CCJN 4394: Media Effects
Spring 2011 Syllabus
Class Sessions: M/W 2:30-3:50 p.m. Room 283

Professor: Vanessa de Macedo Higgins Joyce, Ph.D.
Office: 210
Office hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 pm; Wednesdays 10:00-12 noon, or by appointment
Phone and email: (214) 768-4913; vhigginsjoyc@smu.edu

Required text:

- *Fundamentals of Media Effects* (McGraw-Hill, 2001), by Jennings Bryant and Susan Thompson.
- *Mass Media and American Politics* (CQ Press, 8th edition, 2010), by Doris Graber
- Additional reading materials will be posted on Blackboard.

Learning objectives:

- Become a more informed media consumer and practitioner;
- Critically analyze practices in journalism and how these practices may influence people and society;
- Assess and discuss influence of personal media choices;
- Identify historical trends in media effects;
- Examine and interpret the main theories explaining how people are influenced by mass media;
- Inspect key areas of media effects and examine how these issues are presented to the public;
- Discuss how effects theories are evident in daily media;
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of journalism;
- Assess how new media platforms will affect individuals and society;
- Clearly and effectively present analysis of effects;
- Participate in collaborative class projects.

Course description:

Media's social, political and cultural effects have been shown to influence people's knowledge, thoughts and behaviors. Journalists and media producers have the power to influence society, in different levels, and therefore need to be able to critically approach their work and understand the potential effects. This course aims to make you, future media professionals, aware of these potentials. In this course, we will explore three main topics: introductory and historical perspectives to the study of media effects; the prominent effect theories and how they relate to everyday journalism; journalism coverage of key issues and its influence in society. We will also scrutinize how these theories apply to current media scenarios and project how new media may affect knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of society.

During class, we will engage in thorough discussion of the assigned themes and readings: therefore, reading assignments must be completed prior to class. We will analyze theories and issues and how they currently apply to journalism and mass communication. We will see how these theories are manifested in practical terms. You will have two exams (a midterm and a final) and 5 pop-quizzes. You will also have an individual project (Media Log) and two class presentations (an individual one and a group one). Both individual and group presentations are expected to be conducted professionally and creatively. I expect everybody to participate in the presentations led by your classmates.

Your active participation in this class will make it more engaging and relevant (and end you participation credit). Therefore it is expected that you will be prepared and willing to respectfully present your points of view and questions.

We will be using blackboard throughout the course. There you will find the reading materials for our class, announcements, class power points and much more. I will be keeping you posted as to what resources we will be using on blackboard as the course progresses, but please be ready to access it. I will also be communicating important announcements by email, through blackboard, so please make sure to access your email associated with the university on a regular basis.

Course requirements and evaluation:

Participation:	15%
Effects in new media project (individual):	15%
Media log (individual):	10%
Pop-quizzes (each worth 20 points, 5 quizzes):	5%
Midterm exam:	15%
Contemporary issue or trend project presentation (group):	20%
Contemporary issue or trend project report (group):	5%
Final exam:	15%

Participation (15% of grade):

This part of the grade will be based in your contributions to the classroom discussions, questions, exercises and any other activity performed during class time. The success of this class depends on your participation; therefore you are expected to actively engage in the class. To actively participate in the class means you should be present, prepared and contribute to the class activities. This grade will assess not only how much you have participated in the class (discussions and exercises) but also the quality of that participation. I expect you to voluntarily participate, but I will also call on students for participation. Missing class excessively will result in a failing participation grade. If you must miss class, let me know in advance, if possible, or present your explanation by the next class day. You will still be responsible for any due material and materials covered during absences. Disruptive behaviors will not be permitted. Using the computer in the class for anything that is not class related is considered a disruptive behavior. If anything you are doing is disrupting your classmates (emailing, texting, etc), your participation grade will be penalized.

Effects in new media project (individual) (15% of grade):

This is an individual assignment. At the beginning of the semester, you will be given a chance to select one theory of media effects from those we are discussing in the course. You will share a 10 to 15 minutes presentation and 5 minutes of question and answer with the class on the day assigned for your selected theory, as indicated in the syllabus. During that presentation you should:

- Discuss how the media effect theory can be seen **in the light of new media**. This could be, for example, how agenda-setting manifests itself in blogging or the relation of social cognitive theory to social networks, etc. I am available to discuss your ideas as you prepare your presentation. In the presentation you should explain what the selected theory is, what new media you are relating it to, the importance of this new media, and how the theory is possibly manifested in this new media. I expect these presentations to be well prepared and professional. You can and should be as creative as possible during these presentations, which means you may use any video, audio, website, visuals and any other aids that may help the understanding of your presentation. You will be expected to field questions on the subject.
- Bring a one page handout to the class (copies for all your classmates and instructor) with the main points of your presentation.

