

USC Annenberg School of Communication
COM 203: Communication and Mass Media (4 units)
Spring 2016
Schedule # 20366R

Professor: Dr. Carmen M. Lee

Email: carmenml@usc.edu

Office Hours: Tues., 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Wed. 10:00-11:30 a.m., & by appt.

Office: ASC 121-F

Office Telephone: (213) 740-9897

Meeting Time: **Mon. & Wed., 3:30-4:50 p.m.**

Class Location: ASC G26

<i>Teaching Assistants</i>	<i>Email Address</i>	<i>Office Hour(s)</i>
Ruthie Kelly	TBA	TBA
Jieun Shin	TBA	TBA
Chi Zhang	TBA	TBA

*All Teaching Assistants are located in ASC G4 (Annenberg School of Communication, Ground Floor)

Course Description

This course takes an empirical look at the impact of the mass media on individuals and society. First, an overview of the history of media effects research will be presented. Focus will be placed on the paradigm shifts in media effects and the implications of these changes for understanding how individuals are influenced by mass media. Second, the major theoretical perspectives used to explain the influences of the mass media (e.g., priming theory, social cognitive theory) as well as the methods employed to test such effects (e.g., content analysis, surveys, experiments, longitudinal studies) will be discussed. Third and most importantly, a substantial portion of the course content will focus on the intended and unintended effects of different types of media content on individuals and society.

Course Objectives

The major objective of this course is to provide an extensive examination of the effects of the mass media. By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Understand an array of media effects theories and how they help explain research findings;
- Discuss the ways in which mass media effects is studied;
- Illustrate how media selection and avoidance habits influence individuals on a cognitive, affective, physiological, and behavioral level;
- Apply empirically derived knowledge to everyday media situations;
- Understand how media effects research can be used to inform policy issues;
- Recognize some of the unanswered questions in the field and offer possible answers to those questions.

Required Readings/Materials:

Sparks, G. G. (2015). *Media effects research: A basic overview* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

All additional required readings/course materials will be made available on Blackboard (Bb).

Recommended Supplemental Materials:

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Course Requirements

Responsible attendance and participation is expected.

This course depends on each participant for its energy and vitality! Students are expected to: (1) read the assigned readings *before* class/section, (2) come to each class/section prepared to discuss the subject matter, and (3) actively participate in the class/section. Students who do miss a class or discussion section are expected to have read the material and actively find out what they missed. You should approach another classmate for missed notes and, if clarification is needed, meet with your Instructor or Graduate Teaching Assistant.

Instructor lecture notes or PowerPoint slides are not provided to students in this course.

Discussion sections are an important component of the course. Discussion sections provide an opportunity to clarify course material, but also allow for more in-depth discussion and analysis of some of the major themes addressed in the course. Your Graduate Teaching Assistant, as the section leader, will provide you with more information about what will occur in the discussion sections. After three (3) absences in discussion section, your final grade *may* be reduced by 1% for **each** subsequent absence.

1. Exams

There will be three (3) exams given throughout the course. The exams are NOT cumulative; however concepts do build upon each other. Both lecture material and assigned course readings will be covered on the exam; therefore, attending all lectures and perusal of all assigned readings is essential. Exams *may* consist of true/false, multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions. There will be a review prior to each exam. All exams are to be taken in class on the designated exam dates. Your exams will not be returned to you, but you are welcome to peruse your exam during office hours or a scheduled appointment. Each exam is worth 25% of your final grade.

In the rare event that an **extreme** emergency arises (i.e., you are in the hospital, there was a death in the family, etc.), it is your responsibility to: (1) inform your Instructor prior to the scheduled exam time, and (2) provide the Instructor with verifiable written documentation of the emergency (e.g., medical note from a certified physician). If your excuse is deemed valid and can be verified, you will be allowed to make up the missed exam (*in a timely manner*) at the discretion of the Instructor. Exam I will be held on **February 8, 2016**; Exam II will be held on **March 07, 2016**; Exam III will be held on **May 6, 2016 (2:00-4:00 p.m.)**.

