

# Media, Diversity, Society

JRSM 4702-001

Spring 2023

Class meeting: Monday and Wednesday 9:10-10:35 a.m.

Meeman Journalism Building Room 100

## Prof. Otis Sanford

**Office:** Meeman Journalism Building Room 318B

**Office Hours:** Monday and Wednesday 3 - 5 p.m. or by appointment

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## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Catalog description

Advanced study of recent, critical issues faced by mass media, particularly regarding diversity, with exploration of complexities that cause them and their impact on society.

### Prerequisites

None

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**TEXTBOOK:** No specific textbook is required. There is assigned reading provided by the instructor, plus students will be required to research various topics and discuss them throughout the semester. Some material for class discussion will also be taken from reputable news sites and the latest Annual Edition of Mass Media by Joan Gorham. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ISBN 978-0-07-805124-1. The chapters taken from this textbook will be provided to students by email or through Canvas, so there is no need to purchase the book.

You are required to read the material assigned or provided by the instructor, view videos assigned by the instructor, take announced quizzes, when given, from the assigned readings and PowerPoints, and engage with instructor, guest speakers and other students during class periods on assigned reading material and other information presented. You also will be given outside writing assignments on various topics discussed in class. It is also imperative that you attend all class meetings. Attendance is mandatory. Roll will be taken by the instructor at the beginning of each class and you will not do well if you have repeated absences. It is also essential that students arrive to class on time. Students who have more than 5 unexcused absences during the semester are subject to being penalized one letter grade. Quizzes and exams will NOT be made up except in extreme circumstances as determined by the instructor and with written excuses. Extra credit will be given for perfect attendance and other activities at the instructor's discretion.

Journalism is all about meeting deadlines. No late work will be accepted unless in extreme circumstances. You must contact the instructor no later than the morning that assignments and

quizzes are due to discuss an extension. You certainly cannot wait until near the end of the semester and ask to make up work that is weeks overdue. If you do not complete an assignment, quiz or exam by the specified time, that assignment or exam will receive a zero.

This class begins promptly at 9:10 a.m. on Monday and Wednesday in Room 100 of the Meeman Journalism Building. Again, you must be on time. If you arrive late for class after the roll is taken, you will be marked as tardy, and repeated tardiness will lower your overall grade.

Take Note: If you are absent from class, please do not ask the instructor what work was covered during your absence. Instead, check with a classmate.

#### **GRADING:**

Grading for this class will be on a point system. Writing assignments and quizzes are worth between 50 and 100 points each. If you miss more than two quizzes and outside assignments, it will adversely impact your final grade significantly. Students will also be assigned to write one minor paper and one major outside paper. Details will be discussed during the semester. The papers must be double-spaced, in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, plus the references list if necessary. And papers are to be turned in to the designated folder in Dropbox in Canvas.

A: 900 points and above

B: 800-899 points

C: 700-799 points

D: 600-699 points

F: 599 and below

There will be a mid-term exam and final exam for this class. Each is worth a maximum of 200 points.

#### **Ground Rules for Participation in Discussion in JRSM 4702:**

Material discussed in this class can often involve delicate and controversial topics, mostly around race, gender, ethnicity and other social issues; therefore, some ground rules are necessary.

1. Listen actively -- respect others when they are talking.
2. Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing (“I” instead of “they,” “we,” and “you”).
3. Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another – or the instructor – by asking questions and raising counter-arguments. But refrain from personal attacks. Focus on ideas.
4. Participate to the fullest of your ability -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
5. Instead of invalidating somebody else’s story with your own spin on her or his experience, share your own story and experience.
6. The goal is not necessarily to agree -- it is to gain a deeper understanding of diversity in U.S. media and society.
7. Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses -- they can be as disrespectful as words.
8. Be respectful at all times. Avoid slurs and hostile language or tones, such as yelling. Make every attempt to avoid micro-aggressions.

#### **Tentative Class Schedule for Spring 2023:**

Because outside guest speakers will be scheduled for this class, it is not possible to schedule all

class meetings at the beginning of the semester. Below are tentative class meetings and assignments at the beginning of the semester through Spring Break.

- **Wednesday, Jan. 18:** Introductions, discussion of syllabus, introduction of the instructor, topics to be covered and importance of this class. Will have some one on one discussion with members of the class about why they are enrolled in this class and what they hope to gain from the course.
- **Monday, Jan. 23:** From Left to Right – How Cable TV news has helped divide America. A detailed look at the evolution of cable news and how it morphed from straight objective news coverage to strictly opinion, particularly in the all-important primetime news slots. Will discuss recent national and international news events, how they were reported by the different cable news outlets and the impact those reports are having on society.
- **Wednesday, Jan. 25:** Media coverage of protests from TEA Party, to Black Lives Matter to the Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol: Was the coverage fair and consistent? Or were there disparities based on race, culture and geographic location? And what of the responses by law enforcement and elected officials? Will also discuss the topic, “Television and the Decline of Deference.”
- **Monday, Jan. 30:** Discussion of Article: “Revolution in a Box.” This is a discussion of the good, the bad and the ugly of television where diversity is concerned. Assignment is to research one of the following television news media figures, write a short one-page essay on the person you select and turn it in to Canvas by **Monday, Feb. 6.** The broadcast news media personalities to select from are Edward R. Murrow, Walter Cronkite, Barbara Walters, Fredericka Whitfield, Charlayne Hunter Gault, Connie Chung, Isabell Wilkerson, Gwen Ifill, Nora O’Donnell, Ed Bradley, Carole Simpson, Wolf Blitzer, Anderson Cooper, Joy Reid, Don Lemon, Rachel Maddow, Rush Limbaugh, Tucker Carlson, Sean Hannity. Laura Ingraham, Bryant Gumbel, Ann Curry, Katie Couric, Tom Brokaw David Brinkley or Max Robinson. **Take quiz on previous lectures.**
- **Wednesday, Feb. 1:** The State of Television News. Are personalities more important than the content?
- **Monday, Feb. 6:** Tentative guest speaker from local television news industry discussing the state of local TV news coverage. Discuss your essays on tv news personalities.
- **Wednesday, Feb. 8:** Memphis and the Movement – A detailed look at the political, racial and media history of Memphis from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to today. Who were the key players in politics, civil rights and media who shaped the city’s culture and future? **Take quiz on previous class lectures.**
- **Monday, Feb. 13:** The state of local print journalism. Is it more racially diverse, or less? Also does quality control still exists at newspapers?
- **Wednesday, Feb 15:** More discussion on quality control in newsrooms. The Future of Newspapers with special emphasis on racial diversity in the newsroom. Also, a look at what has happened to the influence of newspapers, including its editorial voice and whether newspaper

