

MASS MEDIA THEORY & EFFECTS

COMM 4050 : SPRING 2012 : DR. PAUL HUSSELBEE

Section 01 (CRN 10629), M W F, 10 to 10:50 a.m., MC 109

Dr. Husselbee, Centrum 213L E-mail address: <husselbee@suu.edu> Office phone: 435/865-8556
Course information page: <www.suu.edu/faculty/husselbee/courseinfo.html>
Office hours: Tuesday, 10 a.m. to noon; Wednesday, 11 a.m. to noon; Thursday, 10 to noon; or by appointment

If you have questions about the class and assignments, your best bet is to ask during class or catch me in the hall after class. If you need individual help or have questions about grades on assignments, you may send me an email message or visit my office during office hours. Based on federal law and privacy concerns, I do not email students' final semester grades, nor do I discuss students' grades with parents.

I do **not** have an open-door policy. Students are asked to respect office hours. If my office hours do not fit your schedule, please email me to request an appointment. Don't ask, "When are you available?" Instead, provide a choice of three days and times when *you* are available, and we'll work out an appointment. Thanks. ☺

ABOUT THE CLASS

Description & Prerequisite — This course examines the theoretical underpinnings of mass media, with a focus on the effects of media on society, institutions, and individuals. As the capstone course for students in the media and strategic communication emphases, it requires a senior thesis. Completion of Comm 3020 with at least a C-minus is *required* for enrollment; if you have not completed Comm 3020, drop this class.

Course Objectives — Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Understand what theory is and be able to explain why understanding theory is important to you as you pursue a career in the mass media.
- Become familiar with the strengths, weaknesses and criticisms of a broad spectrum of media theories.
- Become familiar with immediate and cumulative effects of a wide variety of media content, including violence, pornography, stereotyping, etc.
- Develop and express your own thoughts and critiques about contemporary mass-media theories.
- Carry out a theory-based research study, which will serve as your senior thesis — a paper of sufficient depth to describe in detail your rationale, literature review, research question(s), method, findings or results, discussion, and recommendations. Correct APA style is required.

If you want to complete this course successfully, you will:

- Read all assignments before coming to class so that you understand the discussion. We will not use class time to review assigned readings for students who did not bother to read before class.
- Attend class, listen, take copious notes, and ask questions when you do not understand.
- Participate in class discussions. This is a must; if you listen carefully in class and take part in class discussions, assigned readings will become much easier to understand and apply.
- Participate in a study group that meets regularly to discuss readings and prepare for exams.
- Complete all thesis assignments in timely fashion, working diligently throughout the semester to design and conduct a research study that displays your best academic effort — a paper you will be proud to call your senior thesis.
- Prepare diligently for your thesis presentation and rehearse the presentation several times before presenting your work to the class.

Required Reading — Two books are required: DeFleur's *Mass Communication Theories: Explaining Origins, Processes and Effects* (Allyn & Bacon, 2010) and *Concise Rules of APA Style*. Both books are available from the SUU Bookstore. In addition, handouts on selected topics will be uploaded to Canvas. These handouts are considered extensions of the textbooks; please read them as assigned.

WHAT TO EXPECT

A Typical Class Meeting — In general, we will begin class meetings with a brief reading quiz, thereby encouraging you to read assigned sections of the text. Quizzes will begin promptly on the hour; if you're late, you forfeit your opportunity to take the quiz, so please plan to be on time. The balance of class will be spent in lecture/discussion about media theory and effects. Lectures and discussions will be based not only on the text but also the professor's own background in media theory and various handouts and visual aids. Exams will cover all material taught in the classroom. You are encouraged to take good notes and to work together in study groups to prepare for exams. I do not provide study guides for exams; your study guide is your notes.

Class Preparation and Workload — To prepare for class, please read assigned sections of the text and be prepared to answer a series of true-false and/or multiple-choice questions about the reading. Other than the reading quizzes and quarterly exams, your primary responsibility in this class is to write your senior thesis. Thesis assignments are due at specified intervals throughout the semester (see *Semester Schedule*, pp. 6-7). If you complete each assignment on time, you need not agonize over the senior thesis.

GRADING

Graded Activities — Graded activities and their point values are listed below. In addition to reading quizzes, quarterly exams, and thesis assignments, points are awarded for good citizenship — and subtracted for poor citizenship.

