

## COMM 100 Mass Media & Society — Spring 2022

Section 001

MWF 11:15 a.m. – 12:05 p.m., Chambers 112

**Instructor:** Karlin Andersen (she/her), [kja30@psu.edu](mailto:kja30@psu.edu)

**Office hours:** Wednesdays, 12:30 – 3:30 p.m., Carnegie 8 (or by appointment)

### Course Overview & What You'll Learn

The study of how mass media and society impact, inform, and shape one another is important to your greater understanding of our increasingly connected and technology-reliant world whether you are a communications major or completing this course to fulfill a general education requirement. This course serves as a basic media history course and an introduction to media literacy through a cultural studies lens. By the end of the semester, you should have a foundational understanding of how key media developed, how societal forces molded their development, and how media impact our daily lives from the way we receive information and communicate to our foundational beliefs about society.

Our learning objects are that by the end of the semester you can:

- Demonstrate understanding of important historical developments that have shaped the mass media;
- Demonstrate understanding of the major economic forces that influence media's structure and performance;
- Demonstrate understanding of current trends in media institutions and industries;
- Demonstrate understanding of how media's economic incentives compare to the needs of a democratic society;
- Demonstrate understanding of major concepts and theories that address how media affect society and individuals;
- Demonstrate the ability to apply concepts in class to new situations in media.

### What You'll Read:

- Richard Campbell et al., *Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication*, thirteenth edition (9781319244934), Macmillan Higher Education, 2022.
  - Note, we are using the thirteenth edition which includes updated chapters on current trends in mass communication and the effects of COVID-19 on media. Older editions have different content and page numbers, be sure to purchase the correct edition. A copy will be on loan in the library for 2-hour check out.
- (TBD): Other short readings posted to Canvas.

### What I Expect from You:

- Come to class ready to learn. We will be covering a lot of material over the next fifteen weeks, and this may be the first time many of you have encountered these topics. It's natural to feel worried or uncertain when learning new material. You can set yourself up for success by taking care of yourself physically and mentally so that you arrive to class

focused on each lecture and activity. Asking clarifying questions during lecture and attending office hours to discuss any material you need help with is always encouraged. Maintaining your physical and mental health is an important task throughout the semester, but is complicated by the many demands of college life and other outside responsibilities you may have. There are multiple on-campus resources that are free to access throughout the semester including food services, counseling and crisis lines, legal counsel, and financial assistance (see page 6 for more details).

- Participation and active learning. In-class group discussions are an important part of your overall grade. A successful conversation depends on your willingness to actively engage with the course material and your peers. You can prepare for each discussion by attending lectures and completing the required readings.
- Maintain a respectful and welcoming atmosphere in class. You may encounter ideas or perspectives in this class from our readings, the instructor, or your classmates that are different from your own. It's natural to feel confused, defensive, or even upset. Remember to keep a respectful tone and politely engage with that new idea/perspective. Mean, harmful, or deeming language or actions will not be tolerated. Do not hesitate to talk with me if you experience or witness an act of intolerance from me or another student.
- Increase media literacy. This can be a complex idea, but by the end of the semester you should gain skills in reflecting on the 5Ws + how of media content: who created it; what is its message and/or goal; where was it created and where is it found; when was it created (and under what societal factors); why is it popular, relevant, important (or not); and how does it influence my understanding of the world?

### **What You can Expect from Me:**

- A clear and organized class. I strive to provide clear lectures, directions, and discussions along with an organized and a thorough Canvas page. I was once an undergraduate student as well, so I know disorganized and confusing course content doesn't help anyone. If I struggle with that goal, you find anything about my lectures or directions confusing, let me know and I will correct the issue.
- An excitement for the course and learning from you. My personal passion for media history and belief that media are one of the few societal creations that impacts everyone means I believe this is a key class for all students. I'm excited to teach this course and see you all learn throughout the semester. I learn new things every semester, so I welcome your questions, interpretations, and ideas at any point during class.
- Help and support: If you're struggling, let me know. No one will ever be penalized for asking a question or bringing up a concern. My office hours (Wednesdays, 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.) are a time where I will be available to discuss course content, grades, assignments, or answer any questions you may have. They are not mandatory to attend but are encouraged at any point in the semester no matter your grade in the course. If you cannot make my weekly office hours, please email me to schedule another time in-person or over Zoom to meet. If you have a disability, and feel comfortable telling me, please contact me early in the semester so we can work together to ensure you are comfortable learning throughout the semester. "Official" paperwork from the University's Disabilities

Student Resources office may take a long time to process, please contact me regardless of where you are in that process. Communication requires at least two people; I will work to hold up my end of the conversation.

