

COM 111: Introduction to Mass Communication **Shippensburg University, Fall 2020**

Weekly class meetings on Zoom, Mondays at 2 p.m.

All course materials posted to the course D2L site (<http://d2l.ship.edu>)

Professor

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Email

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Office hours

Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., via Zoom

You are always welcome to meet with me during office hours via Zoom. The Zoom link and password are posted to the course D2L site in a Content folder labeled “Office Hours.” When you click the Zoom link and enter the password, you will be placed in a virtual “waiting room.” Please be patient. I will bring you into the Zoom chat room when I am ready to meet with you.

If you are having troubles with the Zoom connection, you may reach me via my office phone number, (717) 477-1152. It is set up to automatically forward calls to my cell phone. Usually, this works fine, but sometimes there are glitches. You may get a busy signal, or your call might go straight to voicemail.

If the Wednesday and Thursday times don’t work for you, please email me, and we can set up an appointment at a different, mutually agreed-upon time.

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

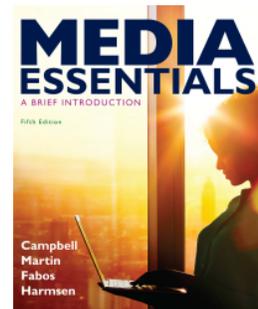
By the conclusion of the course, each student will

- 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.
- Describe prominent people, companies and careers in various mass communication areas.

Required text

Media Essentials: A Brief Introduction (2020, 5th edition). Authors: R. Campbell, C. Martin, B. Fabos & S. Harmsen. Publisher: Bedford/St. Martin's, Boston. ISBN: 978-1319208172.



NOTE: You do NOT need the version of the book with Launchpad access.

The book is available at the SU bookstore and at various online booksellers in paperback and e-book form. Be sure to purchase the **5th (most recent) version**.

Professional values and competencies

The Communication/Journalism Department faculty sets the goal of developing within each student several core professional values and competencies as defined by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). This course addresses the following competencies:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.

Course format and weekly assignments

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, COM 111 is **100% online** this semester, using the university's course management system, Desire2Learn (D2L) Brightspace (<http://d2l.ship.edu>), and Zoom online meeting software (<http://ship.zoom.us>). More information about using D2L and Zoom, including "how-to" videos, is available at <http://www.ship.edu/technology/student/resources/>.

Although the course is online, it will cover all of the same material as if it were face to face. Do not assume that online means "easy" or "less important." **This course will occupy a significant amount of your time. Plan your schedule and budget your time accordingly.**

D2L site: All course materials will be posted to the course D2L site. **It is your responsibility to check the site regularly and make sure you are completing all work and meeting deadlines.** D2L organizes the materials using a horizontal menu bar near the top of the screen. Clicking on a menu bar item (Syllabus, Content, Discussions, Quizzes, Grades, etc.) will take you to that part of the site.

Weekly Content modules: Clicking on "Content" in the menu bar will bring up a vertical listing of "modules," organized by week. (NOTE: You will not see the modules for the whole semester. As the semester progresses, I will make each week's module available.) Clicking on a weekly module will bring up a listing of all materials for the week. At the top is a checklist with all of the tasks and/or assignments to be completed that week. The checklist is for your reference and convenience, enabling you to check off items as you complete them.

Zoom meetings: Each module will include a link and the password for the week's Zoom meeting. **We will meet live ("synchronously") as a class Mondays at 2 p.m.** We may not meet every week, but you should always assume that we are meeting unless I notify you otherwise (via D2L and/or email). The Zoom meetings will be used for announcements, discussions (I may give you a question in advance that we will discuss), assignment explanations, and any questions you have. The Zoom meetings will NOT be

lectures. Although you are not required to share your video during the meetings, doing so is a good way for all of us to get to know one another, and it makes the meetings feel more personal. Be sure to mute your audio when you are not speaking to the class. I will keep track of your Zoom attendance and participation. Your participation during Zoom meetings will be graded at the end of the semester on the following point scale:

- **A (18-20 points):** Attended all (or nearly all) Zoom meetings and frequently participated by asking or answering questions.
- **B (16-17 points):** Attended most of the Zoom meetings and occasionally participated by asking or answering questions.
- **C (14-15 points):** Attended most of the Zoom meetings but rarely participated by asking or answering questions.
- **D (12-13 points):** Only occasionally attended the Zoom meetings.
- **F (0-11 points):** Rarely attended the Zoom meetings.