Reading quizzes (30 quizzes @ 5 points each)	150 points
Quarterly Exams (4 exams @ 50 points each)	200 points
Thesis Assignments (5 assignments @ 30 points each)	150 points
Senior Thesis*	300 points
Final Exam	100 points
Citizenship	100 points
Total	1,000 points

* A minimum grade of 210 on the Senior Thesis is required to pass the class.

Reading Quizzes — Most classes meetings will begin with a five-point quiz on the assigned reading. Questions will be true-false or multiple choice. Quizzes will begin promptly at 10 a.m. If you're late, you miss the quiz. Other than excused absences for university-sponsored activities, no makeup quizzes are given under any circumstances. Students who will miss a quiz for a university-sponsored activity must provide an excuse from the coach or supervisor and take the quiz *before* leaving. Overall, reading quizzes are worth 15 percent of your semester grade.

Quarterly Exams — Four quarterly exams will test your grasp of media theory as discussed in class and in the DeFleur text. Each exam will consist of consist of 10 matching questions, 20 true-false questions, and 20 multiple-choice questions. Exams will be taken in the SUU Testing Center (ELC 113) on the dates designated in the *Semester Schedule*, pp. 6-7). Please bring a No. 2 pencil and a 100-item Scantron answer sheet to the exam, as well as your SUU ID. The Testing Center will not allow you to take an exam for this course without ID. Testing Center hours and policies are available at <<http://www.suu.edu/ss/acdc/testing-center.html>>. A missed exam is governed by the *Makeup Policy* (see *Class Policies*, p. 3). Overall, quarterly exams are worth 20 percent of your semester grade.

Thesis Assignments — Five thesis assignments are designed to help you complete your senior thesis in manageable increments. If you do the assignments well and on time, your senior thesis will be much easier to complete by the deadline. The assignments include the Topic Approval, Literature Review, Rationale & Research Questions, Method, and Results & Discussion. Each assignment is worth 30 points. Thesis assignments are due at specified intervals throughout the semester (see *Semester Schedule*, pp. 6-7). Prepare assignments in MS Word (no Google Docs, please) and submit them via Canvas by 5 p.m. on the due date. Assignments with a time-date stamp after 5 p.m. on the due date are late and will suffer a 10-percent grade penalty. Assignments that do not adhere to APA Style will be returned ungraded; when they are resubmitted, they will suffer the grade penalty. Overall, thesis assignments are worth 15 percent of your semester grade.

Senior Thesis — The capstone project of an SUU communication degree is the senior thesis. The senior thesis should be a research paper no longer than 20 pages of text (about 5,000 words), plus front matter, end matter and tables. It is worth 300 points; a minimum grade of 210 points (70 percent) is required to pass this course. Overall, the thesis is worth 30 percent of the semester grade.

The thesis is due on Friday, April 13, at 5 p.m. This will give me enough time to read your thesis and return it to you for revision, if needed. The **final revised version** of your thesis must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, April 20. In the absence of severe, extended illness or some similarly extreme circumstance that would justify an extension, this deadline is non-negotiable. I am the final arbiter of whether an extension is warranted.

The Communication Department keeps a copy of all senior theses as evidence of our students' achievement. Be sure that your thesis represents your best effort; it symbolizes the capstone of your undergraduate education. If you select a topic that interests you, this project will be self-motivating and therefore a lot of fun.

Final Exam — The final exam is comprehensive; it will feature the most-missed questions from the four quarterly exams. There will be 10 matching questions, 20 true-false questions, and 20 multiple-choice questions. These questions are worth 1 point each. In addition, there will be one essay question. It will require you to select a media theory from a list of theories provided and outline in significant detail its history, propositions, strengths and weaknesses. This question is also worth 50 points. Overall, the final exam is worth 10 percent of the semester grade.

Grading Scale — Grades on individual assignments and the final semester grade are based on this scale:

	B+ 87.0-89.9%	C+ 77.0-79.9%	D+ 67.0-69.9%	F 59.9%
A 94.0-100.0%	B 84.0-86.9%	C 74.0-76.9%	D 64.0-66.9%	or below
A- 90.0- 93.9%	B- 80.0-83.9%	C- 70.0-73.9%	D- 60.0-63.9%	

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance and Participation — The policy is that of most employers in the workforce. They expect you to show up for work and to work while you're there; I expect no less. Please make regular attendance and class participation a personal priority this semester. If you attend class, participate and ask questions, you will find the class much easier. Repeated absences will likely have a significant negative effect on your grade.

