

## COM301, Mass Media & Society, Spring 2018

### Instructor Contact:

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Office Hours: M/W/F 10-11:30, M/F 12-12:30

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### Class Meetings:

COM301-001, MWF 12:40-1:30

### Course Description:

Mass communication; organization, role, content, effects.

Prerequisite: COM100.

### Course Topics:

Media and

- culture
- diversity
- representation
- ethics
- business
- audiences
- current events

### Learning Outcomes:

- Assess the mass media's role in current U.S. society
- Analyze socio-political representations and explain how representation influences action
- Define and differentiate diversity and inclusion, and consider their place in "mass" media
- Discuss and debate ethical issues of mass media roles and responsibilities
- Connect course concepts to current events
- Demonstrate an understanding of social science methods, including observation, data collection, evaluation, and interpretation
- Demonstrate knowledge of major concepts and issues of communication & media studies

### Required Text(s):

Luther, C.A., Lepre, C.R., & Clark, N. (2018). Diversity in US mass media, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. ISBN 978-1-119-23401-2.

### Assignments/Grade Distribution:

"Digging Deeper" report presentation – 20%  
Multi-media chapter/topic review presentation – 20%  
Midterm Exam – 20%  
Final Exam – 20%  
Quizzes – 20% (4% each, lowest quiz dropped)

Late work is not acceptable. If you cannot physically be in class when written work is due, it should be submitted to the instructor via email by the time class starts (if you do not have a copy of the work on computer file, send a photograph or scan of it). Late work will be docked 5% for being turned in after the class in which it is due, and 10% per full day it is late.

### Grading Breakdown:

98-105 pts = A+	92-97 pts = A	90-91 pts = A-
88-89 pts = B+	82-87 pts = B	80-81 pts = B-
78-79 pts = C+	72-77 pts = C	70-71 pts = C-
68-69 pts = D+	62-67 pts = D	60-61 pts = D-      0-59 pts = E

### Bonus Points:

+5 points for perfect attendance  
+5 points for no missed or late work  
+5 points for 75+% on each quiz

### **Grade Questions & Grievances:**

If you find an error in grading, bring it to the instructor's attention immediately so it can be corrected.

If you have a question about assignment feedback, exam answers, etcetera - ask. It will help you learn.

If you disagree with a grade you earn, you can file a request for reconsideration no sooner than 24 hours after receiving the grade and no later than 1 week after receiving the grade. The original work with all evaluation forms should be re-submitted to the instructor along with a 500-1500 word explanation (typed, double-spaced, serif-font) of why you believe your work warrants reconsideration and a higher grade; it should be specific with arguments well supported, using all you have learned in class relevant to making your case. The instructor will reconsider your work within 2 weeks; any grade change at that time, including a lower one, will remain final.

### **Attendance:**

Roll will be called at the start of each class meeting; please inform the instructor of your preferred name and pronouns if needed.

"The world is run by those who show up." The focus of this course is on live, non-mediated, communication. Attendance is, therefore, expected, necessary, and required. Everyone, including the instructor, is expected to show up and be prepared for class on time. (Now and then, life intervenes and we all get held up; occasional late arrivals are allowed, but they should not become a habit and they should minimize disruption to the class.)

If you arrive after roll is taken, you are considered late. If you leave before class is dismissed, you are considered late. Attendance and timeliness will be considered as part of your participation grade.

Absences on exam or presentation days for religious observances or college-sanctioned events should be discussed in advance for accommodations to be made.

Emergency absences on exam or presentation days require notification to the instructor at the earliest possible time and documentation (such as appointment cards or admissions forms for medical treatment) with work being completed immediately upon return to classes.

Absences for any reason at any time are not excuses for missed or late work. Assignments are all scheduled on the included course calendar so you know what is due and when. Deadlines are a fact of all aspects of life, from careers to credit cards. Late work is not acceptable.

### **Academic Integrity:**

It is expected that students will maintain the highest academic and ethical standards. The College is an academic community, which values academic integrity and takes seriously its responsibility for upholding academic honesty. All members of the academic community have an obligation to uphold high intellectual and ethical standards. The Academic Integrity Policy can be found in Chapter 340 of the College Handbook.

### **Accommodation of Disabilities:**

If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please contact Student Disability Services, located in Van Hoesen Hall, Room B-1, or call 607-753-2066 for an appointment. Information regarding your disability will be treated in a confidential manner. Because many accommodations require early planning, requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible.

