Introduction to Mass Communication (COMM 1307-43400)  
Arts & Communications Division  
Spring 2015

Class Meets: Online (3 Credit Hours)  
Dates: January 20-May 14

Instructor: Lori Dann  
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Course Description
This course involves the study of the media by which entertainment and information messages are delivered. Includes an overview of the traditional mass media: their functions, structures, supports, and influences. (3 Lecture Hours)

Required Materials, Resources and Skills For This Course
- Access to a daily newspaper or news website, such as the Dallas Morning News, Fort Worth Star-Telegram or New York Times, as well as local and national television news and/or radio stations.  
- Daily internet access. If you do not have Internet at home, it is available in the library. Messages are sent to the class via email and announcements, so it is important that you check eCampus and email regularly. You will sometimes be asked to watch videos and films online.  
- Basic computer skills, including the ability to type papers, produce PowerPoints, and upload to eCampus.
**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have increased knowledge and understanding of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Amendment</th>
<th>Journalism students should value the implications the First Amendment has throughout journalistic work.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Journalism students should be able to edit and communicate messages verbally and non-verbally for different media outlets and audiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>Journalism students should be able to identify newsworthy events, gather information about the same, and communicate those to audiences of different media outlets after editing.</td>
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<td>Technology</td>
<td>Journalism students should demonstrate the use of different technologies.</td>
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<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Journalism students should demonstrate awareness and understanding of and/or apply the codes of ethics as well as legal rights and restrictions inherent to their chosen field of journalism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Journalism students should demonstrate research skills throughout their practical and academic course work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Journalism students should discuss the diversity of their professional environment as well as their audiences.</td>
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**Core Objectives**

COMM 1307 is a Core Curriculum course that develops the following Core Objectives:

1. **Critical Thinking** — to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
2. **Communication** — to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
3. **Empirical and Quantitative Skills** — to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.
4. **Social Responsibility** — to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
Core Objective Development Statements

COMM 1307 develops **Critical Thinking** and **Communication** by requiring students to analyze and interpret the societal and historical significance of the various media of mass communication in an essay or short answer format, or presentation.

COMM 1307 develops **Empirical and Quantitative Skills** by requiring students to identify — or at least be cognizant of — the ways in which journalistic inquiry and observation, along with information transmitted by the media, are relevant to civic engagement, and to one's own participation in civic life; and to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the complexity of the elements at play in the process.

COMM 1307 develops **Social Responsibility** by requiring students to identify the impact that journalists and other media professionals play in influencing, informing and shaping society through the messages that are communicated/transmitted and their consequences.

Instructor’s Expectations

My goal is to help you succeed in this course. To ensure an optimal learning environment, I ask every student to follow these policies:

- Communicate with me as well as your other classmates frequently.
- Read the assigned chapters. Failure to do so may result in a low grade for any posting, assignment, quiz, or exam. You are expected to cite information from class readings and videos in your discussion posts and other assignments.
- Submit all work electronically. If you experience any problems, please let me know immediately.
- Do not wait until the last minute to submit posts or take any exam or quiz. Technical difficulties are not an excuse for missed deadlines.
- **You will have two attempts on each quiz, but you can only take the midterm and final once**, so make sure you are ready before taking the midterm and final.
- Do not plagiarize. You become guilty of plagiarism when you submit somebody else’s works and/or words as your own. Plagiarism is a serious violation of the student code of conduct and will result in a zero on the assignment. Multiple offenses will be reported to the administration as an Academic Honesty issue. SafeAssign software will be used to ensure that submissions are authentic.
- Do not cheat. If you copy another student’s work, then this will be treated in the same way as plagiarism.
- This course serves as a learning environment for everybody participating in this class. To facilitate academic and personal growth for everyone, you are expected to be courteous and respectful toward the instructor and other students, and can expect the same in return. While I encourage an informal and friendly classroom environment that facilitates discussion and exploration, we must still accommodate one another’s differing perspectives and opinions.
- Incompletes will only be assigned to students who find themselves in extenuating circumstances, who have completed at least eighty percent of the class, and whose grades so far indicate that this student would otherwise have completed this class with a passing grade of “A” or “B”.
Course Work
Students will be asked to complete one media content analysis paper that demonstrates their mastery of the core objectives as well as discussion and blog posts, quizzes, a midterm and a final exam.

