

# MMC6400: Mass Communication Theory

Time: Wednesday (12:50PM - 3:50PM), WEIM 3020

<b>Instructor:</b>	Moon J. Lee, Ph.D.	<b>Phone:</b>	352-273-1699
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:mlee@jou.ufl.edu">mlee@jou.ufl.edu</a>	<b>Office Hours:</b>	T/TH: 9:30 – 10:30 AM
<b>Office:</b>	Weimer 3050		And by appointment
<b>Website:</b>	To be announced	<b>Handouts:</b>	See <a href="#">Project Calendar</a>

## Course Description

This course is designed to provide you an overview of important theories related to the field of mass communication. It will also focus on how these theories advance the scholarly study of mass communication. The class is based on the analysis of existing theories as well as research findings and in-depth discussion. During the semester, students are expected to write a research proposal on a mass communication relevant topic and present it to their peers. We will carefully examine an extensive body of literature in mass (and mediated) communication. The course is aimed at developing and enhancing both students' theoretical and practical knowledge of mass communication and research skills based on critical thinking and problem solving abilities. Topics include, but are not limited to, the interplay of media influences on individuals' decision-making, the effects of different media messages on particular audiences, and the effects of media messages on individuals' perceptions of social reality. Mass communication theories will be discussed in a number of contexts, including (1) historical understanding of mass media theories, (2) individuals' exposure to, search for, and use of media, (3) media processes and effects in various contexts (e.g. political, health, public relations, etc.), and (4) designing effective media messages/campaigns targeting specific groups.

## Course Objectives

**This course will help you:**

1. To carefully examine recent literature on mass communication theories.
2. To demonstrate a keen knowledge of theories and applications of mass communication through scientific research and class discussions.
3. To develop and enhance research skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills.
4. To write an original research proposal from conceptualization to final presentation.

## Course Requirements

Requirements include reading assigned materials, preparing in-class presentations, participating in class discussions, writing reaction papers, writing a research proposal, and a final presentation.

- Reading Assigned Materials: Students are responsible for all assigned readings and materials covered in class.

**Required Text and Software:** Bryant and Oliver (2009), **Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research**, NY: Routledge

- Class Participation: You are expected to participate in class discussions.
- A Research Proposal and a Final Presentation: You will be asked to collaborate with other classmates as a group. Each group will write a research proposal and submit a final paper at the end of the semester. **The final research proposal counts for 50% of your grade.** It is your responsibility to consult with me about your topic early in the semester. The final research proposal is due on April 24 before 3:00PM.

**Research Proposal** - You will be asked to research and write a research proposal in mass communication related topics. Each group will be assigned a research topic and a date for presentation. In a concise, but thorough research paper, you will present your own proposal.

- Final Presentation (10%): At the end of the semester, your group will make a formal presentation of your proposal to the class.
- Theory Presentation and Discussion (20%):

You will have an opportunity to introduce a theory to class. This will be counted as 20% of your grade. I give a better grade where you present the given materials effectively and present critical and useful analysis to the class--**not just repeating what you read.** Please note that if you don't show up in class (unless excused), you will not be able to participate in class discussions, resulting in zero points for this assignment. Make-up presentations will not be given except under exceptional circumstances. It is **your** responsibility to proactively seek and acquire information you missed due to an absence-regardless of whether the absence was excused or not.

**Deadline:** Failure to meet assignment deadlines will result in a lowered grade (-5 points per day).

## Grading

- **Theory Presentation and Discussion (20%):**
  1. During the first week of the semester, we will decide who is going to present a chapter from the required reading materials to the class and when.
  2. You will be asked to email your name, student id, a paper topic from the syllabus, and the date. You need to provide a short outline for your presentation in class.
  3. Each individual is required to prepare a class presentation for the class. Prepare an outline (with moderate details) or power-point presentation for your classmates-please make an appropriate number of copies (or make links available) for everyone in the class, if you prepare an outline. Also, you will be asked to moderate class discussions. You need to prepare an approximately 30 minute presentation along with 3 to 5 questions for your classmates to use while moderating. It is a good idea to include your questions in your outline or presentation slides. But if not, please make sure to provide your questions to the instructor separately.

4. You are required to introduce additional materials (e.g. the most recent publications), provide critical perspectives, and pose good questions to moderate the class discussion.

- **Research Project and a Final Paper (50 %):**

The guidelines for writing a final paper and the final evaluation sheet will be posted on the Project Calendar. Please review them carefully and let me know if you need any extra help. It is very crucial to seek extra help **BEFORE** the final paper is due!

Please note that there are minimum requirements for your final research proposal.

1. It must be theoretical. You must develop your hypotheses based on theories.
2. It must contain at least 20 references.
3. Writing should be clear and compliant with APA style. You are responsible for learning the APA style.
4. The paper should not exceed 20 pages, excluding references, and should include an introduction, literature review with research questions and hypotheses, and method.

- **Reaction Papers (20%):**

Throughout the semester, I will ask you to write reaction papers on assigned readings. Additional information will be provided in a separate handout.

- **Class Participation:**

During the semester, I will regularly check attendance. Excused absences will not count against you. Excused absences are given based on my discretion, prior to the absence having occurred--not after (except for verifiable emergencies). You must consult with me by email, phone, or in person and provide appropriate documentation supporting your request. **Each "UNEXCUSED" absence in my records will result in 2.5% of your total grade lost. In other words, if you have four (or more) unexcused absences, you will lose 10% of the total points.**

- **Final Presentation (10%):**

1. Please prepare a 15 to 30 minute presentation.
2. You will have a chance to answer some questions from your classmates.

<b>Grading Items</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Points</b>
Final Research Proposal	April 24 by 3:00PM	50
Final Presentation (Research Proposal)	Will be determined	10
Reaction Papers		20
Theory Presentation		20
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>100</b>

<b>Range</b>	<b>Final Grade</b>
93 - 100 pts	A
90 - 92 pts	A-
87 - 89 pts	B+
83 - 86 pts	B
80 - 82 pts	B-
77 - 79 pts	C +
73 - 76 pts	C
70 - 72 pts	C-
67 - 69 pts	D +
60 - 66 pts	D
Below 59 pts	F

### **Academic Honesty**

Students should be aware of academic honesty in fulfilling all course requirements. **Plagiarism is not permitted.** If you use information from a publication, you must attribute a source.

### **Class Etiquette**

- Reading a newspaper or other unrelated materials during class is not permitted.
- Sleeping during class is considered as an unexcused absence.
- Do not use cell phones or audible pagers.
- Use of tobacco products is not allowed in the classroom.

### **Seeking Help**

If you need individual assistance beyond the help you receive in class, you can see me during office hours or set up an appointment for another time. If you have any special concerns for your instructor to know in order to ensure your academic success in class, please inform me as soon as possible, so I can assist you accordingly. Please, see me if you have any problems! I consider my student's failure to learn as my own failure to teach effectively. We are going to work together to provide a high quality academic environment for your learning.

**Special Assistance:** Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify me during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for the course. Late notification may cause the requested accommodations to be unavailable. All accommodations must be approved through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Peabody Hall 202 (Tel.352-392-1261).