

USC Annenberg School of Communication
COMM 313: Communication and Mass Media (4 units)
Fall 2022
Schedule # 20506R

Instructor: Carmen M. Lee, PhD
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs., 10:00-11:30 a.m.,
Wed. 12:30-1:30 p.m., & by appt (PST).
Class Meeting Time: Tues. & Thurs., 12:30-1:50 p.m.

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Class Location: [ANN L105A](#)

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Office Hour(s) & Appts:
By Appt.

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 Learning Outcomes

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:

- **Discuss** media effects theories and how they help explain research findings;
- **Explain** the ways in which mass media effects is studied;
- **Identify** and critically **reflect** on the biases that are inherent in all media;
- **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;
- **Explain** 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.)*. Cengage Learning. [Available on course Blackboard site; PDF]

Potter, W. J. (2017). *Media effects*. Sage. [Available through USC Libraries; [Digital](#)]

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

Poll Everywhere classroom response system-free and available online at <https://pollev.com> [Join: TBA]

Poll Everywhere is a tool that will allow for greater interactivity in the course to further students' learning experience. Students can use any electronic device, such as web browser (*suggested*), tablet, or mobile phone to complete polls and surveys during course instruction.

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation

This course depends on each participant for its energy and vitality! Meaningful participation occurs when students: (1) read the assigned readings and/or watch assigned videos *before* class, (2) come to each class prepared to discuss course content, and (3) *actively* participate in the class discussions and activities. Students can also show their participation in the course by attending office hours or scheduling an appointment with the Instructor or Teaching Assistant, utilizing the resources on Blackboard, and by sending emails discussing the real-world application of course content.

Regular attendance and participation will assist in your comprehension of course content *and* provide you with opportunities to connect with the Instructor/TA and your peers. It is expected that students will make every effort to attend all in-person classes, however it is recognized that personal circumstances will arise which preclude class attendance. Students who miss a class meeting are expected to have read the material *and* actively find out what they missed. You should approach another classmate for missed lecture notes and, if clarification is needed, meet with your instructor or a teaching assistant. Instructor lecture notes or PowerPoint slides are not provided to students in this course.

Based on both objective (quantifiable; e.g., regular class attendance, in-class activity participation, speaking in class, attentiveness, attending office hours/scheduled appointments, engagement with course material via Bb) 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. Class participation is worth 15% of your final grade.

IMPORTANT: Please do not come to class if you are feeling ill, particularly if you are experiencing COVID-related symptoms. Nothing we do in our class is worth your health, my health, or the health of your peers.

2. Exams

There will be three (3) exams given throughout the course. The exams will be open-note/open-book, timed, and available for a 24-hour window of time via Blackboard. 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, attention to lecture content and erudition of all assigned readings is essential. Exams *will* consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions. Each exam is worth 60 points; collectively worth 45% of your final grade.

There are no make-up exams allowed. In the rare event that an *extreme* emergency arises (i.e., you were in the hospital, there was a death in your family), it is your responsibility to inform your instructor prior to the scheduled exam time. If your excuse falls within the spectrum of an extreme emergency, we will work toward a solution. Exam I will be held on **September 20, 2022**; Exam II will be held on **October 25, 2022**; Exam III will be held on **Tuesday, December 13, 2022.**

3. Analysis Papers

You will be assigned two (2) papers, approx. 5-6 pages in length, which require you to analyze the impact of media on the individual and society. The first paper requires you to analyze the influence of *specific* media content on the individual (i.e., micro-level effect). The second paper requires you to analyze the influence of media on society (i.e., macro-level effect; public, institutions, community). Each paper should be typed, double-spaced pages presented in an acceptable style format (i.e., APA or MLA). All submissions will be electronic via Blackboard. **A more detailed description of each assignment can be found under the ‘Analysis Papers’ tab on Blackboard.** The submission deadlines are **Fri., October 07, 2022 (Paper #1)** and **Fri., November 18, 2022 (Paper #2) by 11:59 p.m. PT.** Each paper is worth 80 points; collectively worth 40% of your final grade.

Late Paper Submissions

Unless otherwise stated, all papers are due on the dates outlined in this syllabus. However, I recognize that sometimes “life happens.” All students are provided with **one flexible opportunity** to turn in a paper up to two days (48-hours) beyond the due date without penalty. You do not need to provide me with the reason: simply email me and tell me you would like to use your flex opportunity. Any paper submission beyond the allocated flex opportunity/due date will receive a 10% deduction for each day late. If you experience extenuating circumstances (e.g., you are hospitalized) that prohibit you from submitting your assignment on time, please let me know. I will evaluate these instances on a case-by-case basis.

