

USC Annenberg School of Communication
COMM 313: Communication and Mass Media (4 units)
Spring 2018
Schedule # 20499R

Professor: Dr. Carmen M. Lee

Email: carmenml@usc.edu

Office Hours: Tues. and Thurs., 10:30-12:00 noon,
Wed. 10:00-11:30 a.m., & by appt.

Office: ASC 121-F

Office Telephone: (213) 740-9897

Meeting Time: **Tues. & Thurs., 12:30-1:50 p.m.**

Class Location: **ANN L105A**

Teaching Assistant

Andrea Alarcon

Do Own (Donna) Kim

Email Address

alar450@usc.edu

doownkim@usc.edu

Office Hour(s)

TBA

TBA

*All Teaching Assistants are located in ASC G4 (Annenberg School of Communication, Front Lobby- 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

1. Class Participation

This course depends on each participant for its energy and vitality! Students are expected to: (1) read the assigned readings *before* class, (2) come to each class prepared to discuss the subject matter, and (3) actively participate in the class. Participation does not just mean talking! Good participation involves coming to class on time with questions about the readings to share with the class, volunteering answers to questions that are insightful, actively listening to others' contribution to discussion, and moving the discussion along toward a shared understanding.

Weekly attendance is expected and essential for participation credit. Based on both objective (quantifiable; e.g., class attendance, speaking in class, attending office hours/scheduled appointments) and subjective (qualitative; e.g., contributing meaningful questions/answers, illustrating comprehension of course material) assessment, participation scores shall be at the discretion of the Instructor. The ‘average’ participation score is 15 points; noteworthy participation will receive more points. Class participation is worth 5% of your grade.

Students who miss a class 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.

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

2. 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 erudition 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 20% 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 06, 2018**; Exam II will be held on **March 06, 2018**; Exam III will be held on **May 09, 2018 (2:00 - 4:00 p.m.).**

3. Reaction Papers

You will be assigned a series of reaction papers. A reaction paper features your intellectual reaction to a mass media topic covered in lecture/readings. 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 2 to 5 double-spaced, typed pages. All reaction paper descriptions are presented on Blackboard. The reaction papers are due: **#1: Feb. 02 (Week 4); #2: Mar. 09 (Week 9); #3: Mar. 30 (Week 11); #4: Apr. 24 (Week 15).** Reaction papers are worth 35% of your final grade.

Excused/Unexcused Absences

All excuses are not valid. Missing a class 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 in a timely manner.

Grading Timeframe and Missing or Inaccurate Score Inquiries/Disputes

For effective learning, students should receive timely feedback on assignments and exams. Therefore, every attempt will be made to grade assignments/exams and post grades within a week (7 days). Scores for all assignments and exams are regularly updated on Blackboard. You are responsible for notifying the Instructor **within one (1) week** of a score posting if you think a score is missing or inaccurate. Moreover, you only have this period of time to contest a score on an assignment/exam. 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> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Class Participation | 5% | 20 | <i>weekly</i> |
| Exam I | | 80 | 02/06/18 |
| Exam II | 60% | 80 | 03/06/18 |
| Exam III | | 80 | 05/09/18 |
| Reaction Papers (4) | 35% | 140 | 02/02, 03/09, 03/30, 04/24 |
| <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 [or their] 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, 2017-2018).

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/department/department-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 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.

Email Policy

Email *can be* an effective communication tool. However, it also can produce more confusion than clarity and be an inefficient use of time. Emails should be limited to quick questions and scheduling appointments; they should not be seen as an alternative to attending class lectures, office hours, or a scheduled appointment. Before emailing, make sure you consult the course syllabus, handouts, and the course website to see if the answer to your question is there. Although responses may be provided quickly, you should give us 48 hours to reply to your email. If you do not receive a response within 48 hours, please follow-up via email or in person.

Classroom Comportment

Students are expected to engage in behaviors that enhance the learning environment. The Instructor 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 as this may result in a suspension of use by the entire class for the semester. 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, 2017-2018).

