Media Uses and Effects
Journalism & Mass Communication JMC:1100 – Fall 2020

Professor Rachel Young (she/her/hers)
rachel-young@uiowa.edu
course website: http://icon.uiowa.edu/

Zoom drop-in hours: 9:30-10:30 am Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2-3:30 pm Wednesdays, or by appointment

Teaching Assistants (aka, TAs – they will lead your Discussion Sections)

Frankline Matanji
frankline-matanji@uiowa.edu
Section 0A01: 8:30 am Friday, 105 EPB (English-Philosophy Building)
Section 0A04: 12:30 pm Friday, 110 MLH (MacLean Hall)
Section 0A06: 10:30 am Friday, 213 MLH (MacLean Hall)
Zoom drop-in hours: 11:30 am to 1 pm, Mondays and Tuesdays. Zoom link.

Mumtahin Awny (she/her/hers)
mumtahin-awny@uiowa.edu
Section 0A03: 11:30 am Friday, 105 EPB (English-Philosophy Building)
Section 0A05: 1:30 pm Friday, 105 EPB (English-Philosophy Building)
Section 0A07: 2:30 pm Friday, 105 EPB (English-Philosophy Building)
Zoom drop-in hours: 10 am to 12 pm Mondays, 2:30-3:30 pm Wednesdays Zoom link.

Hannah Rakofsky
hannah-rakofsky@uiowa.edu
Section 0A09: 9:30 am Friday, 2229 SC (Seamans Center)
Zoom drop-in hours: 1-2 pm Wednesdays, 10:30-11:30 Thursdays. Zoom link.

Why study media effects?

We consume (and create) a lot of media. We spend more time using media than doing almost anything else. All that media must have some effect on us, but what? In this class we’ll apply the philosophies, theories, and methods of social science to understanding media effects. We’ll explore questions that people have debated since the early days of film: Does violent media really cause violence? Does news influence the political process? Does the world we see in media reflect what’s really happening? And if media does affect us, what can we do about it?

This course will give an overview of the history and current state of research into media effects. Taking a social science approach to studying media allows you to move beyond intuition, opinion, and emotion to develop a systematic view of media impacts and influence. Over the semester, you’ll develop your abilities to be critical media consumers and creators, a lifelong skill for our media-saturated world.
**Learning Objectives**

At the end of this course you should be able to:

L1: Understand the historical development and context of social science philosophies, assumptions, and methods
L2: Describe the role of theory in media effects research
L3: Explain basic statistical concepts and their appropriate application
L4: Appraise the effects of your own media creation and consumption
L5: Assess the strengths and limitations of media effects research
L6: Develop a research plan applying social science theories and methods to a question

**SJMC Learning Outcomes**

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is committed to your academic and professional success. In line with this commitment, we have identified learning outcomes that every student should obtain by the time they earn a JMC degree. You can find more information about these learning outcomes here on the SJMC Website.

This course contributes to these learning outcomes by helping you understand how media messages influence their audiences. Achieving these outcomes means the ability to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the basic tenets of media literacy and how media literacy relates to personal media habits and professional development.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to and understanding of the role of media representations and stereotypes in shaping perceptions of people and groups, particularly marginalized or underrepresented groups.

This course also fulfills the General Education Social Sciences elective. GE stated outcomes are:

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 arguments and supporting their ideas with evidence and reason. Lectures, exams, discussion sections, and the two written assignments will develop these outcomes.

**Textbook, Discussion Reading, and Other Media**

  - Available at Iowa Book; also available online to rent or as an e-book
- Other readings, articles, podcasts, and videos will be posted on the lecture ICON site.
- **Discussion Readings:** Most weeks (other than exam weeks, the week before break, and the first week of class) you will have a brief reading that builds on concepts and theories covered in that week’s lectures and applies those concepts to a current media topic. Readings will be available in the Module for that week on the MUE Lecture ICON page. The Discussion Reading should be completed by the start of Discussion Section. You will need to do this reading to complete your DSR (Discussion Section Response).
Class Format and Highlights

This semester will not be typical. Our plans may need to change as the semester goes on. I'll always communicate with you and be as transparent as possible. For now, we'll have a mix of online and in-person learning. I'll explain more in a Welcome video by the first week of class. If you have any questions, email me any time or come to drop-in hours.

