

# Pro Seminar in Mass Communication

## JRMC 8000; Fall 2009

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<b>Office Hours:</b>	MW 1:30 – 2:30 PM	<b>Class:</b>	9:05 – 12:05 PM

### Course Description and Objectives

Welcome to graduate school. As you begin work on your master's degree, the Pro Seminar in Mass Communication will introduce you to mass communication theory and the fascinating world of research in journalism and mass communication. The aim of this class is to help you become a better media scholar. If your goal is to become a practitioner—or to continue your career in advertising, journalism, public relations, or telecommunications—we trust this new perspective will help. As social psychologist Kurt Lewin says, “There is nothing so practical as good theory.”

This seminar will explore a set of theories commonly used by social scientists in general, and media scholars in particular. These theories might come from psychology, sociology, linguistics, history, but all have been applied to help us understand mediated communication—one of the most important forces in our culture.

- The Pro Seminar introduces and helps orient students to a particular culture, i.e. that of mass communication broadly construed, its disciplinary boundaries, its history and scholarly developments, its leading lights, its mores & social norms, and more.
- The Pro Seminar offers an opportunity for students to meet many of the Grady College graduate faculty and to learn about their research and professional interests.

### General class schedule

**1. Grady Faculty on Theory:** A faculty member will explain how theory informs his or her research in journalism and mass communication. Their topics typically will not correspond with that week's readings. All sections of JRMC 8000 will combine and meet in the Drewry Room for this session.

**2. Group Discussion:** Students will meet to discuss the readings and listen to student presentations.

### Required Readings

- Denis McQuail, ed., *McQuail's Reading in Mass Communication Theory* (Sage, 2002).
- The course packet is thick! And available from:  
Athens Blueprint, 269 W. Dougherty St., 706-548-0656, M-F 8-5:30 PM.

**WEBCT:** This course may have a companion WebCT site to enable email communication and access to grades. Access it through your MyID login to the UGA website.

## **Course Performance Guidelines**

As a careful reading of the course objectives indicate, we hope to accomplish a great deal in this class. Our success, yours and mine, ultimately depends on you. You are expected to attend class meetings, participate in class discussions, and prepare for class by reading the assigned chapters and articles. Don't just read the material, think about it, question it, and bring your input to the attention of the class.

Attendance: You are expected to attend every class.

Preparation: Come to class with assignments completed and reading material covered. Absolutely, positively, no late assignments are accepted. All assignments must be typed unless specified. Untyped assigned will receive a zero. If in doubt, type.

Punctuality: Be on time to class.

Electronic Communication: WebCT, listservs, and e-mail communication are accepted at the university as official means of correspondence. Students thus are responsible for checking the class WebCT location daily for any changes or updates to the course, and for checking their officially registered e-mail account daily for any official communication regarding this course.

Exam/Presentation Make ups: There is no "make-up option" for any exam or presentation. No exam will be given after its scheduled date, no matter the circumstance. There are only a few cases in which a student may be able to take an exam early.

## **Course Requirements**

Participation: 10%

Midterm Exam: 30%

Test knowledge of course content based on readings and class discussion.

Application of theory to research & practice: 30%

Students, working individually or in pairs, will be assigned a mass communication theory or concept. As outlined in the two parts below, the student will [1] summarize the basic tenets of the theory and provide a synthesis of how the theory or concept is used currently, and [2] lead discussion that extends the theory or concept into timely research or practice. The discussion, based on your choices below, will involve the class in applying the theory or concept to research and/or social practice.

Be prepared to direct a discussion of your chosen theory or concept. Summarize the theory or concept in its historical context, describe how it has come to be applied today, and speculate about the kind of research it could inform as we move forward. Especially of interest: how does the theory or concept contribute to some kind of social practice (e.g. health communication campaign, investigating how to predict social outcomes, etc).

**Turn in:** Brief 5-page theory summary paper (also distribute to classmates).

Talking points of discussion including summary, definitions, applications, speculations (in the form of a power point presentation or outline).

Research Proposal, 15-20 pgs: 30% final grade

Here is an opportunity to apply general material to a specific interest of your choice. Identify a research topic and question. Specify what mass communication theory informs your approach to answering the question. Conduct a literature review citing seminal theoretical works but focusing

on more contemporary research. Finally suggest a methodology for answering your question and explain why that method is appropriate for your theory as well as your topic. This proposal may form the nucleus of a seminar paper or Master's thesis.

### **Student Conduct and Honesty**

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty," UGA's policy on academic honesty. Each student is responsible to inform him/herself about those standards before performing any academic work. Any form of academic dishonesty is unacceptable. University policies regarding academic honesty will be strictly enforced.

### **Americans with Disabilities Statement**

If you have a disability or condition that compromises your ability to complete the requirements of this course, you must notify me within one week of receiving this syllabus. I will make reasonable efforts to assist you. You are encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center:

Director: Karen Kalivoda, Location: Clark Howell Hall, Phone: 542-8719 or 542-8778 (TTY)

### **Diversity Statement**

It is my intention to respect all types of students and viewpoints. I expect you to extend the same courtesy to me and your classmates.

### **Extra Credit**

There may be extra credit opportunities.

### **Online Evaluations**

\*\*Course evaluations will be completed online. Details: <https://ssl.franklin.uga.edu/evaluation/>

### **Grading**

Your final grade will be based on totals points. The following is a tentative look at the points available this term.

Participation	10%
Midterm Exam	30%
Discussion Leader	30%
Research Proposal	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Final grades are determined on the following percentage scale. Please note: Final grades are rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent. Because we round up throughout the semester, there is no "rounding" of final point totals.

A = 90-100, B = 80-89.9, C = 70-79.9, D = 60-69.9, F = 59.9 and below.

**Note:** This syllabus is not a contract and may be changed at any time for any reason by the faculty member. In other words, please note that this syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

### **Commercial Notetaking in University Courses**

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