Critical Issues in Mass Comm  **COMM-4455**

**Description**

Exploration and analysis of critical, contemporary issues concerned with the relationship between mass media and society. Emphasis on critical, creative, and collaborative thinking to reach considered judgments and position students to be media literate, responsible, and responsive 21st century mass media and public relations professionals.

**Requisites**

**Prerequisites:**
COMM 1154 Minimum Grade: C and ENGL 1102 Minimum Grade: C

**Corequisites:**

**Contact Information**

Instructor  
Soo Jung Moon

Office / Telephone  
Humanities 142 / (678) 839-4936

Virtual Office Hours  
MW 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m., 2:00-3:30 p.m. or by appointment

Google Meet for Office Hours

Dial-in: (US) +1 408-831-2244 / PIN: 942 937 032#

Email  
smoon@westga.edu

You are encouraged to use **CourseDen email** for all class-related correspondence.

**Meeting Times**

**Materials**

**Thinking Clearly : Cases in Journalistic decision-making**

**Author:** Tom Rosenstiel and Amy Mitchell  
**Publisher:** Columbia University Press

**Mightier than Sword: How the news media have shaped American history**

**Author:** Rodger Streitmatter  
**Publisher:** Westview press

**Edition:** 4  
**ISBN:** 978-0813349770

**Outcomes**
COURSE OVERVIEW
The news media are in a state of upheaval. This course tracks many of the changes underway, particularly for those thinking of careers in this area. But beyond that, this is a good time to think about what we want media to do in a society.

This course is designed to not be just a description of the current news media and their history but an analysis of our underlying normative expectations of those media, through cases in which they have met those hopes and in those where they have not. In the process, I hope you will strengthen your own intellectual autonomy, both as a citizen and as a future professional in this area.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications(ACEJMC SLO2)
2. Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.(ACEJMC SLO3)
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.(ACEJMC SLO4)

The course is designed to help you:
- understand the crucial value of news and media in a democratic society (awareness of the key historical, legal, and economic context of journalism)
- be able to evaluate the extent to which journalism has performed up to our expectations (comparing performance against normative standards)
- understand how news professionals approach the issues that confront them in their work (ability to distinguish between individual level and organizational/institutional factors)
- develop your own personal and professional judgment as you sharpen your critical thinking skills (e.g., distinguishing between facts, values, and underlying issues)

Key questions explored through case studies:
• What's the truth?
• How do we know what we know?
• What's fair?
• What's the right thing to do?

Evaluation

Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Type</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Assignments</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Quizzes and Others</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total 100 points</strong></td>
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NOTE: ALL HANDOUTS ABOUT ASSIGNMENTS ARE PLACED IN THE "ASSIGNMENTS" MODULE.

Orientation Module: Introduction Posting / Syllabus Quiz (3%)

See the course website and class schedule for more information on these two assignments that should be completed during the first week of class. Unlike other Exams, multiple attempts are available for this Syllabus quiz.

Exams (48%)

Open Wednesday and Thursday.*

You are expected to complete a total of three online exams (in the Quizzes of CourseDen). The exams are based on all the materials placed in the corresponding module, such as the textbook, lecture notes, video clips, and other reading items.

The exams include multiple-choice/true-false/matching questions. You cannot revisit the questions once you submit answers. Please read the instruction carefully. Once you start the quiz, you need to finish it in a limited time. You will have 2 minutes per question.

* The last exam will be available on Saturday and Sunday due to the academic calendar.

Weekly Assignments (35%)

Due on Sunday.

These assignments are designed to encourage you to read course materials thoroughly and to think critically about the content covered in the materials. The formats are short answer questions, essays, responses and/or summaries. Some questions of the Exams will be based on Weekly Assignments.

Discussions (2 posts @ 5% each = 10%)

Each discussion board will be kept open Tuesday and Wednesday.

Your assignment is to post one main thread and two replies to one of your classmate's postings. The due date for each Discussion is noted on the Weekly Schedule. Detailed guidelines will be given with the discussion questions.

NOTE - If you are the first or second person to post, remember to come back later when your classmates have posted in order to find a posting to which you can reply.

News Quizzes (2 @2% each = 4%)

Detailed instruction will be given.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Your assignments must be typewritten and double-spaced. Use 1-inch margins and 12-pt. Put your name and the date at the top of each page. The file name of your story is your capitalized last name and assignment: SMITH Film1 (the first film essay by Smith).

