

Media Literacy

MSCM 2201 (Section 3)

Spring 2023



What is the role
of a newspaper in 2023?



Is radio just for
“old people?”



Are books just an
antiquated technology?



Will legislatures kill
TikTok?

I'm Dr. Michael Dreher - Chair of the Department of Communication and your professor for this course.

We'll be answering these questions and many more as we explore the mass media, how the internet has changed media, and look at the future of mass media. Along the way, we'll also discuss what it means to be "media literate," and how we as consumers need to be critical when it comes to the media we choose, as well as how messages function in different kinds of media. So turn the page to find out more about this course and what we'll do together...

Instructor Information:

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Office Hours: MWF 10-11 and other
times as needed

What are office hours? A chance to get questions answered, a time for me to get to know you a little better, a place to discuss careers, graduate school, and lots of other things too. I tend to be around a lot more than "official" hours. So if these hours don't work, let me know. We'll figure out some better times. I encourage you to stop by!

Course Description:

This course will focus on the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate the process of creating and interpreting media in a variety of forms.



Cartoon source: <https://xkcd.com/2045>

Course Objectives: What should you learn by the end of the semester?

1. You should be able to think critically about the structure, role, and impact of media in a diverse society.
2. You should be able to analyze how the media are used to construct meaning and/or persuade.
3. You should be able to describe the perceptual framework through which individuals view the media, interact with it, and create understanding from it.
4. You should be able to give examples of the historical and theoretical foundations relevant to media literacy in a diverse society.

Additional Objectives: What do you want to get out of this class?

Textbook:

Turow, Joseph. *Media Today*. 8th edition. New York: Routledge, 2022.

And before you ask, yes, you do need to get the textbook. The 8th edition is more up to date and cheaper than the 7th edition.

The secrets to doing well in this class... Everything you want to know will be found on this page!*

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Is it true that your jokes start off bad and only get worse?

As some Minnesotans would say, "Oh, yeah, you betcha."

2. Minnesota? Why Minnesota?

Well, I did live there for 24 years before coming to Georgia College.

3. Do I need to show up for class every day?

I'd strongly encourage you to do so, because much of what we do isn't in the textbook. If you're big on the "so what" questions like I am, you'll want to come to class. You'll better be able to do the assignments you'll have if you come to class. But don't come if you're sick or have another legitimate reason not to come. I hate to pull the "x absences and your grade will be lowered" card. But, it's fair to say that you won't get an A for participation if you're constantly away from class.

4. Is it true that we won't have tests in this class?

Maybe. That's up to you. If you read the text, you participate in class and outside of class, then we don't need to have pop quizzes. But, if people don't read the material, then I reserve every right to change the syllabus to have pop reading quizzes. I may ask you some questions in class from time to time as a check-in. But I'll let you know those are happening.

5. In other words, I don't have to do the readings.

I didn't say that. Some of our in-class work will rely on your having read the material before class. You cannot not do the readings if you want an A in this class.

6. Wait: isn't "cannot not" a double negative?

Just wanted to make sure you were paying attention. :)

7. What will classes be like?

Discussion and application are the primary components of our class sessions. I promise not to regurgitate the text to you. I'm also big on spiral learning.

8. What's spiral learning?

In one sentence: we'll come back to different topics multiple times in increasing depth. We may talk about something at the beginning of the semester, then come back to it with more complexity or from a different angle later.

9. Now that you mention it, how do I get an A in this class?

- Make good, well-supported arguments (through your insights and research.)
- Show me that you've read and grappled with the material you've read and discussed, and have thought about its implications.
- Come to class prepared to discuss and learn.

10. You mean, that's it?

There is a more detailed grading policy on page 5. But, essentially, if you do the three things above, you'll do well.

11. So did you change the class at all from last semester when you taught it?

Oh, yeah, you betcha. The only thing that's constant when it comes to the media is change. Who knows -- we may lose some forms of social media while others may become more popular. Besides, who knows what Elon Musk will do in the next 15 weeks? :)

12. I hate discussing in class. What can I do?

Never fear. There will be ways of demonstrating that you've read and interacted with the course material. I know not all communication majors like speaking in class or public.

13. What else should I know?

- Don't wait until the last minute to do assignments. That stresses you and me out.
- If you're going to be absent, let me know.
- Don't be a stranger. The more I know about you and how you learn, the better I can help you.

