

Course Syllabus

Class Meeting Time and Place

10 a.m. to 10:50 a.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Jan. 12 to May 4, 2009
Loftin Student Center (LSC) 209, second floor, Journalism-Photography Department

Instructor

Ms. Susan A. Merkner, M.A.

Office hours: Mondays: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 Tuesdays: 12:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.
 Wednesdays: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 Fridays: 11 a.m.-noon
 and by appointment

Office location: Loftin Student Center 212-B (inside The Ranger newsroom)
Phone and voice mail: 733-2874 (office direct line) or 733-2870 (department)
Fax: 733-2868
E-mail: smerkner@mail.accd.edu

Catalogue Description/Prerequisites

Introduction to Mass Communications, COMM 1307 (3-3-0).

Prerequisite: None; students should be eligible to take ENGL 1301; the courses may be taken concurrently.

Description: This course develops an understanding of the interrelationship of the mass media in society and examines the influences governing the development of mass communication processes. It provides an overview of the mass media: their functions, structures, supports and influences.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend and participate in all class sessions and are responsible for the content of each class. Students are required to arrive on time and attend the complete class to be counted present. The instructor takes roll at the start of each class. Students who arrive late are recorded tardy; two tardies count as one absence. Those who miss more than six class sessions will be dropped with a grade of WN.

Texts

Required: *The Media of Mass Communication* (9th edition) by John Vivian (Unbound Books a la Cart), plus accompanying My Communication Lab Course Compass access code included with purchase of textbook; ISBN: 0205611877. Students MUST buy this edition by ISBN number, and register online for My Communication Lab by Jan. 20 at the latest. Use all capital letters when entering access code. Students also are required to download additional materials from the San Antonio College PALS Web site: <http://sacportal.accd.edu/cp/home/loginf>.

Instruction

Techniques include lecture, video presentations, case studies, Power Point presentations, Web sites, readings, guest speakers, enrichment assignments and group activities.

Course Content

The purpose of this course is to increase the student's understanding of communication: interpersonal, group and mass. We also will look at media ethics and media law before a closer inside glimpse at each of the major mass media: newspapers, magazines, radio, television, the Internet, plus public relations and advertising. Emphasis during the study will be on history, organization and career opportunities.

Grades

Class assignments and exams carry a value of 100 points. An absence will translate as a zero grade for that day's work. The instructor does not accept late assignments.

Course grades will be determined as follows:

Journal: **10 percent**

Enrichment assignments (5 homework exercises at 2 percent EACH – creativity, letter to editor, radio, magazine and advertising): **10 percent**

Chapter exams (10 tests at 3 percent each): **30 percent**

Midterm exam (take-home exam based on classroom instruction): **10 percent**

Mass comm career project (interview/paper/oral presentation): **15 percent**

Final exam (take-home exam based on classroom instruction): **15 percent**

Attendance and class participation: **10 percent**

Testing Requirements

Online exams (pre-test, post-test and chapter exam) must be completed for each of the following textbook chapters: 1, 16, 18, 19, 11, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12 and 13. Chapter exams are timed (30 minutes each) and must be completed by no later than 5 p.m. Tuesday on the dates provided by the instructor at the first class meeting. Students must complete the pre-test and post-test for each chapter exam to receive credit for the exam. Pre-tests and post-tests are recorded as completion grades; chapter exams are recorded numerically. Students who complete all 11 chapter exams online will have their lowest exam score dropped, and each of the remaining 10 exams will count as 3 percent of the course grade. No chapter exam scores will be dropped for students who fail to take one or more of the 11 scheduled exams. Resolution of student technical problems must be accomplished by 5 p.m. on the Monday before a chapter is due.

Standards

All work done outside of class must be written on a computer and printed in black ink. Printing enrichment assignments before they are due in class is the responsibility of the student; the instructor will not make printouts for students.

Accuracy is one of the primary goals of a responsible communicator. All assignments for this course will be graded for content, form, word usage, mechanics and spelling. Proofread your work. Get help, if you need it.

On ALL assignments, provide a cover sheet with the student's full name, the class day(s) and hour, and the assignment title on separate lines.

No late assignments will be accepted!

Learning Outcomes and Performance Objectives

Learning Outcome 1: The student, whether a communications major or simply a media consumer, will be cognizant of developments, components, criticisms and personalities in the development of electronic and print media, and the ethical, legal and market environment in which they exist.

Performance Objectives/Methods of Measurement:

1. The student will demonstrate knowledge of strengths and weaknesses of the various methods of news coverage, including newsworthiness and reporting styles, by completing written examination(s) and/or enrichment assignments.

2. The student will demonstrate and understand the importance of laws, rules, self-regulation and ethical decisions in mass media by completing written examinations, participating in case studies and examination of ethical and legal dilemmas.

3. The student will be able to identify major individuals involved in the development of measurable mass media by completing written examinations, participating in organized class discussions and completing enrichment assignments such as writing a letter to the editor.