Don’t just include phrases. Write in complete sentences; you will be judged on clarity and content, as well as grammar. Use a Spellcheck, but also review your work carefully for errors. The more neatly you layout the information, the more likely we will be able to see you have responded to all the questions and give you full credit.

You need to submit MS Word or PDF files for all writing assignments. Google Doc link is not acceptable.

Schedule

COMM 4455 CRITICAL ISSUES IN MASS COMMUNICATIONS / Fall 2021, Aug.11-Oct.1

Weekly Schedule

- Discussions open Tue & Wed
- Exams and Quizzes open Wed & Thus
- Other assignments are due on Sun
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week (Mon-Sun)</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Due @ 11:59 pm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Aug.11-15      | Orientation | - Element of Journalism: What do we expect of journalism? (pdf)  
- Muckraking, in the textbook Mightier than the Sword (MTS) Ch. 6 | - Introduce yourself (1p)  
- Syllabus Quiz (2p)  
- Weekly Assignment 1 (2p) |

You can check out DVD *The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords* and "good night, and good luck" for three hours reserved at the library (Note: Library use only).

| Aug.16-22      | 2. News in the local community | - Case: Columbine school shooting in the textbook Thinking Clearly  
- Case: Minnesota basketball cheating | - Discussion 1 (Tue & Wed, 5p)  
- Weekly Assignment 2 (4p) |

| Aug.23-29      | 3. Media and Race | - Abolition, MTS 2  
- Pushing the Civil Rights Movement, MTS 11 | - Weekly Assignment 3 (4p) |

**Exam 1 (12p, Wed & Thu)** covers Module 1 & 2
You cannot revisit the questions for Exams and News Quizzes.

| Aug.30-Sep.5   | Module 3 (cont.)  
4. Media & Gender | - Electing an African-American President, MTS 15  
- Case: New Orleans Times-Picayune Series on racism | - News Quiz 1 (Wed & Thu, 2p)  
- Weekly Assignment 4 (5p, Black press) |

| Sep.6-12       | 4. Media & Gender | - Slowing the momentum for women's rights, MTS 3  
- Creating "Rosie the Riveter," MTS 9 | - Weekly Assignment 5 (5p) |


**Exam 2 (16p, Wed & Thu)** covers Module 3 & 4

- Standing against Joe McCarthy, MTS 10 | - Weekly Assignment 7 (10p, Good Night and Good Luck) |

- News Quiz 2 (Wed & Thu, 2p) |
Course Policies and Resources

Late Work Policy

This class has a straightforward late policy. A late assignment, including exams and quizzes, will be reduced 20% for each calendar day.

- You cannot make up for missed Discussions that require interaction with other students and Extra Credit assignments.
- Exams and Quizzes: Contact me to re-open the quiz section.
- Late writing assignments: All late assignments should be submitted to the dropbox "Late Works" in the Assignments section of CourseDen. While each original folder would be closed after its deadline, students can access to "Late Works" folder anytime. You can find the instruction from the "Assignments" module or Weekly modules. You do not need to obtain my approval for the late submissions. Please turn in your works ASAP to minimize the daily penalty.

Excused Late Works

Excused late works are limited to the following reasons:

- Court appearances in which you are not the defendant.
- Field trips or the UWG-sponsored travel.
- Hospitalization.
- Military service.
- Family emergency.
- Technical problems with CourseDen (not your computer or internet connection)

Students need to send me the relevant documentation for the excused make-up exams/assignments within 24 hours after the due date.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The penalties for academic dishonesty range from receiving 0 points on the exam/assignment to receiving an "F" grade in the course.

All the work you do must be your own. Do not present the work of another as if it were your own. Use quotation marks to indicate the exact words of someone else, and cite the source. Cite sources of ideas that are not your own, even if you did not use their exact words. Summarizing OK – it is considered paraphrasing, but do not just rearrange a sentence or change some of the words. Still, each time a source is paraphrased, a credit for the source needs to be included in the text.

Cheating Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids.

Fabrication Falsification or unauthorized invention of any information or citation.