**Mental, Emotional, & Physical Wellbeing:**

Diminished mental health, including significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, alcohol and/or substance abuse, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can interfere with optimal academic performance.

If symptoms are related to your course work, please speak with the instructor. If you have communication apprehension (also known as "stage fright") to a degree that can interfere with your success in a communication course that depends on public speaking, speak to the instructor *immediately* to learn management techniques and to discuss possible options to ensure you can complete the course.

If problems with relationships, family worries, loss, or a personal struggle or crisis are negatively impacting your mental health and/or interfering with your academic success, SUNY Cortland offers the following resources to help you manage personal challenges that threaten your personal or academic well-being.

- Counseling Center: Van Hoesen Hall, Room B-44 \* 607-753-4728
- Substance Abuse & Prevention Education Van Hoesen Hall, Room B-1 \* 607-753-2066
- Active Minds student club

If challenges securing food or housing are affecting your academic performance, or your emotional wellbeing, you are urged to contact the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs for support (607-753-4721).

**Etiquette:**

Communication involves speaking *and* listening (sending & receiving messages). Good communication requires participants to consider various ideas and be willing to be persuaded by others. In this class, we will all practice good communication skills by speaking and listening with respect to those around us. We will be open to opposing viewpoints, even if we are not always persuaded by them. We will make an effort to contribute to discussions and to ensure that others have opportunities to contribute to discussions. We will not use ad-hominem attacks (name calling) when we engage in arguments, nor will we use straw-man fallacies (off topic arguments) just to advance our own viewpoints.

Recent research has suggested that we are not as good at multitasking as we think we are, so to succeed in this class and to help those around us succeed, we will minimize distractions by using technology only in ways that are directly related to coursework and goals. Devices will be silenced and put away when not being used for class purposes.

We will not attend class under the influence of alcohol or other recreational substances. We will also minimize distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, food, drink, bathroom breaks, extraneous conversation, and packing up early before class is over; these not only break our own concentration but also disrupt those around us.

We will come to class on time and prepared with whatever materials are expected of our roles. For the instructor that means, at minimum, lecture notes, related presentation aids, graded student work, the roster, and writing instruments. For the student, that means, at minimum, any relevant texts, work that needs to be submitted, paper (preferably in a dedicated notebook/folder/binder), and a writing instrument.

We will practice professional communication styles and habits. Emails will include formal salutations such as "Dear" or "Hello" and will be written in a way that are appropriate for acquiring and maintaining employment.

## **Coursework Explained:**

### Readings:

The textbook is like having an entire semester's worth of class notes all taken for you! But you have to read it to get the notes. Chapters are marked in the calendar on the days you are expected to have read them. In-class discussions will correspond with, though not fully repeat or summarize, those chapters.

### Lectures:

Course lectures are designed to reinforce and clarify the material in your text. You are encouraged to take additional notes that help you to better understand the readings.

### Activities:

In addition to formal lectures, a number of class meeting times are reserved for application activities that are designed to help contextualize and explain course concepts.

### Quizzes:

There are 6 multiple choice quizzes in this class to help reinforce key ideas and terms. They will each be about 10 questions long, based on the assigned readings and corresponding class discussions.

The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

### Exams:

There will be a midterm exam and a cumulative final exam, each composed primarily (but not entirely) of questions taken from the 6 quizzes. (So keep your quizzes to use as study guides!)

*Why tests?* Psychological research on the science of successful learning has demonstrated that the act of preparing for a test and actually taking the test and retrieving information is a great boost to memory. Exams are not just a measurement instrument, they are also an important learning instrument. Exams are a clinically proven way to help students keep up with classwork – they encourage attendance, preparation and review in ways that less traditional or structured means don't, and the use of frequent quizzes or tests is likely to promote regular, moderate, work, whereas a few larger assignments tend to produce short bursts of cramming, often at the last minute. Your speech compositions will be easier if you take the time to learn the basics in advance.

### Digging Deeper Reports:

An appendix in your text challenges you to explore course issues further. Each person will be randomly assigned a suggestion for further exploration. You will do the needed research and present your findings to the class in a 5-minute presentation.

