



## RTV 2405 Media & Society

### Spring 2026 – 14693 (ASEL)

Instructor: Andrew Selepak, PhD

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, Period 8

Office: Weimer Hall 3053

Email: [aselepak@ufl.edu](mailto:aselepak@ufl.edu)

Room: Tuesday, Periods 5-6 (11:45 – 1:40), FLG 220

Thursday, Period 6 (12:50 – 1:40), FLG 220

Course Website: <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>

#### What to expect from RTV 3405:

The purpose of this course is to guide students through an understanding of the relationship between the media and society, and how they shape and influence each other. This course traces the development of the media as well as examining the functions and limitations of each medium. Special attention is given to the role of mass communication in reflecting and projecting society. We will examine the media as a central force in the shaping of culture. Through the study of the media, and media theory, we will critique the media and develop an informed view of the impact the media has on individuals as well as national and international communities. Additional emphasis will be placed on media manipulation, propaganda, media psychology, and misinformation.

By the end of this course, students should be better able to analyze, evaluate, and interpret media messages and how the media impacts individuals and society.

#### Course Objectives

1. Explore the structural and social forces that direct the media to cover stories a certain way and what that means for our democracy
2. Examine the forces that drive types of news coverage and not others
3. View the impact of advertising messages to create a consumer culture
4. Demonstrate media literacy by accessing, interpreting, and evaluating media messages
5. Trace the development and evolution of mass media to analyze, interpret, and evaluate how the media shapes and promotes cultural narratives
6. Evaluate how our brains respond to media messages
7. Apply mass communication theories to analyze, interpret, and evaluate how the media shape people's views of reality
8. Develop a historical perspective about how media technologies originated and developed
9. Understand the variety of relationships between media and audiences, including how the media affects individuals and society
10. Discuss ethical and philosophical issues related to the mass media

## **Required Texts**

The media is rapidly changing, and our understanding of the media continues to evolve. For this reason, few textbooks are as up to date as needed. Therefore, all the material you will need for this course comes in lectures and online readings.

## **Course Philosophy and Expectations**

Mastery in this class requires preparation, passion, and professionalism. Students are expected, within the requirements allowed by university policy, to attend class, be on time, and meet all deadlines. Work assigned should be completed as directed. Full participation in discussions, group projects, and small group activities are required.

My role as instructor is to identify critical issues related to the course, direct students to and teach relevant information, assign appropriate learning activities, create opportunities for assessing student performance and communicate the outcomes of such assessments in a timely, informative, and professional way. Feedback is essential for students to have confidence that they have mastered the material and for the instructor to determine that students are meeting all course requirements.

At all times, it is expected that students will welcome and respond professionally to assessment feedback, that students will treat fellow students, instructors and assistants with respect, and that students will contribute to the success of the class to the best of their abilities.

This class is in-person, and you must log into Canvas with your UF ID and password to access the materials and assignments. The course is organized into modules with due dates.

## **Technical Assistance**

In the event that you have technical difficulties with your course, please contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) either by filling out an [online request form](#) or calling 352-392-4357 - select option 1. The Help Desk is located on the ground floor of the Hub on the UF campus.

If your technical difficulties caused you to miss a due date, you MUST report the problem to the Help Desk and then email your lab instructor. Include the ticket number that you are given from the Help Desk in an email to the instructor to explain the late assignment/quiz/test.

## **IT Support**

For all Technical assistance questions please contact the UF Computing Help Desk:

Phone: 352-392-HELP (4357)

Email: [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu)

## **Please Note**

Your instructor is not able to handle technological issues or answer questions related to computer issues. If a problem of this nature arises that causes you to miss an assignment, you must provide your Help Desk ticket number to the instructor to receive an extension.

## Expectations for Students

### Announcements

You are responsible for reading all announcements posted in Canvas each time you log in.

### Email

You are responsible for reading all your course emails and responding in a timely manner (within 24 hours).

