

Introduction to Mass Communications – Fall 2023

<i>Course Information</i>	JOUR 101: Intro to Mass Communications
<i>Term</i>	Fall 2023: 9/7/2023 through 12/15/2023
<i>Class Hours</i>	11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday
<i>Class Location</i>	Payne Hall 201
<i>Professor</i>	Dr. Jared Macary (Professor Macary)
<i>Instructor Office Hours</i>	9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Monday, Wednesday 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday
<i>Instructor Office Location</i>	Reid Hall 202
<i>Instructor email¹</i>	jmacary@wlu.edu

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Course Description

Purpose

- To introduce students interested in journalism, strategic communication, public relations, advertising, and other creative and information industries to professional opportunities.

¹ Expected email response time by instructor: Weekdays (M-F): Within 12-24 hours. Weekends: Next business day.

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- To learn history in the form of what's come before, what is now, and what can be in the future across the fields of media and communication.
- To learn and critically reflect on mass communication theory and practice.
- To practice producing media to communicate with audiences.

Overview

- Students will be:
 - Introduced to major areas of media and communication history, theory, and practice. This includes medium-focused lectures and topics that traverse media.
 - Expected to attend and interact with scheduled lectures and guest speakers; and read, write, view, and make media.
 - Expected to work independently and in groups, using emotional intelligence to express themselves and get assignments done on time.

Core Skill Development

- To become A) more aware, engaged, and confident as a receiver and producer of media and communication in daily life, and B) able to envision one's path as a media and communication professional by surveying the field.

Required Texts

Book

- Pavlik & McIntosh (2018). *Converging media: A new introduction to mass communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
 - Available at W&L Bookstore.

Handouts

- *Additional readings will be posted on Canvas.*
- Readings and their due dates are described in the course schedule section.

Expected Learning Outcomes

1. Learn and become conversant in media and communication history; able to think critically about how the past could impact the future.
2. Learn concepts and theories across the fields of media and communication; able to apply concepts and theories in class discussions and writing assignments, such as media analyses and exams.

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3. Learn basic technical approaches to media production, such as news writing; able to follow requirements and inject creativity to produce audience-focused media.
4. Read and reflect on assigned material; able to summarize and discuss their main points verbally and in writing.
5. Able to understand and follow requirements for assignments, completing them by deadlines. Prepare for “real world” work that mixes objective and subjective assessment.
6. Learn resources available to you at W&L, such as personnel and coursework, pursuant of degree options in journalism and strategic communication.
7. Learn about career opportunities in journalism and strategic communication.