How will we deliver lectures and take exams?

- **Lecture**: Weekly lecture videos posted will be posted to ICON by midnight on Sundays (other than the first week of class)
- **Weekly assessment**: Short activities based on the lecture videos and that week’s readings will be posted to Discussion Section ICON when lecture videos are posted. They will be due before your discussion section Friday (so you’ll have a week to watch videos and complete assessments).
- **Exams**: We have four exams. The first three will be taken on your discussion section ICON site, during your in-person discussion section. You will bring your laptop to section to take the exam (important: if you do not have a working laptop, let me or your TA know ASAP so we can help figure out a solution). Your final exam will be taken online at the time assigned to us. The time of our final exam (aka, Exam 4) will be announced by late October.

What about discussion section?

- **Discussion section, before Thanksgiving**: Until break, or until further notice, your discussion section will meet in person. Your TA will run the discussion section. We will use that time to have deeper discussions of concepts and theories and to take exams. As per university policy, we’ll all wear masks and sit 6 feet apart. Please bring your laptop or tablet to discussion section. We will sometimes use them for class activities.
- **Discussion section, after Thanksgiving**: After break, discussion section will meet online. The format will be announced closer to break.
- **Discussion section response (DSR)**: Each week you will complete a discussion response based on the week’s readings. You will submit it to discussion section ICON by the start of your discussion section each Friday.

How can I talk to Professor Young? How can I talk to my TAs?

- The university is requesting the office hours are held online this semester.
- **Professor Young drop-in hours**
  - Zoom drop-in hours just for Media Uses and Effects: 9:30-10:30 am Tuesday and Thursday (other than exam days). Come by with questions or to say hello any time.
  - General drop-in hours: 2-3:30 pm Wednesday.
  - Here’s the link for drop-in hours
- **TA drop-in hours**
  - **Frankline**: 11:30 am to 1 pm Mondays and Tuesdays. [Zoom link](#).
  - **Mumtahin**: 10 am to 12 pm Mondays, 2:30-3:30 pm Wednesdays [Zoom link](#).
  - **Hannah**: 1-2 pm Wednesdays, 10:30-11:30 Thursdays. [Zoom link](#).
Grading

Total of 620 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 – discussion section responses
- 70 pts – weekly assessments

Grades will not be curved. Your scores on each assignment will be posted on the ICON page for your discussion section in the Gradebook section. You can keep track of the points you earn toward the desired grade on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97.5-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92.5-97.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.5-89.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82.5-87.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.5-79.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72.5-77.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67.5-69.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>62.5-67.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;59.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade Inquiries
If you have questions or concerns about a grade, please speak with your TA during Zoom drop-in hours within two weeks of receiving the grade. If you feel like the situation has not been resolved after this conversation, please see Professor Young during her Zoom drop-in hours within two weeks of your meeting with the TA to discuss the situation and grade. Grade inquiries must happen over Zoom (not email) and within the time frame specified. If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please contact Professor Young.

Exams
Exams will be delivered synchronously on the discussion section ICON page. You will take the exam during your Friday discussion section, on your own laptop. Each exam will consist of multiple-choice and short-answer items. Exam material will come from textbook readings, additional readings or videos, lectures, and discussion section. Lectures and discussion will often cover material not included in the textbook. The final is not comprehensive, ie, it will cover material learned since Exam 3, not material from the whole semester. If you must miss an exam due to an emergency or illness, you must contact Professor Young via email as soon as possible prior to the exam.

Exam dates are:
September 18 (Friday), October 16 (Friday), November 6 (Friday), and the date for the final exam will be announced by the end of October. The first three exams are held during your regular discussion section time.

