Does advertising persuade us? Do repeated images of very thin women and very muscular men shape our own body image? Does playing violent videogames make people more aggressive? This course answers these questions and more about the effects of using media in the 21st century. Students will understand how historical mass communication theories apply to modern media and explore the concepts that explain the role of the media in our lives as individuals and as a society. This knowledge will serve as a guide to navigating today’s media industry and becoming critical consumers of media messages.

By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- Understand historical development and context of mass communication theories and concepts.
- Critique social scientific methods and perspectives.
- Understand persuasion, public opinion, and media effects on audiences.
- Make better use of media as thoughtful consumers.

Textbook:

*Media Effects Research: A Basic Overview (4th edition)*

By Glenn G. Sparks (2013) – available at University Bookstore

Other readings and assigned materials, as noted on the schedule, are available on the Internet on the ICON website and/or in the Journalism Resource Center, located on the 3rd floor of Adler Journalism Building (Room E350).

This course fulfills the General Education Social Sciences elective. GE stated outcomes: Students will examine the strengths and weaknesses of at least one method of inquiry distinctive of the social sciences, and become familiar with its major assumptions, concepts, and ways of formulating questions. Students will learn to evaluate data, generalizations, and hypotheses in the discipline. Students will have the opportunity to practice the methods of the discipline. Students will be given practice in developing positions and supporting their ideas with evidence and reason. [Lectures, exams, discussion sections, and the two papers will develop these outcomes.]
Exams

Each exam will consist of multiple-choice and short-answer items. No make-up exams will be given without an Explanatory Statement for Absence form. If you must miss an exam, you have to contact Stephanie Miles via email or phone prior to the exam. Make-up exams should be taken within a week of the scheduled exam. All exams are held during regular class time.

Exam material will come from textbook readings, lectures, and discussion section. Lectures and discussion will often cover material not included in the textbook. The final is not comprehensive.

Exam dates are: June 25, July 9, July 18, and August 1 (Final)

These dates will not change. Mark your calendar now.

Grading

A total of 650 points possible. Grades will be based on the following:

- 400 pts – four exams, including the final (all exams are worth 100 points)
- 100 pts – original research proposal
- 50 pts – short essay responses
- 70 pts – media log project
- 30 pts – attendance and participation

This course uses the +/- system. To receive a + on your grade, you must earn at least 7.5% more than the minimum for each grade. For example, a B+ requires 87.5% to 89.9% of points. The – level is for students earning less than 2.6% more than the minimum. A B- requires 80% to 82.5%. B grades fall between 82.5% and 87.5%. Do not assume grades will be rounded up or curved. Your scores on each assignment will be posted on ICON in the grade book section. You can keep track of the points you earn toward the desired grade on the following scale:

Minimum number of points for:

- A+ 633
- A 601
- A- 585
- B+ 568.5
- B 536
- B- 520
- C+ 503.5
- C 471
- C- 455
- D+ 438.5
- D 406
- D- 390
- F 389.9 or below

Assignments

Discussion questions
Points: 10 points each (x5 for a total of 50 points)
Length: Less than 1 page, typed and double-spaced

Each week, you will be given a short essay question about the readings. You are to write a short response and bring a hard copy to class on the due date. The purpose of this is to encourage you to do the readings and prepare in advance for class. More detailed instructions for this assignment are posted on ICON.
**Media log project**
Points: 30 points
Length: You will be provided a recording sheet to complete

You will spend time recording media you consume and thinking about how the content might impact individuals. The purpose of this assignment is to critically think about the media you are consuming and to encourage you to start thinking about questions you might want to answer for your original research proposal. More detailed instructions for this assignment are posted on ICON.

**Original research proposal**
Points: 100 points
Length: 4-5 pages total, typed and double-spaced

For this paper, you are to take a current issue and suggest how to conduct research on it from a theoretical perspective. (“Current,” for this assignment, means something that has happened since August 2012.) What social scientific theory/perspective might best explain either the media coverage or the potential audience interpretation? Why? What research method would you use to study this? Why? More detailed instructions are posted on ICON.

**Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory for this course and will be taken daily as part of your final grade. Excused absences should be communicated to the instructor in advance of the missed class via email. You must fill out an Explanatory Statement of Absence form (available via the Registrar’s website at [http://registrar.uiowa.edu/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=D7YMmOGcC6s%3d&tabid=79&mid=415](http://registrar.uiowa.edu/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=D7YMmOGcC6s%3d&tabid=79&mid=415)) within one week of your absence.

**Classroom Conduct**

No inappropriate classroom behavior will be tolerated. In this class, “inappropriate behavior” includes talking on cell phones, texting, playing electronic games, checking Facebook, surfing the internet, and talking to other students during class. Put any device that makes noise on SILENT before the class starts. If you feel the need to sleep, update Facebook, or read the newspaper, you may as well not come to class.