**Because college courses shouldn't be a guessing game.*

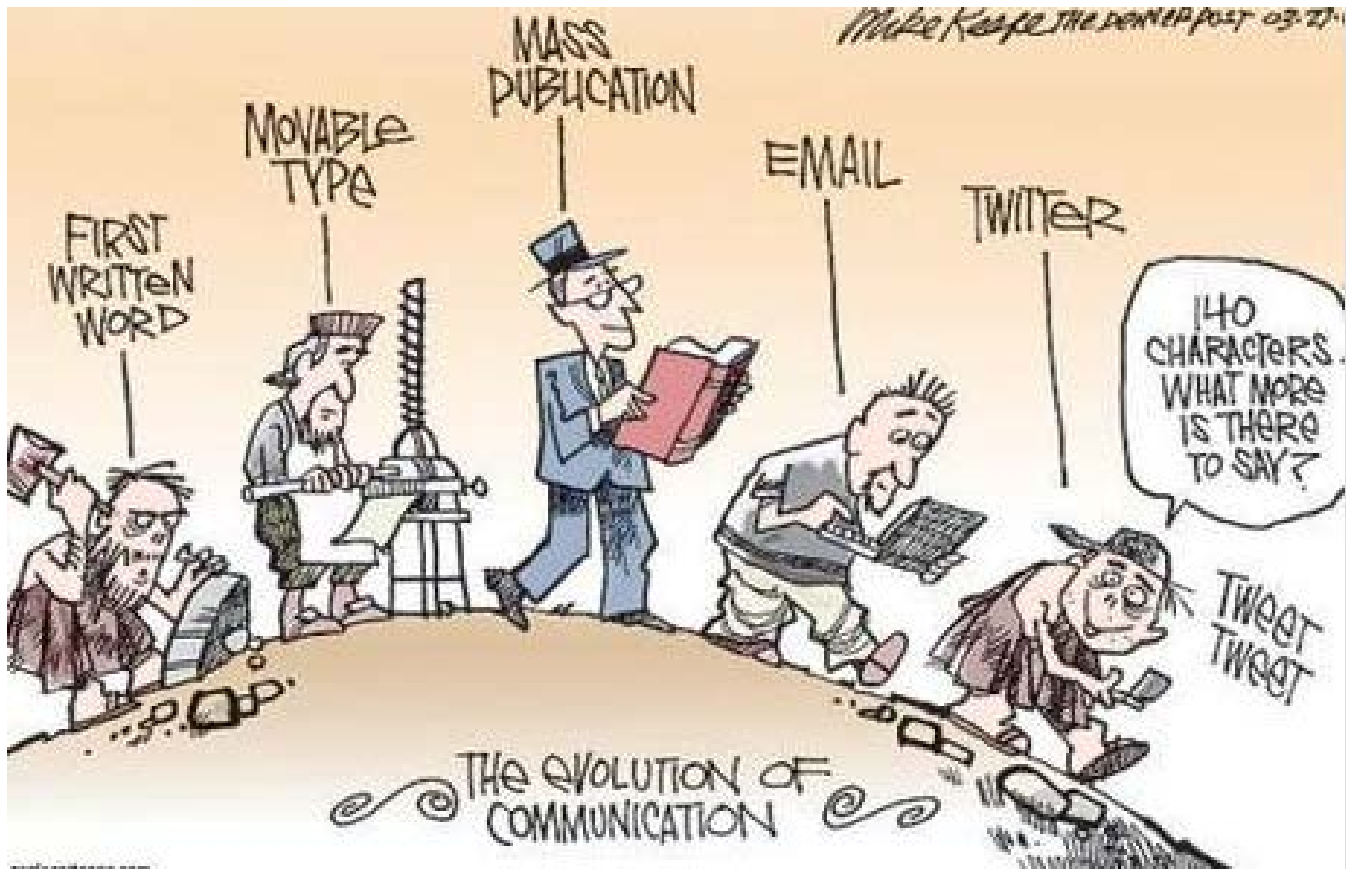
So what is this class about?

If I had to liken this class to a recipe, it would be this:

- 1 dose of history, so that we're all starting from the same place.
- A dose or two of current knowledge about different types of media
- Lots of reflection and analysis about how the media impacts us on personal and societal levels.
- Quite a bit of discussion about future directions of media, and how those directions will impact us not only as citizens, but also as producers and consumers of mass media.
- And finally, combine all of the above with respect for each other, hopefully a little laughter, and creating a space where we all learn from each other: I'll learn from all of you as you'll learn from me.

Or, as Dr. Bobbie Eisenstock put it on her website (bemedialiterate.com):

"Media literacy... is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create communications in all forms using media and digital technology. Media literate individuals can reflect on media they consume and create and take action to share knowledge and solve problems."



Source: Denver Post, March 27, 2009

Assignments and Grading Policy

In-Class Group Work	20%	I use the normal grading scale:
Weekly Journal Entries	20%	90-100% = A
Paper #1	20%	80-89% = B
Paper #2	20%	70-79% = C
Being Prepared For Class/Participation	20%	60-69% = D

In-Class Group Work:

I believe that we all learn from each other. Particularly when it comes to the mass media, you have different background experiences and have different ways of approaching the mass media compared to me.

Here's how this portion of the class will work. Several times during the course of the semester, I'll assign case studies in groups of 5-6. You'll get some time to work on them in class; there may be a bit of out-of-class time that's necessary in order to complete the case study.