Exam reviews
Your TAs will hold Zoom Exam Reviews on the Thursdays before the exams. The reviews are optional / not required. The Zoom links will be posted the week of the exam.

Assignments
All assignments must be uploaded to the discussion section ICON website on or before the due date. All papers must include your name, the date, and your section number.
**Weekly Assessments** – These assessments are short answer questions or brief activities based on the weekly lectures. You will find them under the lecture videos on your discussion section ICON site. **The questions will be included in the videos** – that means you'll have to watch the video to see the question. An on-topic, thoughtful, and complete response will get full points (2.5 points per assessment, 5 points total per week). The point of the weekly assessments is to get you thinking about the concepts and theories discussed in the lectures and to prove as an “attention check” to demonstrate that you’ve watched the lecture videos. We will drop your lowest score, so you can miss one weekly assessment and still get full points (70).

**Discussion Section Responses** (DSRs) – Most weeks, your TA will post a two-part question about the next week’s readings, including the Discussion reading. You are to answer the question and post your answer to ICON before the next week’s section. The purpose of this is to encourage you to do the readings and prepare in advance for discussion. DSRs will have two parts: (1) a closed-ended question about a concept or theory from the reading and (2) an open-ended question asking you to give your thoughts about the reading. Both parts must be completed, and correct, for the full 5 points. We will drop your lowest score, so you can miss one DSR and still get full points (50).

**Original research proposal** – For this paper, you will identify a current topic related to media effects, identify a theory that could help explain or predict those media effects, develop a research question, and determine which method is the best fit for answering your question. More detailed instructions will be posted on ICON.

**Lecture notes**
The outline of the week’s lectures will be posted on ICON by the following Monday and remain posted for a week. The outline will not contain all information discussed in the lecture, however, so you should not assume that skipping the lectures will allow you to earn a desirable grade on exams. You must retrieve the notes within the week they are posted – after they are removed, they will not be e-mailed or otherwise provided. The lecture notes will serve as your study guide for exams, so be sure to download them each week.

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**College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**
**Information for Undergraduates**

This information may change as the semester goes on. [Click this link for the most up-to-date information from CLAS.](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences)

**Absences and Attendance**
Students are responsible for attending class and for contributing to the learning environment of a course. Students are also responsible for knowing their course absence policies, which will vary by instructor. All absence policies, however, must uphold the UI policy related to student illness, mandatory religious obligations, including Holy Day obligations, unavoidable circumstances, or University authorized activities ([https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences)). Students may use the CLAS absence form to aid communication with the instructor who will decide if the absence is excused or unexcused. The form is located on ICON within the top banner under "Student Tools.”
Academic Integrity
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty. Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through UI email. Visit this page for information: (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code).

Accommodations for Disabilities
UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student is then responsible for discussing specific accommodations with the instructor. More information is at https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/.

Administrative Home of the Course
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and related policies. Other colleges may have different policies. CLAS policies may be found here: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

Classroom Expectations
Students are expected to comply with University policies regarding appropriate classroom behavior as outlined in the Code of Student Life. This includes the policies and procedures that all students have agreed to regarding the Steps Forward for Fall 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly, all students are required to wear a face cover when in a UI building, including a classroom. In addition, the density of seats in classrooms has been reduced. In some instances, this will allow 6 feet or more of distance while other cases, it may be less. Regardless, wearing face coverings and maintaining as much distance as is possible are vital to slowing the spread of COVID-19. In the event that a student disrupts the classroom environment through their failure to comply with the reasonable directive of an instructor or the University, the instructor has the authority to ask that the student immediately leave the space for the remainder of the class period. Additionally, the instructor is asked to report the incident to the Office of Student Accountability for the possibility of additional follow-up. Students who need a temporary alternative learning arrangement related to COVID-19 expectations should contact Student Disability Services (https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/fall-2020/covid-19-temporary-learning-arrangements/; +1 319 335-1462).