2. Reaction Papers

You will be assigned a series of **in-class** reaction papers. A reaction paper features your intellectual reaction to a mass media topic covered in lecture. You might be asked to: (a) juxtapose theories/research findings/arguments presented, (b) discuss potential implications for theory, research, or “real world” application, or (c) critique an idea and suggest an alternative. The reaction papers will vary in length from one-half to one full page. Reaction papers are not announced and are dependent on attendance (i.e., you must be present in class). Reaction papers are worth 25% of your final grade.

Excused/Unexcused Absences

All excuses are not valid. Missing a class or discussion section because of a job interview, work obligation, vacation, or wedding is not a valid excuse. A class/discussion section missed because of a religious holyday obligation, student-athlete university-sponsored away event, death in the family, or a personal medical emergency is a valid excuse.

However, excused absences are **ONLY** provided under the following circumstances: (1) the student must contact the Instructor before the missed class with a valid excuse (see list above) and (2) provide the Instructor with verifiable written documentation of the valid excuse (e.g., a medical note from a certified physician, a funeral program, a student-athlete advisor letter). Regardless of the validity of the excuse, students who fail to contact the Instructor before the missed class/section will not receive an “excused” absence. If an excused absence is provided, students will be allowed to make up a missed assignment (e.g., reaction paper) in a timely manner.

Missing or Inaccurate Score Inquiries/Disputes

Scores for all assignments and exams are regularly updated on Blackboard. You are responsible for notifying the Instructor and/or GTA **within one (1) week** of a score posting if you think a score is missing or inaccurate. If you fail to inquire/notify us of any discrepancy, missing score, or contest a score within one week of the date the score is posted, no further changes will be made.

Extra Credit Opportunities

There *may* be extra credit opportunities available. Extra credit is not guaranteed as it is dependent on the need of research participants in departmental research or a relevant Annenberg School of Communication sponsored event. If extra credit opportunities are made available, students can receive 2 points for each half-hour of participation (max. 8 points).

Assessment:

You will be assessed on the following requirements:

<u>Requirements</u>	<u>% Of Final Grade</u>	<u>Point Equivalent</u>	<u>Date Due</u>
Exam I		100	02/08/16
Exam II	75%	100	03/07/16
Exam III		100	05/06/16
Reaction Papers	25%	100	vary
<i>Total</i>		<i>400 pts. possible</i>	

IMPORTANT: Grades are based on the work completed from the first and last day of class. Per USC policy, “No student is allowed to re-take a final examination or do extra work in a course after the semester has ended for purposes of improving his or her grade.”

Grading

The following scale will be used to assign final course grades:

<u>Points</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Grade</u>
376-400	94-100	A	292-307	73-76	C
360-375	90-93	A-	280-291	70-72	C-
348-359	87-89	B+	268-279	67-69	D+
332-347	83-86	B	252-267	63-66	D
320-331	80-82	B-	240-251	60-62	D-
308-319	77-79	C+	0-239	≤59	F

Course PoliciesAcademic Integrity Policy

The Annenberg School of Communication maintains a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School of Communication. There are no exceptions to the school’s policy (University of Southern California Catalogue, 2015-2016).

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles as set forth in [SCampus](#).

The university does not tolerate discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment. You are encouraged to report incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu> or to the Department of Public Safety <http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/departement/departement-public-safety>. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community (e.g., a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member) can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential supports, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> describes reporting options and other resources.

Disability Service Accommodations

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Disability Services and Programs (DSP). You need to make a request with DSP for each academic term that accommodations are desired. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you are encouraged to do this **no later than the first week of class**. Students taking courses in the Annenberg School of Communication will need to share and discuss their letters with their Instructor and forward a letter to the Office of the Director (ATTN: DSP). Please note that accommodations are not retroactive,

and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your Instructor with an accommodation letter from DSP. Your cooperation is appreciated. Disability Services & Program contact information: (213) 740-0776 or http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html

Student-Athlete Travel Excuse Letters

Prior to a university-sponsored away competition, Student-Athletes are responsible for providing their GTA or Instructor with a Competition Excuse Letter (provided by their academic counselor) for the classes missed while on the road (i.e., excused absence). It is the responsibility of the Student-Athlete to provide the letter prior to leaving on their trip and to make arrangements for a make-up of any missed assignments or exams.

