

**COM 111-01: Introduction to Mass Communication**  
**Shippensburg University, Spring 2017**  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 – 10:45 a.m., Rowland Hall 209**

<p><b>Professor:</b> Kyle Heim, Ph.D. <b>Office:</b> Rowland Hall 123 <b>Office hours:</b>     Tue. &amp; Thurs., 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.     Wed., 1 – 3 p.m.     or by appointment</p>	<p><b>Professor's email:</b> <a href="mailto:krheim@ship.edu">krheim@ship.edu</a> <b>Office phone:</b> (717) 477-1152 <b>Course website:</b> <a href="http://d2l.ship.edu">http://d2l.ship.edu</a></p>
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**Course description**

COM 111 is an introductory core course in the Communication/Journalism Department. This course is designed to allow students to develop an informed critical perspective concerning the debate over media culture as a force for both democracy and consumerism. Part of this perspective entails an understanding of media history, how media industries are structured, and who their major players are. Another part aims to encourage students to think beyond the drier facts and to consider how the media influence, and are influenced by, culture. This course asks students to become cultural critics of media, connecting their own consumption of media to the larger issues of citizenship and democracy. **Comm/Journ majors and minors must pass this course with a “C” grade or better.**

**Course learning objectives**

By the conclusion of the course, each student will

- Summarize the history and development of mass communication over time;
- Identify major technological developments, key people and primary institutions in mass communication;
- Describe how basic concepts of media law and ethics impact mass communication operations;
- Use the vocabulary of mass communication to effectively communicate key concepts;
- Think critically about the mass media as an integral part of our culture;
- Discuss the effects of mass media upon society;
- Assess the complex role media economics play in shaping media practices and consumption;
- Describe key developments in media ownership and their impact on democracy;
- Become a more literate and discerning media consumer; and,
- Describe prominent people, companies and careers in various mass communication areas.

**Required text**

***Media Essentials: A Brief Introduction (2016, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)***. Authors: R. Campbell, C. Martin & B. Fabos. Publisher: Bedford/St. Martin's, Boston.

The ISBN is 978-1457693762 (without Launchpad access) or 978-1319055509 (with Launchpad access). **You do NOT need Launchpad.** Launchpad gives you access to the website for the textbook, <http://www.macmillanhighered.com/launchpad/mediaessentials3e/3852940>, which includes materials such as practice quizzes and videos for each chapter. Going to the website and selecting the “I need to pay later” option will allow you to get a free 21-day Launchpad trial.

## **Professional values and competencies for C/J majors and minors**

The Communication/Journalism Department faculty sets the goal of developing within each student the following core professional values and competencies as defined by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) [competencies addressed in this course are in **bold**]:

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- **demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;**
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- **demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.**
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- **think critically, creatively and independently;**
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts; and
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

## **Attendance and missed/late work policy**

- **Attendance is mandatory**, and students are expected to come to class on time each day. An attendance sheet will be circulated at the start of class each day. It is your responsibility to sign the sheet. The attendance sheets will serve as the official record of attendance. If you come to class late, after the attendance sheet has circulated, you may be marked absent that day.
- **Students are responsible for keeping track of their own attendance.** I will use the attendance sheets to calculate attendance at the end of the semester.
- **Students are permitted 3 unexcused absences during the semester.** More than 3 unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your final course grade as follows:
  - **4 or 5 unexcused absences** = final grade lowered by a half-grade — for example, from an A- to a B+ or from a C+ to a C. NOTE: Shippensburg University does not use C- or D+ grades, so a C would be lowered to a D.
  - **6 or 7 unexcused absences** = final grade lowered by a full letter grade — for example, from a B to a C.
  - **8 or more unexcused absences** = student automatically fails the course, regardless of his or her performance on exams and assignments.
- **An absence will be excused ONLY** if a student (1) notifies the instructor of the absence via email BEFORE class, **AND** (2) provides official written documentation of the reason for the absence (e.g., an official signed, dated note from a doctor, coach, lawyer, other instructor, etc., or from the Dean's Office). This documentation must be provided when you return to class. If you know you will miss more than one class due to illness or a family emergency, it is recommended that you notify the Dean's Office, which will notify all of your instructors of your absences.
- If your absence is excused, you are permitted to make up an assignment **if you contact the instructor in advance to confirm the excused absence and any work you must complete.** The

work will be due **by the next class** you are able to attend. Quizzes or exams will be made up in office hours during a time that suits the student and instructor.