Grading Timeframe and Missing or Inaccurate Score Inquiries/Disputes

For effective learning, students should receive timely feedback on assignments. Therefore, *every attempt* will be made to grade assignments and post grades within 10-14 days. Scores for all assignments 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 dispute a score. To dispute a score, you must submit your reason *in writing*. This policy is helpful for two reasons: First, if a score change is justified, it provides documentation for change in the record. Second, it gives you a chance to think through and present your

argument carefully, to maximize your chances of success. Submit your brief, written argument to the course instructor and teaching assistant. If you fail to inquire/notify us of any discrepancy, missing score, or dispute a score within one week of the date the score is posted, no further changes will be made.

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	15%	60	<i>weekly</i>
Exam I		60	09/20/22
Exam II	45%	60	10/25/22
Exam III		60	12/13/22
Analysis Papers			
#1: Individual: Micro-Level Effects	40%	80	10/07/22
#2: Society: Macro-Level Effects		80	11/18/22
Total		400 pts. possible	

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

NOTE: 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.”

What does a letter grade mean?

Enrollment in this course does not mean you earned an “A” in this course. *Earning an A* might require more diligence than you are used to. Doing the bare minimum is not A-level work. Description of letter grades are below.

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Description</u>
A	Excellence; demonstrates <i>extraordinarily</i> high achievement; comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; all expectations met and exceeded.
B	Good; moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates good, if not thorough understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings.
C	Satisfactory/Fair; reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; most expectations are met; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding.
D	Marginal; minimal knowledge and understanding of subject matter; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding.
F	Failing; unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; failure to meet the minimum standards for passing the course.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

The 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 ([USC Catalogue 2022-2023](#)). In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course.

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Additionally, acquisition of term papers or other assignments from any source and the subsequent presentation of those materials as one's own is another form of academic dishonesty and equally unacceptable. Please familiarize yourself with all aspects of expected student conduct in [SCampus](#) in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards and Appropriate Sanctions".

Student Accessibility Accommodations

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS). You need to make a request with OSAS for each academic term that accommodations are desired. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you are encouraged to do this **during 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: OSAS). Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from OSAS. Your cooperation is appreciated. Office of Student Accessibility Services contact information: (213) 740-0776 or <https://osas.usc.edu>.

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 plan for a make-up of any missed assignments or exams.

Religious Observances

The observance of religious holidays (activities observed by a religious group of which a student is a member) and cultural practices are an important reflection of diversity. As your instructor, I am committed to providing equivalent educational opportunities to students of all belief systems. At the beginning of the semester, you should review the course requirements to identify foreseeable conflicts with assignments, exams, or other required attendance. If possible, please contact me within the first two weeks of classes to allow time for us to discuss and make fair and reasonable adjustments to the schedule and/or tasks.

Computer Access

USC Annenberg has a policy that requires that all students enrolled in an Annenberg class bring their own laptop device to campus. Windows OS and Mac OS software necessary to complete assignments in this course are available on computers in the following USC Computing Centers: Ahmanson Information Commons at Leavey Library, King Hall (KOH 206), and Waite Phillips Hall (WPH B34). Moreover, all currently enrolled students (with a valid ID) are eligible for the [USC Computing Center Laptop Loaner Program](#). It is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to a computer that can perform the necessary functions for completion of assignments.

Laptops/Electronic Devices

Laptops/Tablets may be used during class for course related purposes (e.g., note-taking and participation). 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.

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. Per [SCampus](#) “distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media (see Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).”

Recording Policy

Students may not record or distribute 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 the Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) 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.

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.

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.**

Learning Experience Evaluations

Learning Experience Evaluations will be conducted on the last day of the class. This will be your opportunity to provide feedback about your learning experience in the class. This feedback helps the instructor determine whether students are having the intended learning experiences for the class. It is important to remember that the learning process is collaborative and requires significant effort from the instructor, individual students, and the class as a whole. Students should provide a thoughtful assessment of their experience, as well as of their own effort, with comments focused on specific aspects of instruction or the course. Comments on personal characteristics of the instructor are not appropriate and will not be considered. For this feedback to be as comprehensive as possible, all students should complete the evaluation.

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 not be seen as an alternative to attending class lectures, office hours, or a scheduled appointment. Although responses may be provided quickly, you should allow a 24-hour timeframe for a response during the week (36-hours on weekend). **If you do not receive a response within the expected timeframe, please follow-up via email or in class.**

Additional Resources

Counseling and Mental Health [24/7 on call]: (213) 740-9355 or <https://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling/>
Counseling and Mental Health Services provides access to different counseling services, such as drop-in or one-on-one appointments, group counseling via Telehealth and workshops for health with anxiety, sleep, relationships, etc.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline [24/7 on call]: (800) 273-8255 or suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) [24/7 on call]: (213) 740-9355(WELL), or studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault. Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX: (213) 740-5086 or equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment: (213) 740-5086 or 821-8298 or usc-advocate.symphlicity.com/care_report
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

USC Support and Advocacy: (213) 821-4710 or studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC: (213) 740-2101 or diversity.usc.edu
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

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.