Plagiarism Representing the words or ideas of another as one's own. Direct quotations must be indicated and ideas of another must be appropriately acknowledged.
Mission

Fair, just, and productive societies require the free flow of news, information, and ideas from communicators of knowledge, skill, and integrity who reflect the diversity of the people they serve. Therefore, the School of Communication, Film, and Media strives to provide high quality academic and experiential learning opportunities to prepare students for successful integration into the global community as industry professionals, leaders, and thinkers in the fields of convergence journalism, digital media and telecommunication, film and video production, and public relations.

Vision

The School of Communication, Film, and Media is committed to empowering students to communicate clearly, act responsibly, think critically, and understand context(s) to enhance their personal, civic, academic, and professional lives, facilitating active participation in an evolving and increasingly diverse society.

Strategic Priorities

Invested Teaching

To inspire and equip students to discover their personal, intellectual, and professional potential through personalized teaching, academic coaching, and career mentoring.

Experiential Learning

To offer students early and on-going multiple and diverse hands-on learning to develop and enhance personal, intellectual, and professional growth.

Connectedness

To serve as the hub that connects and cultivates partnerships among key stakeholders to enhance personal, intellectual, and professional growth. Key stakeholders include administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, industry, community, and friends.

Mass Communications Degree Program Learning Outcomes

ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies: The Bachelor of Science degree program in Mass Communications is accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), and the School is committed to preparing students with the requisite knowledge and skills to be successful in the media and communications industries after graduation. The School has adopted as its Mass Communications degree program learning outcomes ACEJMC’s 12 professional values and competencies, known as 6 X 6 MASS COMM SUCCESS, that all graduates of an ACEJMC accredited program should be aware of and able to demonstrate as scholars and professionals in the discipline. For the detailed list of the ACEJMC professional values and competencies, see the UWG Undergraduate Catalog or ACEJMC - Standard 2. Curriculum and Instruction.

6 X 6 MASS COMM SUCCESS
Film & Video Production Degree Program Learning Outcomes

Overview: The Bachelor of Science degree program in Film & Video Production is designed to train graduates in the field who are agile, adaptable, and able to employ their skills in an array of roles from entrepreneurial content producers to on-set film work, both above and below the line. It will provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the machinery at work behind media production and distribution, along with a set of tangible, marketable, and transferable skills for an array of positions within the infrastructure of film and content production. The FVP degree program learning outcomes include:

1. Demonstrate critical thinking, aesthetic awareness and technical proficiency in the production and assessment of audio-visual film work.
2. Understand all phases and roles of film production in order to help formulate career goals.
3. Understand the various potentials of film as both a commodity for a targeted audience, and an act of authorship and creative expression.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of cinema in a global society.

Institutional Policies

Academic Support

Accessibility Services: Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact Accessibility Services (https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php).

Center for Academic Success: The Center for Academic Success (http://www.westga.edu/cas/) provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu.

University Writing Center: The University Writing Center (https://www.westga.edu/writing/) assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or writing@westga.edu.

Online Courses

UWG takes students’ privacy concerns seriously; technology-enhanced and partially and fully online courses use sites and entities beyond UWG and students have the right to know the privacy policies of these entities. For more information on privacy and accessibility for the most commonly used sites, as well as technology requirements visit the UWG Online.
Students enrolled in online courses can find answers to many of their questions in the Online/Off-Campus Student Guide (http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php).

If a student is experiencing distress and needs help, please see the resources available at the UWG Cares (http://www.westga.edu/UWGCares/) site. Online counseling (https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/index.php) is also available for online students.

**Honor Code**

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student's account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please visit the Office of Community Standards (https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpsa/ocs/index.php) site.

**UWG Email Policy**

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to check his or her email.

**Credit Hour Policy**

The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

**HB 280 (Campus Carry)**

UWG follows University System of Georgia (USG) guidance: http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information# (http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information)

You may also visit our website for help with USG Guidance: https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php (https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php)

**Mental Health Support**

If you or another student find that you are experiencing a mental health issue, free confidential services are available on campus in the Counseling Center. Students who have experienced sexual or domestic violence may receive confidential medical and advocacy services with the Patient Advocates in Health Services. To report a concern anonymously, please go to UWGcares.
ELL Resources

If you are a student having difficulty with English language skills, and/or U.S. culture is not your home culture, specialized resources are available to help you succeed. Please visit the E.L.L. resource page for more information.

COVID-19

The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff remain the University of West Georgia’s top priority.

For the most recent information on coronavirus disease (COVID-19) visit:

- Georgia Department of Public Health (https://dph.georgia.gov)

Additional Items