- In the event of an unexcused absence, you will **NOT** be allowed to make up a quiz or exam and will earn a grade of zero. If an assignment is due on the day of an unexcused absence, you will not receive extra time to complete the assignment. You will be penalized for submitting it late.
- Deadlines are critical in any media-related profession. Deadlines are not merely guidelines; they are final dates for submitting assignments. Assigned work is due on the deadline date. **Late assignments will be assessed a penalty of a full letter grade for each day past the deadline**, unless they are late because of an excused absence. Extensions are granted at my discretion and may require documentation of extreme circumstances, such as illness or an emergency. All extensions must be requested at least 24 hours before the assignment is due.

### **Email and D2L**

Please be sure to check your Shippensburg email account and D2L before class. I frequently use email and D2L to communicate important class information to students, including any class cancellations due to illness, inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

When corresponding with me by email, **please include a subject line and mention that the email is regarding Intro to Mass Comm**. Please do not email me at the last minute or late at night and expect an immediate response. I respond to emails as quickly as I can, but **please allow 24 hours for a response or up to 48 hours on a weekend**. I am always happy to answer a question, but please check the syllabus and the course schedule here and on D2L first to see if it can be answered there first.

### **Course projects and assignments**

#### **1. Unit exams (total of 270 points)**

- There will be three unit exams (worth 90 points each), which will cover the textbook chapters, in-class discussions, videos and any assigned readings used within each unit. The exams may include a combination of the following question types: matching, multiple choice, true-false, short-answer and essay.

#### **2. Oral history project (100 points)**

- You will complete a two-part oral history project. For Part 1 (worth 50 points), you will interview a person age 50 or older and ask this person questions about his or her mass media experiences in the 20th century (1930s on). Once you have performed the interview, you will summarize the answers and analyze the results. Then, for Part 2 (worth 50 points), you will select a media company or organization discussed by your interviewee that interests you. You will research this firm by uncovering information about the company in four specific areas. Details and instructions will be provided in class and on D2L over the course of the semester.

#### **3. Quizzes (30 points)**

- Pop quizzes (worth 6 points each) will be given at the start of six randomly chosen class sessions. Each quiz will cover the assigned reading for that day. The quizzes may include a mix of multiple-choice, short-answer, and true-or-false formats. You may use handwritten or printed-out notes that you have taken, but you cannot use the readings themselves (or photocopies) or any electronic devices. Your top five quiz scores will count toward your course grade, and your lowest quiz score will be dropped. If you come to class late, you will not get extra time to finish the quiz. In the event of an unexcused absence, you will earn a zero and will not be permitted to make up the quiz. In the event of an excused absence (see “Attendance and missed/late work policy” above for information on what qualifies as an excused absence), it is your responsibility to contact me to make arrangements to make up the quiz.

## **Grading and evaluation**

A total of **400 points** are available. Point totals at the end of the semester will be converted to letter grades using the following scale:

Point Total	Grade	Point Total	Grade	Point Total	Grade
372 – 400 (93%)	A	320 – 331.5 (80%)	B-	0 – 239.5	F
360 – 371.5 (90%)	A-	300 – 319.5 (75%)	C+		
348 – 359.5 (87%)	B+	280 – 299.5 (70%)	C		
332 – 347.5 (83%)	B	240 – 279.5 (60%)	D		

Students who had more than three unexcused absences during the semester will have their final grade lowered accordingly (See “Attendance and missed/late work policy” above).

Grades will be recorded on the course D2L site. It is your responsibility to monitor your grades. Questions regarding assignment grades should be raised when an assignment is returned, not at the end of the semester.

## **Classroom etiquette policy**

- Class will start on time at 9:30 a.m. Tardiness is rude and disruptive. Make every effort to be on time so as not to miss anything or disrupt the class.
- Inappropriate, rude or disrespectful language or behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. This may include (but is not limited to) the following: talking or not paying attention during a lecture; using inappropriate language; being disrespectful to your instructor or fellow classmates; texting, emailing, listening to music or other use of electronic devices during class; sleeping; and tardiness.
- **Unless instructed otherwise, use of cell phones and laptop computers in the classroom is not permitted.** Cell phones are to be turned off or on vibrate and put away during class.

## **Academic dishonesty policy**

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated in this course and will be handled according to the University’s Academic Dishonesty Policy found on pages 38-40 of the 2015-2017 Shippensburg University Undergraduate Catalog (<http://www.ship.edu/catalog>). *All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the department, Dean’s Office and Office of Student Affairs.* Penalties for violation of the AD Policy include grade reduction, assignment of a failing grade for the course, suspension and expulsion from the University.