### Course-Related Questions

Please email your instructor concerning any course-related questions.

### Instructor's Plan for Classroom Response Time and Feedback

#### Email Policy

Except for weekends, holidays, and University breaks, the instructor and/or teaching assistant will typically respond to emails within 48 hours. If you have questions of a personal nature, please email the instructor.

#### Assignment Feedback Policy

The instructor and/or teaching assistant will provide feedback on submitted assignments within one week of the submission date. Some assignments may require a longer review period, which the instructor will communicate to you.

#### Course-Related Questions Policy

Except weekends and holidays, the instructor will generally answer questions within 48 hours.

#### Video Conferencing

The instructor will provide any information on required video meetings within Canvas.

#### 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.

### **Electronic Communication Policy**

In addition to the University's policy, please consider the following:

Privacy, confidentiality, and security in all electronic communications. See [Information Security](#). All electronic communication resources must be used for the course and in alignment with the CJC Online and University mission. See the [Acceptable Use Policy](#).

Prohibited use of false identity, false identity pseudonyms, or anonymous (sender's name or electronic identification is hidden).

Prohibited online access without consent.

Prohibited disruption of services including introducing computer contaminants (viruses).

Prohibited [harassment](#) of any kind.

Please see UF's Information Technology [policies](#) for additional information.

### **Academic Integrity Policy**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code."

The [Student Honor Code](#), Violation of the Student Honor Code, specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to the appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TA in this class.

### **Netiquette**

Due to the casual style of communication commonly found in the online environment, students are sometimes tempted to relax their grammar, word choice, syntax (arrangement of words to create well-formed sentences), writing mechanics (capitalization, punctuation, and spelling), and/or professionalism. Keep in mind when communicating with others to be courteous, civil, respectful, and professional. Please remember that you are adult students and professionals—your communication must be appropriate.

### **Online Attendance Policy**

Since this course will use Canvas, students should access this course at least four times per week to ensure you do not miss pertinent postings, messages, or announcements. It is imperative that you meet course deadlines and stay active. If you are experiencing a major illness, absences due to University duties, or other large-scale issues, contact the instructor immediately.

Students are responsible for meeting all academic objectives as defined by the instructor. In general, acceptable reasons for absences include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements, military obligation, [severe weather conditions](#), [religious holidays](#), and participation in official University activities. Absences from class for court-imposed legal

obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused. [Excused absences](#) must be consistent with university policies and require appropriate documentation. For additional information, see the [attendance policies](#).

### **Software Use**

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

### **Notification to Students of FERPA Rights**

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see:

<http://registrar.ufl.edu/catalog0910/policies/regulationferpa.html>.

### **Online Meeting Etiquette**

Video conferencing is an excellent tool to interface with your peers and instructor(s) but there are also netiquette expectations to ensure that all participants are respected and treated with civility. Please make sure that you follow all of the netiquette and etiquette expectations including the following:

Be punctual and courteous.

Position your camera at eye level with good lighting.

Show respect and professionalism by dressing business casual or business professional.

Make sure your background is in a proper setting with minimal distractions.

Mute your microphone when you are not speaking.

### **Writing Style**

In order to meet the academic rigor and standards of UF, all students are required to use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) 7<sup>th</sup> Edition style in their courses. The APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition Manual has a plethora of guidelines that includes scholarly writing, publishing principles, elements and format for your papers, writing style and grammar, bias-free language guidelines, mechanics of style, intext citing and references, etc. For additional information on notable changes, see [changes between APA 6<sup>th</sup> Edition and APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition](#).

### **Academic Resources**

[One UF Student Portal](#) – Course registration, final grades, transcript requests, degree audit.

[GatorRater](#) – Online faculty evaluations and results.

[UF Bookstore](#): Phone: 352-392-0194, Email: [ufbookstore@bsd.ufl.edu](mailto:ufbookstore@bsd.ufl.edu)

[Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

### [UF Library Services for Distance Students](#)

[Ask a Librarian](#) – chat with librarians online.

