

# JOUR 585: THEORY OF MASS COMMUNICATION

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**Special Note: It is to your advantage to utilize my office hours! If you are unavailable during my office hours, I encourage you to make an appointment to see me at other times. Please feel free to call my cell phone if you have an emergency.**

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is intended to provide grounding in basic theories of communication, traditional and contemporary, from a critical cultural perspective. We will explore the meanings and implications of critical cultural approaches to communication scholarship.

Ultimately, the course seeks to develop and enhance your understanding and interpretation of communication theory as well as your ability to apply this theory to your own research inquiries and endeavors.

## REQUIREMENTS

- Carey, J. (1989). *Communication as culture: Essays on media and society*. New York: Routledge.
- Durham, M.G., & Kellner, D. (Eds.) (2006). *Media and cultural studies: Keywords*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Supplemental readings (See Appendix)
- User name and password for your Moodle account
- Email account that you will check at least twice a day

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Your grade for this course will be determined by your performance in the following assignments: Current event quizzes, AP stylebook quizzes, writing assignments, and ethics paper.

1. **Commentary:** For every class meeting, you will be required to present a type-written synthesis of the readings for that particular week. These

should be 4–6 pages long for graduate students (only 3–4 pages for undergraduate students), double-spaced. These should represent not merely a summary of the material, but you should primarily establish connections across the readings and incorporate your own perspective on the main ideas and concepts presented.

2. **Final Paper:** Guidelines for the final paper will be distributed early on in the semester and we will discuss the expectations and requirements at length (note: as with the synthesis pieces, the final paper’s required length will be shorter for undergraduate students than their graduate counterparts).
3. **Participation:** Since this is a class that highly depends on your input and contributions, you are expected to attend regularly and participate reflectively along with your colleagues and the instructor. All comments and ideas are welcome so long as they are expressed courteously and respectfully.

#### Overall Grading Scheme

Weekly Commentaries	40%
Final Paper	40%
Participation	20%
	100%

Your final grade for this class will be calculated according to the following grading scale:

#### Grading Scale:

A	B	C	D	F
100 – 94 = A	89 – 87 = B+	79 – 77 = C+	69 – 67 = D+	59 or < = F
93 – 90 = A-	86 – 83 = B	76 – 73 = C	66 – 63 = D	
	82 – 80 = B-	72 – 70 = C-	62 – 60 = D-	

### ACADEMIC HONESTY

IMPORTANT! The Journalism Department is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating will receive a failing grade in the class and will be reported to the University to the Dean of Students for possible further disciplinary action.

You must properly attribute any information you acquired from the Internet. Passing this

information off as your own is a violation of CSUN's plagiarism policy, and carries the penalties outlined above. For a further explanation of the behavior defined as cheating, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult the 2009-2010 CSUN Catalog.

## CLASSROOM CONDUCT

- You are not allowed to surf the Web in my classroom.
- Completely turn off your cell phone, iPhone, Blackberry, iPod, etc...
- Do not send or receive text messages!
- If you come to class late, **you are responsible** for getting your name checked on the class roll before you leave the classroom; failure to do so will result in an absence.
- A lot of material will be covered in class. You are expected to get any notes or assignments you missed from your classmates.

## DEADLINES

Make-up assignments will **ONLY** be given if the student meets the university's excused absence policy **AND** if the student notifies me within 24 hours from the missed class via phone or email.

Assignment missed due to un-notified absences **CANNOT** be made up even if you have valid excuses. **Do not ask for after-the-fact exceptions. Again, if a student fails to notify me within 24 hours of missing class, the late assignment will not be considered for acceptance at all.**

## EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

Students in this course are strongly encouraged to make every effort, with the instructor's help, to include people and subjects in their assignments that have been marginalized by the mainstream media. Such people include ethnic, racial and religious minorities, gay and lesbians, the elderly, the disabled, and poor, etc... This is meant to ensure that you understand the social responsibility of journalist in a pluralistic democratic society.

### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

"It is the policy of the CSU to make information technology resources and services accessible to all CSU students, faculty, staff and the general public regardless of disability."

The California State University System is undertaking coordinated effort to bring the CSU into compliance with federal and state laws pertaining to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Under Section 508, agencies must give disabled employees and members of the public access to information that is comparable to the access available to others.

This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact me if you have disabilities. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the

instructor, and seeking available assistance, in a timely manner. Contact Center of Disabilities at (818) 677-2684 ([www.csun.edu/cod](http://www.csun.edu/cod))

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This syllabus outlines the conditions and requirements of the class. Acknowledgement of it implies an agreement to abide by the standards set forth within. It is up to all students to familiarize themselves with the course syllabus and to refer to it regarding class procedures. Course outlines are subject to change. Written assignments and homework will be announced weekly. Assignments will be added, subtracted or altered depending on class progress, video availability, guest speaker's schedules and any unforeseen circumstances.

\*Pending Approval of furlough days for faculty.

<b>J585 Fall 09 Timeline</b>				
<small>(subject to change as real-life journalistic learning opportunities emerge)</small>				
<i>Week</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Topic</i>		<i>Assignments</i>
1	4/13	Introductions; Carey: Intro, Chapters 1 & 2		
2	4 1/2	Carey: Chapters 3 & 4		Commentary 1
3	1	D/K: Chapters 1-3		Commentary 2
4	9/16	D/K: Chapters 4-7		Commentary 3
5	9/23	Carey: Chapters 5-8; D/K: Chapters 8-10		Commentary 4
6	3/10	D/K: Chapters 11-14; Paper writing		Commentary 5
7	1 3/7	D/K: Chapters 15-18		Commentary 6
8	5/7	D/K: Chapters 19-21		Commentary 7
9	10/21	D/K: Chapters 22-24		Commentary 8
10	5/14	D/K: Chapters 25-27		Commentary 9
11	2 3/4	D/K: Chapters 28-32		Commentary 10
12	1	Veterans' Day		
13	11/18	D/K: Chapters 33-35		Commentary 11
14	11/25	D/K: Chapters 36-38		Commentary 12
15	6	NO CLASS: Individual appointments with students about final papers		
16	1 1/3	Final Paper		

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