu).

Website: <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

### **Career Resource Center** (Located in Reitz Union)

Phone: 392-1601 Website: <http://www.crc.ufl.edu/>

### **Library Support**

Website: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>.

### **Teaching Center** (located in Broward Hall)

Phone: 392-2010 or 392-6420 Website: <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

### **Writing Studio** (Located in Tigert Hall)

Phone: 846-1138 Website: <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

### **Student Complaints**

Campus: [https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF\\_Complaints\\_policy.pdf](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf)

On-Line: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaintprocess>

### **In-Class Recording**

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the

instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code

## Grading

*Information on current University of Florida grading policies can be found at:*  
<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

### Grading Components

10 points (class discussion leader)  
 + 50 points (theory proposal assignment)  
 + 20 points (theory proposal presentation)  
 + 20 points (weekly reading reaction papers 2 @ 10 points each)  
 100 total points possible

### Grading Scale

A	(93.0-100)
A-	(90.0-92.9)
B+	(87.0-89.9)
B	(83.0-86.9)
B-	(80.0-82.9)
C+	(77.0-79.9)
C	(73.0-76.9)
C-	(70.0-72.9)
D+	(67.0-69.9)
D	(63.0-66.9)
D-	(60.0-62.9)
E	(below 59.9)

## Assignments

(Individual rubrics for each assignment, including how the assignment will be graded are available on Canvas)

### **Class Discussion Leader**

This will be your chance to lead a discussion during one of the weeks of your choosing. You will be responsible for directing and driving discussions, referring to points made in the readings (even if you may not agree with a point, you can offer your point of view, just make sure to have sources to back up your position), and interacting with your classmates (and me if I engage) to offer responses to their questions/comments. There will be a sign-up discussion sent around the first week of class. In advance of the week you choose, it would be worth it to do a bit of research in order to have an understanding of the topics being discussed, as well as material to add to the discussion if needed. In weeks where you are not a discussion leader, your role will

be to respond to the leader's prompts with original thoughts/comments that provide value and add to the topic(s) being discussed.

### **Theory Proposal Assignment**

- *Topic proposal paper (10 points)* – Provide a one-page summary of a question or topic that will define your interest for future research. In keeping with some of the textbook chapters and research introduced in class, your proposal should strive to explain the issue of interest, its relevance to mass communication, and why you believe it is an important topic for exploration. At this stage, you are not required to identify a particular theory to frame your topic. Therefore, the lion's share of your energy should be allocated to what would otherwise serve as "an introduction to your topic." **DUE WEEK 4**
- *Annotated bibliography (15 points)* – The annotated bibliography assignment should directly relate to the topic of your theory paper. Its purpose is to provide a foundation on which you can build your research interest and represents a synopsis of the key research literature related to the theory you choose to explore in greater detail. The annotated bibliography is an individual assignment. It should include full citations from no less than 20 relevant sources, a short summation of the points raised by each source author, and a "key quote" that assists you in remembering the significance of the work. Each annotated bibliography citation should be single-spaced by source. **DUE WEEK 9**
- *Final paper (25 points)* – The culmination of your work (to understand your topic within the framework of a mass communication theory) will be reflected in the applied theory in mass communications proposal. This assignment requires you to integrate your findings from the literature review on your theory (from the annotated bibliography assignment) with a practical secondary review of your selected topic (i.e., topic proposal paper). The proposal is 10-15 pages in length and should conclude with propositions or hypotheses for research. **DUE WEEK 16**

### **Theory Proposal Presentation**

This will be your chance to present your theory proposal to your classmates. You will have between 5-10 minutes in which you will be expected to give a presentation detailing the proposal you designed, including the theory you chose, highlights from your annotated bibliography (seminal studies, oft-cited studies using the theory you've chosen, etc.) and the thoughts behind your proposal. Your PowerPoint (or whatever you use to create your presentation) is due in Canvas before class starts on the 20<sup>th</sup>. More information will be given on this assignment throughout the semester.

### **Weekly Reading Reaction Papers**

Reaction papers are short essays that offer your major reactions, questions, and critiques to the assigned readings for a given theory. Students are encouraged to provide a well-reasoned analysis of the body of work reviewed to demonstrate his/her understanding of the theme of the week's readings. The point is not to summarize the readings in the reaction paper, but rather to use the perspectives offered in the reading materials as a foundation for comparing, contrasting, and discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the perspectives advanced in the readings. The paper will serve as the basis of your contribution to the class discussion for the week.

## MMC 3630 FALL 2021 COURSE SCHEDULE

Instructor reserves the right to amend and change the lecture schedule and class plan as needed.

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPICS</u>
Week #1	1/5	Course Intro
Week #2	1/12	Chapter 1: Theory and the Study of Communication
Week #3	1/19	Chapter 2: Historical Developments in Mass Communication Theory
Week #4	1/26	Chapter 2: Historical Developments in Mass Communication Theory
Week #5	2/2	Chapter 3: The Individual Perspective on Mass Communication Theory
Week #6	2/9	Chapter 4: The Sociological Perspective on Mass Comm Theory
Week #7	2/16	Chapter 4: The Sociological Perspective on Mass Comm Theory
Week #8	2/23	Chapter 5: The Alternative Paradigms of Critical and Cultural Studies
Week #9	3/2	Chapter 6: International Communication Theories
Week #10	3/9	<b>SPRING BREAK YO</b>
Week #11	3/16	Chapter 7: Research Principles and Practices
Week #12	3/23	Chapter 8: Quantitative Research Methods
Week #13	3/30	Chapter 9: Qualitative Research Methods
Week #14	4/6	Chapter 10: Beyond Theory and Method
Week #15	4/13	Student Projects in Theory-based Research
Week #16	4/20	<b>Final Project Presentations</b>