Estimated Student Workload

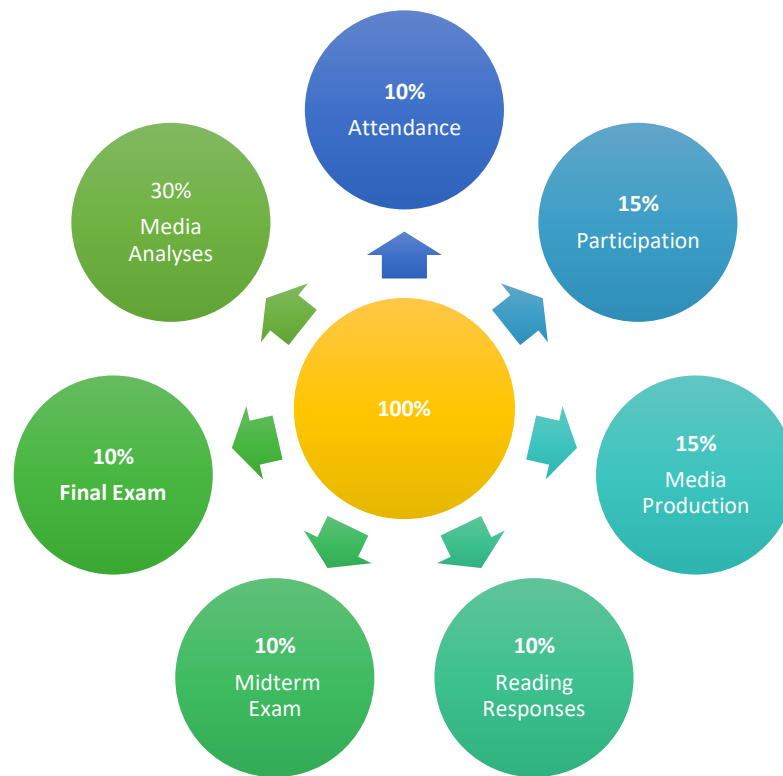
- In this course, you are expected to:
 - Complete all readings, viewings, and writing assignments on time,
 - Attend and engage in class sessions, lectures, guest lectures, and
 - Ask for clarification and assistance when you need it.
- Lecture slides will not be uploaded to Canvas. If you cannot attend a class, coordinate to view the notes of a fellow student.
- Bring pencils/pens and paper to take notes.
- Bring a computer and a mobile device to class but keep them stowed. The professor will be explicit when asking you bring them out.
- All assignments completed by students are to be uploaded to Canvas in a Word document format, unless specified, for grading.
- Assignments emailed to the instructor will not be graded.
- Arrive on time for class sessions and be prepared to stay the entire duration (1 hour).
- Assignments, including reading, viewing, listening, and writing, outside of class will occupy approximately 8-12 hours a week.
- Being organized is critical to success in this course. Take the time early on to get organized to save time later in the course.
- You may speak with the instructor at any point about regarding your progress in the course. *Do not wait until the end of the term to raise a question or address a concern.*

Assignments & Exams (100%)

Overview

The following diagram highlights the distribution of assignments, valued in percent, relative to the whole.

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Attendance (10%)

- You are expected to attend each class session. ***No unexcused absences permitted.***
- An excused absence includes illness. If you are ill and cannot attend, you must email the professor **before** class. Remember the honor code!
- If you email the professor any time after class has started, you will be marked absent. Notification of an absence before work starts for the day is requisite in professional settings.
- It is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate if you do not attend a class. The professor will not post slides to Canvas nor re-teach a class session in whole or part.

Participation (15%)

- Participation translates into interacting with the professor, guest speakers, and fellow students by contributing verbally and in writing to activities and discussions.
- Participation also includes working well with others interpersonally, such as in small groups assigned or chosen.
- Through participation, you demonstrate critical thinking, the ability to work with others, and professionalism. Those working in media and communication regularly use their voice to communicate their ideas.

Media Production (15%)

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- This course includes basic media production practice to communicate with audiences.
- Students will learn how to produce a type of media and inject originality and creativity.
- Objectives in producing media in this course include:
 - To evaluate and follow requirements.
 - To elect to exceed requirements to improve content and add value.
 - To receive subjective criticism and feedback.
 - To meet deadlines and pay attention to detail.
- These objectives reflect “real world” experience working in journalism and strategic communication.
 - For example, creativity and “good design” cannot be evaluated objectively because what is desirable in one organizational context may be undesirable in another. Like it or not, creativity is often a matter of taste and trial and error.
- Media to be produced will be posted on Canvas along with their foci, requirements, and options to go beyond.
- *Late grading is in effect for media production assignments.*

Reading Responses (10%)

- Reading responses are short written assignments whereby students follow a prompt by the professor to discuss assigned materials. While these are called reading responses, they also include other media, such as podcasts and video content.
- By completing a reading response, students demonstrate:
 - Attentiveness to details
 - Preparation for class sessions.
 - Ability to internalize and summarize information – an invaluable skill for journalists and strategic communicators.
- Length may be up to two paragraphs of writing.
- All responses are to be completed on Canvas by their due dates in accordance with course policies.
- *No make ups, extensions, or late grading for reading responses. If you do not complete a reading response by its assigned date and time, you do not get the points. Move on to the next one.*

Midterm Exam (10%)

- *The midterm will be during class time on Monday, October 16, 2023.*
- The midterm exam will encapsulate all materials discussed and presented prior to the day of the exam. The exam will be **closed book**.
- The exam will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions.
- The midterm will cover material from class sessions (lectures) and from assigned readings not discussed in class. So, you want to make sure you’ve read, viewed, and listened to all assignment materials.

