

Long Island University, Brooklyn

Department of Journalism and Communication Studies

JOU 120 INTRO TO MASS COMMUNICATION

Spring 2018

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Catalogue Description: An introduction to the fields of print, electronic and interactive media. Students are exposed to media theory and to a critical approach to the function of mass communication in America. They examine the roles of newspapers, magazines and books, as well as film, recording and broadcast. The impact of cable TV, personal computers, New Media, blogging, and their new digital communication technologies receives special attention. The course also reviews persuasive uses of mass media in politics, advertising and public relations. 3 credits.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Introduction to Mass Communication invites students to conduct a probing examination of journalism and mass media in American society and to examine the influences, functions and shortcomings of mass communications in a free society. Students acquire an understanding of mass media and digital media trends in order to become more sophisticated media consumers, critics, and citizens. Students are asked to examine several significant social, cultural, class and racial issues of today's electronic superhighway. Students are urged to frame appropriate questions and to formulate answers concerning media efficacy, fairness and responsibility. This requirement of both critical analysis and application to contemporary trigger issues pervades every aspect of the course, class readings, discussions, writing assignments, tests, and quizzes.

In surveying the various forms of mass communications, JOU 120 offers an analysis of the cultural and social effects of mass and digital media on individuals, society, public morals and political issues. Students are expected to ponder the meaning and the extensions of the First and Fourth Amendments and also reflect on how the footprints of the Digital Age--especially manifested through portable media such as I-phones and cell phone recordings--have not only altered society and personal habits but now are driving much of our news. The Roles of the Press, Fake News and Twitter in the Trump Presidency era is critical to our country and society and also needs to be continually examined.

Throughout the semester, American social, cultural and intellectual history is considered when analyzing press performance and in accessing both the benefits and negative aspects of today's communication. Emphasis is placed on proactive audiences. JOU 120 begins with abstract principles and an overview of mass communication research. The course next works progressively toward specific institutions and historical events, with the assumption that one needs to understand media theory, functions, impact and terminology before the individual parts make sense. Sometimes--due to its urgency, contemporary events interrupt the day's scheduled topic. Definitions will be emphasized and students will hone and increase their vocabulary.

A midterm and final will be administered. Students will be asked to answer objective questions, to demonstrate understanding of important terms and to answer thought-provoking essay questions.

With government regulation becoming more intrusive in the daily lives of American citizens, students must develop the sophistication and tools to determine which Internet communication is accurate and truthful, and which Internet communication is controlled by vested interests or the government for the promotion of their own agendas.

Credibility of courses and Fake News are examined in a world currently in crisis. Ideally, students will be encouraged to not only learn, but also use course vocabulary and concepts while discussing the class work and to forge their own synthesis of course materials.

The instructors view role as more than a transmitter of information. For not only will they provide substantive, pertinent information, but they also will guide student learning and challenge individual expressive capabilities. A high degree of curiosity about media history, press ethics and the electronic future as well as willingness to read a substantial quantity of diverse material is expected of each student.

Course Requirements and Grading

In-class and out-of-class written assignments are important. While there may be a couple in-class written assignments (for which you must be present to complete) these include the short Reaction paper due February 1st, and two other papers from the below pool of A, B,C, and D. Your fourth paper and final paper will be the the Media Function Paper described below. While your midterm and final exams will count for fifty percent of your grade, your written work will count the other fifty percent of your final grade.

Short Paper #1 due February 1st

Select One From The Two Options Below

Option A Watch “The Data Brokers: Selling Your Personal Information,” Sixty Minutes, broadcast August 24, 2014, 7:05 PM. Correspondent Steve Kroft investigates the multibillion-dollar industry that with virtually no oversight collects, analyzes and sells the personal information of millions of Americans. Write an analytical paper that evaluates this Sixty Minutes segment and devote one-half of your paper to discuss how the materials you viewed in the segment affect your own privacy, life and future.

Option B Carefully view the Frontline film titled “Generation-Like.” In the first paragraph succinctly state the thesis of the film. In the following page-and-one-half criticize the film. Ask yourself, is this portrayal of young people up-to-date? Do not summarize and do not praise. Devote the remainder of your article to criticism only.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/generation-like/>

Short Paper #2

Select One From The Two Options Below

Option A: Carefully Read Daniel J. Boorstin’s distributed 1971 article titled, “Television: More Deeply than We suspect, It has Changed All of Us.” Nearly half a century later much has happened in the dawning and implementation of today’s digital age and cyberspace world. Mentioning several themes addressed by Boorstin, update his article with your paper titled: “Digitalization, Cyberspace and The Internet: More Deeply Than We Suspect, They Have Changed All of Us.”