CJC Librarian - [April Hines](#), Phone: 352-273-2728, Email: [aprhone@uflib.ufl.edu](mailto:aprhone@uflib.ufl.edu).

[Course Reserves](#): Electronic resource reserve items that can be accessed via links or files.

[Teaching Center](#): General study skills and tutoring. Broward Hall, Phone: 352-392-2010 or 352-392-6420.

[Writing Studio](#): Provides one-on-one consultations and workshops tailored to specific classes (graduate and undergraduate). 302 Tigert Hall, Phone: 352-846-1138.

[On-Line Student Complaints](#): This process is designed to make every attempt to resolve student complaints within its academic and administrative departments at the program level.

[Information for Veterans](#): Veterans Affairs Certification: Phone: 352 - 294-2948

[Academic policies and resources](#): Office of the Provost

## **Student Resources**

[Distant Student Resources](#): Phone: 352-392-1265

[U Matter, We Care](#): If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or Phone: 352-294-2273 so that a team member can reach out.

[Counseling and Wellness Center](#): [3190 Radio Road, Gainesville, FL 32611](#)  
[Phone: \(352\) 392-1575, Fax: \(352\) 273-4738](#)

[Sexual Violence Response](#): Victim services, Care Area, UF Police Department, and Title IX.

[University Police Department](#): Resources available include the Office of Victim Services and Community Services Division. Emergency: 9-1-1; Non-Emergency: 352-392-1111.

[Academic Planning](#): Academic advisors that can refer you to the wide array of resources that are available to UF students.

[Gator Connect](#): Online database of student organizations.

[Career Connection Center](#): Career assistance and counseling. Reitz Union, Phone: 352-392-1601.

**Veteran Services:** Office of Student Veteran Services, Phone: 352-294-2948, email: [vacounselor@ufl.edu](mailto:vacounselor@ufl.edu). Collegiate Veterans Success Center, Phone: 352- 294-7215, email: [charlotte.kemper@va.gov](mailto:charlotte.kemper@va.gov).

**Student Financial Affairs:** Financial aid counseling including Aid-a-Gator program. Phone: 352-392-1275.

**Student Success Coach:** Meet with a graduate student coach that can support you in numerous ways during your time in graduate school, such as time and stress management, motivation, organization, and much more.

### **Course Measurement Breakdown**

Students' progress in this course will be evaluated according to the following distribution:

Assessments	
Lecture Exams (3 total)	45%
Reading Exams (2 total)	20%
Video Quizzes	15%
Knowledge Quizzes	10%
Media Literacy Certificate	10%

Your grades will be posted to Canvas at <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>

### **Grading Scale**

A (93-100)	B (83-86)	C (73-76)	D (63-66)
A- (90-92)	B- (80-82)	C- (70-72)	D- (60-62)
B+ (87-89)	C+ (77-79)	D+ (67-69)	E (Below 60)

The university policies concerning this grading scale can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### **Late Work Policy**

Students are expected to complete assignments by the day they are scheduled. The following penalties will be applied to all work that is late for any reason other than those identified by the university policies, which can be found online at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

For excused absences (see the section on Attendance Policy on page 4), the students must contact their instructor with documentation for the absence and detail when they will return to class to determine assignment due dates. Once a timetable to return has been established, any work submitted after that time will be subject to the late penalties listed below.

You must therefore inform the instructor of the dates missed due to excused absences which fall into the categories of excused absence outlined on page 4. Late work penalties will be applied to

work submitted beyond the dates provided due to absences. You therefore can receive late penalties on work submitted due to an excused absence.

For unexcused absences, the following penalties will be applied to all work that is submitted late.