Turnitin.com

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers might 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.

LiveSafe Mobile Safety App: <http://dps.usc.edu/services/safety-app/>

Managed by the USC Department of Public Safety and the USC Department of Emergency, this free downloadable app [Google or Apple] can be used to initiate contact with emergency responders around both USC campuses. The features include: immediate "push button" calls to DPS, easy reporting for suspicious activity or crimes in progress, and location services to notify friends of your route through campus.

Course Schedule*

| | Date | Topic | Reading(s) |
|---|--------------------|--|---|
| Week 1 | Jan. 09 Jan. 11 | Introduction to the Course Understanding Mass Communication & Media Effects | Syllabus ^T Sparks (Chpt. 3, pp. 72-73 <u>only</u>) |
| Week 2 | Jan. 16 Jan. 18 | Historical Overview of Media Effects Research Scientific Study of Media Research | ^T Sparks (Chpt. 3, pp. 54-72 <u>only</u>) ^T Sparks (Chpt. 1) |
| Week 3 | Jan. 23 Jan. 25 | Scientific Study of Media Research (cont.). Audiences: Identification, Interaction, & Gratification | ^T Sparks (Chpt. 2) ^T Sparks (Chpt. 4); ^{Bb} Nielsen (2017) |
| Week 4 | Jan. 30 Feb. 01 | Unique Audiences: Children and Adolescents Unique Audiences (cont.) & Exam I Review | ^T Sparks (Chpt. 7) ^{Bb} Strasburger & Wilson (2014) |
| Week 5 | Feb. 06 Feb. 08 | Exam I Violence and Mass Media: Content | ^T Sparks (Chpt. 5) |
| Week 6 | Feb. 13 Feb. 15 | Violence and Mass Media: Content & Effects (cont.). Violence and Mass Media: Effects (cont.). | ----- ^{Bb} Huesmann & Taylor (2006) |
| Week 7 | Feb. 20 Feb. 22 | Sex and Mass Media: Content Sex and Mass Media: Effects | ^T Sparks (Chpt. 6) ^{Bb} Collins et al. (2004) |
| Week 8 | Feb. 27 Mar. 01 | Stereotypes and Mass Media: Gender Gender (cont.) & Exam II Review | ^T Sparks (Chpt. 10, pp. 253-265 <u>only</u>); ^{Bb} Smith, et al. (2017) ^{Bb} Grabe, et al. (2008) |
| Week 9 | Mar. 06 Mar. 08 | Exam II Mass Media and the Social Identity Approach | ----- |
| Spring Break (March 11 – March 18) | | | |
| Week 10 | Mar. 20 Mar. 22 | Stereotypes and Mass Media: Minority Groups Stereotypes and Mass Media: Minority Groups (cont.) | ^{Bb} Bogle (2004); ^{Bb} Ramirez-Berg (2002) ^{Bb} Mastro & Greenberg (2000); ^{Bb} Smith, et al. |
| Week 11 | Mar. 27 Mar. 29 | Stereotypes and Mass Media: Minority Groups (cont.) Persuasion | ^{Bb} Levina et al. (2000); ^{Bb} Smith, et al. ^T Sparks (Chpt. 8) |
| Week 12 | Apr. 03 Apr. 05 | News and Media Effects News and Politics | ^T Sparks (Chpt. 9) ^T Sparks (Chpt. 10, pp. 266-278 <u>only</u>) |
| Week 13 | Apr. 10 Apr. 12 | Advertisement and Promotion Advertisement and Promotion (cont.) | ^{Bb} Wilcox et al. (2004) ----- |
| Week 14 | Apr. 17 Apr. 19 | Mass Media and Health: Tobacco & Alcohol Mass Media and Health: Campaigns | ----- ----- |
| Week 15 | Apr. 24 Apr. 26 | Diffusion of Innovations & New Technology Course Wrap-Up | ^T Sparks (Chpt. 11) ----- |
| Finals Week | | Exam III (Wednesday, May 09; 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.) | |

*Course schedule/content subject to change at Instructor discretion

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