Your total grade for this project will be based on your presentation and handout. I expect you to be present and on time during the presentation date. If you do not show up (or warn me of any problems interfering with your presentation **at least one week before** your presentation), you will receive a 0 for this project.

Media log (individual) (10% of grade):

You will be asked to record, during the week of February 14th, your daily intake of mass media, recording information on every media content you consume for those 7 consecutive days (you will receive a list of the media forms you should be recording). You will keep track of how much time you spent on each medium and what type of content it was. You will receive an instruction sheet and a form for the log. You will then analyze your media use, with the information from your media log, and answer questions relating to the influences your media choices have on you. You will also use the information from this media log for a class discussion, so I will need two copies of your log. Assignments are due, printed, at the beginning of class and will be considered late any time after that. Late assignments will receive a 5 points penalty per day late. Late assignments should be brought to my office (printed, I will not accept email), either to me personally or in the bin outside my office.

Pop-quizzes (five quizzes, 20 points each, 5% of your total grade):

These pop-quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class on five unannounced days. These quizzes will be short and will be related to the reading of the previous days. You may miss one of the quizzes (without the need of a formal explanation) and turn in the answers (in person) the next class day (it is your responsibility to ask your class mates if you missed one, if you did, then you may ask me for the questions). If you miss more than one quiz, you will not be allowed to turn in the answers for the missed ones, and will receive a 0.

Exams (midterm and final are each 15% of grade):
Both midterm and final exams will be a combination of closed-ended questions (multiple-choice; true-false, etc) and open-ended questions (short answers and essay). They will be based on materials covered in the readings, class discussions, student presentations and speakers. If you expect to miss the exam for any school related activity or any other excusable absence, you must make arrangements with the instructor ahead of time (at least one week). There will be no make-ups for missed exams without approved excuses and their documentation.

Contemporary issue or trend project (20% of grade for presentation and 5% of grade for report):
The class will be divided into groups for this project. The project is divided into two segments: a class presentation, worth 20% of your final grade, and a written report, worth 5% of the class grade. Each group will select a contemporary media issue or trend and analyze it in relation to a media effects theory. We will have class discussions about possible project selections and the progress of your project.

- The group presentation should be between 25 minutes to 30 minutes. It should thoroughly describe the issue or trend presented in the media and its importance. Your group should also describe the theory you are analyzing the issue or trend with, and present a clear explanation of how the theory is demonstrated in your selected issue or trend. You have identified why this effect may be occurring within the issue or trend, and suggest ways of identifying how this effect may be occurring. You should also explain what the issue and effect mean for journalism. You could, for example, talk about coverage of man-made disasters, such as the recent oil spill in the gulf, and framing theory. Presentations should be clear and creative and may use visuals, videos, audio or any other aids to explain your points. The group will receive one collective grade, unless it is clear that someone did not participate.
- The written report should be ten to fifteen pages long. It should be a deep analysis of the subject you are presenting. It should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the issue or trend and a thorough understanding of the theory. It should clearly present the connections and must show your perspective on the subject matter. It should contain at least five outside sources, as well as examples of your issue or trend. It should be free of spelling and grammatical errors. The report should also contain a grade one page individual page (aside from the page requirements) where you should inform how your participation was like in the project; qualifying both your participation and other group member's participation. These grades (up to five points) will be included in each individual's grade.

Extra credit (one point each on final grade, up to three points maximum):
You have two options for extra credit. You may:

- Attend a lecture or presentation at the university (invited guest). Write a three paragraph report about that lecture that: (a) clearly indicates who you heard, where and when; (b) summarizes the main points or argument of the lecture; (c) indicates how you would go about reporting on that lecture in a responsible manner. Each report is worth one point.

- Watch a movie about journalism. Write a three paragraph report about the movie that: (a) clearly indicates what you watched and why you consider it a journalism movie; (b) summarizes the main points of the movie, as it relates to journalism; (c) indicates how the movie demonstrates a theory of effect.

