

COM 403 Mass Communications Theory 08/29-12/17/2005 **Emil Coman**
s. 01 UG 10048 MWF 12:00 pm-12:50 pm & s. 02 UG 10607 MWF 04:00 pm-04:50 pm

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignment due
08/29-09/02	Introduction	Ch. 1	Choose article for review from list
09/07 & 09/09	Understanding and Evaluating Mass Communication Theory <i>09/05 Labor day – no classes</i>	Ch. 2	- Lead class discussion (individual)
09/12-09/16	The Rise of Media Industries and Mass Society Theory	Ch. 3	- Lead class discussion (individual)
09/19-09/23	The Rise of Media Theory in the Age of Propaganda	Ch. 4	Choose topic for Web review - Lead class discussion (individual)
09/26-09/30	Normative Theories of Mass Communication	Ch. 5	- Lead class discussion (individual)
10/03-10/07	Limited Effects Theory Emerges	Ch. 6	- Lead class discussion (individual)
10/10-10/14	Middle-Range Theory and the Consolidation of the Limited Effects Paradigm	Ch. 7	- Lead class discussion (individual)
10/17-10/21	Challenging the Dominant Paradigm: Children, Systems, and Effects	Ch. 8	- Lead class discussion (individual)
10/24-10/28	Emergence of Critical and Cultural Theories of Mass Communication	Ch. 9	- Lead class discussion (individual)
10/31-11/04	Media and Audiences: Theories About the Role of Media in Everyday Life	Ch. 10	- Lead class discussion (individual)
11/07-11/11	Theories of Media, Culture, and Society	Ch. 11	DUE: Web review 11/07 - Lead class discussion (individual)
11/14-11/18	Trends in Mass Communication Theory: Seeking Consensus, Facing Challenges	Ch. 12	- Lead class discussion (individual)
11/21	Ch.17 Theories of Cyber Communication <i>11/23/11/26 Thanksgiving recess-no classes</i>	Ch. 17 in Severin	DUE: Final paper 11/21 - Lead class discussion (individual)
11/28-12/02	From mediated to mass communication and mass society: old & current debates	Readings on reserve	- Lead class discussion (individual)
12/07	<i>Synthesis topics</i> “Real & Imagined Realities”	No reading!!!	No reading!!!
	<i>12/08/05 Classes End</i>		

Room for updates: changes:

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Instructor: Emil Coman Phone: 860-465-0661 This class relies heavily on Blackboard, check it as often as possible: <http://www.easternct.edu/depts/its/Blackboard/index.htm> email: comprocess@yahoo.com

Office Hours: Mon., Wed., & Fri. 3:00-4:00pm & by appointment; Mail Box: **Media Center r. 253**
Office: **Eastern Hall, room 31** **web site:** www.geocities.com/comprocess (if you ever forget it, just “google” e.g. my name or “ECSU AND mass comm”)

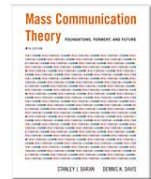
Course Description: This is an advanced course designed for senior communication students. It aims to provide the communication majors, as well as other interested students, with a social-scientific and philosophical understanding of the role and impact of the media. The emphasis will be placed on systematic scientific understanding of media institutions, processes, and effects and media’s relationships with communities and the society.

Course objectives:

- to understand the basic features of scientific theories in social sciences and in particular of mass comm systematic research;
- to become familiar with the main mass comm theories, their successes, limitations and utility;
- to improve the ability to critically evaluate reports of mass comm research;
- to improve your scholarly researching skills and your ability to construct convincing research papers and presentations.
- to relate theories to your own future professional field and be able to effectively use such theories to pursue your career.

Textbook:

- Baran, Stanley J., & Davis, Dennis K. (2003). *Mass Communication Theory* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co. **REQUIRED**
- Ch.17 (*only*) *Theories of Cyber Communication*, pp. 366-388 in Severin, Werner J., & Tankard, James W. (2000). *Communication theories: origins, methods, and uses in the mass media*, 5th edition, ISBN 0-8013-3335-0
- *Additional* reading materials that will be provided electronically by instructor: published research articles that represent exemplary research in each theoretical area discussed in class.



Materials on reserve will be made available by instructor for your convenience in electronic format; when available through electronic databases provided by ECSU library, URL links will be included.