Learning Outcome 2: The student will be cognizant of various forms of communication in today's information society, including nonverbal, interpersonal and mass forms.

Performance Objectives/Methods of Measurement:

1. The student will demonstrate knowledge of communication models, interpersonal communication, nonverbal communication and the creative process by completing written examinations, writing a journal and participating in organized class presentations.
2. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the selection and packaging of news and information by completing written examinations and participating in organized class/group discussions of news selection and placement according to the demographics and psychographics of the San Antonio news market.
3. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the dynamics of photography and its history by completing written examinations and completing enrichment assignments.
4. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the history and development of public relations and its move toward professionalism by completing written examinations and participating in an organized class/group discussion of case studies of successful public relations campaigns and by using the language of public relations and public relations techniques.
5. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the history and development of advertising and the relationship between advertising and mass media by completing written examinations and participating in organized class/group discussions of advertising campaigns for given products and specific target audiences, based on demographics and psychographics, and by using the language of advertising.

Learning Outcome 3: The student will demonstrate knowledge of various career opportunities in mass media.

Performance Objectives/Methods of Measurement:

1. The student will demonstrate knowledge of his/her chosen career path by completing an interview of at least 30 minutes with a professional in the student's chosen career and reporting on that interview either with a written report, as well as an in-class presentation involving a Power Point, student-made video or other creative materials.
2. The student will demonstrate knowledge of techniques of a job search by completing written examinations and participating in organized group discussions of techniques such as writing a résumé, preparing for a job interview and building a portfolio.
3. The student will demonstrate knowledge of professionals in journalism and photography by exposure to speakers in the department and from various local media outlets.

College, Department and Instructor Requirements

College requirements: A written, comprehensive final examination, not to exceed two and one-half hours in length, shall be given at the end of each semester for each course at the regularly scheduled time. Any exceptions to these requirements must be approved by the appropriate dean. Other examinations are given at the discretion of the instructor. A student who must be absent from a final examination should petition that instructor for permission to postpone the examination. A student absent without permission from a final examination is graded "F." Postponed examinations result in a grade of "I." The final exam must be taken within 120 calendar days from the end of the semester or the grade automatically becomes an "F."

Department requirements: A student wishing to withdraw from this class during the semester must process a formal withdrawal through the Office of Admissions and Records. Failure to withdraw formally will result in the assignment of a failing grade (F) for the course. Students may drop the class by obtaining and correctly completing the required paperwork by visiting the Office of Admissions and Records or the administrative office of the Journalism-Photography Department, Room 204-A of Loftin Student Center.

Instructor requirements:

- * Read the newspaper daily or at least on Sunday
- * Read a magazine of your choice
- * Watch television news occasionally and be aware of television trends
- * Listen to radio
- * Watch commercials on television -- form opinions as to your favorites and the most effective and least effective ads
- * Complete all assignments on time

College Policies

A. San Antonio College does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age or disability with respect to access, employment programs or services.

B. Students are urged not to bring children to either a class or a lab. Minors under the age of 12 must not be left unattended on campus.

C. ADA Statement: As per Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, if accommodation is needed, contact the Office of DisABILITY Support Services, CAC 124C, Phone: (210) 733-2347.

D. A Rapid Response Team exists for the purpose of responding to emergencies. If you have a disability that will require assistance in the event of a building evacuation, notify Disability Support Services, Chance Academic Center 124C, Phone: (210) 733-2347.

E. Academic Dishonesty: Students may be subject to disciplinary proceedings resulting in an academic penalty or disciplinary penalty for academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism and collusion. For additional information refer to the "Student Code of Conduct" in the San Antonio College Bulletin.

F. San Antonio College Attendance Policy: Regular and punctual attendance at all classes and laboratories, day and/or evening, is required. A student absent for any reason is responsible for all work missed. Both tardiness and early departure from class are forms of absenteeism. The instructor establishes the policy with regard to each. Absences of each student are recorded without exception. The counting of absences begins on the first day of class. A student absent the equivalent of two weeks of instruction in a 16-week semester may be dropped by the instructor. If a student is dropped from a class for excessive absences, the instructor will record a grade of "WN" (withdrawn for non-attendance). It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the withdrawals have been submitted.

G. ACCD Department of Public Safety emergency phone numbers:

ACCD DPS Emergency Phone: (210) 222-0911
 ACCD DPS General Phone: (210) 485-0099
 ACCD DPS Weather Phone: (210) 485-0189 (For information on college closures)

H. Students also must abide by the policies, procedures and rules set forth in the "Student Code of Conduct" and all other policies set forth in the San Antonio College Bulletin.

Classroom Behavior/Electronics/Smoking/Food and Drink

All cell phones, pagers, PDAs, music players, laptop computers and other electronic devices must be turned off before class begins and remain off during class. Any student who violates this policy may be dropped from the course. Please refrain from eating or drinking (except water) in the classroom. Excessive trips outside the classroom for visits to the restroom or water fountain or for cell phone use will not be tolerated. San Antonio College is a smoke-free campus.

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