Option B: Critique “Our New Digital Thunderdome,” by Adam Hamdy, *New York Daily News*, June 19, 2017.

New York Daily News
June 19, 2017

Our New Digital Thunderdome By Adam Hamdy

Remember when social media was going to enable us to make friends with the world? Instead, it mutated into a digital Thunderdome, a dystopian Coliseum where complete strangers get vicious with each other. Even the august office of the President isn't immune, as the tweeter-in-chief uses social media to issue personal attacks, playing his part in turning a technology that was meant to connect people into a forum for alienation and aggression.

As seen in recent elections on both sides of the Atlantic, social media ratchets up the hype and hate of political campaigning. Emboldened by echo chambers that reinforce our own belief systems, we're increasingly unwilling to constructively engage with opposing ideas. Instead, we shout louder, reducing complex ideas to witty memes and populist hashtags, polarizing the debate and shrinking the space for common cause, chasing likes and retweets with simplistic, extreme opinions.

When social media is simmering with so much rage, are we so surprised when this boils over into real life? Although the reasons behind acts of violence are complicated, when James Hodgkinson of Belleville, Ill., opened fire on the Republican congressional baseball team, injuring Rep. Steve Scalise and four others, he did so as a man who had spent years railing against the party on Facebook, and was a virulent critic of President Trump, writing in *March* for the “destruction” of “Trump & Co.” Its long past time to question what all this online hate is doing to us. Not everyone will be radicalized to acts of political violence, but cyberbullying and aggression are increasingly rife online, with worrying consequences for our real world interactions and well-being.

Recent research suggests that social media use is changing the way our brains function, turning us into digital addicts, robbing us of empathy, and making us more prone to depression.

A team of psychologists at the University of Chicago led by Wilhelm Hofmann found that social media use triggers a dopamine reward in the brain, making it more addictive than cigarettes or alcohol. Little wonder, it's estimated the average internet user now spends more than two hours per day on social media to get their fixes of likes and followers.

But rather than connecting us, this “social” activity may actually be driving us further apart. In his 2014 book, “The End of Absence,” Michael Harris presents evidence that suggests social media use means young people now have substantially less empathy than previous generations. Living in a virtual world where they consume each other's lives as a form of entertainment, the connected generation is losing the ability to truly relate to other people.

Researchers at the University of Sussex found that people who spend significant amounts of time engaged in screen-based media activities see a reduction in the density of neurons associated with empathy and emotional control, impairing their ability to deal with socio-emotional issues. It seems that our brains are being reshaped by social media use, and instead of bringing us closer together, these technologies are shrinking our capacity to understand or identify with each other.

And while our interactions with Facebook friends and Instagram followers may seem authentic, these virtual connections are no substitute for real world friendships and support networks. University of Pittsburg study conducted by Brian Primack found that people's propensity to suffer from depression increased with the number of social media platforms they use. And researchers from Brown University have discovered that young people who have negative experiences on Facebook are 3.2 times more likely to suffer depression than those who don't.

Unlike our devices, which can be switched off, we carry the legacy of our online interactions into the real world. Depression at the perfect lives we see depicted on Facebook may lead us to isolate ourselves from our real friends. And our addiction to social media might mean we leave our kids to play on their iPads while we obsess over Facebook or Twitter. Our anger at a fake story about Pizzagate might cause us to snap at complete strangers. It seems that our experiences in the digital Thunderdome can take a very real toll and are shaping how we engage with the real world. In light of what scientists can now tell us about what social media is doing to our brains, we should take special care to ensure that we engage in civil discourse and do our best to minimize extremism, hostility and anger that can help propel people towards violence.

Short Paper #3

Select One From The Two Options Below

Option A: Update John Leo's distributed, "Hard Times For News," published in the *New York Daily News*, October 11, 1997. Leo discusses what others view as "the end of news," "the great American yawn," the tug against complicated stories, the shortening attention span, the softening of hard news, the youths' rejection of traditional news, the shift "from sheer information toward drama and emotional storytelling" and the trend toward Hollywood news replacing traditional, legitimate Washington news stories. Discuss whether or not the trends Leo describes in this two-page article--now thirty years later--has continued and shifted, or stopped. Consider whether or not new trends have taken over in the ensuing 18 years since this article was written? Provide specific examples for your arguments.