### **Graded Activities**

Your grade is based on 4 exams and 4 in-class group discussions each worth 100 points for 500 points possible in the entire course.

#### **In-Class Discussions:**

- We will have group discussions 5 times throughout the semester, on Fridays, roughly every three weeks. Participation in and one written summary of discussion days is worth 100 points of your final grade.
- You will be randomly placed into a discussion group (listed on Canvas during the third week) which will be your group for the entire semester. You will receive pre-written questions from the instructor and will discuss those questions for most of the class time. We will end with a full class discussion in which every group will share key points from their conversation. A bullet point or brief written summary of your discussion and the names of your group members who were present will be turned in at the end of each discussion day.
- In addition to attending discussions, you must summarize the key points, arguments, and ideas from 1 of the discussions through the summary turned in by the following Wednesday class period. This should be typed, in 12 pt. font, and be a minimum 250 words. This write up is worth 20 points of your overall discussion grade. While the in-class discussion is a group effort, your write-up will be an individual effort. Write-ups are due one week after the discussion. See full assignment sheet on Canvas.
- There will be 5 in-class discussions throughout the semester. Each discussion will be worth 20 points, but you will only be graded on 4 discussions meaning you can miss one discussion days. The written summary of one discussion will be the final 20 points of your discussion grade
- Grade break down: 80 points (based on 4/5 discussions) + 20 points (written summary of one discussion) = 100 points total.

#### **Exams:**

- You will take 4 multiple-choice question exams each worth 100 points.
- The first 3 exams will happen during the regular 15 weeks of the semester, the fourth will happen during finals exam week (see the schedule for exact dates).
- Exams will be graded on a normal scale, see below. Adjustments may be made to individual test scores at the instructor's discretion depending on class average but will always favor students.

#### **Grade Breakdown:**

- The four exams and total discussion points will be graded on a normal scale,
  - 94 – 100 points = A
  - 87 – 89 = B+
  - 90 – 94 = A-
  - 84 – 86 = B

- 80 – 83 = B-
- 77 – 79 = C+
- 70 – 76 = C
- 66 – 69 = C-
- 60 – 68 = D
- 0 – 59 = F
- Final grades, point cutoffs for final grades will follow the standard Penn State grading system:
  - 470 points and above = A
  - 450-469 = A-
  - 435-449 = B+
  - 420-434 = B
  - 400-419 = B-
  - 384-399 = C+
  - 350-383 = C
  - 300-349 = D
  - 0-299 = F

### Extra Credit Opportunities:

- You may earn up to 15 points of extra credit throughout the semester by completing three extra credit opportunities (each worth 5 points).
- You may register with the Penn State Media Effects Research Lab which conducts studies and often needs undergraduate participants. See document on Canvas for more information. The instructor is not part of any of these studies nor has control over the research system. Any issues with signing up for studies or the system should be directed toward the lab ([psucocmerl@gmail.com](mailto:psucocmerl@gmail.com)).
- You may submit a discussion question for our Friday in-class discussions on Canvas in the relevant quiz drop box by Thursday at 9 a.m. Questions should be thoughtful, open ended (not a yes/no), and engage readings or lecture materials. Your question should be timely, meaning you cannot submit a question on content relevant to unit two during the discussion in unit three. You will receive credit, if your question meets those criteria, regardless of if the question is used in a discussion.
- If you discover any typos or errors in this syllabus by the end of week 1, email me ([kja30@psu.edu](mailto:kja30@psu.edu)) and you will be awarded 1 point of extra credit for every error. You will not receive a point if another student has already identified that typo/error.
- Other extra credit opportunities may be given throughout the semester at the instructor's discretion.

## Course Policies

### COVID-19 Policies:

We know from existing scientific data that wearing a mask in public can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community (Lyu and Wehby, 2020; CDC, 2020; Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2020). Just as you're expected to wear a shirt and shoes to class every day, everyone -- including the instructor and TAs -- are required to wear a face mask in University buildings, including classrooms and labs. You **MUST** wear a mask appropriately (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) in the building if you are attending class in person. Masks have been provided for students, faculty, and staff, and everyone is expected to wear one while on campus or out in the community. Refusal to comply with University policies is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Students who refuse to wear masks appropriately may face disciplinary action for Code of Conduct violations. See details here: <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/support-safetyconduct/student-conduct/code-conduct>.