Citizenship — Respect for fellow students and for the professor is expected; rudeness is not tolerated. Rude behavior includes conversing with other students during class discussions, texting on your cell phones, and surfing the Internet or writing e-mail messages during class. Please put away your i-Pads and close your laptops when class begins. Also, silence your cell phones when you enter the classroom; if you're expecting a call that you must accept, please leave the room quietly and take the call in the hallway. Good citizenship will be noted and will enhance your final grade. Poor citizenship will have the opposite effect.

Makeup Policy — Missed reading quizzes and quarterly exams may be made up only when the missed opportunity is the result of a university-sponsored activity or under extenuating circumstances. Such circumstances include serious illness or a death in the immediate family. I am the sole and final arbiter of what constitutes "extenuating circumstances." In such circumstances, documentation is required.

Routine excuses — including family vacations, weddings (even your own), religious observances (baptisms or baby blessings), or early departures for university breaks ("My ride was leaving without me") — are not extenuating circumstances and do not qualify for makeup work. Please plan your lives accordingly.

A student who misrepresents an excuse while requesting a makeup opportunity will receive a grade of 0 on the quiz or exam in question. A second such instance will result in dismissal from the course with a failing grade for cheating, which cannot be removed from your transcript by repeating the course.

No request for makeup work will be honored until you submit the form titled, *Request for Makeup Work*. It is available on the course information page: <www.suu.edu/faculty/husselbee/courseinfo.html>. Requests submitted more than two class days after the quiz or exam date will not be considered.

Deadlines for Thesis Assignments — Our business lives and dies with deadlines; this class is no different. Deadlines are established for the thesis assignments. An assignment not submitted by the deadline incurs an automatic, non-negotiable grade penalty of 10 percent. For every 24 hours that passes after the deadline, an additional 10 percent will be added to the grade penalty. Work submitted more than seven days after the deadline will not be accepted for a grade. The only exceptions to this rule are serious illness and family emergency.

APA Style — All thesis assignments must adhere to APA Style. This includes paper and page format, as well as in-text citations, references, and tables. A comprehensive handout titled *Formatting Research Papers for APA Style with MS Word 2010* is available on the course information page. Please use it to format your thesis assignments. Thesis assignments that do not adhere to APA Style will be returned ungraded with instructions to correct the style. When the assignment is resubmitted, the 10-percent grade penalty will be applied. Please save yourself and me the trouble of going through all that clap-trap by doing it right the first time. Thanks. ☺

Cheating and Plagiarism — Cheating on quizzes or exams will result in a grade of 0, and could result in harsher sanctions, including dismissal from the course with a failing grade. Keep in mind that the Testing Center is vigilant about cheating on exams. If a Testing Center employee accuses you of cheating, I will *not* substitute my judgment for his judgment, so please be sure your conduct at the Testing Center is above board. Also, a student who helps a classmate cheat is just as guilty as the cheater and will be dealt with accordingly.

Any act of plagiarism — especially on the thesis assignments — will result in a failing grade for the course. Invariably, students caught plagiarizing justify themselves with excuses such as, “But I thought I cited it correctly,” or, “I didn’t know it was wrong.” Negligence and ignorance are not acceptable excuses. A comprehensive handout titled *A Primer on Plagiarism* is available on the course information page. Please study it and be sure to do your own work.

The SUU Academic Integrity policy (discussed below) is clear that cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated. The policy outlines possible sanctions for cheating and plagiarism, but leaves the disposition of individual cases to the discretion of the professor. I do not relish the prospect of sanctioning students for cheating, but I do not shirk the responsibility just because it is unpleasant. Let’s work together to avoid these problems. If you have a question about what is acceptable, please chat with me after class, email me, or visit me during office hours.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity — Scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated. You are expected to have read and understood the current issue of the student handbook (published by Student Services), which outlines students’ rights and responsibilities, and the intellectual property policy, for information about procedures and about what constitutes acceptable on-campus behavior. In addition, you should read the university policy on Academic Integrity, found at <<http://www.suu.edu/pub/policies/pdf/PP633Academic.pdf>>.