Option B Your Assignment after reading the above is to take a position to Agree or Disagree with the New York Times article to be distributed. "**How to Navigate Social Media Boundaries in a Relationship** by VANESSA MARIN," while making an argument pro or con on her advice with appropriate evidence, summarized and

documented. In your paper, emphasize social media's role in helping or hindering thoughtful, caring and humane personal relationships.

FINAL PAPER (Long) #4

Write an essay of no more than 2,000 words that analyzes your own personal use of the mass and digital media. About one-half of the paper will describe and the other half will analyze your own media habits. A list of criteria for paper excellence is appended to this syllabus. A handout of questions to ponder will be given to you. Both content and presentation will be evaluated and the paper must be properly documented. Obvious problems such as bad grammar, improper references, poor organization, or other "unforgivable" errors in style will be reflected in the paper grade.

TEXT: For the most part, you will be provided with the readings and the links. Many will be drawn from a collection of PEW studies on audiences and the state of public opinion on various contemporary pressing and burning issues.

MANDATORY ATTENDANCE, George Polk Seminar, Kumble Theater, Thursday Evening, April 5th

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

In the classroom you will be asked to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the readings. Participation will be judged for factual accuracy, validity of argument and clarity of thought and expression. If adequately supported, strong positions on issues will be welcomed both in class discussion and writing. You continually will be asked to analyze, evaluate and criticize media performance.

The instructors view their roles as more than a transmitter or summarizer of information. While they will provide substantive, pertinent information, They also will attempt to facilitate and guide student learning as well as to challenge individual expressive capabilities. A high degree of curiosity and willingness to learn is expected from each student.

STUDENT CONDUCT EXPECTATION

Students must come to class on time and bring self-discipline to the classroom. Cell phones, I-phones Smart-phones or other hand-held devices are strictly forbidden while class is in session

unless you are taking notes. That is, no use of mobile communications will be allowed during class unless it is part of a group assignment or answering a pending class query. Otherwise, during class these technologies serve to distract students and cause students to lose focus. Students must avoid looking at their cell phones while class is in session. Students who have their phone alert activated, glance at their phones to check their text messages, or see who called, or even sport headphones while walking into the classroom, are viewed by the instructor as unfocused and not concentrating on the academic challenges at hand. In the past, students who hide their cellphones behind their books and book bags have been embarrassed by the instructor and asked to leave the room. Text messaging or looking at Facebook during class will negatively affect your final grade. I promise! **Please keep your social media outside of my classroom!** One student recently received a lower grade because he used a large portable computer throughout the semester in one of our courses, insisting that he was writing critiques of student speeches in Speech 03. However, at the semester's end his marble notebook submission contained only handwriting! The instructor concluded that the student had been dishonest and penalized him accordingly. Students also are strongly discouraged from entering or leaving the room while another student is speaking. Students who run outside the classroom to answer an "emergency" call are showing disrespect and distracting both the class and the instructor with door opening and closing. Such behavior will not be tolerated. No one will be dismissed from the room to answer any call. Disruptive behaviors include, but are not limited to, talking to other students, text messaging, cell phones beeping, ringing, individual sleeping, eating and doing work for another class. Student desks must be cleared with the exception of materials used for this class.

Week One

Course Overview, Techniques & Goals
First and Fourth Amendment; *Areopagitica*
Discussion: How Strong Are Our First Amendment Rights Today in America?
Segment from CBS Sunday Morning
Criteria for Excellence
Educational Philosophy
Challenge for Critical Awareness of the Mass and Digital Media

Icebreaker: WORDS MATTER!
Denotative and Connotative Language

Week Two

Conclusion of Week One Topics
The Information Explosion and the New Media Ecology
Crucial Challenges in the Digital and Internet Age
Counter Current: Luddites as Heroes?

Week Three

The Way the Systems Work – Elementary Communication Theory
Characteristics of Mass Communications
Important Terminology, Concepts and Definitions
The Effects of Technological Innovations On Our Society

Week Four

Functions of Mass Communications
Demographics of the American Audiences
Lifespans and Generation Spans
Exactly How Could Civil War Widows Live Into The 21st Century?
Grover Cleveland, Frances Cleveland and Francis Cleveland
My friend Walter Seward—The Three Century Man
Straus and Howe Theory Regarding Baby Boomers; Generation X; Millennials—Now, let's update!