Assignments and Grading
Exams (Midterm and Final)
There will be a mandatory midterm and final exam for all students.
Midterm = 100 points
Final = 100 points
200 possible points

Discussion Posts (12 total)
Students are responsible for posting on a weekly discussion board topic chosen by the instructor as well as responding to at least two of your classmates' posts. Your post should be at least 250 words long and should not stray from the original topic. Posts must demonstrate that you have read the required text, citing examples and using terminology from the readings, to receive maximum credit. Responses to your classmates' posts should do the same. Short comments will not receive full credit. Late posts will not be accepted unless there is a documented excuse, such as a lengthy illness, or a school-sanctioned activity.
20 points each = 240 possible points

Blog Posts (12 total)
Students will submit a weekly blog post of at least 200 words about current news events and how they are covered in the media. Current events should involve a topic that is relevant to your community, state, country, etc. It should NOT involve a celebrity or sports unless there is a unique news or media angle to the coverage. If you are unsure about whether a topic fits the blog post criteria, ask the instructor.
20 points each = 240 possible points

Class Introduction
20 points

Quizzes (8 total)
25 points each = 200 possible points

Media Content Analysis
The topic will be assigned at a later date.
100 points

Total Possible Points in Course: 1,000

Grading Scale
A = 900-1,000 points  
B = 800-899 points  
C = 700-799 points  
D = 600-699 points  
F = 0-599 points

**Extra Credit**  
Students can earn extra credit for producing stories, photographs or graphics that are published in the student newspaper, *The Et Cetera*, or on its website. Student editors cannot get extra credit for stories they are paid to produce as part of their job requirements, but may take on additional assignments for extra credit. Do not count on extra credit to replace regular assignments.

**Deadlines and Missed Assignments/Tests**  
Late assignments will not be accepted without providing proper documentation or getting prior approval from the instructor.

**Submitting Work**  
All work must be turned in through eCampus. Please do not send any assignments to me through email. If you have any problems submitting, please let me know immediately. To avoid technical glitches, it’s best not to wait until the last minute to submit assignments since you have an entire week in most cases. Note that I am much more understanding about extenuating circumstances if you communicate with me before the due date and if you are an active student in the class who regularly meets the posted deadlines for your assignments.

**Eastfield College Email Policy**  
Faculty and students must have and use a DCCCD account* for all correspondence relating to academic coursework. I cannot communicate with you about grades via email unless you are using Netmail. If you do not have a Netmail account and wish to discuss your grade, you will need to contact me via telephone or set up an appointment to meet on campus.

*For information on setting up a DCCCD student email account, go to: [https://www1.dcccd.edu/netmail/input_ssn.cfm](https://www1.dcccd.edu/netmail/input_ssn.cfm). You may email the instructor through your NetMail account or through eCampus by clicking on the Send Email option under Tools. DO NOT send messages through Course Messages because it does not send me a notification when you do.

**Withdrawing from the Class**  
If you are considering dropping this class, please contact me immediately. Many times, there might be a better alternative than dropping a class. If we cannot find a more satisfactory solution, then it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to withdraw formally from the course or courses. The last day to withdraw with a grade of “W” for the spring semester is April 16. Failure to drop or withdraw officially from a course will result in you receiving no credit for any remaining assignments and will like result in a failing grade for the course. For more information, please follow this link:
http://www.eastfieldcollege.edu/ari/Drop.asp

Stop Before You Drop
Texas Education Code 51.907 limits the number of courses a student may drop. You may drop no more than 6 courses during your entire undergraduate career unless the drop qualifies as an exception. Your campus counseling/advising center will give you more information on the allowable exceptions. Remember that once you have accumulated 6 non-exempt drops, you cannot drop any other courses with a “W”. Therefore, please exercise caution when dropping courses in any Texas public institution of higher learning, including all seven of the Dallas County Community Colleges. For more information, you may access: https://www1.dcccd.edu/coursedrops

Students on Financial Aid
If you are receiving Financial Aid, you must attend and participate in this class prior to the certification date. Do not drop or stop attending any class without consulting the Financial Aid Office. Changes in your enrollment level and failing grades may require that you repay financial aid funds.