NOTE: If you need to miss a single Zoom meeting because of illness, emergency, etc., you do not need to notify me. But if a situation arises that causes you to miss several Zoom meetings (or more than a week of course material), please let me know via email so that we can discuss the situation.

Assigned reading: Each week you will read a chapter in the textbook about the week's topic. Please read each chapter thoroughly, paying close attention to the key concepts and terminology. You are encouraged to take notes as you read. Each chapter concludes with a "Chapter Essentials" review section (but the "Chapter Essentials" section is not a substitute for reading the full chapter).

Lecture videos: After you have read the textbook chapter, please watch the lecture videos posted to the week's module. Most weeks, there will be two or three of them, about 10-20 minutes apiece. I have uploaded the videos to YouTube and embedded them within D2L. (Please let me know if a video is not playing properly.) The lecture videos will expand upon (not repeat) points covered in the textbook and provide additional information. The lectures will include PowerPoint slides, and you are encouraged to take notes as you watch. YouTube provides captions for the videos (although the captions may have errors), and you may pause or replay the videos and change the playback speed.

Supplemental videos or other materials: In addition to the lecture videos, there will be other material related to the week's topic for you to view or read (usually, a link to one or more videos from external sources). Be sure to view or read this material because it usually will be the basis for the week's discussion board topic.

Discussion board posts and replies: You will interact with your classmates and explore course topics in a more personal and in-depth manner on the D2L discussion board. Most weeks, there will be an assigned discussion topic, usually one that relates to the supplemental video or other materials for the week (so make sure you have viewed or read that material before you post). I will give you a discussion prompt, and the class will be divided in half: those of you whose last name begins with A through K, and those of you whose last name begins with L through Z. Some weeks, you will be creating a post; other weeks, you will be replying to two or more posts of your classmates. The deadline for your post or replies will be the end of the day Sunday, but if everyone waits until Sunday evening to post, the discussion board won't be any fun. Therefore, you must post earlier in the week in order to earn the full points. Your posts and replies will be graded according to three criteria: substance, mechanics and timing. The grading rubric

and more details are provided in a Content folder labeled “Discussion board guide” on the D2L site.

Quizzes: Each module will contain a link to the week’s quiz. **The quiz will cover the assigned textbook chapter, the lecture videos, AND the supplemental videos or other materials**, so make sure that you complete all of those tasks before you take the quiz. (NOTE: The first week of the semester is an exception to this rule. During the first week, you will take a shorter, 6-question quiz on the syllabus.) **Quizzes must be completed by the end of the day (11:59 p.m.) Sunday.** Failure to complete the quiz by the end of the day Sunday will result in a score of zero. **Each quiz will contain a total of 14 multiple-choice, true-or-false, and fill-in-the-blank questions. The quizzes are open-book and open-notes, but you will have only 20 minutes to complete them.** If you exceed the 20-minute time limit, you will receive a score of zero. You must complete the quiz in its entirety the first time you open it, and you are not allowed to move back and forth between questions. If you leave the quiz to go to another web page, you may be locked out of the quiz. **You may not retake a quiz**, so make sure that you have a reliable Internet connection and are free from interruptions before you begin. You may not work on the quizzes with a classmate; that is a form of academic dishonesty (see “Plagiarism and academic dishonesty” below). **Your 11 highest quiz scores will count toward your semester grade, and your 2 lowest quiz scores will be dropped.** I drop the 2 lowest scores because I understand that problems such as illness, emergencies, computer glitches, etc., may arise. Because of the possibility that unforeseen problems will arise later in the semester, you should never skip a quiz. **There will be absolutely no make-up quizzes.**