If you are a student with disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of Accessibility Services at (860) 465-5573. To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations, you should contact the Office of Accessibility Services as soon as possible. Please understand that we cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until we have received an accommodation letter from the Office of Accessibility Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Grades: Being a theoretical course designed primarily for advanced communication majors, this class requires significant reading besides textbook. In addition to reading responsibilities, each student will be required to complete one written research article review, to lead a class discussion on one of the weekly assigned readings, to complete a Web review on a theory of choice, and to complete a short final paper comparing or contrasting two major mass comm theories.

Instructions and guidelines on how to review, comment, critique and discuss research in class will be provided by instructor. Guidelines for Web review and final paper will also be provided.

GRADING format

- 15 % Written research article review
- 15 % Leading the class discussion on a weekly reading
- 10 % Web review of a mass comm theory
- 40 % Weekly responses
- 10 % Final (short) paper
- 10 % Participation: Attendance - 8% + Class Participation - 2 % **(Right/Left hand^{ME})**

Grades generally follow this distribution:

Course Grade	Accumulated %	Course Grade	Accumulated %
A	93.3-100	C+	77-79.99
A-	90-93.29	C	73-76.99
B+	87-89.99	C-	70-72.99
B	83-86.99	D+	65-69.99
B-	80-82.99	D	60-65

ATTENDANCE policy: Attendance is expected in this class; it is also built in the final grade, but if one misses more than 1/5th of all classes, i.e. 8 classes, any such 1/5th will result in an additional one letter grade deduction from the final grade. If you miss 1/5th of all 40 classes, or 8 classes, you'll get one letter grade less (say from A to B). If you miss 2/5^{ths}, your grade will lose 2 letter grades (say from A to C).

Short guidelines for assignments (more detailed instructions will be provided later on):

1. Written review of a research article: you will pick one article from the list provided, and then will write a short review and critique paper of the theoretical bases, findings, theoretical implications, limitations, and suggestions (3 pages).

Your written review will address primarily the theory section of the research article, i.e. the theoretical bases of hypotheses, justification of hypotheses, conclusions and theoretical implications of them.

2. Leading the class discussion on a research article from the assigned list: you will pick one article from the list provided, and then will present a summary of the piece and lead a short class discussion on theoretical grounds and conclusions of the piece, as well as limitations and your own suggestions (you will be the expert on that piece, but you won't teach it or formally present it, rather lead the discussions!).

3. Web review of a mass comm theory of your choice: you will choose a particular theory and run a Web search on the subject; the result will be a list with the most important, trustworthy and interesting WWW links, annotated by you (2-3 pages). This needs to be turned in electronically as html file (a master file will be compiled and shared with all of you).

4. You are responsible for completing a short 1 page weekly response/reaction paper that reflects your comments and reflections on the assigned readings. This paper is due the day **before** our class, and you should send it **through Blackboard**. You will be getting it back in class graded.

Being a course designed for advanced comm students that major in PR and advertising in particular, the readings will revolve around examples of comm theories applied to the PR and advertising fields.

This response paper should address **primarily** the theoretical section of the article, e.g. evaluating their goals, ontology, epistemology, and axiology. You are expected to evaluate, critique the theoretical bases and the conclusion section and offer suggestions and alternative interpretations and solutions.

5. The final paper will be reflection on two major theories' tenets, focusing on both their heuristic contributions to the field and their drawbacks. The format will be either based on the similarities between the two, or on contrasting them. Implications of the similarities and differences you just discovered for our mass comm field will conclude your paper (5 pages).

- alternatively, the paper could propose the application of a known mass comm theory to the areas of PR and advertising, from an original or unlooked for perspective.

6. Participation: being there plus saying anything (does not need to be smart, interesting or valid).

Emailing Guidelines: You should send assignments **through Blackboard**; if you attach files (reviews, papers, etc) please attach them as a Single Web Page (HTML file): when you save it in Word (or Excel), there is an option to save it as Web Page, or html file. Word (or doc) files tend to be able to carry viruses, which does not happen with html.

Table of Contents: Baran, Stanley J., & Davis, Dennis K. (2003). *Mass Communication Theory* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Preface.

Section One: INTRODUCTION TO MASS COMMUNICATION THEORY.

1. Introduction.

2. Understanding and Evaluating Mass Communication Theory.

Section Two: ERA OF MASS SOCIETY AND MASS CULTURE.