Classroom Comportment

Students are expected to engage in behaviors that enhance the learning environment. The Instructor/GTA is responsible for optimizing learning for not only individual students but for all students in the course. Thus, disruptive behaviors will not be tolerated. These behaviors include: not listening, pretending to listen while secretly texting or using electronic devices, speaking without being recognized, making fun or otherwise berating/disparaging the remarks of another person, etc. **Disruptive behaviors may adversely affect your overall course grade.**

Laptops/Electronic Devices

Laptops/Tablets may be used during class for note-taking purposes only. Please do not use devices for any purpose unrelated to our class. Other electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, iPods, etc.) should be turned off/silenced and put away. If you need to use your phone for any reason, please excuse yourself from the classroom.

Recording Policy

Students may not record any portion of a classroom lecture, discussion, or review **without the prior and explicit written permission of the course instructor**. The unauthorized use of any form of device to audiotape, photograph, video-record or otherwise reproduce (in whole or in part) lectures, course notes, or teaching materials provided by the instructor is forbidden. Students registered with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) who are unable to take or read notes have the right to audio record class lectures for their personal study only. Lectures recorded for this purpose may not be shared with other people without the consent of the Instructor. Furthermore, permission granted for recording of a lecture, discussion, or review also requires the observation of privacy guidelines and regulations for students in the class whose presence or statements might also be recorded.

Intellectual Property

The syllabus, lectures, handouts, and Blackboard content fall under personal and university-wide intellectual property policies. Anything other than personal use (e.g., organized recording, duplication, or distribution) on your part represents a violation of copyright and fair use laws.

Incomplete Work (IN)

A mark of incomplete is used to reflect work not completed because of documented illness or some other emergency occurring after the twelfth week of the semester; arrangements for the IN and its completion should be initiated by the student and agreed by the Instructor prior to the final exam. Incompletes will be given only when all University requirements pertaining to them are met. Marks of IN must be completed within one year from the date of the assignment of the IN (USC Catalogue, 2015-2016).

Turnitin.com

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. You may submit your papers in such a way that no personal identifying information is included.

Consultations

You are more than welcome to contact me in my office, email me, attend office hours, or set up a meeting time. Please do not wait until the night before an assignment is due or an exam to realize that you do not understand it. If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Additional Resources

Student Counseling Services: (213) 740-7711 or <http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

Student Counseling Services Counseling Center provides mental health treatment for students as well as assistance with developmental issues (e.g., intimate relationships, cultural adjustment, and identity development). Moreover, they provide assistance to students struggling with emotional urgent concerns. Student Counseling Services is located in Engemann Student Health Center, 1031 W. 34th Street.

ITS Customer Support Center (CSC): (213) 740-5555 or <http://itservices.usc.edu/students/>

The ITS Customer Support Center (CSC) provides support to the USC community for connecting to the USC Network and using supported applications. For help with network connectivity and software, contact CSC. Walk-in support is available in Leavey Library's Information Commons.

USC Campus Cruiser Service: (213) 740-4911 or <http://transnet.usc.edu/index.php/campus-cruiser-program/>

If you work, study, or take classes at night, the USC Campus Cruiser Service offers either a walking or vehicle escort to your destination. Services on the University Park Campus are available from 6:00 p.m. to 2:45 a.m., 7 days a week. You can make a request for a campus escort online at <https://usc.ridecell.com/request> or through a smartphone app.