Point Deduction	Duration of Lateness
5 Points	Less than an hour
10 Points	Greater than one (1) hour but less than 24 hours
15 Points	Greater than 24 hour but less than 48 hours
25 Points	Greater than 48 hours but less than one (1) week
Not Accepted	Greater than one (1) week

### **Course work**

This course is comprised of multiple exams and quizzes. Students are expected to attend/watch all lectures and contribute to any class discussions and assignments using examples drawn from professional experience, personal experience, and course readings.

#### **Lectures**

It is the responsibility of the student to attend all lectures. The lectures are designed to build off each other as well as correspond with the weekly readings.

**Lecture PowerPoints will not be provided to students. It is important to come to class for the lecture material missed.** If you miss lecture, you are encouraged ask a fellow classmate for the material missed.

#### **Lecture Exams**

Three times during the semester, students must complete exams intended to measure the student's ability to retain key concepts from the course material. See the course schedule for dates. Exams must be completed in Canvas.

#### **Reading Exams**

Twice during the semester, students must complete exams intended to measure the student's ability to retain key concepts from the assigned readings. See the course schedule for dates. Exams must be completed in Canvas.

#### **Video Quizzes**

During the semester, we will watch short videos during class on various topics. Immediately after watching the videos, students will take a brief quiz that will measure the student's ability to analyze, evaluate, and interpret key concepts from the video.

#### **Knowledge Quizzes**

During the semester, students will take short quizzes to examine their general knowledge. These are participation and attendance quizzes. Your scores will be based on attendance. As a class, we will then review student responses to evaluate student knowledge on core concepts.

## ProLiteracy Certification Course

You must complete the ProLiteracy Navigating Today's Media certification course. The course will provide instruction on the skills to understand and engage with media messaging. Upon completion of course, students should submit a screenshot of the completed certification in Canvas.

## Course Policies

### Incompletes

An incomplete grade may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor as an interim grade for a course in which the student has completed a major portion of the course with a passing grade, been unable to complete course requirements before the end of the term because of extenuating circumstances, and obtained agreement from the instructor and arranged for resolution of the incomplete grade. Instructors are not required to assign incomplete grades.

Additional information on incomplete grades can be found at the following links:

- [UF Catalog](#)
- [Incomplete Grade Contract](#)

### Courtesy.

If you arrive late to lecture or lab, settle in with minimum disturbance. Put your cell phone on vibrate.

## **DO NOT TAKE PHOTOS DURING THE CLASS OF POWERPOINTS OR OTHER MATERIAL.**

First, this can be distracting to the instructor. Second, if you are only taking photos of the lecture material, you are not processing the information, and you will not learn it. This may prevent you from doing well on exams.

### Flexibility

We believe the semester plan outlined in the calendar is realistic. Nonetheless, the instructor reserves the right to adjust the course content, exercises, exams, etc., based on the class's collective ability to maintain pace.

### Attendance

Requirements for class attendance, exams, assignments and other work in this course are consistent with university policies unless specifically stated within this syllabus. These university policies can be found in the online catalog at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

### University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

Students with Disabilities who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to notify the instructor and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) so that reasonable accommodations may be implemented. DRC is located in room 001 in Reid Hall or you can contact them by phone at 352-392-8565.

### **University counseling services and mental health services**

Counseling and Wellness resources

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

352-392-1575

### **Netiquette: Communication Courtesy**

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. <http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

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

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575.

The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength.

In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

### **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. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. 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 <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### **University Policy on Academic Misconduct**

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/08/The-Orange-Book-Web.pdf>

The University of Florida Honor Code reads as follows:

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

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."

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

All students in the College of Journalism and Communications are expected to conduct themselves with the highest degree of integrity. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that they know and understand the requirements of every assignment. At a minimum, this includes avoiding the following:

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism occurs when an individual presents the ideas or expressions of another as his or her own. Students must always credit others' ideas with accurate citations and must use quotation marks and citations when presenting the words of others.