### In-class Technology Policy:

Research on the student use of computers to take notes in the classroom finds that they do not lead to the same level of learning outcomes as paper notetaking and may also distract others in the classroom (see, for example, this study: <https://seii.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/SEII-Discussion-Paper->

2016.02- Payne-Carter-Greenberg-and-Walker-2.pdf). **Therefore, computers, tablets, smartphones, etc. will not be allowed in Comm 100.** All notes should be taken on paper. **If you need a computer or other assistive technology to take notes or fully engage with course content, please do not hesitate to email ([kja30@psu.edu](mailto:kja30@psu.edu)) or meet with me to discuss accommodations.**

### **Attendance & Participation:**

Formal attendance will not be taken. However, regular attendance is in your best interest to gain the most from this class and perform well on the exams. Much of the in-class material is not covered in the readings and for-profit notetaking services are a poor substitute since each instructor focuses on different material and exam questions. I suggest finding a friend to provide notes if you miss class. Remember that 100 points of your final grade relies on your attendance at and participation in our in-class discussions. You may miss 1 of those discussions without penalty.

### **Exams & Extensions:**

Exams one, two, and three will be administered through the Pollock Testing Center on the first floor of Pollock Building. Exam four is not comprehensive and will be given during finals week at a time and location as assigned by the Registrar later in the semester. Information about the testing center is found here: <http://www.testing.psu.edu/> **You must register for each exam once you receive an email from the Testing Center** (email notices from the Testing Center sent out one week before the official start of each exam), and **you will need to schedule the exams during the designated days** (see Course Schedule). Please note that they close at 11 p.m., and if you are late for a slot near the closing time you may not be allowed to take the exam then. Students must take all four exams to pass the course.

All exam dates are firm. However, I understand that life happens and you may experience something during the semester that limits your capacity to meet deadlines. In-class discussions cannot be replicated; therefore, makeups will not be allowed. You can miss one discussion day without penalty. You can get an extension or makeup on an exam, but you must **contact the instructor at least one week prior** to an exam date if you foresee an issue. If an emergency arises and you miss an exam, contact the instructor as soon as possible. **Makeup exams will not be provided more than one week past the original exam date.** If you are a student athlete or have other University-related activities that require you to miss class, please contact me as soon as you know when you will be gone.

### **Contacting Me:**

Email is the best way to contact me, [kja30@psu.edu](mailto:kja30@psu.edu). I try to respond to all emails within 48 hours, but delays may occur over University breaks/holidays and weekends. If you email after 5:00 p.m., do not expect a response until the following morning. Make it a habit to check the course Canvas page and your Canvas mailbox for important updates. You will never be penalized for asking questions in class or contacting me. If something doesn't make sense, you need help, you don't understand a grade, just ask. If you're having trouble with the course, let me know as soon as possible. Do not wait until the last week of class. Nothing bad will come from asking for help or consulting me.

### **Academic Integrity:**

#### **Short Form:**

Don't cheat, don't plagiarize someone else's work, take credit for work that is not your own, complete assignments for others, or share exam questions/answers. Any of the above will result in an F for the assignment and Penn State's academic integrity office will be contacted.

#### **Long form:**

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly and creative activity in an open, honest and responsible manner, free from fraud and deception, and is an educational objective of the College of

Communications and the University. Cheating – including plagiarism, falsification of research data, using the same assignment for more than one class, turning in someone else’s work, or passively allowing others to copy your work – will result in academic penalties at the discretion of the instructor. In serious cases, it could also result in suspension or dismissal from the University or in the assignment of an “XF” grade (failed for academic dishonesty).

As students studying communications, you should understand and avoid plagiarism (presenting the work of others as your own.) A discussion of plagiarism, with examples, can be found at <http://tlt.psu.edu/plagiarism/student-tutorial/>. The rules and policies regarding academic integrity should be reviewed by every student, and can be found online at: <http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/47-00-48-00-and-49-00-grades/#49-20> and in the College of Communications document, “Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures.” Any student with a question about academic integrity or plagiarism is strongly encouraged to discuss it with his or her instructor.

## Student Assistance

### Support Services:

Penn State offers a [variety of support services](#) for your mental and physical health along with housing, food, and financial security.

- Counseling and Psychological Services: These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients’ cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.
  - Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park (CAPS): 814-863-0395
  - Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400
  - Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741
- Food security: <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/support-safety-conduct/basic-needs-support/food-support-and-basic-resources>
- State and Centre County support services for rental assistance, internet access, food benefits: <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/support-safety-conduct/basic-needs-support/guide-public-assistance-programs>
- Financial support: <https://studentaid.psu.edu/>
- Technology and equipment borrowing and loan services: <https://libraries.psu.edu/services/technology-equipment>

### Reporting Bias:

Consistent with University Policy AD29, students who believe they have experienced or observed a hate crime, an act of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment that occurs at Penn State are urged to report these incidents as outlined on the [University’s Report Bias webpage](http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/) (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>)