### **Digging Deeper Presentation Rubric**

	<b>Element</b>	<b>Points</b>		<b>Comments</b>
<b>Intro</b>	Screening	<b>20</b>	Introduces self to audience, states the topic & purpose of the presentation, previews what the presentation will contain	
<b>Content</b>	Info	<b>15</b>	Ideas are explained and supported with research/data, sources of information are indicated	
	Goal	<b>15</b>	Purpose of exploration assignment is achieved	
<b>Delivery</b>	Verbal	<b>10</b>	Easily heard & understood, exhibits enthusiasm & variety.	
	Nonverbal	<b>10</b>	Makes eye contact, uses gestures effectively, appears prepared with professional demeanor.	
	Present Aid	<b>10</b>	No presentation aid needed & not used. OR Aid was useful & used effectively.	
<b>Concl.</b>	Recap	<b>20</b>	Reviews key content and summarizes the presentation	

#### One Representation Replaces Another, page 365

1. Conduct a content analysis of 3-5 episodes of your favorite show. How many social group stereotypes do you see in the programs?
2. Conduct a content analysis of 3-5 episodes of your favorite show. How many social group stereotypes do you see in the programs?
3. Consider the representations discussed in the textbook and the mass media images of social groups you've recently encountered. What other examples can you find that you believe simply have evolved from old representations?

#### Sexuality and Power, pages 365-366

4. Some issues of sexuality are more complicated than others. For instance, in some cases, African American men are hypersexualized, such as when they are the main characters in Blaxploitation-type films, and in other cases they are desexualized, such as when they are portrayed in "buddy" roles. Explore these contradictions and what they might mean.
5. Some films over the past 20-40 years or so have featured men, and often men of color, dressed as women. Try to find and review or learn about some of those films. Consider how those men are being represented. Also consider what the filmmakers might be saying about the position of women in this country.
6. 2017 saw the rise of the #MeToo movement. Review news stories of sex and sexual harassment scandals in the entertainment industry. How is the media handling the discussion on abuses of sexuality and power in its own industry?

#### Rules and Regulations Impact Representations, page 366

7. Based on what you have read so far, what rules or laws have been put in place to correct some of the stereotyping or hurtful representations in the media? Should more be done? Can more be done?
8. Should the various media industries set standards for themselves about how groups discussed in this text are represented in film, television, or in other media platforms?
9. Assuming treatment of underrepresented groups in the industry itself (ex. writers, artists, producers, directors) influences representations, what rules/regulations are being put in place to protect victims of sexual harassment or other discrimination in the media industry?)

#### Symbolic Annihilation of a Social Group, pages 366-367

10. Compare the box office profits for films that have people of color in casts and the profits for film that have replaced people of color with white actors. Is there something to be said about the argument that Hollywood needs white actors to draw audiences or do you think the argument has no foundation?
11. Consider films that have cast cis-gendered actors as Trans characters, and/or able-bodied actors as characters with physical disabilities. Is this related to star power and box office receipts, or is something else at work here? How does it influence or shape representation of these groups? What messages does it send?
12. Try to think of social groups that have seen advancement away from symbolic annihilation. What might be the underlying reasons for the advancement?
13. Do you believe invisibility is worse, better, or just as problematic as a negative stereotype? Find examples to support your answer.

Minorities as the "Other," page 367

14. Gather several recent issues of popular fashion magazines, such as *Vogue* or *Glamour*, and several recent issues of men's fashion magazines, such as *GQ* or *Esquire*. Review each advertisement in these magazines. Compare and contrast how women and people of color are presented. Are they made into objects? Do they appear as the "Other"?
15. Look at the characters in 2-3 popular video game franchises. Compare and contrast how men, women, and people of color are presented. Who is objectified? Who is made into the "Other"? Who are the "good guys" and the "bad guys"?
16. Look at the characters in several comic books, or in popular superhero movies. Compare and contrast how men, women, and people of color are presented. Who is objectified? Who is made into the "Other"? Who are the "good guys" and the "bad guys"?
17. Look at music videos from 3-4 different musical genres, such as pop, hip hop, country, and/or rock. Compare and contrast how men, women, and people of color are presented. Who is objectified? Who is made into the "Other"?
18. How has history contributed to the systematic "Othering" of the poor, women, or ethnic minorities?