Read: Handout, Brownstone, concerning Straus and Howe

Week Five

The Cultural and Social Impact of Mass Communications on Society and Individuals
Paradigms and Thomas Kuhn
Megan's Law—From Privacy and Censorship to Public Access
World Trade Center Disaster Coverage & Communication
Jack Lule, "Myth and Terror on the Editorial Page: *The New York Times* Responds
to September 11, 2001," *Journalism Quarterly* 79:2 Summer 2002 : 275-293
Dennis "Media Effects: The Processes and Influences of Mass Communication";
Review Luli, Chapter Two, "Media Effects" The Biggest News Story of Your Lifetime

Case Study: Media Usage by Assassins. Artistic depictions such *Taxi Driver*, *Assassins*, and *Ragtime*. A gallery of Presidential and Cultural Assassins--Harry K. Thaw/Stanford White/Evelyn Nesbitt, Mark David Chapman, ("Chapter 27") and Arthur Bremer (*Diary of An Assassin*).

Week Six

Catchup and Review of Weeks One through Five

MIDTERM

Week Seven

Reality, Mediated Realities, and their Use By Media and Audiences
Popular Culture and Folklore in the Mass Media
Mass Media, Stereotypes, Minorities, Gender and the Media
Daniel Boorstin's Pseudo Event as described in *The Image*
Marshall McLuhan, *The Mechanical Bride*
-- Condemned Men Participate In Their Own Audience's Participation
Selective Perception and Retention Reviewed; Gordon Allport's Study
ABC Coverage of Arab Stereotypes, time permitting – *The Siege* Movie Review

Week Eight

Spring Recess Monday, March 12 to Monday, March 19.

Four Theories of The Press
Newspaper History

Handout: The Chronology of American Newspaper History
Newspaper Front Page Presentation
Tapes: The Harlem Renaissance; Music, Including Broadway and Jazz and "Crossing Over"
Cultural Magnifications: Race in the Musical Lyrics of South Pacific and Showboat

Week Nine

Conclusion of Newspaper History
News, Reporting, Newspapers
Newspaper Writing Styles

Read: Dennis "Journalistic Styles," pp. 210 – 215 (To be Distributed)

Week Ten
Books and Magazines

Week Eleven

MANDATORY ATTENDANCE, George Polk Seminar, Kumble, Thursday Evening, April 5th

Radio and Television

Philo T. Farnsworth; Television at the 1939 World's Fair

HYPERLINK "<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ab/1939fairhelicopter.jpg>"

Week Twelve
Film, Recordings and Music

Week Thirteen

Advertising; Public Relations
The Press and Government; Regulation and Economics

News or PR—What Is This? CNN's "Rudy the Rock" – Objective News or Promotion?
CBS Sixty Minutes—Dead Celebrities Fill Coffers, Not Coffins

Time Permitting: David Galarza's CNN Interview; Citizen and Proactive Journalism
Presidential Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers on Dave Letterman

Also, go to Frontline:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/clinton/interviews/myers.html>

Week Fourteen
Catchup and Review

Monday, May 7th Semester classes meeting Monday through Friday

end.

Final Examinations Tuesday-Monday, May 8-14.

What is the thesis of this article?

Is the article well argued and supported?

Do you agree with the article?

Why, or why not?

Exactly how does the author's position differ from other articles? Why?

What is the appropriate category for the article?

Criteria for Excellence Excellent * Good * Adequate * Weak * Unsatisfactory

Content

Originality of
thought _____

Scope of
Research _____

Depth of
Research _____

Depth of
Analysis _____

Synthesis _____

Accuracy _____

Organization _____

Logic _____

Attribution to
Authorities _____

Interest _____

Style

Composition _____

Originality of

Expression _____

Clarity, Coherence,
Conciseness,
Syntax _____

Word Precision _____

Transitions _____

Paragraphing _____

Grammar _____

Spelling _____

Punctuation _____

Mechanics and Form _____

Copy Reading _____

Crediting
Sources _____

Bibliography &
Notes _____

YOUR INSTRUCTOR I

Donald Allport Bird is Professor and Chair of the Department of Journalism and Communication Studies at Long Island University, Brooklyn where he serves on the George Polk Awards Committee and from which he received the David Newton Award for Teaching Excellence. He graduated from The Stony Brook School and later from Rutgers—The State University after being appointed a Henry Rutgers Scholar and earned his Ph.D. at Indiana University in Folklore and Mass Communications. He has devoted nearly forty years to mass communications teaching, administration, writing and consulting, more than sixteen so far at LIU as journalism chair.