Oral history project, other assignments

In addition to the weekly tasks and assignments described above, you will complete a two-part oral history project and two smaller assignments this semester:

Oral history project: This is the main project of the semester. For **Part 1** (worth 50 points), you will interview a person **age 50 or older** (but not a parent) about his or her mass media experiences in the 20th century (1930s onward). Because it may not be feasible or safe to interview someone face to face during the COVID-19 pandemic, you are welcome to interview the person by phone or via Skype, Zoom, Facetime, etc. (but not via email or text message). After conducting the interview, you will summarize and analyze the interview in a double-spaced paper of at least 4 complete pages, due by the end of the day (11:59 p.m.) Sunday, Oct. 18. In **Part 2** (worth 60 points), you will select a media company or organization discussed by your interview subject. You will research the company or organization in four specific areas and write a double-spaced paper of at least 4 complete pages. This part will be due during finals week, after Thanksgiving break (date and time to be announced). **Both parts of the oral history project must be uploaded as *.doc or *.docx Word files (NOT *.pdf files) to the designated D2L assignment submission folders by the deadlines.** (Do NOT email the assignments to me.) Further details, instructions and grading rubrics will be provided on the D2L site. **IMPORTANT: You must complete both parts of the oral history project in order to pass the course. Failure to complete and properly submit both parts will result in a failing (F) grade in the course, regardless of your point total at the end of the semester and your performance on the other tasks and assignments.**

Oral history peer review assignment: To help you prepare for Part 2 of the oral history project, you will assume the role of professor and grade two sample papers from previous semesters, using a designated rubric. This assignment (worth 10 points) will be due by the end of the day (11:59 p.m.) Sunday, Oct. 25. Details and instructions will be provided on the D2L site.

Syllabus quiz: During the first week of the semester, you will take a brief quiz on the syllabus. This quiz (worth 6 points) will ensure that you are familiar with the syllabus, and it will acquaint you with the format for the quizzes in the weeks that follow.

Email communication

- In addition to checking the D2L site, please check your Ship email account regularly. I frequently use email to communicate important class information to students. I will contact you at your Ship email address (not your Gmail, Yahoo or other account).
- When corresponding with me by email, please **use your Ship account and include a subject line. I am teaching 3 other courses this semester, so always mention that the email is regarding COM 111**. Please allow 24 hours for a response or up to 48 hours on a weekend. I am always happy to answer a question, but check the syllabus and the D2L site to see if it can be answered there first.

Deadlines, course progress

It is your responsibility to make sure that you are completing all work and meeting deadlines. In an online-only course, it is easy to fall behind or become “invisible.” **If you run into problems that are affecting your progress in the course or your ability to meet deadlines, let’s chat. Please email me or meet with me on Zoom during office hours so that we can address the situation.**

Quizzes and discussion board assignments must be completed by the set deadlines. Failure to meet the deadline will result in a score of zero. Only in the most extreme of situations will I reopen a quiz or a discussion topic after the deadline has passed, and my definition of “extreme situation” is probably much narrower than yours.

Both parts of the oral history project must be completed by the due dates. Late submissions will be penalized a full letter grade (e.g., from B+ to a C+) for each day past the deadline, unless appropriate arrangements were made in advance. 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.

Grading

A total of **400 points** are available during the semester, broken down as follows:

Weekly Quizzes	154 points
Top 11 quiz scores (14 points each)	
Discussion Board Posts and Replies	100 points
10 sets of posts/replies (10 points each)	
Oral History Project	110 points
Part 1 - Interview (50 points)	
Part 2 – Research Paper on Media Company/Organization (60 points)	
Other Assignments	16 points
Syllabus Quiz (6 points)	
Oral History Peer Review Assignment (10 points)	
Zoom Meeting Participation	20 points
TOTAL	400 points

Point totals at the end of the semester will be converted to letter grades using a percentage-based 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		

REMINDER: Failure to submit both parts of the oral history project will result in an automatic failing (F) grade, regardless of the point total at the end of the semester.