**Reacting Safely to Severe Weather**

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the [Department of Public Safety](http://dps.uiowa.edu) website.

*These CLAS policy and procedural statements have been summarized from the web pages of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the University of Iowa [Operations Manual](http://uiowa.edu/operationsmanual)
**Tentative Course Schedule**

Check the class site on ICON for updates and changes to the schedule below. Read the chapters before the class each week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td>June 11</td>
<td>Welcome! Introduction to the course</td>
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<td>June 12</td>
<td>What is Media? (Selections from Ch. 12)</td>
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<td>June 13</td>
<td>A Brief History of Media</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td>June 17</td>
<td>Ch. 1 – Scientific Approach</td>
<td>6/17: Discussion Question #1 Due</td>
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<td>June 18</td>
<td>Ch. 2 – Scientific Methods</td>
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<td>June 19</td>
<td>Ch. 2 cont.; Ch. 3 – History of Media Effects</td>
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<td>June 20</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td>June 24</td>
<td>Ch. 3 cont.; Diffusion of Innovations reading</td>
<td>6/24: Discussion Question #2 Due</td>
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<td>June 25</td>
<td><strong>Exam 1</strong> – Ch. 1, 2, 3, 12, diffusion, intro, history</td>
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<td>June 26</td>
<td>Ch. 9 –News and Political Content</td>
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<td>June 27</td>
<td>Ch. 9 cont.; Agenda setting reading</td>
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<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>Ch. 8 – Persuasive Effects of Media</td>
<td>7/1: Discussion Question #3 Due</td>
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<td>July 2</td>
<td>Ch. 8 cont.; Marketing and PR reading</td>
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<td>July 3</td>
<td>Marketing and PR cont.; Risk Communication</td>
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<td>July 4</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td>July 8</td>
<td>Risk Communication cont.</td>
<td>7/8: Discussion Question #4 Due</td>
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<td>July 9</td>
<td><strong>Exam 2</strong> – Ch. 9, 8, marketing, PR, risk comm.</td>
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<td>July 10</td>
<td>Ch. 5 – Media Violence</td>
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<td>July 11</td>
<td>Ch. 5 cont.; Ch. 6 – Sexual Content</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
<td>July 15</td>
<td>Ch. 6 cont.; Ch. 10 - Stereotypes</td>
<td>7/15: Media Log Project Due</td>
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<td>July 16</td>
<td>Ch. 10 cont.</td>
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<td>July 17</td>
<td>Body image reading</td>
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<td>July 18</td>
<td><strong>Exam 3</strong> – Ch. 5, 6, 10, body image</td>
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<td><strong>Week 7</strong></td>
<td>July 22</td>
<td>Ch. 7 – Emotions</td>
<td>7/22: Discussion Question #5 Due</td>
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<td>July 23</td>
<td>Ch. 7 cont.; Ch. 4 – Time Spent with Media</td>
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<td>July 24</td>
<td>Ch. 4 cont.; Ch. 11 – New Media Technology</td>
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<td>July 25</td>
<td>Ch. 11 cont.; Social Media reading</td>
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<td><strong>Week 8</strong></td>
<td>July 29</td>
<td>Social Media cont.</td>
<td>7/29: Research Proposal Due</td>
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<td>July 30</td>
<td>To be announced</td>
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<td>July 31</td>
<td>What does it all mean? Putting MUE together</td>
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<td>Aug 1</td>
<td><strong>Exam 4</strong> – Ch.4, 7, 11, 12, Social Media</td>
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Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook.

Electronic Communication
University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa email address (@uiowa.edu). Check this account regularly. Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (Operations Manual, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11.)

Academic Honesty
All CLAS students have, in essence, agreed to the College’s Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

CLAS Final Examination Policies
The final examination schedule for each class is announced around the fifth week of the semester by the Registrar. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the dates and times of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar’s web site.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint
Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook). The interim DEO for the School of Journalism & Mass Communication is Prof. Julie Andsager, phone 319.335.3428.

Accommodations for Disabilities
A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements.

Understanding Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Resources for Students
Writing Center – 110 EPB, 335-0188
Speaking Center – 153 EPB, 335-0205
Language Media Center – 120 PH, 335-2331
“The Iowa Dozen”

In this class we will learn the following principles, which—when spelled out—become the “Iowa Dozen.”

We will learn:
1. to write correctly and clearly
2. to conduct research and gather information responsibly
3. to edit and evaluate carefully
4. to use media technologies thoughtfully
5. to apply statistical concepts appropriately

We will value:
6. First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups
7. a diverse global community
8. creativity and independence
9. truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity

We will explore:
10. mass communication theories and concepts
11. media institutions and practices
12. the role of media in shaping cultures.