Students with Disabilities — SUU complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with medical, psychological, learning or other disabilities desiring academic adjustments, accommodations, or auxiliary aids must contact the Southern Utah University Coordinator of Services for Students Disabilities (SSD) in Room 206F of the Sharwan Smith Center. The phone number is 435/865-8022. SSD determines eligibility for and authorizes the provision of services.

Emergency Management — In case of emergency, the University's Emergency Notification System will be activated. Students are encouraged to maintain updated contact information using the link on the homepage of the *mySUU* portal. Also, please become familiar with the Emergency Response Protocols posted in each classroom. Detailed information about SUU’s emergency management plan can be found at <www.suu.edu/emergency>.

HEOA Compliance — Sharing of copyrighted material through peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing, except as provided under U.S. copyright law, is illegal. Detailed information about the SUU policy on peer-to-peer file sharing is available at <<http://www.suu.edu/it/p2p-student-notice.html>>.

ABOUT THE PROFESSOR

Dr. Husselbee began working as a sportswriter at *The Observer* in his hometown, La Grande, Ore., in 1978. He has been a reporter and editor at newspapers in Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Texas. He has also worked for the Associated Press in Ohio and Utah. He left the newsroom in 1992 to pursue a career in higher education. He taught at Brigham Young University and Ohio University while in graduate school. He also taught at Dixie State College and Lamar University before coming to SUU in August 2000.



As a professor, Dr. Husselbee teaches primarily in the news media emphasis, focusing on research and writing skills. He also teaches the undergraduate and graduate ethics courses, as well as two quantitative research classes on the graduate level. As a scholar, Dr. Husselbee has published articles in a variety of scholarly journals, including *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Newspaper Research Journal*, *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, and *Journal of Sports Media*. He has presented papers at regional and national conventions. His current research interests include sports media communication, media effects and ethics. He is on the editorial board of *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*.

In his time away from SUU, Dr. Husselbee officiates high school football and umpires high school baseball. He enjoys reading spy novels, writing poetry, and planning his next trip to Manhattan (Broadway) or Baja (Cabo). He also loves weekends in Las Vegas and just hanging out with his beautiful wife, Peggy, and Kizzie, the wonder dog.

Although he is active on Facebook, Dr. Husselbee does not accept “friend requests” from current students. It’s nothing personal; it’s more about maintaining appropriate boundaries. Besides, most freshmen and sophomores see Dr. Husselbee as a mean ogre. It usually takes them a couple of years to realize he’s just a big ol’ teddy bear who pushes them to work harder and perform better because he wants them to succeed in life. So if you want to Facebook with Dr. H, please send him a “friend request” after you graduate. Other than his wife and family, he counts former students among his best Facebook friends. 😊

The Fine Print — Other than policies on grading, deadlines, makeup work and attendance, any information in this syllabus is subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Class	Day	Date	Topic	Reading
1	Mon	Jan. 9	Rules of the Road/Background	Syllabus
2	Wed	Jan. 11	Introduction to Media Theory	DeFleur, pp. 18-37
3	Fri	Jan. 13	The Scientific Method * Thesis Assignment Due: Topic Approval	DeFleur, pp. 38-45
—	Mon	Jan. 16	Martin Luther King Day (no class)	
4	Wed	Jan. 18	More on the Scientific Method	DeFleur, pp. 45-54
5	Fri	Jan. 20	Communication Models	Handout 1, Models
6	Mon	Jan. 23	Psychology and Mass Media Theory	DeFleur, pp. 70-77
7	Wed	Jan. 25	Perception and Selectivity	DeFleur, pp. 77-81
8	Fri	Jan. 27	Cognitive Consistency: Balance and Dissonance	Handout 2, Consistency
9	Mon	Jan. 30	More on Cognitive Consistency ** Exam 1 opens in the Testing Center at 9 a.m.	
10	Wed	Feb. 1	Political Science and Mass Media Theory ** Exam 1 closes in the Testing Center at 6 p.m.	DeFleur, pp. 56-69
11	Fri	Feb. 3	Walter Lippmann and Public Opinion * Thesis Assignment Due: Literature Review	DeFleur, pp. 109-120
12	Mon	Feb. 6	The Magic Bullet: Powerful Effects	DeFleur, pp. 122-132
13	Wed	Feb. 8	Propaganda	Handout 3, Propaganda
14	Fri	Feb. 10	More on Propaganda	
15	Mon	Feb. 13	Selective and Limited Effects	DeFleur, pp. 133-147
16	Wed	Feb. 15	Persuasion	Handout 4, Persuasion
17	Fri	Feb. 17	More on Persuasion * Thesis Assignment Due: Rationale and Research Question	
—	Mon	Feb. 20	Presidents Day (no class)	
18	Wed	Feb. 22	Groups and Social Expectations	Handout 5, Groups
19	Fri	Feb. 24	More on Groups and Communication	DeFleur, pp. 217-226
20	Mon	Feb. 27	Media Gatekeeping ** Exam 2 opens in the Testing Center at 9 a.m.	DeFleur, pp. 148-157
21	Wed	Feb. 29	Lazarsfeld and the Two-Step Flow Hypothesis ** Exam 2 closes in the Testing Center at 6 p.m.	DeFleur, pp. 172-177
22	Fri	Mar. 2	More on the Two-Step Flow Hypothesis * Thesis Assignment Due: Research Method	DeFleur, pp. 177-182
23	Mon	Mar. 5	Diffusion of Innovations	DeFleur, pp. 227-235
24	Wed	Mar. 7	More on Diffusion of Innovations/Diffusion of News	DeFleur, pp. 235-240
—	Fri	Mar. 9	Thesis Day (no class)	
—	Mon	Mar. 12	Spring Break (no class)	
—	Wed	Mar. 14	Spring Break (no class)	
—	Fri	Mar. 16	Spring Break (no class)	

