

MMC 6402: Mass Communication Perspectives

Wednesdays 9:35am-1:40pm, Weimer 1098

PROFESSOR

Frank Waddell, Ph.D.
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OFFICE HOURS

3067 Weimer Hall
Wednesday and Thursday, 8:30am-9:30am

REQUIRED READINGS

All readings will be posted to Canvas or available via the UF library

Access to hard copy of APA style book (6th ed.) is recommended

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Mass communication perspectives (MMC 6402) provides an overview of theoretical and methodological traditions in the field of mass communication. Topics to be covered include the philosophy of science, concept explication, the history of mass communication as a field, and contemporary theoretical perspectives from mass communication.

GRADING

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| Attendance/Participation: | 5% |
| Weekly Forum Posting: | 5% |
| Theory Summary: | 20% |
| Exams: | 30% |
| Final Research Report: | 40% |

Grading scale: A, 100-93; A-, 92-90; B+, 89-87; B, 86-84; B-, 83-80; C+, 79-77; C, 76-74; C-, 73-70; D+, 69-67; D, 66-64; D-, 63-60; E, 59 and below

ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINES

Attendance/Participation (5%): Attendance is mandatory. All students are expected to come to class on a weekly basis, reading all assigned materials in advance. Your grade for attendance/participation will be determined based on the frequency and quality of your contributions to class discussion.

Weekly Forum Posting (5%): Each week you will be asked to submit a 250-500 word summary of an empirical study related to the topic/theory of the week. The summary should provide a citation to the article in question along with a brief description of the study's methodology and findings. Duplicate articles are not allowed, so check the forum before posting to ensure your article has yet to be summarized. Postings are due on Canvas under the forum tab at least 24 hours before our class meeting.

Theory Summary (20%): In this paper (5-10 pages), summarize the key assumptions and predictions of a theory from the field of communications or a related discipline. The theory should be approved by the instructor prior to beginning the paper. Identify the seminal manuscripts where the theory was first introduced, then track how the theory has changed over time. Comment on how the theory has evolved, and how you see the theory changing in the future. In sum, your theory summary paper should (1) describe the evolution of the paper since its inception, (2) summarize the contemporary assumptions of the theory, and (3) offer directions for the theory's evolution. After writing the paper, you will do a 10-minute presentation during class with a handout and PowerPoint presentation, followed by a Q&A session. The schedule of presentations will be determined in week 2.

Exams (30%): Two exams will be conducted throughout the semester, each worth 15% of your final grade. Exam 1 will be conducted at the midpoint of the semester, while Exam 2 will be conducted in the final week of the semester. Both exams will be essay-based and closed note during our regularly scheduled class time. The exams will cover all readings assigned for the course.

Final Research Report (40%): Submit a conference worthy research report based on an empirical study conducted during the semester. Students are strongly encouraged to conduct a replication of a well-known experimental study from mass communication science, although original empirical studies are also allowed pending instructor approval. The paper (30 pages max, inclusive of references and appendix) should be formatted according to APA style 6th edition and include the following elements: title page, abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, references, and appendix. Students may complete the research

report as a group (up to 4 people) or work individually. A detailed description of the report's requirements along with a recommended schedule for the project will be supplied in week 2.

LATE WORK POLICY

One letter grade (-10 points) will be deducted per day for work submitted past the assignment's deadline. If students anticipate that they will be unable to meet a deadline due to university documented issues (e.g., health condition, death in family), please contact me as soon as possible to arrange an extension. In general, I am quite willing to work with students when issues arise that prevent you from submitting work on time. However, it is necessary for these discussions regarding late work to occur either before or recently after (e.g., within a week) the original deadline for the assignment. Work that is more than 10 days late will be given a "0" unless you contact the professor to arrange an alternative due date within the week that the assignment was due.

HONOR CODE POLICY

This class strictly adheres to the UF honor code. Any prohibited behavior such as plagiarism, data fabrication, or cheating will result in a failing grade for the assignment in question and referral to the honor court, who may administer additional penalties such as a failing grade for the course or dismissal from the college. More information about the university honor code is available online at the following link: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

It is expected that all students will arrive to class on time and be respectful of fellow classmates during lecture and student presentations. Please turn all cell phones to silent. While laptops are allowed, it is expected that they will only be used for class-related work such as note-taking or group assignments. In the event that you need to answer an emergency phone call, please excuse yourself from class and answer the call in the hallway. The professor reserves the right to revoke the use of technology during class if the above policies are not followed.

Schedule

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| August 22nd: | Course Overview; Introduction to Communication Science |
| August 29th: | Magic Bullet/Hypodermic Needle; Two-Step Flow |

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| September 5th: | Cultivation Theory |
| September 12th: | Agenda Setting |
| September 19th: | Spiral of Silence; Third Person Effect |
| September 26th: | Media Priming; Framing |
| October 3rd: | Midterm Exam |
| October 10th: | Selective Exposure; Mood Management |
| October 17th: | Dual Process Models of Persuasion; Narrative Persuasion |
| October 24th: | Uses and Gratifications; Individual Differences |
| October 31st: | Social Cognitive Theory; General Aggression Model |
| November 7th: | Racial Stereotyping; Body Image |
| November 14th: | Hyperpersonal Model; Computers are Social Actors |
| November 21st: | Holiday; No Class |
| November 28th: | Final Project Presentations |
| December 5th: | Final Exam |
| December 12th: | Final Paper Due; No Class |