

## Communication 240: Survey of Mass Communication, Spring 2013

### Contact Information

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### COM240 Spring 2013 Semester Schedule

	<u>Class Time</u>	<u>Contact Hours</u>
Monday:	8:30-10:00am	10:00-11:30am
Wednesday:	12:00-1:30pm	1:30-3:00pm

**Classroom:** Consult electronic signboard

### Introduction

Welcome to COM 240, Survey of Mass Communication! This course will offer you a critical survey of the role played by mass communication in shaping culture. We will analyze individual media institutions in terms of the information they distribute, the entertainment they provide and the influence they bring. Special attention will be paid to the audience-medium relationship and to improving media literacy.

### Course Objectives and Structure

This course has the following goals:

1. Teach how to be active media consumers
2. Illustrate the role that the media play in both shaping and reflecting culture
3. Demonstrate the role audience members play in the mass communication process
4. Provide skillsets for enhancing media literacy

This class will be conducted primarily in a lecture format. However, we will also break from a typical lecture format on a very regular basis to explore communication using other methods of learning such as class discussions, in-class activities and application assignments. A tool I frequently employ for in-class assignments and class examples are clips from television shows and movies – it makes sense to me to utilize mass media to teach mass media. Your mastery of the material from lecture, class discussions and course readings will be evaluated by a number of relatively short written assignments.

Your grades will be regularly posted on the course website. It is your responsibility to monitor your progress on the course website, as well as to check your school email regularly for updates.

### Required Textbook

*Introduction to Mass Communication*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, Stanley J. Baran (2013)

This book will be available to you at the campus book store. Please read this book – particularly, read each relevant chapter prior to coming to class. While I cover much of the material presented in this text, I do not make it a practice to “teach a book.” Therefore, to maximize the value of the class, be sure to both attend class and read the Baran text.

### Assessment and Grading

There will be Individual Application Assignments and In-Class Group Assignments in this class. Your grade will be figured by dividing the number of points you have earned by the total number of possible points for this class (300) and then applying the appropriate letter grade to the percentage. Extra credit will not be available in this class.

Once you have calculated your percentage, you can determine the letter grade you will earn in the class. **Please note that I use a typical grading scheme found at SUNY at Buffalo.** Here is a list of assignments and points possible:

Journal #1: Books / Newspapers / Magazines	30
Journal #2: Film / Music / Television	30
Journal #3: Videogames / Internet	30
Journal #4: Wrap-up	30
In-Class Activity #1	20
In-Class Activity #2	20
In-Class Activity #3	20
In-Class Activity #4	20
In-Class Activity #5	20
In-Class Activity #6	20
In-Class Activity #7	20
In-Class Activity #8	20
MERIT (punctuality, participation, attendance)	20

A	100 – 95	B+	89 – 87	C+	79 – 77	D+	69 – 67
A-	94 – 90	B	86 – 83	C	76 – 73	D	66 – 60
		B-	82 – 80	C-	72 – 70	F	59 or less

### Assignments

**Journals:** A description of all four journals can be found on UBLearn. These journals are to be submitted online through the UBLearn Assignments tool. Please do not email your journals to me. On UBLearn, you will find specific parameters for how much information you should write for each section. Please don't exceed these limits! Consolidating your writing is a good academic skill to master.

These journals should come from YOUR experiences with mass media and should contain YOUR opinions. Therefore, it is perfectly acceptable to use the first person (I, me, my) when writing.

**In-Class Group Assignments:** The In-Class Group Assignments are designed to be started and completed in class as a group of 5-6 students, with the exception of taking them home and typing them. They will be described in class on the day they are to occur. One assignment should be turned in for your group. Please underline each group members' surname, as indicated by UBLearn. ***This enables me to grade papers far quicker AND ensure that everyone gets a grade.***

Working together as a group is a skill essential to your future careers. Excuses or complaints regarding your involvement or group members' involvement in a particular assignment will not be tolerated.

### Assignment policies and procedures

Each assignment takes about a week to evaluate and grade. Late work will take longer.

In-class assignments are to be turned in as a hard-copy. All assignments **must** be typed and formatted in **Times New Roman, 12 point**.

You are expected to complete assignments by the due date indicated on the course schedule. Late assignments will receive an automatic 30% grade reduction and will only be accepted up to one week after the due date. Therefore, it is recommended that if you anticipate missing a class in which work is due, come to see me during my contact hours prior to your absence and turn your work in early. This is especially advisable for in-class assignments. Since all group members receive the same grade for the in-class assignments, a late penalty of 30% is shared by everyone! This late work policy is necessary so that I can return graded assignments in a reasonable amount of time.

## Course Policies

**Attendance:** You are expected to not only be in class on time, but to also make appropriate contributions to class discussion. ***If you miss an in-class assignment, you will not be allowed to make it up.*** This policy is meant to ensure fairness to all students.

It is your responsibility to follow through to learn material missed due to absence.

**Punctuality:** Please be on time. While “life happens” and accidental lateness happens to everyone on occasion (myself included), chronic lateness is disruptive and disrespectful and will not be tolerated. You are expected to be in the classroom and seated prior to the start time of class.

**Etiquette:** *Please silence your cell phones before coming to class.* While laptops/tablets are welcomed in the classroom as note-taking devices, using them to watch videos, instant message or read email is **not** welcomed.