Final Exam (10%)

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- *The final exam will take place during finals week (Week 13).*
- The final exam will encapsulate all materials discussed and presented prior to the day of the exam. The exam will be **closed book**.
- The exam will consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answer questions.
- The final will cover material from class sessions (lectures) and from assigned readings not discussed in class.
- The final will include concepts and materials preceding the midterm.

Media Analyses (30%)

- This course emphasizes reading, writing, and discussion to prepare and orient students to working in media and communication.
- Through media analyses, students apply what they've learned in terms of history, concepts, and theory to a variety of phenomena, such as current and past events, technologies, and social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental issues.
- Objectives in analyzing media in this course include:
 - To flex depth of critical thinking, reasoning, and original thought
 - To link phenomena happening in the world to concepts learned in class
 - To receive subjective criticism and feedback
 - To meet deadlines and pay attention to detail
- Media analysis will be:
 - Posted on Canvas along with their foci, requirements, and options to go beyond.
 - Evaluated for structure, content, and attention to detail, among other factors; some will be objective and others subjective.
- *Late grading is in effect for media analyses.*

Grading Criteria

- Review each assignment's rubric to be clear on *what* and *how* you'll be graded.
- No grade rounding requests. If you earn an 89.99, you have earned a B+ per the scale below. I will not accept requests to bump grades up by any percentage at any point.
- All grades may be viewed in Canvas. Grading for this course is straightforward; you should be able to determine your own grade at any point.
- If an assignment is "hidden" in Canvas, that means I have not released grades yet, and your final grade has yet to be affected.
- If you want to appeal a grade, follow the instructions in the Course Policy section.

Grading Scale & Meaning

Excellent	A+ (97.00 – 100%)	Work that is well-organized. Ideas are expressed succinctly and presented clearly. Requires almost no additional editing.
	A (93.00 – 96.99%)	
	A- (90.00–92.99%)	
Good	B+ (87.00 – 89.99%)	

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	B (83.00 – 86.99%)	Work could be raised to higher quality without extensive editing. Lacks an element of polish and organization, or vice versa. Needs some revision.
	B- (80.00 – 82.99%)	
Average	C+ (77.00 – 79.99%)	Work has issues in at least one or two basic areas, like grammar, spelling or weak conceptualization and expression. It is an adequate first draft but needs significant revision before being submitted.
	C (73.00 – 76.99%)	
	C- (70.00 – 72.99%)	
Below Standards	D+ (67.00 – 69.99%)	Work is inadequate. Effort contains multiple basic errors and/or ideas are not fully articulated or confusing. The work shows underwhelming use of critical thinking.
	D (63.00 – 66.99%)	
	D- (60.00 – 62.99%)	
Failure	F (< 60%)	Work is not completed in such a way as to respond adequately to the challenge given. The work demonstrates low to no critical thinking.

Course Policies

See the “How to email a professor” under Course Resources on Canvas for additional information.

Reading, Viewing, and Listening Assignments

- A date specified for a reading, viewing, or listening assignment is the date by which that assignment must be completed. So, if you are to read a chapter for a Tuesday, that chapter should be read by that Tuesday.
- I expect you to block off time to read; however, I do not expect you to comprehend all that you read. For this reason, I may call on any student at any time to discuss some aspect of a reading. An appropriate response can be “I don’t know, but here’s what I understand it to be...” So, you may not understand what you read but you are expected to try to understand it and participate in class to work through that understanding.
- ***If it becomes clear that students are not reading, then a pop quiz may be given.***

Writing Assignments

- A due date specified for a writing assignment is the date by which that assignment should be completed. So, if you are to submit a paper to Canvas by Tuesday at 11:59 PM, that paper should be completed by that Tuesday at 11:59 PM.
- All written work must be in Microsoft Word format (.doc/.docx), except where noted. Any other formatted file will not be accepted.
- Any in-class assignments are to be completed in class the day that they are assigned. No make-ups are allowed for any in-class assignments.