Course Schedule*

	Date	Topic	Reading(s)
Week 1	Jan. 11	Introduction to the Course	Syllabus
	Jan. 13 <i>Jan. 13</i>	Understanding Mass Communication & Media Effects <i>Discussion Section</i>	^T Sparks (Chpt. 3, pp. 72-73 <u>only</u>)
Week 2	Jan. 18	No Class - Martin Luther King Jr. Day	-----
	Jan. 20 <i>Jan. 20</i>	Historical Overview of Media Effects Research <i>Discussion Section</i>	^T Sparks (Chpt. 3, pp. 54-72 <u>only</u>)
Week 3	Jan. 25	Scientific Study of Media Research	^T Sparks (Chpt. 1)
	Jan. 27 <i>Jan. 27</i>	Scientific Study of Media Research (cont.). <i>Discussion Section</i>	^T Sparks (Chpt. 2)
Week 4	Feb. 1	Audiences: Identification, Interaction, & Gratification	^T Sparks (Chpt. 4)
	Feb. 3 <i>Feb. 3</i>	Unique Audiences: Children and Adolescents <i>Discussion Section</i>	^T Sparks (Chpt. 7); ^{Bb} Strasburger & Wilson (2014)
Week 5	Feb. 8	Exam I	-----
	Feb. 10 <i>Feb. 10</i>	Violence and Mass Media: Content & Effects <i>Discussion Section</i>	^T Sparks (Chpt. 5);
Week 6	Feb. 15	No Class – President’s Day	-----
	Feb. 17 <i>Feb. 17</i>	Violence and Mass Media: Content & Effects (cont.). <i>Discussion Section</i>	^{Bb} Huesmann & Taylor (2006)
Week 7	Feb. 22	Sex and Mass Media: Content & Effects	^T Sparks (Chpt. 6)
	Feb. 24 <i>Feb. 24</i>	Sex and Mass Media: Content & Effects (cont.). <i>Discussion Section</i>	^{Bb} Collins et al. (2004)
Week 8	Feb. 29	Stereotypes and Mass Media: Gender	^T Sparks (Chpt. 10, pp. 253-265 <u>only</u>);
	Mar. 2 <i>Mar. 2</i>	Stereotypes and Mass Media: Gender (cont.). <i>Discussion Section</i>	^{Bb} Smith, et al. (2015) ^{Bb} Grabe, et al. (2008)
Week 9	Mar. 7	Exam II	-----
	Mar. 9 <i>Mar. 9</i>	Mass Media and the Social Identity Approach <i>Discussion Section</i>	-----
Spring Break (March 14 – March 19)			
Week 10	Mar. 21	Stereotypes and Mass Media: Minority Groups	^{Bb} Bogle (2004); ^{Bb} Ramirez-Berg (2002)
	Mar. 23 <i>Mar. 23</i>	Stereotypes and Mass Media: Minority Groups (cont.). <i>Discussion Section</i>	^{Bb} Monk et al. (2010)
Week 11	Mar. 28	Stereotypes and Mass Media: Minority Groups (cont.)	-----
	Mar. 30 <i>Mar. 30</i>	Stereotypes and Mass Media: LGBT <i>Discussion Section</i>	^{Bb} Calzo & Ward (2009)
Week 12	Apr. 4	News and Politics	^T Sparks (Chpt. 10, pp. 266-278 <u>only</u>);
	Apr. 6 <i>Apr. 6</i>	News and Politics (cont.). <i>Discussion Section</i>	^{Bb} Mastro et al. (2009) ^T Sparks (Chpt. 9)
Week 13	Apr. 11	Persuasion	^T Sparks (Chpt. 8)
	Apr. 13 <i>Apr. 13</i>	Advertisement and Promotion <i>Discussion Section</i>	^{Bb} Wilcox et al. (2004; pp. 1-10 <u>only</u>)
Week 14	Apr. 18	Mass Media and Health: Tobacco & Alcohol	^{Bb} Bryant et al. (2013)
	Apr. 20 <i>Apr. 20</i>	Mass Media and Health: Campaigns <i>Discussion Section</i>	^{Bb} Austin (2014)
Week 15	Apr. 25	Diffusion of Innovation & New Technology	^T Sparks (Chpt. 11)
	Apr. 27 <i>Apr. 27</i>	Course Wrap-Up <i>Discussion Section</i>	-----
Finals Week		Exam III (Friday, May 6; 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.)	

*Course schedule/content subject to change at Instructor discretion

^TCourse Textbook (Sparks)^{Bb}Blackboard Reading