Also along these lines, sleeping, carrying on private conversations, reading outside materials etc., is noticed by me and by your classmates. This behavior is disrespectful, disruptive, reflects poorly on you and will definitely affect your grade. Likewise, enthusiastic, well-intentioned and relevant participation keeps the class interesting and moving!

**Classroom condition:** Please practice carry-in/carry-out when you are in the classroom – it is my request that we leave the room in the condition in which we found it or better, if possible.

**Respect:** **Although you can expect some lively discussion in this class, students are expected to respect gender, sexual identity, race, religion, and other similarities and differences.**

## General UB Program Policies

*“Attendance and active participation is expected by all students in every class. Students are expected to be present for the entire duration of each class. Tardiness to or absenting oneself during class will result in a deduction from the attendance and participation portion of the final grade.*

*“Late assignments, if accepted, will be penalized.*

*“Students who are absent from a midterm exam must request a make-up exam from the course instructor; a make-up will be given only if there is an appropriate, documented reason for absence from the exam (such as an MC); any disputes regarding the validity of the reason or the documentation may be referred to the student advisor.*

*“Students who are absent from a final exam must formally request a make-up exam in writing to the student help desk within 24 hours of the original exam. Supporting documents must be provided. Make up final exams will not be granted automatically but will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account all the relevant circumstances. Disputes may be referred to the resident director.*

*“There will be no make ups for other course assessments, and students who are absent from such assessments will receive a zero.”*

## UB Statement of Principle on Academic Integrity

*“The University at Buffalo has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for appropriate citation of sources, and for respect for others’ academic endeavors. By placing their name on academic work, students certify the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements.*

*“Additionally, students are expected to understand and abide completely by the following guidelines for academic integrity in all UB courses:*

*“Plagiarism, cheating, and other incidents of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic failing grade for the course. Depending on the severity of the violation, your case may also be reported to UB for further investigation and may result in expulsion from the university.*

*“Plagiarism consists of copying work from another source without giving proper citations. You must not copy information from printed materials, internet sources, or from the work of other students. If you are uncertain about how to submit your work correctly, consult the instructor immediately.*

*“Any claim of ignorance of the rules of academic integrity by any student is unacceptable.”*

**A Final Note:**

This syllabus should be viewed as a contract. In reading this syllabus and maintaining your registration in this course, you are indicating that you accept its terms and conditions.

Course schedule (Subject to change upon instructors' discretion and/or needs of students)

	Day	Date	Time	Topic	Due dates	
<b>Week 1</b>	Mon	14-Jan	8.30 - 10.00	Course introduction		
	Wed	16-Jan	12.00 - 1.30	1: Mass Com., Culture & Mass Media		
<b>Week 2</b>	Mon	21-Jan	8.30 - 10.00	2: Convergence & Reshaping of Mass Com.		
	Wed	23-Jan	12.00 - 1.30	<i>In-class #1</i>		
<b>Week 3</b>	Mon	28-Jan	8.30 - 10.00	3: Books	In-Class #1	
	Wed	30-Jan	12.00 - 1.30	4: Newspapers		
<b>Week 4</b>	Mon	4-Feb	8.30 - 10.00	<i>In-class #2</i>		
	Wed	6-Feb	12.00 - 1.30	5: Magazines	In-Class #2	
<b>Week 5</b>	Mon	11-Feb	<b>Chinese New Year: No classes</b>			
	Wed	13-Feb				
<b>Week 6</b>	Mon	18-Feb	8.30 - 10.00	6: Film	<b>JOURNAL #1</b>	
	Wed	20-Feb	12.00 - 1.30	<i>In-class #3</i>		
<b>Week 7</b>	Mon	25-Feb	8.30 - 10.00	7: Radio, Recording, and Popular Music	In-Class #3	
	Wed	27-Feb	12.00 - 1.30	<i>In-class #4</i>		
<b>Week 8</b>	Mon	4-Mar	8.30 - 10.00	8: Television, Cable, and Mobile Video	In-Class #4	
	Wed	6-Mar	12.00 - 1.30	<i>In-class #5</i>	<b>JOURNAL #2</b>	
<b>Week 9</b>	Mon	11-Mar	8.30 - 10.00	9: Videogames	In-Class #5	
	Wed	13-Mar	12.00 - 1.30	10: The Internet and the World Wide Web		
<b>Week 10</b>	Mon	18-Mar	8.30 - 10.00	11: Public Relations	<b>JOURNAL #3</b>	
	Wed	20-Mar	12.00 - 1.30	<i>In-class #6</i>		
<b>Week 11</b>	Mon	25-Mar	8.30 - 10.00	12: Advertising	In-Class #6	
	Wed	27-Mar	12.00 - 1.30	<i>In-class #7</i>		
<b>Week 12</b>	Mon	1-Apr	8.30 - 10.00	13: Theories & Effects of Mass Com.	In-Class #7	
	Wed	3-Apr	12.00 - 1.30	<i>In-class #8</i>		
<b>Week 13</b>	Mon	8-Apr	8.30 - 10.00	14: Media Freedom, Regulation, and Ethics	In-Class #8	
	Wed	10-Apr	12.00 - 1.30	15: Global Media		
<b>Week 14</b>	Mon	15-Apr	8.30 - 10.00	<i>"Final Thoughts"</i>	<b>JOURNAL #4</b>	