Dr. Bird has taught on-location at corporations such as NBC and Pfizer and at military bases in five states. At the request of Chinese academics, Dr. Bird has lectured on the First Amendment, environmental reporting, new media, media trends, and media economics at Remnin University in Beijing, China, Beijing Normal University, Nankai University in Tianjin, Fudan University, Hua Dong University in Shanghai, and Zhejiang University in Hangzhou. During his fifth trip to China Thanksgiving 2015 he gave four invited lectures at China Youth University in Beijing, a school that under Dr. Bird's leadership has forged ties to LIU with regular student exchanges. Dr. Bird has hosted foreign journalists at LIU for the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program has been appointed and trained as an English Language Officer (contract) with the International Distinguished Visitors and Leadership Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the U.S. Department of State. During the summer of 2010 he served as a *New York Times* Fellow to the International Center for Longevity. Dr. Bird also has held post-doctoral research appointments at Harvard University's W.E.B. Dubois Institute for African-American Research and at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he was a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow in Speech Communication.

His students have won national and New York City metropolitan awards and a number have become successful writers and editors at leading media outlets throughout the country. A few have earned their Ph.D.'s and have taught at universities such as University of Nebraska, University of Illinois and Washington State University. Some have

become newspaper executives and publishers—one publisher of the *Indianapolis Star*.

Dr. Bird has studied persuasive techniques and teaches courses in communication theory, public relations, news writing and sensationalism. While an undergraduate he worked at The Associated Press and later *served on the copy desks of newspapers such as The Jersey Journal, the Patterson News, and Africa Today*. He has published articles on trade magazines, important media figures and has researched a history of *Billboard* magazine through the Beatles. He presented a paper at the American Folklore Society in Quebec titled “*Presentation of Self and Folklore on Facebook*” and has completed a study on 9/11 communication titled “*Holy Smoke*” on 9/11: *Legend, Belief and Dialectics in the New Media* to be published in *New Directions in Folklore*. In June, 2017 he co-presented at the Indiana University’s Future of Folklore Conference a paper titled “*9/11 and Holy Smoke Revisited: the Role of Undergraduate Research in creating a 9/11 Oral History Website and a Case Study Viewed Fifteen Years Later.*”

The Internet and digital interests of his two sons, nearly 24 and nearly 30, have taught Dr. Bird that, alas, a hundred years from now his own generation will be viewed as a transitional one. Bird is grateful for the enrichment provided by his students and family and believes all teaching and learning is two-way, especially across generations. Teaching is a *calling* and not merely in a profession. A War Baby and *not* a Baby Boomer like Dr. Pison (below), he believes that asking the right question is as important as formulating the right answers. And, he is eager to learn more from his students -- the millennials who now remain *his* primary teachers.

Your Instructor II

Thomas Pison, Ph.D. has taught this course JOU 120 at LIU several times as well as course offerings in Advertising, Public Relations, Media Management and Speech Communications. For more than twenty years, Dr. Pison has worked with digital technology using all modes of communications, specializing in integrating conventional business content to emerging digital platforms and training people to maximize the efficiency of new technologies. He also has worked with industry professionals at government research centers

Dr. Pison has taught numerous government employees and also employees at telecommunication firms. He has developed on-site and computer-based (CBT) programs for writing budgeting and finance proposals, organizational development, project management, and effective business communications. Dr. Pison also has developed software training programs in areas such as Computer Security and Avoiding Sexual Harassment for use on training platforms adapted for the Internet.

Dr. Pison has published extensively on the application of internet technology to training and development in leading journals such as *Circuits and Design* (an IEEE publication), the *Transponder, and Security Concerns*, and the initiated the monthly column, “Tech Tools, for Technology and Skills Training,” the largest paid-circulation training magazine in the United States. Dr. Pison also was Technical Editor of *The ASTD Lamplighter*, an award-winning publication on current trends in human resource training and development. His work as National Advertising Manager for the *Mac Street Journal*, a publication of the New York MacUser’s Group, resulted in contract work in direct marketing and mainstream advertising, managing research for advertising firms and producing white papers on various industries.

Currently, Dr. Pison works as Research Director for responsebydesign.com, a New York-based on-line marketing and advertising agency. The firm produces a variety of direct marketing initiatives such as newsletters and promotions integrated with web site development.