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- *Written assignments must not be emailed to the professor for grading. They will be ignored. If Canvas is closed because you missed a deadline, you must ask the professor to reopen it. Again, some assignments, such as Reading Responses, do not have any make up options.*

Media Production Assignments

- Follow requirements for media production assignments. These are akin to following requirements for deliverables in many professional environments.
- All media production assignments are to be delivered for grading according to given specifications. For example, if a requirement states that an accepted video file format is MP4. Then, uploading a WMV file would not be accepted.
- For media production assignments, you may not do stories on your friends or organizations you are a part of, such as Greek organizations and extra-curricular activities. The point of assignments is to push your boundaries. If you have questions, be sure to ask the professor before moving forward.

Making Up Assignments

- See details for each assignment in the “Assignments & Exams” section regarding make ups. No make ups for Reading Responses.

Late Assignments

- Technological problems impeding assignment upload by a due date will not be accepted as an excuse for a late assignment. *Be sure to plan ahead, such as ensuring you have reliable internet access before a deadline.*
- Do not email the professor with a written assignments after its due date. All emailed assignments will be ignored. Instead, email the professor asking that Canvas be opened to allow for a late submission. Take note of the following expected email response times by the instructor: Weekdays (M-F): Within 12-24 hours & Weekends: Next business day.
- Late work receives a penalty of *one letter grade per day*. The drop in one letter grade starts the minute after the assignment deadline. So, if an assignment is due by 11:59 PM and you submit at 12:00 AM, you have a drop one letter grade. Plan your work time accordingly. Professionals meet deadlines. Speak with the professor if you have questions.

Grade Appeal Requests

- If you strongly disagree with a grade and wish to challenge it, you must a) wait 24 hours since you first became aware of your grade, b) review the “How to email a professor” instructions, and c) cogently appeal your grade in an email to the instructor. A cogent appeal uses sound reasoning related to the assignment produced and its assessment. This includes use of evidence to support your appeal request. Statements such as “I think I deserve a better grade” are not sound appeals.

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- Be sure to honor the 24 hours before emailing the professor. Students often err on sending emails when they are upset, resulting in confusion and frustration more than a desired outcome.
- Take note that an appeal is a request. A reassessment of an assignment's grading can result in a grade that is lower, higher, or the same.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

- As a department, we in Journalism and Mass Communications (JMC) recognize the increased presence of artificial intelligence (AI), fueling debate, excitement, and fear.
- By AI, we mean human thought processes simulated by various computing systems, such as ChatGPT, Google Bard, Claude AI, and more.
- We view AI as a tool with the potential to help people communicate. We also see it as a future job skill. Like any tool, AI has appropriate and inappropriate uses, and, in any job, tools have sensible and honorable applications.
- Unless the professor explicitly authorizes AI for a specific purpose in a course, your use of AI, in any form, is considered a violation the W&L honor system because it constitutes outside academic assistance.
- Remember: *A key drawback to AI is that it cannot replace critical thinking, ingenuity, and creativity, the skills that you develop and polish at Washington and Lee. Not only can you do those better than AI, but we are confident that when you do use artificial intelligence, you will do so ethically and responsibly.*
- Rest assured, we will continue to prepare you intellectually and professionally for your future.

