Course description and objectives

This course explores the ways in which media impact society and how individuals relate to the media by examining social scientific-based theories that relate to media effects, learning, and public opinion. Discussion includes the elements necessary for theory development from a social science perspective, plus historical and current contexts for understanding the major theories of the field.

The objectives of this course are:

- To learn and critique a variety of social science-based theories
- To review mass communication literature in terms of its theoretical relevance
- To study the process of theory building

Textbook:


Additional readings will be posted on the course ICON.

Teaching Policies & Resources — CLAS Syllabus Insert (instructor additions in this font)

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 at [http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

Electronic Communication

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences ([Operations Manual, III.15.2, k.11](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook)).

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. See [www.uiowa.edu/~sds/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/) for more information.

Academic Honesty

All CLAS students have, in essence, agreed to the College's [Code of Academic Honesty](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook): "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**). It is important to attribute to source, either by quoting (if using exact words) or citing (if paraphrasing from original work). Failure to do so is considered academic dishonesty and carries severe penalties. Please use the APA style guide for this course to help you with attributing to source appropriately, and in the style preferred by social scientists in the discipline.

**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 with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (**CLAS Academic Policies Handbook**). Please talk to me, the instructor, first if you have complaints. If the issue is not resolved to satisfaction, the DEO, Professor Julie Andsager may be contacted at julie-andsager@uiowa.edu.

**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.

**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 website](#).

**Other**

**Special needs**
I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability which may require seating modifications or testing accommodations or accommodations of other class requirements, so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Please contact me during my office hours.

**Meetings and consultations with the instructor**
I check e-mail frequently, and especially during office hours. E-mail is the best way to reach me; my phone during office hours is the next best.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions regarding any aspect of the course—syllabus, term assignments, ideas for assignments, exams, what constitutes academic dishonesty, or any other issue related to the course. Depending upon the nature of the question or problem, I may do one or more of three things—ask you to check back with the syllabus (so consult it first before approaching me), discuss over e-mail, or indicate that a meeting during office hours or by appointment may be best.
Complaints and grievances

If you have problems with any aspect of the course, please bring them to my attention at the earliest. Talk to me during office hours. I can then take appropriate measures to address the situation. If the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can contact Professor Julie Andsager, Director, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, at 319/335-3486 or julie-andsager@uiowa.edu and pursue the matter further.

Course requirements

For the most part, we will use student-generated reading responses to readings as “discussion starters” for each class period of assigned readings. Presentations will be sorted out in the first class session for the semester.

Assignments: Please adhere strictly to the deadlines set in the course calendar. See the grading section below for more details on each assignment. Guidelines for each assignment will be discussed in class and posted to ICON in cases where I consider them necessary. Writing is a critical part of communicating your knowledge and effective employment of theory, and care should be taken in written exercises and postings. The Writing Center can help with assignments before they are submitted to me. Please refer the following web site http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc/ for details.

Course grading:

Attendance and participation (10%)

Attendance is required for all class meetings barring exceptional circumstances, which have to be appropriately documented. Students will animate a good part of in-class discussion, and the instructor will moderate it. All students are required to participate with relevant questions, observations, and remarks that will invite and facilitate discussion. In case of illness, you should provide a completed “self-report form” (available on the Registrar’s website at http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/Student/FormsforStudents/tabid/79/Default.aspx) upon return to class and follow-up on any missed activity.

Assignments: All assignments are due by 5 PM on the specified deadline, through ICON upload, and where I indicate, on hard copy.

1. Discussion postings for each class meeting – all count for 25%
   Good discussions depend on your preparation with readings and reading discussion questions posted online before coming to class, so please ensure that you come to class prepared. To facilitate readings-based participation, each week students will post one synthesized discussion question based on the assigned readings for the week. These questions will determine the course of class discussion for each session.

2. 4 short analytical papers on three theories @ 5 points = 20% (topics in course calendar)
3. Teaching theory 10% (below)
4. Research paper = 35% (below)

Teaching theory. You will identify one theory that interests you and teach the rest of us about it. Select a scholarly article that you think applies your theory in interesting and effective ways, then incorporate it along with our assigned readings in your lesson. (Bring your selection to me two weeks in advance of your presentation day, and I’ll make copies for everyone. If you don’t manage to do that, bring copies for everyone the week before your presentation date.) Creativity is welcome in finding ways to engage your students in the days’ material and to help us remember the key concepts.
You will turn in a written outline of key points, discussion topics and questions for the class to stimulate discussion. You’ll be responsible for about 30 minutes of the class on the day your theory has been assigned. These materials and your ability to clearly present the material form the basis of your grade on this assignment.

Research paper. You will find a theoretical perspective to specialize in for the duration of this course (at least). How to select this perspective? We will discuss in class, but the purpose is to allow you to take a concept or topic that you are interested in and thoroughly examine it in an appropriate theoretical framework. As we go through the semester, you should be seeking studies that build on the topic. The term paper will be somewhat similar to a literature review but will feature your analysis of the theory and whether the research on your topic has added to or altered the theoretical perspective and its development. Expect this paper to be about 20 pages in length, with at least 10 studies referenced plus any other references necessary to define and discuss the theory.

COURSE CALENDAR

This is a working schedule. Changes and deviations may be necessary. It is your responsibility to be informed of the correct schedule at all times. If changes are needed, they will be announced in the “News” section of the course ICON.

Note: Read the assignments before class. We will base much of our discussion each week on the readings, and our class is too small for you to be able to avoid participating in discussion. The full reference for most of the ICON readings is available in the bibliography following this calendar.

“Other” in the middle column indicates readings either on ICON or to be accessed by you via E-Journals through the Main Library webpage. Check the bibliography below for the appropriate spots.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/ date/topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments and due dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1, Mon. Jan. 27</td>
<td>Severin &amp; Tankard, ch. 1-2; Other – Chaffee; Popper; Webb et al.; Westley</td>
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<td>Introduction, scientific method and theory</td>
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<td>Week 2, Mon. Feb. 03</td>
<td>Severin, ch. 3-5, 7</td>
<td>Due Wed. Feb. 05: short paper1 – evaluating theory</td>
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<td>Models to theory, early theorizing</td>
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<td>Week 3, Mon. Feb. 10</td>
<td>Text, Chapter 12</td>
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<td>Spiral of Silence and Third-Person Effects</td>
<td>Other -- Noelle-Neumann; Scheufele &amp; Moy; Davison; Perloff; Andsager &amp; White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4, Mon. Feb. 17</td>
<td>Text, chapters 3,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultivation and the scary world - 1</td>
<td>Other - Gerbner readings – read in order in bibliography</td>
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<td>Week</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Mon. Mar. 3</td>
<td>Cognition, Attitude, and Persuasion</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Mon. Mar. 10</td>
<td>Social learning and social cognitive theory</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Mon. Mar. 17</td>
<td><strong>Spring break, no class</strong></td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Mon. Mar. 24</td>
<td>Agenda setting</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Mon. Mar. 31</td>
<td>Framing</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Mon. Apr. 7</td>
<td>Uses and gratifications</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Mon. Apr. 14</td>
<td>Diffusion and knowledge gap</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Mon. Apr. 21</td>
<td>New media technologies</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Mon. Apr. 28</td>
<td>Social science theories for public issues</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Mon. May 5</td>
<td>Research paper presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 16</td>
<td>Mon. May 12</td>
<td><strong>Final paper due May 12</strong></td>
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Readings list (with some extra references)


