



# SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION

## University of Wisconsin-Madison

Journalism 565 – Spring 2011  
EFFECTS OF MASS COMMUNICATION  
Chemistry B371, 11 - 12.15 PM, Tuesdays & Thursdays

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### Course description

This course will provide students with an in-depth understanding of individual-level media effect theories. Specifically we will examine the processes through which mass media affect individual's attitudes and behaviors. The goal of this course is to give students an understanding of how these effects have been conceptualized (e.g. Uses and Gratifications, Cultivation, Agenda Setting, Framing, Priming, Hostile Media Phenomena, Knowledge Gaps, Third-person Effects, Diffusion of Innovations), the underlying mechanisms at work, key research findings and how new communication technologies impact previous conceptualizations, helping them recognize the real-world applicability of findings in these areas.

### Course objectives

- Familiarize with the historical development of media effects research.
- Familiarize with the research methods used to study media effects.
- Understand main theories and key areas of research.
- Understand the underlying cognitive, affective and social mechanisms that explain effects or the contingency of these effects.
- Understand how new communication technologies affect the effects tradition.
- Develop critical thinking abilities that enhance the application of empirically derived knowledge to interactions with media and current events.

### Course requirements

This course consists of lectures and discussion sessions. Course material will be presented in lectures and readings. Activities, projects and discussion will primarily occur during discussion sections. During lectures participation is expected and discussion will occur (with the discussion section giving us an opportunity to continue and expand our class conversations) so you should complete readings by the date indicated in the syllabus. Grades in the class will be based on the following components and percentage distribution:

(1) Discussion section	a) Participation (including lecture)	10%
	b) Assignments and quizzes	15%
(2) Midterm exam		25%
(3) Research paper		25%
(4) Final exam		25%

A = 93 -100; AB = 88 – 92; B = 83 – 87; BC = 78 – 82; C = 71 – 77; D = 60 – 70; F = <60

This class will follow University guidelines concerning scholastic misconduct and grievance procedures.

Class Participation:

10% of your class grade will be based on contributions to class discussion both in discussion section and during lectures. Students are expected to go beyond opinion-giving and be able to critically engage readings. At the same time, each student must contribute to a classroom environment in which ideas are debated in a respectful way.

Assignments and quizzes

For this course you will have to complete 3 written assignments that are due on February 8, February 22 and April 14. Once you complete these assignments you will turn them in using the Dropbox tool in learn@uw. During the discussion sections, and prior to you having to complete the assignment, we will give additional information regarding the specific assignment.

Exams

There will be two exams for this class: a midterm on March 10 (worth 25% of the final grade) and a final exam on May 13 (worth 25% of the final grade). The midterm will include both close-ended and open-ended questions, which will be based on the readings and/or material presented in class. The final exam will include both close-ended and open-ended questions that will be based on the readings and/or material presented in class. No early or late exams will be allowed unless you can demonstrate an extreme emergency.

Final research paper

You will write a research paper for this class (approximately 6 pages in length). The paper requirement will be handed out in discussion section. The final paper is due May 3 and accounts for 25% of your grade. Late papers will be penalized. The instructor from your discussion section will grade your research paper.

**Readings**

Textbook: Bryant, J., & Thompson, S. (2002) Fundamentals of media effects. McGraw Hill. (Available at University Bookstore). Before each class students are expected to complete the assigned readings. All articles, files and presentations (with the exception of the textbook) are available at the learn@UW class website.

**Semester Schedule (Lectures & Readings)**

Day	Topic	Reading
W1 - Jan 18	Introduction to media effects	
W1 - Jan 20	Research methods	
W2 – Jan 25	Research methods	Communication Research Methods Appendix in Contemporary Communication Theory by D. Infante, A Ranger & T Avtgis (pages 423 to 453).
W2 - Jan 27	Cultivation	Textbook Chapter 6.
W3 – Feb 1	Agenda Setting	Textbook Chapter 9.
W3 – Feb 3	Knowledge Gap	Tichenor, P.J., Donohue, G.A., & Olien, C.N.

		(1970). Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge. <i>POQ</i> , 34: 159-170.
W4 - Feb 8	Uses & Gratifications	Textbook Chapter 8.
W4 - Feb 10	Third-person effects	Davison, W. P. (1983). The third-person effect in communication. <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> , 47, 1–15.
W5 - Feb 15	Hostile Media	Schmitt, K. M., Gunther, A. C., & Liebhart, J. L. (2004). Why partisans see mass media as biased. <i>Communication Research</i> , 31, 623–641.
W5 - Feb 17	Framing	Iyengar, S. (1991). Is anyone responsible? How television frames Political Issues. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (Chapter 4).
W6 - Feb 22	Priming	Textbook Chapter 5.
W6 - Feb 24	Spiral of silence	Noelle-Neuman E. (1974). The spiral of silence: A theory of public opinion. <i>Journal of Communication</i> , 24: 43-51.
W7 – March 1	Mediated deliberation	Rojas, H., Shah, D.V., Cho, J., Schmierbach, M., Keum, H., & Gil de Zúñiga, H.G (2005). Media dialogue: Perceiving and addressing community problems. <i>Mass Communication &amp; Society</i> , 8, 93 -110.
W7 – March 3	Diffusion of innovations	Textbook Chapter 7.
W8 – March 8	Review	
W8 – March 10	Midterm exam	
March 12 -20	Spring recess	
W9 – March 22	Underlying Mechanisms	Textbook Chapter 4.
W9 – March 24	Internet effects	Sunstein C.R. (2007). Republic.com 2.0. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. (Chapter 6).
W10 – March 29	Internet effects	Kim Y., & Ball-Rokeach, S. (2010) New immigrants, Internet and civic society. Chapter in Routledge Handbook of Internet Politics.
W10 – March 31	News	Textbook Chapter 14.
W11 – April 5	Persuasion	Textbook Chapter 10; Cialdini Interview
W11 – April 7	Advertising	Textbook Chapter 17.
W12 – April 12	Violence	Textbook Chapter 11.
W12 – April 14	Health	Textbook Chapter 16.
W13 – April 19	Sexual content	Textbook Chapter 12.
W13 – April 21	Video games	Lee, K. M., Ping, W., & Park N. (2009) Effects of Computer/Video Games and Beyond. In Media Effects Advances in Theory and Research.
W14 – April 26	Mobile communications	Srivastava, L. (2008). The Mobile makes its mark. Handbook of mobile communications edited by J. E. Katz. MIT Press.
W14 – April 28	Mobile communications	Shirky, C. (2008). Here comes everybody. Chapter 1: It takes a village to find a phone.
W15 – May 3	Critique of effects tradition	
W15 – May 5	Review	
May 13	Final exam	