NO incompletes will be issued for this course, except in emergency situations as defined by the University catalog.

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

Extra credit

Generally, I do not provide extra-credit work. However, on weeks when you are submitting a discussion board post (not replies), you will earn 2 extra-credit bonus points if you are the FIRST person in the class to submit your post. (You may earn those 2 bonus points only once during the semester.) Other extra-credit opportunities may appear by surprise as “Easter eggs” during the semester. For example, one of the questions on the syllabus quiz might give you the opportunity to earn 2 extra-credit points if you remember the word “pineapple.”

Keeping copies of assignments and emails

Keep an electronic copy of all assignments and course-related email messages. Do not delete any course-related files or emails until you receive your final grade at the end of the semester. If there are questions about assignments, you may be asked to produce the original emails and files.

Technology help

I am happy to answer any questions regarding course content and assignments, but technical questions should be addressed to people who are much more knowledgeable about the technology:

Computer and Internet access: If you need access to a laptop or the Internet, please fill out the [University's Request Access to Equipment form](#).

D2L assistance: If you need technical assistance with the D2L system, please contact the SU Student Helpdesk at (717) 477-HELP (x4357) or helpdesk@ship.edu. After hours, you may contact D2L Technical Support at helpdesk@d2l.com or (866) 832-2319. An [instructional video](#) provides details on using D2L as a student.

Zoom assistance: Information is available on [how to download and set up the Zoom application](#) and [how to join a Zoom meeting](#). An [instructional video](#) provides details on using Zoom as a student, and additional information is available through the [Zoom Help Center](#).

General information: More information about Fall 2020 technology at Ship is available [at this site](#).

Withdrawing from the course

A student may drop a course within the drop/add period without ramifications to the student's transcript, but after that time frame, a withdrawal from the course will result in a W grade on the transcript. **The deadline to withdraw with a W grade is Oct. 26.** More information is available at the [Registrar's site](#).

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty

Students are expected to complete individual and original work for this class. Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be handled according to the university's [Academic Dishonesty Policy](#). All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the department, Dean's Office and Office of Student Affairs. Penalties for violation of the Academic Dishonesty Policy

include grade reduction, assignment of a failing grade for the course, suspension and expulsion from the University.

Academic resources

The Learning Center: If you feel you need extra help to improve your academic performance in this course or in any of your other courses, please consider making an appointment with a tutor or learning specialist in the Learning Center. The Learning Center is located in Mowrey Hall and can be reached at (717) 477-1420. Tutoring and most other services will be offered via Zoom. More information is available at the [Learning Center's website](#).

The College of Arts & Sciences Advising Center (CASA): Located in DHC 216, CASA is a walk-in office that offers several types of academic support, from advice and help on time management, test anxiety and study skills to discussions about what major might be right for you. Email casa@ship.edu or call (717) 477-1150 to set up a time to meet with a success coach or faculty adviser.

Student Success: The Elnetta G. Jones University Center for Student Success and Exploratory Studies uniquely supplements and reinforces the university's commitments to serve a more diverse student population and to cultivate a learning-centered environment where students persist to graduation. We enrich the teaching and learning mission of the university by delivering specialized, high-impact academic and student enrichment services that empower students to successfully attain their educational goals. See [the Student Success Center website](#) for more information.

Accessibility resources

Shippensburg University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. The University welcomes all students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs and strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR) to discuss specific needs. OAR is located in Mowrey Hall 252 and can be reached by phone at (717) 477-1364 or via email at oar@ship.edu.

Preferred name policy

In an effort to continue building a more inclusive and affirming campus climate, the LGBTQ+ Concerns Committee collaborated with APSCUF's Social Justice Committee to develop a preferred name policy at Shippensburg University. This policy was unanimously approved by President's Cabinet in September, 2017. View specific details about [Shippensburg University's Preferred Name Policy](#). Although a legal name and/or gender marker change is determined by the state in which a student, staff, or faculty resides in, the LGBTQ+ committee has worked to increase access for campus community members to utilize a preferred name in situations where a legal name is not required.