3. The Rise of Media Industries and Mass Society Theory.

4. The Rise of Media Theory in the Age of Propaganda.

5. Normative Theories of Mass Communication.

Section Three: THE RISE AND FALL OF LIMITED EFFECTS.

6. Limited Effects Theory Emerges.

7. Middle-Range Theory and the Consolidation of the Limited Effects Paradigm.

8. Challenging the Dominant Paradigm: Children, Systems, and Effects.

Section Four: CONTEMPORARY MASS COMMUNICATION THEORY—SEARCHING FOR CONSENSUS AND CONFRONTING CHALLENGES.

9. Emergence of Critical and Cultural Theories of Mass Communication.

10. Media and Audiences: Theories About the Role of Media in Everyday Life.

11. Theories of Media, Culture, and Society.

12. Trends in Mass Communication Theory: Seeking Consensus, Facing Challenges.

PROPOSED Comm Theory list of readings assigned to review & lead class discussion on; posted and downloadable from Blackboard

1. 09/07

PR14. [Amassing the Multitude: Revisiting Early Audience Studies](#) Bratich, Jack Z. [Communication Theory](#) OR [2](#) OR [THROUGH uconn only](#) , Volume 15, Number 3, August 2005, pp. 242-265(24); **posted online by me on Blackboard !!!!!**

2. 09-/12

PR7. How television news programs use video news releases, *Public Relations Review*, Volume 27, Issue 2, Summer 2001, Pages 213-222 Mark D. Harmon and Candace White [PDF \(67 K\)](#)

3. 09/21

PR4. [The propaganda model revisited](#). By: *Herman*, Edward S.. *Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine*, Jul/Aug96, Vol. 48 Issue 3, p115, 14p [HTML Full Text](#)

4. 09/28

PR2. [What's Wrong With Outcomes Evaluation?](#) By: Pratt, Cornelius B.; Lennon, George. *Public Relations Quarterly*, Winter2001, Vol. 46 Issue 4, p40, 5p, 2bw [PDF Full Text](#)

5. 10/05

PR3. [The Five P's for Media Interviews: Fundamentals for Newbies, Veterans and Everyone in Between](#). By: Smudde, Peter M.. *Public Relations Quarterly*, Summer2004, Vol. 49 Issue 2, p29-34, 6p [PDF Full Text](#)

6. 10/12

PR6. [Acknowledging the Infrsystem: A Critical Feminist Analysis of Systems Theory](#). Creedon, Pamela J.; *Public Relations Review*, v19 n2 p157-66 Sum 1993 [PDF \(796 K\)](#)

7. 10/19

Ads4. [Children, media and consumption](#). By: Tufte, Birgitte. *International Journal of Advertising & Marketing to Children*, Oct2003, Vol. 5 Issue 1, p69-76, 8p [PDF Full Text](#) (117K)

8. 10/26

Ads5. [Violent Commercials in Television Programs for Children](#). By: Shanahan, Kevin J.; Hermans, Charles M.; Hyman, Michael R.. Journal of Current Issues & Research in *Advertising*, Spring2003, Vol. 25 Issue 1, p61, 9p [PDF Full Text](#) (571K)

9. 11/02

Ads9. [Effects of Compulsive Buying Tendencies on Attitudes Toward Advertising: The Moderating Role of Exposure to TV Commercials and TV Shows](#). By: Kwak, Hyokjin; Zinkhan, George M.; DeLorme, Denise E.. Journal of Current Issues & Research in *Advertising*, Fall2002, Vol. 24 Issue 2, p17, 16p [PDF Full Text](#) (1.2MB)

10. 11/09

PR16. [Public Relations and the Impact of Media Fiction](#). By: Ramsey, Ben. *Public Relations Quarterly*, Winter76/77, Vol. 21 Issue 4, p9, 4p, 1bw [PDF Full Text](#)

11. 11/16

Ads11. [Millennial Dogma: A Fantasy Theme Analysis of the Millennial Generation's Uses and Gratifications of Religious Content Media](#). By: Drumheller, Kristina. Journal of Communication & Religion, Mar2005, Vol. 28 Issue 1, p47-70, 24p [PDF Full Text](#) (1.1MB)

12. 11/21

PR10. "@Work in cyberspace": Exploring practitioner use of the PRForum, *Public Relations Review*, Volume 22, Issue 2, Summer 1996, Pages 115-131 Steven R. Thomsen [PDF \(1290 K\)](#)

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