### Disabilities Services:

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides [contact information for every Penn State campus](#) (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator>). For further information, please visit [Student Disability Resources website](#) (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/>). If you have a disability, and feel comfortable telling me, please contact me early in the semester so we can work together to ensure you are comfortable learning throughout the semester. “Official” paperwork from the University’s Disabilities Student Resources office may take a long time to process, please contact me regardless of where you are in that process. **If you need a computer or other assistive technology to take notes or fully**

**engage with course content, please do not hesitate to email ([kia30@psu.edu](mailto:kia30@psu.edu)) or meet with me to discuss accommodations.**

## **Course Schedule**

**(Subject to change)**

### **Unit 1: What are Media? And, Early Media Technology Developments**

#### **Week 1: Media, Culture, and Us**

M 1/10: Welcome to COMM 100

W 1/12: Unit 1 overview (Read Campbell, ch. 1 “Media, Culture and Communication” pg. 3-31)

F 1/14: Introduction to media industries

#### **Week 2: The Business of Media**

M 1/17: No class, MLK Jr. Day

W 1/19: Media as business (Read ch. 13 “Media Economics and the Global Marketplace” pg. 367-397)

F 1/21: Media as business & introduction to discussion days

#### **Week 3: Print Journalism**

M 1/24: Newspapers and early journalism (Read ch. 8 “Newspapers: The Rise and Decline of Modern Journalism” pg. 225-255)

W 1/26: Newspapers & magazines (Read ch. 9 “Magazines in the Age of Specialization” pg. 258-281)

F 1/28: Discussion day 1

#### **Week 4: Print Magazines**

M 1/31: Newspaper wrap-up and Magazines

W 2/2: Magazines continued, Unit 1 wrap-up & exam review

F 2/4: Exam 1

### **Unit 2: Digital Media**

#### **Week 5: Live from your Radio to your iPod**

M 2/7: Radio (Read ch. 5 “Popular Radio and the Origins of Broadcasting” pg. 123-155)

W 2/9: Radio cont.

F 2/11: Recorded sound & music (Read ch. 4 “Sound Recording and Popular Music” pg. 91-121)

#### **Week 6: Pairing Music and Moving Pictures**

M 2/14: Recorded sound & music continued

W 2/16: Exam 2 discussion day

F 2/18: Discussion day 2

#### **Week 7: Music and Movies continued**

M 2/21: Movies (Read ch. 7 “Movies and the Power of Images” pg. 193-222)

W 2/23: Movies continued

F 2/25: NO CLASS – Snow day

#### **Week 8: Movies Continued**

M 2/28: Movies continued

W 3/2: Exam review

F 3/4: Exam 2

**Spring Break 3/6 – 3/12: No Classes**



**Unit 3: Media as a Business**  
**Week 9: Television & Cord Cutting**

M 3/14: Television (Read ch. 6 “Television: From Broadcasting to Streaming” pg. 157-190)

W 3/16: Television continued and streaming

F 3/18: Guest lecturer: Digital games and online gaming (Read ch. 3 “Digital Gaming and the Media Playground” pg. 59-89)

**Week 10: Streaming**

M 3/21: Streaming services from Netflix DVDs and YouTube to Twitch and Spotify

W 3/23: Streaming continued

F 3/25: Podcasts

**Week 11: Advertising as Funding, Promotion, Culture Building**

M 3/28: Podcasts continued

W 3/30: Advertising (Read ch. 11 “Advertising and Commercial Culture” pg. 309-341)

F 4/1: Discussion day 3

**Week 12: All Publicity is Good Publicity**

M 4/4: Public Relations (Read ch. 12 “Public Relations and Framing the Message” pg. 343-364)

W 4/6: PR continued, Unit 2 summary, and review for exam

F 4/8: Exam 3

**Unit 4: Understanding and Studying Media**

**Week 13: Journalism Ethics, Why Do They Matter?**

M 4/11: Journalism ethics (Read ch. 14 “The Culture of Journalism: Values, Ethics, and Democracy” pg. 399-427)

W 4/13: Media literacy: from fake news and silos to agenda setting

F 4/15: Discussion day 4

**Week 14: How We Impact Media and Media Impacts Us**

M 4/18: Media effects (Read ch. 15 “Media Effects and Cultural Approaches to Research” pg. 429-453)

W 4/20: Media literacy: cultural studies and mass media

F 4/22: Media literacy and media effects continued

**Week 15: Media Law from Free Speech to Surveillance**

M 4/25: Media law (Read ch. 16 “Legal Controls and Freedom of Expression” pg. 455-482)

W 4/27: Media law continued, final exam review

F 4/29: Course wrap up and discussion day 5

**Finals Week 5/2 – 5/6**  
**Final exam date and time TBD**