should endorse political candidates.

- **Monday, Feb. 20:** Discussion of Article: “A Porous Wall: How Newspapers are Monetizing Content.” Also a look at the intermingling of editorial and advertising departments. **Take quiz on previous lectures and class discussions.**

- **Wednesday, Feb. 22:** Guest speaker from the local newspaper industry to discuss racial diversity in local newspapers, then and now, along with the current state of the newspaper business in the age of the internet, apps and social media.

- **Monday, Feb 27:** Journalism’s role in recording history: Who’s doing it and is it still credible and complete? A detailed discussion of the importance of chronicling history through books, newspaper and broadcast reporting and commentary.

- **Wednesday, March 1:** Take Midterm exam. No class lecture. Exam will open in Canvas at the start of this class period.

- **Monday-Wednesday, March 6 and 8:** Spring break, no classes.

**The remaining class schedule for the semester will be sent later by email and posted in Canvas.**

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- **Wednesday, Jan. 25:** If necessary, we will complete discussion of media coverage of various protest groups. Begin discussion of distributed article “Television and the Decline of Deference.”

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## ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

### Professional Values and Competencies in JRSM 4702

- Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, both in a global context and in the United States.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

### How professional values and competencies will be met

#### *Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)*

- Recognize the role of media in influencing the political and cultural dynamics on the global stage.
- Develop a strong historical sense of how mass communication technologies originated and developed.
- Understand the variety of relationships between media and their audiences, particularly diverse audiences.
- Be sensitive to the needs of diverse and under-represented groups in programming and leadership when creating messages.
- Understand the ongoing government regulation of the U.S. Media as well as the constitutional principles that guide it.
- Recognize the continuing impact and power of social media platforms in shaping global media messages.
- Evaluate the dynamics that cause mistrust in the media, and assess attempts to manipulate media, including social media, for political and social gain.
- Recognize the ethical and philosophical issues that arise in media culture and understand the range of viewpoints regarding these issues.
- Recognize the stark differences in delivery of media content globally.
- Understand the behind-the-scenes operations and decision-making processes of major mass communication industries.
- Understand how evolving technology affects the media and mass communication.
- Understand what's involved in preparing for and advancing a career in the changing media.
- Understand mass communication theories and their application to media professions.

#### *Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)*

- Earn a passing score on periodic tests and/or exams.
- Participate in one or more outside activities (e.g., attend FOI and First Amendment lectures, interview media professionals, visit media organization, participate in applicable research) at the discretion of the instructor.

## How assessment of student learning will be met

### *Awareness*

- Grow awareness of the First Amendment and basics of media law
- Recognize major divisions of mass media, including newspaper, magazine, TV, radio, the internet, books, movies, public relations and advertising.
- Evaluate how diversity affects the media industry.

### *Understanding*

- When ethical decision making is discussed throughout the semester as it applies to each media profession, students will be required to present justification for their opinions during discussion and class exercises to show they are not just repeating the instructor's lecture points, but showing understanding of the process.
- Discussion questions will be posed in class to stimulate critical thinking. Independent thinking is encouraged.
- Demonstrate an awareness of current issues and events in news and popular culture.

### *Application*

- Creation of research papers related to various issues of diversity in mass media are required to show an understanding of the current media landscape.
- Participation in class discussions are designed to encourage healthy dialog around critical issues of diversity, equity and inclusion through mass media.
- Principles and practices of various media organizations that are discussed can be used in other classes within Journalism & Strategic Media.

## JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

### **Portfolio requirement**

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSM 3900/3905. The portfolio should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or Squarespace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé

- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

### **Email**

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

### **Electronic devices**

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

### **Attendance**

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

### **Course repetition**

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C- for undergraduate; B- for graduate) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

### **Academic integrity**

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method,



for rating originality of your ideas and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

### **Online SETEs**

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE evaluation forms; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

### **Deadlines**

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

### **AP Style and grammar**

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. You are responsible for learning these rules and checking your work for errors.

### **Disability and accommodations**

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

### **Diversity and inclusivity**

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

### **Weather policy**

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website and the LiveSafe App regarding inclement weather.

### **Student support**

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.