Academic Honesty
Your enrollment indicates acceptance of the DCCCD Code of Student Conduct published in the DCCCD Catalog at https://www1.dcccd.edu/catalog/ss/code.cfm. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense that includes, but is not limited to, cheating on tests, plagiarism and collusion.
* **Cheating** includes copying from another student’s test or homework paper, using unauthorized materials, collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test, knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, or soliciting the contents of an unadministered test, and substituting for another person to take a test or complete an assignment.
* **Plagiarism** is the appropriating, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one’s own written work.
* **Collusion** is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of course requirements.

Plagiarism/Charting/Collusion Penalties
If plagiarism, cheating, or collusion is discovered, it will result in a zero on the assignment or test upon the first offense. Second and subsequent offenses may result in a failing grade for the course and/or other penalties under the Code of Conduct. In any written paper, test, or online post, you are guilty of the academic offense known as plagiarism if you partially or entirely copy the author’s sentences, words. You cannot mix the author’s words with your own or “plug” your synonyms into the author’s sentence structure. The author’s words, phrases, sentences must be put in your words, in your style of writing. When you do this, you are demonstrating understanding and comprehension. **If you summarize, paraphrase or directly quote from an author, you must use quotation marks and the appropriate documentation because the ‘idea(s)’ still belong to the author.**

Obtaining Final Course Grades
Final Grade Reports are no longer mailed. Convenient access is available online at www.econnect.dcccd.edu. Use your identification number when you log onto eConnect. Your grades will also be printed on your Student Advising Report, which is available in the Admissions Office.

**Online Classroom Conduct and Responsibility**
Each student should follow the District’s policies, procedures, and regulations concerning student conduct. This class includes discussions about sensitive subjects including racism, sexism, and violence, and it is important that all students respect their classmates’ opinions.

**Sexual Harassment**
Eastfield College has a zero tolerance policy on sexual harassment. All students shall report complaints of sexual harassment informally to the college Human Resources Director or formally to the Vice Chancellor of Educational Affairs.

**ADA Statement**
Students with a physical, mental or learning disability who require accommodations should contact the college Disability Services Office in C237. 972.860.8348 or email efcdso@dcccd.edu. For more information: http://www.eastfieldcollege.edu/SSI/DSO/index.html

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)**
In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the College may release information classified as “directory information” to the general public without the written consent of the student. Directory information includes: (1) student name, (2) student address, (3) telephone numbers, (4) date and place of birth, (5) weight and height of members of athletic teams, (6) participation in officially recognized activities and sports, (7) dates of attendance, (8) educational institution most recently attended, and (9) other similar information, including major field of student and degrees and awards received. Students may protect their directory information at any time during the academic year. If no request is filed, directory information is released upon written inquiry. No telephone inquiries are acknowledged. No transcript or academic record is released without written consent from the student, except as specified by law.

**Key Semester Dates**
**February 2:** Certification date. Students must attend at least one class by this date to be certified as an active student in the class.
**February 19:** Conference Day. No classes. Campus closed.
**February 20:** Professional Development Day for Eastfield employees. No day classes will meet.
**March 9-14:** Spring Break. No classes. Campus closed.
**April 3:** Good Friday holiday. No classes. Campus closed.
**April 16:** Last day to withdraw and still receive a “W”
**May 11-14:** Final exams
**May 18:** Last day for faculty to submit grades through eConnect to the Registrar’s office
The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as necessary.