## **Learning Center resources**

If you feel you need extra help to improve your academic performance in this course or any of your other courses, please consider making an appointment with a tutor or learning specialist in the Learning Center (LC). The LC is located on the lower level of Lehman Library, right below Starbucks, and can also be reached at 717-477-1420.

## **Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) statement**

Students with disabilities are not required by law to identify themselves to SU and the Office of Disability Services; however, if a student desires accommodations, he or she is obligated to complete the necessary forms and provide disability documentation at the time other requests are made. It is the policy of Shippensburg University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal law, state law, and the University’s commitment to equal education opportunities. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services at the *beginning* of the term (120 Horton Hall; 717-477-1329).

### **Commitment to a safe learning environment**

Shippensburg University faculty support a safe campus environment for all. No one on this campus has the right to threaten you or make you feel intimidated in any way. More specifically, unwanted advances, harassment, aggressive or violent behavior, and sexual assault will not be tolerated. A comprehensive list of reporting options and support services, including confidential resources, can be found at [http://www.ship.edu/no\\_more/](http://www.ship.edu/no_more/).

Shippensburg University and its faculty are committed to assuring a safe and productive educational environment for all students. In order to meet this commitment and to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and guidance from the Office for Civil Rights, the University requires faculty members to report incidents of sexual violence shared by students to the University's Title IX Coordinator. The only exceptions to the faculty member's reporting obligation are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing assignment for a class, or as part of a University-approved research project. Faculty members are obligated to report allegations of sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred. Such reporting must be made to the Shippensburg University Police at 477-1444, the Department of Human Services (DHS) at 800-932-0313, and the University's Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs at 477-1308. Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence can be found at: [www.ship.edu/No\\_More/Sexual\\_Misconduct/Sexual\\_Misconduct\\_Information/](http://www.ship.edu/No_More/Sexual_Misconduct/Sexual_Misconduct_Information/)

## **Tentative Course Schedule**

The timeline for this course may need to be adjusted for severe weather events or other unforeseen circumstances. Changes will be announced in class and via email or D2L. **All reading and homework must be completed by the date on which it is listed.**

### **Unit 1 – Mass comm overview: Law, economics and technology**

Tue., 1/24 – Introduction to the course

Thurs., 1/26 – Ch. 1: Mass communication: A critical approach

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Tue., 1/31 – Ch. 13: Legal controls and freedom of expression

Thurs., 2/2 – Legal controls and freedom of expression (cont.)

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Tue., 2/7 – Ch. 14: Media economics and the global marketplace

Thurs., 2/9 – Media economics and the global marketplace (cont.)

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Tue., 2/14 – Ch. 9: The Internet and new technologies

Thurs., 2/16 – The Internet and new technologies (cont.)

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Tue., 2/21 – **EXAM 1 on Chapters 1, 9, 13, and 14**

### **Unit 2 – Journalism, public relations and advertising**

Thurs., 2/23 – Ch. 3: Newspapers to digital frontiers: Journalism's journey

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Tue., 2/28 – Journalism (cont.)

Thurs., 3/2 – View *All the President's Men*

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Tue., 3/7 – View *All the President's Men* (cont.)

Thurs., 3/9 – Review and discuss *All the President's Men*

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Tue., 3/14 and Thurs., 3/16 – NO CLASS (Spring break)

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Tue. 3/21 – Ch. 12: Public relations and framing the message

Thurs., 3/23 – Ch. 11: Advertising and commercial culture

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Tue., 3/28 – Advertising and commercial culture (cont.)

Thurs., 3/30 – View *The Greatest Movie Ever Sold*  
**DUE: Oral History Project (Part 1)**

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Tue., 4/4 – View and discuss *The Greatest Movie Ever Sold*

Thurs., 4/6 – **EXAM 2 on Chapters 3, 11, and 12, plus the two films**

### **Unit 3 – Mass media history: From books to television**

Tue., 4/11 – Ch. 2: Books and the power of print

Thurs., 4/13 – Ch. 4: Magazines in the age of specialization

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Tues., 4/18 – Ch. 5: Sound recording and popular music

Thurs., 4/20 – Ch. 6: Radio

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Tue., 4/25 – Ch. 7: Movies

Thurs., 4/27 – Movies (cont.)

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Tue., 5/2 – Ch. 8: Television and cable

Thurs., 5/4 – Television and cable (cont.), course wrap-up  
**DUE: Oral History Project (Part 2)**

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Week of 5/8 – 5/12 – **EXAM 3 on Chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 (Date and time to be announced)**