Reliance of the News on White "Expert" Sources, page 368

19. Conduct a content analysis of the op-eds that appear in a local newspaper. Whose stories are being told? These stories provide context for complex current events, so the stories that are published are important to the readers. Whose stories are not being told?
20. Conduct an analysis of the experts who appear on television news programs during tax season, discussions of current tax changes, or any other financial issue (or look at the experts who appear on financial news programming). How many of these experts are women or people of color? Do those experts get asked to speak about the same issues as white male experts?
21. Conduct an analysis of the experts who appear on television news programs during sports reports, or who appear on sports-programming. How many of these experts are women or people of color? Do those experts get asked to speak about the same issues as white male experts?
22. Conduct an analysis of pundits appearing during prime time on CNN. Who are the talking heads offering their take on politics?
23. Conduct an analysis of pundits appearing during prime time on Fox. Who are the talking heads offering their take on politics?

"False" Framing and Misrepresentation, page 368

24. Compare and contrast how any white-on-black police shooting or Black Lives Matter protest was covered by 3 different news outlets. Choose the news sources so that they represent different political slants, business models, or regions. Are there differences in the coverage? What, and why?
25. Compare and contrast how the "alt-right" march in Charlottesville during the summer of 2017 was covered by 3 different news outlets. Choose the news sources so that they represent different political slants, business models, or regions. Are there differences in the coverage? What, and why?
26. How might media ownership shift the way a story about alternative fuels is covered on the news?
27. How might media ownership shift the way a story about gay rights is covered on the news?
28. How might media ownership shift the way a story about health care is covered on the news?

Online = New Opportunities, page 368

29. Examine several podcasts that focus on minority issues or discuss minority representations. Determine who created and maintains the podcasts. Compare and contrast the content of each site based on which are created by and for minority group members and which are not.
30. Vine was considered an important platform for black culture. How are African Americans portrayed on one of the other streaming video sites, such as Streamable? How do those portrayals compare to images you see in traditional entertainment media?
31. Examine an array of popular memes; do they reflect any social group stereotypes, do they exclude any social groups?

Changes, Contradictions, and an Ever-Moving Continuum, page 369

32. Explore the notion that inequities in media representations are rooted in power relation imbalances between social groups and examine your thoughts on whether it is even possible to have fair and equal social group representation in mass media.
33. Based on what you've learned so far, what future challenges do you think lie ahead in terms of diversity in the media? Examine some of these challenges, or other changes, contradictions, and connections.
34. Based on what you've learned so far, what future challenges do you think lie ahead in terms of diversity in the media? Examine some of these challenges, or other changes, contradictions, and connections.

### Multi-Media Chapter/Topic Review:

The last two weeks of the semester will be dedicated to review, in preparation for the final exam. Two-three people will be assigned to each chapter/topic focusing on representation from the semester. The small groups will divide the chapter/topic up among them and independently (but with coordination) create and deliver short, 5-10 minute, presentations to review and illustrate key ideas from the text and course.

These are not *just* summaries of the chapters, however. You are expected to present the information in your own terms and language, using your own examples - the use of media/multi-media, is expected, with a focus on what you think is the most interesting and the most important. You are further encouraged to move beyond just the textbook in gathering information (ie: each chapter has references at the end that can allow you to explore aspects that interest you in more detail). Creativity is applauded. You may make your presentations into videos, songs, raps, poems, plays, games, simulations... or anything else you can dream up.

Chapters will be assigned randomly

### Multi-Media Chapter Review Rubric

	Element	Pts		Comments
<b>Intro</b>	Screening	10	Introduces self to audience, states the topic & purpose of the presentation, previews what the presentation will contain	
<b>Content</b>	Info	10	Ideas are explained and supported with research/data, sources of information are indicated	
	Goal	10	Purpose of topic review is achieved	
	Creativity	15	Content was presented in a novel, interesting, engaging, and/or audience-centered way.	
	Coordination	15	The multiple speakers for the topic/chapter did well dividing up the content for adequate coverage without repetition	
<b>Delivery</b>	Verbal	10	Easily heard & understood, exhibits enthusiasm & variety.	
	Nonverbal	10	Makes eye contact, uses gestures effectively, appears prepared with professional demeanor.	
	Present Aid	10	Multi-media was used effectively and chosen wisely	
<b>Concl.</b>	Recap	10	Reviews key content and summarizes the presentation	