Class Recordings: Privacy and Sharing
Some sessions of a course could be recorded or live-streamed. Such a recording or streaming will only be available to students registered for the course. These recordings are the intellectual property of the faculty, and they may not be shared or reproduced without the explicit written consent of the faculty member. Students may not share these sessions with those not in the class; likewise, students may not upload recordings to any other online environment. Doing so is a breach of the Code of Student Conduct and, in some cases, a violation of the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
Communication and the Required Use of UI Email
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to the UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

Complaints
Students with a complaint about an academic issue should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the Chair of the department or program offering the course; students may next bring the issue to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; see this page for more information: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities.

Final Examination Policies
The final exam schedule is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals with a few exceptions made for particular types of courses such as labs or off-cycle courses: https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies.

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom
The University of Iowa is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for people of all gender, sexual, racial, religious, and other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited in MyUI to optionally share the names and pronouns they would like their instructors and advisors to use to address them. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (https://diversity.uiowa.edu/eod; +1 319 335-0705 or (diversity.uiowa.edu)

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 must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, please see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.
**Tentative schedule (any changes will be announced on ICON)**

Note: Read the assigned reading **before** viewing the lecture videos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments Due Dates and Exams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>What are Media Effects? How Do We Study Them?</td>
<td>Sparks, Chapter 1</td>
<td>Section: DSR (will be completed in discussion section)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8/25 &amp; 8/27)</td>
<td></td>
<td>No Discussion Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Social Scientific Research Methods</td>
<td>Sparks, Chapter 2</td>
<td>Section: DSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9/1 &amp; 9/3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion reading: On ICON</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>History of Media Effects</td>
<td>Sparks, Chapter 3</td>
<td>Section: DSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9/8 &amp; 9/10)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion reading: On ICON</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Diffusion of Innovations</td>
<td>On ICON</td>
<td><strong>In Friday, 9/18, Discussion Section</strong></td>
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<td><em>No Discussion Reading</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>News and Political Content</td>
<td>Sparks, Chapter 9</td>
<td>Section: DSR</td>
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<tr>
<td>(9/22 &amp; 9/24)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion reading: On ICON</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Agenda Setting and Gatekeeping</td>
<td>On ICON:</td>
<td>Section: DSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Persuasive Media Effects</td>
<td>Sparks, Chapter 8</td>
<td>Section: DSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10/6 &amp; 10/8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion Reading: On ICON</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Time Spent with Media</td>
<td>Sparks, Chapter 4</td>
<td><strong>In Friday 10/16 Discussion Section</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(10/13 &amp; 10/15)</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>No Discussion Reading</em></td>
<td><strong>Exam 2 - Chapters 4,8,9, agenda setting reading, gatekeeping reading, lecture/discussion</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Exam 2 Review on Zoom at 9:30 am Thursday, 10/15</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Discussion Reading</td>
<td>Exam Review</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 9    | Violence in the Media | Sparks, Chapter 5 | Discussion reading: On ICON | Section: DSR  
Original Research Proposal Assigned |
| 11   | Stereotypes in the Media | Sparks, Chapter 10 | No Discussion Reading | In Friday 11/6  
Discussion Section  
Exam 3 Review on Zoom at 9:30 am Thursday, 11/5 |
| 12   | Sex in the Media | Sparks, Chapter 6 | Discussion reading: On ICON | Section: DSR |
| 13   | Media and Our Emotions | Sparks, Chapter 7 | No Discussion Reading | Friday 11/20  
Original Research Proposal Due  
No Discussion Section this week;  
Happy Thanksgiving |
| 14   | Thanksgiving Break | The Internet and Social Media | Sparks, Chapter 11 | Section: DSR  
Discussion reading: On ICON |
| 15   | The Limits of a Social Science Approach | Sparks, Chapter 12 | Discussion reading: On ICON | Section: DSR  
Exam 4 Review on Zoom at 9:30 am Thursday, 12/10 |
| 16   | | | | |

**Exam: Finals Week TBA**  
– chapters 7, 6, 11, and 12; lecture/discussion