SEMESTER SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)

Class	Day	Date	Topic	Reading
25	Mon	Mar. 19	Agenda-Setting	DeFleur, pp. 159-164
26	Wed	Mar. 21	More on Agenda-Setting	DeFleur, pp. 164-171
—	Fri	Mar. 23	Thesis Day (no class)	
27	Mon	Mar. 26	The Knowledge-Gap Hypothesis	Handout 6, Knowledge Gaps
28	Wed	Mar. 28	More on Knowledge Gaps	
29	Fri	Mar. 30	Media Dependency	DeFleur, pp. 343
30	Mon	Apr. 2	Uses and Gratifications ** Exam 3 opens in the Testing Center at 9 a.m.	DeFleur, pp. 183-188
31	Wed	Apr. 4	More on Uses and Gratifications ** Exam 3 closes in the Testing Center at 6 p.m.	DeFleur, pp. 188-194
32	Fri	Apr. 6	The Third-Person Effect	DeFleur, pp. 347
33	Mon	Apr. 9	The Spiral of Silence	DeFleur, pp. 341-343
34	Wed	Apr. 11	Modeling and Social Learning	DeFleur, pp. 206-216
35	Fri	Apr. 13	Cultivation * Thesis Assignment Due: Senior Thesis	DeFleur, pp. 337-341
36	Mon	Apr. 16	Desensitization	DeFleur, pp. 257-269
37	Wed	Apr. 18	More on Desensitization	DeFleur, pp. 269-278
38	Fri	Apr. 20	Marshall McLuhan, Media Determinism, and the Global Village * Thesis Assignment Due: Thesis Revisions (if required)	DeFleur, pp. 335-337
39	Mon	Apr. 23	Thesis Presentations ** Exam 4 opens in the Testing Center at 9 a.m.	
40	Wed	Apr. 25	Thesis Presentations ** Exam 4 closes in the Testing Center at 6 p.m.	
—	Fri	Apr. 27	Study Day (no class)	
—	Thur	May 3	Final Exam, 9 a.m., MC 109 No early final exams; please do not ask.	

* Thesis Assignments

- ✦ Prepare assignments in MS Word (no Google Docs, please); submit them via Canvas **by 5 p.m.** on the due date.
- ✦ Assignments submitted after 5 p.m. on the due date are late and will suffer a 10-percent grade penalty.
- ✦ Assignments that do not adhere to APA Style will be returned ungraded.

** Quarterly Exams

- ✦ Bring a No. 2 pencil and a 100-item Scantron answer sheet to the exam, as well as your SUU Student ID.
- ✦ The Testing Center will not allow you to take an exam for this course without your SUU Student ID.
- ✦ You must arrive at the Testing Center at least an hour before it closes, or you will be allowed to begin the exam.