Title IX - Commitment to a safe learning environment

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 faculty member's reporting obligations are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by students during classroom discussions, in writing assignments for class, or as part of University-approved research projects.

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 (717) 477-1444, the Department of Human Services (DHS) at 800-932-0313, and the University's Office of the Vice President of Enrollment Management, Student Affairs and Student Success (717) 477-1235. Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence is set forth at the following link: [Equity, Inclusion and Compliance](#).

Tentative Course Schedule

The timeline for this course may need to be adjusted due to unforeseen circumstances. Changes will be announced via Zoom, email or D2L.

NOTE: This is an **abbreviated schedule**. Please see each week's module (on the D2L course site under "Content") for due dates and the full list of tasks, assignments and materials for the week.

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

Week 1 (Aug. 17-23): Introduction

Zoom meeting
Syllabus quiz
Discussion board assignment

Week 2 (Aug. 24-30): A critical approach

Zoom meeting
Read Chapter 1 (Mass communication: A critical approach)
Lecture videos and other materials
Quiz
Discussion board assignment

Week 3 (Aug. 31-Sept. 6): Media law

Zoom meeting
Read Chapter 13 (Legal controls and freedom of expression)
Lecture videos and other materials
Quiz
Discussion board assignment

Week 4 (Sept. 7-13): Media economics

Zoom meeting
Read Chapter 14 (Media economics and the global marketplace)
Lecture videos and other materials
Quiz
NO DISCUSSION BOARD ASSIGNMENT THIS WEEK

Week 5 (Sept. 14-20): Technology and the Internet

Zoom meeting
Read Chapter 9 (The Internet and new technologies: The media converge)
Lecture videos and other materials
Quiz
Discussion board assignment

Unit 2 – Journalism, public relations and advertising

Week 6 (Sept. 21-27): Journalism

Zoom meeting

Read Chapter 3 (Newspapers to digital frontiers: Journalism's journey)

Lecture videos and other materials

Quiz

Discussion board assignment

Week 7 (Sept. 28-Oct. 4): Public relations

Zoom meeting

Read Chapter 12 (Public relations and framing the message)

Lecture videos and other materials

Quiz

Discussion board assignment

Week 8 (Oct. 5-11): Advertising

Zoom meeting

Read Chapter 11 (Advertising and commercial culture)

Lecture videos and other materials

Quiz

Discussion board assignment

Unit 3 – Mass media history: From books to television

Week 9 (Oct. 12-18): Books

Zoom meeting

Read Chapter 2 (Books and the power of print)

Lecture videos and other materials

Quiz

NO DISCUSSION BOARD ASSIGNMENT THIS WEEK

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT PART 1 – due by end of the day Sunday, Oct. 18

Week 10 (Oct. 19-25): Magazines

Zoom meeting

Read Chapter 4 (Magazines in the age of specialization)

Lecture videos and other materials

Quiz

NO DISCUSSION BOARD ASSIGNMENT THIS WEEK

ORAL HISTORY PEER REVIEW ASSIGNMENT – due by end of the day Sunday, Oct. 25

Week 11 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1): Music and sound recording

Zoom meeting

Read Chapter 5 (Sound recording and popular music)

Lecture videos and other materials

Quiz

Discussion board assignment

Week 12 (Nov. 2-8): Radio

Zoom meeting

Read Chapter 6 (Popular radio and the origins of broadcasting)

Lecture videos and other materials

Quiz

Discussion board assignment

Week 13 (Nov. 9-15): The movie industry

Zoom meeting

Read Chapter 7 (Movies and the impact of images)

Lecture videos and other materials

Quiz

Discussion board assignment

Week 14 (Nov. 16-22): Television

Zoom meeting

Read Chapter 8 (Television, cable and specialization in visual culture)

Lecture videos and other materials

Quiz

NO DISCUSSION BOARD ASSIGNMENT THIS WEEK

Nov. 23-29: Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 30-Dec. 4: Finals Week

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT PART 2 – due date to be announced

NOTE: There is NO final exam in this course.