Grades:
Final course grades will be assigned along the following guidelines:

94-100=A	73-76=C
90-93=A-	70—72=C-
87-89=B+	67-69=D+
83-86=B	63-66=D
80-82=B-	60-62=D-
77-79=C+	Below 60=F

Academic integrity: I expect you to meet SMU's Honor Code and avoid academic sabotage, cheating, fabrication, facilitating dishonesty, and plagiarism. The violation of SMU's Honor Code will result in a failing grade in the assignment and I will bring your case forward to the SMU Honor Council. More information and definitions of SMU's Honor Code can be found at http://smu.edu/studentlife/studenthandbook/PCL_05_HC.asp.

Special needs: If you need academic accommodations for any disability or other special needs influencing your success in this class, please let me know as soon as possible to make special arrangements. According to University Policy (No. 2.4), you must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. You may call 214-768-1470 or visit http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp to begin the process. Once registered, you should schedule an appointment with me to make appropriate arrangements.

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

How to earn an "F" on a written project: Miss a deadline. Misquote or misrepresent someone. Rewrite or submit a paper that was produced for another class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The reading materials indicated below are from the required textbooks and materials on blackboard, unless otherwise noted. The book *Fundamentals of Media Effects* will be indicated as "fundamentals," *Mass Media and American Politics* will be indicated as "mass media" and texts coming from blackboard will indicate so. I will announce guest speakers in class. Schedule is subject to change.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading/ Homework
		Intro and key concepts in media effects	
1	01/19	Course introduction, War of the Worlds (Orson Welles)	In-class: audio and reading material Intro topics student presentation
2	01/24	Introduction to media effects and its dimensions	Read: Fundamentals, Ch. 1 Read: Perse, Blackboard **Topics for individual presentation and bio due**
	01/26	History of media effects	Read: Fundamentals, Ch. 2 and 3
3	01/31	Current media scenario	Read: Mass media, Ch. 2 Watch (Blackboard): Texas Tribune
		Media effect theory	
	02/02	Social Cognitive Theory, Social Learning Theory	Read: Fundamentals, Ch.4 Read (Blackboard): O'Rorke In class: Student presentation
4	02/07	Priming	Read: Fundamentals, Ch. 5 In class: Student presentation
	02/09	Framing	Read (Blackboard): Entman In class: Student presentation
5	02/14	Violence: cultivation	Read: Fundamentals, Ch.6 In class: Student presentation **Start Media log (for one week)**
	02/16	Violence: Effects of media violence, effects drug trafficking coverage	Read: Fundamentals, Ch. 11 Read (Blackboard): Medel, Ch. 1 In class: Student presentation (2)
6	02/21	Diffusion of innovation	Read: Fundamentals, Ch.7 In class: Student presentation
	02/23	Agenda-setting	Read: Fundamentals, Ch.9 In class: Student presentation **Media log project due**
7	02/28	Uses and Gratification	Read: Fundamentals, Ch.8 In class: Student presentation In class: Discussion media log
	03/07	Media effects international	Read: Mass media, Ch.11 In class: Student presentation

Week	Date	Topic	Reading/ Homework
8	03/02	Midterm Exam	**Study for midterm exam**
	03/09	Minority portrayal	Read: Fundamentals, Ch.19 In class: Student presentation (2)
9	03/14	Spring Break, no class	
	03/16	Spring Break, no class	
		Key areas of effects	
10	03/21	Politics: persuasion, communication effects campaign	Read: Fundamentals, Ch.10 Read: Mass media, Ch.8 In class: Student presentation (2)
	03/23	Politics: Media and government relations	Read: Mass media, Ch.1, Ch.9 In class: Student presentation
11	03/28	Case study (international, media and government)	Read (Blackboard): Legal Jeopardy: Clarín Group and the Kirchners
	03/30	News media and war	Read (Blackboard): Reese In class: movie
12	04/04	Entertainment	Read: Fundamentals, Ch. 20 Read (Blackboard): Baumgartner and Morris In class: Discuss group project
	04/06	Advertisement	Read: Fundamentals, Ch.17 **Topic for group project due**
13	04/11	Health Communication; Body Image	Read: Fundamentals, Ch.16 Read (Blackboard): Levine and Harrison In class: movie
	04/13	New Media Technologies	Read: Fundamentals, Ch.21 Read: Mass media, p.326-339 In class: consultation groups project
14	04/18	Effects of crisis coverage	Read: Fundamentals, Ch.14 Read: Mass media, Ch. 5
	04/20	Group project presentation day	
15	04/25	Group project presentation day	
	04/27	Group project presentation day	**All Groups Project Reports due**
16	05/02	Final Exam Review	

Final exam: Thursday. May 5th, from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.