Integrity & Plagiarism

- This course upholds the W&L Honor System. All course activities and assignments are pledged, whether you write the pledge or not. To get more information about W&L's Honor System, you can review it in the Student Handbook: <https://my.wlu.edu/student-handbook#honor-system>.
- Academic plagiarism, simply, is using the words or ideas expressed by someone else as your own. All students in this course should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g., quotations, paraphrases, ideas).
- If there is any question about whether an act constitutes plagiarism, it is a student's obligation to clarify their question with the instructor before using something in an assignment. The Executive Committee's plagiarism pamphlet also provides examples: <https://my.wlu.edu/executive-committee/the-honor-system/plagiarism/plagiarism-pamphlet>.
- There are many reasons why people plagiarize, from lacking time to lacking confidence to do work assigned. Regardless, there's no place for plagiarism in this class.

Classroom Technology Use

- Bring at least two pencils/pens and paper to class to take notes.

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- Bring your phone and computer to class as they may be used for specific activities. Otherwise, they are to remain stowed for the duration of class time.
- If you need to use your phone to make a call or send a text, just step outside into the hall. No judgment.
- Please be respectful of the professor and your peers by not sending texts inside the classroom. If the professor observes you using your phone or computer to text, you will be asked to go into the hall until you've completed your messaging. This isn't a punishment. You're just swapping one location for another.
- You are not allowed to audio and/or video record lectures in any way. Doing so is considered a breach of trust. You will be asked to leave the class if you violate this policy.

Equity & Inclusion

- Along with the university, I affirm and actively promote the right of all individuals to equal opportunity in education without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other extraneous consideration not directly and substantively related to effective performance.

Accessibility

- W&L is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. For this reason, W&L makes reasonable academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.
- All undergraduate accommodations must be approved through the Office of the Dean of the College.
- Students requesting accommodations for this course should present an official accommodation letter to the instructor *within the first two weeks of the term* and schedule a meeting outside of class time to discuss accommodations.
- It is the student's responsibility to present approved materials in a timely fashion to the instructor and to follow up about accommodation arrangements. Accommodations for test-taking should be arranged with the instructor at least a week before the date of the test or exam.

Title IX

- W&L is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender or sex-based bullying and stalking).
- If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, know that help and support is available to you. For more information on Title IX at W&L: <https://my.wlu.edu/general-counsel/code-of-policies/discrimination-harassment-and-retaliation/non-discrimination-equal-employment-opportunity-statement/title-ix-at-washington-and-lee-university>.
- W&L has trained staff members to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing

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accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, etc. For more information about W&L resources: <https://my.wlu.edu/sexual-misconduct-resources>.

Resources & Tips

Keep on pushing forward

- Do not get discouraged by low scores early on or missing the first Reading Response. Put in more time and effort. Keep chugging forward despite any ego bruise.

Reading in this class

- Block off time to sit with assigned readings. Pay attention to the time you sit with a reading trying to understand it more than whether you understand it. Take notes about what you *do not understand* more than what you do understand. Do not judge yourself as stupid. I will not tolerate students judging others for lacking understand. Reading comprehension is a muscle you develop. Take notes, articulate clearly what you do not understand from a reading, and bring it to class, where we can discuss and clarify.
- IMPORTANT: If you embrace and commit to the *process* of reading, you will be surprised at the outcome.
- Take note of comments made for the midterm and final exam. Items on exams go beyond content discussed in class.

Review each assignment's rubric

- A rubric is a measure of how an assignment will be graded. You can view an assignment's rubric on Canvas in the same place you will upload your assignment for grading.
- Be sure to review rubrics and ask questions if you have them in advance of an assignment's deadline.

Set up a weekly calendar

- Create a calendar (e.g., Google Calendar, iCal, etc.) to map all assignments, their due dates and times, and method of submitting each assignment. A small amount of effort can reduce headaches of what needs to get done by what time, where, etc.

Takes notes for all lectures, readings, viewings, and listenings (and review them)

- Using a pencil/pen and paper, take notes for all lectures. Take notes in any way you like for readings, viewings, and listenings outside of class.
- Your detailed notes will be critical to the midterm and final exam. Lecture slides will not be uploaded to Canvas. If you cannot attend a class session, coordinate with a fellow student to review their notes. Be sure to reciprocate and not abuse anyone's generosity.

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