**Cheating:** Cheating occurs when a student circumvents or ignores the rules that govern an academic assignment such as an exam or class paper. It can include using notes, in physical or electronic form, in an exam, submitting the work of another as one's own, or reusing a paper a student has composed for one class in another class. If a student is not sure about the rules that govern an assignment, it is the student's responsibility to ask for clarification from his instructor.

**Misrepresenting Research Data:** The integrity of data in mass communication research is a paramount issue for advancing knowledge and the credibility of our professions. For this reason, any intentional misrepresentation of data, or misrepresentation of the conditions or circumstances of data collection, is considered a violation of academic integrity. Misrepresenting data is a clear violation of the rules and requirements of academic integrity and honesty.

Students are expected to adhere to the University of Florida Code of Conduct  
<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>

## **Course Calendar**

### **Week Zero – 1/9**

Lecture: Introduction to course & how to view the media

**Week One – 1/13 & 1/15**

Lecture: Media Effects Intro

Readings:

[Introduction to Media Effects](#)

[What Is Media Psychology?](#)

**Week Two – 1/20 & 1/22**

Lecture: Let's talk about your brain

Readings:

[11 Fun Facts About Your Brain](#)

[Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences](#)

**Week Three – 1/27 & 1/29**

Lecture: Media Messages

Readings:

[Media Effects on Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs](#)

[Social Learning Theory | How Media Shapes Our Behaviors](#)

**Week Four – 2/3 & 2/5**

**Lecture Exam One: 2/5**

Lecture: Media Effects on Individuals

Readings:

[Exposure to Media Violence and Emotional Desensitization](#)

[How the Media Affects Teens and Young Adults](#)

**Week Five – 2/10 & 2/12**

Lecture: Media Effects on Society

Readings:

[Plummeting trust in institutions has the world slipping into grievance. Here's the fix](#)

[Americans' Deepening Mistrust of Institutions](#)

Assignment: **ProLiteracy Certification Course, due 2/12, by 11:59 PM**

**Week Six – 2/17 & 2/19**

**Reading Exam One: 2/19**

Lecture: What is Media Literacy?

Readings:

[Media Literacy Skills](#)

[25 Movies to Discuss Media Literacy](#)

**Week Seven – 2/24 & 2/26**

Lecture: The History of Media

Readings:

[Timeline of the Evolution of Mass Media](#)

[Video Games and Children & First Amendment Law](#)

**Week Eight – 3/3 & 3/5**

**Lecture Exam Two: 3/5**

Lecture: Entertainment Media

Readings:

[19 Forgotten Hollywood Scandals That Shocked Fans](#)

[Entertainment or exploitation: The ethics of true crime media](#)

**Week Nine – 3/10 & 3/12**

Lecture: Celebrification

Readings:

[In a Celebrity-Obsessed World, Have We Reached Peak Parasocial?](#)

[20 times reality TV shows were exposed as fake](#)

**Week Ten – 3/17 & 3/19**

Lecture: The Media and Spring Break

Readings:

[The Beach](#)

**Week Eleven – 3/24 & 3/26**

Lecture: Advertising

Readings:

[The ‘romantic’ advertising tricks that give you unrealistic expectations of love](#)  
[Why People Are Seeing More Ads for Drugs on TV](#)

**Week Twelve – 3/31 & 4/2**

Lecture: The News Media

Readings:

[The Draft Slide of Shedeur Sanders: An Exercise in Framing Theory](#)  
[U.S. Turns To Social Media For News - But Fears Of Misinformation Rise](#)  
[News Media Tracker: How Americans Use and Trust News Sources](#)

**Week Thirteen – 4/7 & 4/9**

Lecture: Social Media

Readings:

[Social Media and Mental Health](#)

**Week Fourteen – 4/14 & 4/16**

**Reading Exam Two: 4/16**

Lecture: Don’t trust the “experts”

Readings:

[The Enrollment Cliff: How Fewer Applicants Are Reshaping Higher Education](#)  
[The Elites Who Hate Elites](#)

**Week Fifteen – 4/21**

**Lecture Exam Three: 4/21**