USC Emergency, University Park Campus [24/7 on call]: (213) 740-4321 or dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety, University Park Campus [24/7 on call]: (213) 740-6000 or dps.usc.edu
Non-emergency assistance or information.

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.

Annenberg Student Success Fund: <https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards>
The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Course Schedule*

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Due
Week 1	Aug. 23	Intro. to Course; Studying Media Effects	Syllabus	
	Aug. 25	Understanding Media Comm. & Media Effects	^T Sparks (Chpt. 3, pp. 72-73 <u>only</u>); ^T Potter (Chpt. 3, pp. 33-49)	
Week 2	Aug. 30	Scientific Study of Media Research	^T Sparks (Chpt. 1 & Chpt. 2)	
	Sept. 01	Scientific Study of Media Research (cont.)	-----	
Week 3	Sept. 06	Historical Overview of Media Effects Research	^T Sparks (Chpt. 3, pp. 54-72 <u>only</u>); ^T Potter (Chpt. 5, pp. 65-84)	
	Sept. 08	Audiences: Identification, Interaction, & Gratification	^T Sparks (Chpt. 4); ^{Bb} Nielsen (pp. 19-31)	
(Sept. 09: Last day to add, drop w/out mark of "W" and full refund; Change enrollment to P/NP)				
Week 4	Sept. 13	Unique Audiences: Children and Adolescents	-----	
	Sept. 15	Unique Audiences (cont.) & Exam I Review	^T Sparks (Chpt. 7)	
Week 5	Sept. 20	Exam I		
	Sept. 22	Violence and Mass Media: Content	-----	
Week 6	Sept. 27	Violence and Mass Media: Content (cont.)	^T Sparks (Chpt. 5)	
	Sept. 29	Violence and Mass Media: Effects	^{Bb} Huesmann & Taylor (2006)	
Week 7	Oct. 04	Sex and Mass Media: Content	^T Sparks (Chpt. 6)	
	Oct. 06	Sex and Mass Media: Effects	^{Bb} Collins et al. (2004)	Paper #1 [due Fri. 10/07]
(Oct. 07: Last day to drop w/out mark of "W" on transcript; Change P/NP to letter grade)				
Week 8	Oct. 11	Stereotypes and Mass Media: Gender	^T Sparks (Chpt. 10, pp. 253-265 <u>only</u>); ^{Bb} Smith et al. (Gender section)	
	Oct. 13	No Class – Fall Recess		
Fall Recess (Oct. 13-14)				
Week 9	Oct. 18	Stereotypes and Mass Media: Gender (cont.)	^{Bb} Grabe et al. (2008)	
	Oct. 20	Stereotypes and Mass Media: LGBT; Exam II Review	^{Bb} Smith et al. (LGBT section)	
Week 10	Oct. 25	Exam II		
	Oct. 27	Stereotypes and Mass Media: Disability/Ment. Health	^{Bb} Smith et al. (Disability section)	
Mid-Semester Grades Reporting				
Week 11	Nov. 01	Stereotypes and Mass Media: Ethnic/Racial Groups	^{Bb} Bogle (2004); ^{Bb} Ramirez-Berg (2002) ^{Bb} Smith et al. (Ethnicity/Race)	
	Nov. 03	Stereotypes and Mass Media: Ethnic/Racial (cont.)	^{Bb} Monk-Turner et al. (2010)	
Week 12	Nov. 08	Mass Media and Health: Tobacco & Alcohol	-----	
	Nov. 10	Mass Media and Health: Persuasive Campaigns	^T Sparks (Chpt. 8)	
(Nov. 11: Last day to drop a class w/ mark of "W")				
Week 13	Nov. 15	News and Media Effects	^T Sparks (Chpt. 9)	
	Nov. 17	News and Media Effects (cont.)	^T Potter (Chpt. 12)	Paper #2 [due Fri. 11/18]
Week 14	Nov. 22	Diffusions of Innovations	-----	
	Nov. 24	No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday		
Thanksgiving Holiday (Nov. 23-27)				
Week 15	Nov. 29	Social Connections and Social Capital	^T Sparks (Chpt. 11)	
	Dec. 01	Society and Technology & Course Wrap-up	^T Potter (Chpt. 14)	
Finals Week		Exam III (Tuesday, December 13, 2022)		

*Course schedule/content subject to change

^TCourse Textbook (Sparks; Potter)

^{Bb}Blackboard Readings