#### DAY 1

Indigenous peoples, chapter 3 (2 speakers)  
African Americans, chapter 4 (3 speakers)

#### DAY 2

Hispanics, chapter 5 (3 speakers)  
Arabs, chapter 6 (2 speakers)

#### DAY 3

Asians, chapter 7 (3 speakers)  
Mixed Race, chapter 8 (2 speakers)

#### DAY 4

Gender, chapters 9-10 (3 speakers)  
LGBTQI, chapter 11 (2 speakers)

#### DAY 5

Age, chapter 12 (2 speakers)  
Disabilities, chapter 13 (speakers 3)

#### DAY 6

Class, chapter 14 (2 speakers)  
Religion, chapter 15 (3 speakers)

	<b>MONDAYS</b>	<b>WEDNESDAYS</b>	<b>FRIDAYS</b>
<b>Wk1</b>	1/22: course intro, syllabus review	1/24: Topic introduction (ch. 1)	1/26: <u>read ch. 2 for today</u>
<b>Wk2</b>	1/29: project planning day	1/31: <u>read ch. 3 for today</u>	2/2: media/activity day <u>QUIZ 1, ch. 1-3</u>
<b>Wk3</b>	2/5: <u>read ch. 4 for today</u>	2/7: <u>read ch. 5 for today</u>	2/9: media/activity day <u>QUIZ 2, ch. 4-5</u>
<b>Wk4</b>	2/12: <u>DIGGING DEEPER PRESENTATION DAY 1</u>	2/14: <u>DIGGING DEEPER PRESENTATION DAY 2</u>	2/16: <u>DIGGING DEEPER PRESENTATION DAY 3</u>
<b>Wk5</b>	2/19: <u>DIGGING DEEPER PRESENTATION DAY 4</u>	2/21: <u>read ch. 6 for today</u>	2/23: <u>read ch. 7 for today</u>
<b>Wk6</b>	2/26: <u>read ch. 8 for today</u>	2/28: review day <u>QUIZ 3, ch 6-8</u>	3/2:
<b>Wk7</b>	3/5: <u>MIDTERM EXAM= ch. 1-8</u>	3/7: <u>read ch. 9 for today</u>	3/9: <u>read ch. 10 for today</u>
<b>Wk8</b>	3/12: <i>Spring Break</i>	3/14: <i>Spring Break</i>	3/16: <i>Spring Break</i>
<b>Wk9</b>	3/19: media/activity day <u>QUIZ 4, ch. 9-10</u>	3/21: <u>read ch. 11 for today</u>	3/23: <u>read ch. 12 for today</u>
<b>Wk10</b>	3/26: <u>read ch. 13 for today</u>	3/28: no class, prof @ conference	3/30: no class, prof @ conference
<b>Wk11</b>	4/2: media/activity day <u>QUIZ 5, ch. 11-13</u>	4/4: <u>read ch. 14 for today</u>	4/6: <u>read ch. 15 for today</u>
<b>Wk12</b>	4/9: <u>read ch. 16 for today</u>	4/11: media/activity day <u>QUIZ 6, ch. 14-16</u>	4/13: media/activity day
<b>Wk13</b>	4/16: presentation work & coordination	4/18: <u>read ch. 17 for today</u>	4/20: media/activity day
<b>Wk14</b>	4/23: <u>MULTI-MEDIA REVIEW PRESENTATION DAY 1</u>	4/25: <u>MULTI-MEDIA REVIEW PRESENTATION DAY 2</u>	4/27: <u>MULTI-MEDIA REVIEW PRESENTATION DAY 3</u>
<b>Wk15</b>	4/30: <u>MULTI-MEDIA REVIEW PRESENTATION DAY 4</u>	5/2: <u>MULTI-MEDIA REVIEW PRESENTATION DAY 5</u>	5/4: <u>MULTI-MEDIA REVIEW PRESENTATION DAY 6</u>
<b>Finals Wk</b>			COM301-001 = Thu, 5/10, 11:00am-1:00pm

Spring break lasts only one week. You are responsible for *all* the classes in the week prior to and following the scheduled break.

Finals week is a mandatory part of the course. Final exam times are determined by the college according to a standard matrix, and are posted on the Cortland.edu website year-round (under Academic Calendars). Plan ahead and plan accordingly; travel arrangements need to accommodate, not conflict with, your finals week responsibilities.