Each group will then present on their case study for approximately 15 or so minutes. I won't be grading you on your public speaking ability (this isn't Fundamentals of Public Speaking). Your goals in the presentation of the case study are three-fold:

- To give us a sense of the context for the case study, and to present what issues the case study raises.
- To help us understand the "so what" behind the case study -- why do we as media literate citizens need to know about this particular situation?
- To answer questions raised by the case study in terms of future implications.

As an example, your group might have a case study involving the song "Happier" by Marshmello and Bastille. Marshmello was taken to court by Artem Stolaïrov and was accused of copying his song "I Lived (Arty Remix)" (*Hollywood Reporter*, May 6, 2019). The case study would involve studying the court case, letting us know what the issues were and why those issues are important to understand, what the ultimate verdict was, as well as what the ruling means for us today. Your group should also expect questions and discussion from me as well as from your colleagues.

- The first set of case studies will come in the Media Regulation portion of the course.
- The second set of case studies will come in the News Industry portion of the course.
- The third set of case studies will come in the Television/Video portion of the course.

Weekly Journal Entries:

Each week you'll turn in a short (couple of paragraph) summary of your reaction to the week's readings and discussion. Those will be due every Monday (except for Labor Day and Fall Break).

Example: On Wednesday, January 18, you'll turn in your first journal entry. That entry will consist of your thoughts and insights from chapter 1, our discussion about media convergence in general, and any questions or ideas that have come up from the readings and discussion.

Why do I have this type of assignment? Two reasons: 1. I know that not everyone is comfortable discussing in class, and 2. I know that some people prefer to reflect and think after they've listened and read to others.

Paper #1 and Paper #2:

Further details about these papers will be given later in the semester. Instead of focusing on one area of the media, these papers will ask you to draw conclusions across several different types of media. Rubrics can be found later in the syllabus. Paper #2 will serve as the final exam for the course.

Being prepared for class/participation:

I know that not everyone likes to participate in a traditional class format. There are several ways in which you'll be able to demonstrate your attention to the readings and class discussion. The first is the weekly journals, mentioned above. The second way is simple: come to class, pay attention, work in our various group/pair/other activities. It'll be pretty clear who has/hasn't read the assignments! Finally, as mentioned previously, I'll occasionally ask y'all questions in class. That'll give you another chance to demonstrate your readiness for class discussion.

Rubric for assignments....

	Outstanding	Good	Fair	Poor
	4	3	2	1
Explanation of issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
Evidence Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
Influence of context and assumptions	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.
Control of syntax and mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language used has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

Georgia College Official Policies...

Religious Observance Policy

Students are permitted to miss class in observance of religious holidays and other activities observed by a religious group of which the student is a member without academic penalty. Exercising of one's rights under this policy is subject to the GC Honor Code. Students who miss class in observance of a religious holiday or event are required to make up the coursework missed as a result from the absence. The nature of the make-up assignments and the deadline for completion of such assignments are at the sole discretion of the instructor. Failure to follow the prescribed procedures voids all student rights under this policy.

Assistance for Student Needs Related to Disability

If you have a disability as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, you may be eligible to receive accommodations to assist in programmatic and physical accessibility. The Student Disability Resource Center can assist you in formulating a reasonable accommodation plan and in providing support in developing appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to all GC programs and facilities. Course requirements will not be waived, but accommodations may assist you in meeting the requirements. For documentation requirements and for additional information, we recommend that you contact the Student Disability Resource Center located in Russell Library 109 at 478-445-5931.

Student Rating of Instruction Survey

Given the technological sophistication of Georgia College students, the student opinion survey is being delivered through an online process. Your constructive feedback plays an indispensable role in shaping quality education at Georgia College. All responses are completely confidential and your name is not stored with your responses in any way. In addition, instructors will not see any results of the opinion survey until after final grades are submitted to the University. An invitation to complete the online opinion survey is distributed to students near the end of the semester. Your participation in this very important process is greatly appreciated.

Academic Honesty

The integrity of students and their written and oral work is a critical component of the academic process. The submission of another's work as one's own is plagiarism and will be dealt with using the procedures outlined in the GC Catalog. Remember that allowing another student to copy one's own work violates standards of academic integrity.

Student Use of Copyrighted Materials

As a student your ability to post or link to copyrighted material is governed by United States copyright law. The law allows for students to post or link to copyrighted materials within the course environment when the materials are pertinent to course work. Students are expected to adhere to the stipulations of the Georgia College Honor Code, which addresses plagiarism. Violations are subject to disciplinary action. Policy recognizes that exclusive rights of copyright holders are balanced by limitations on those rights under federal copyright law, including the right to make a fair use of copyrighted materials. The absence of a copyright notice or symbol on a work does not denote a lack of copyright. Failure to comply with this policy, including federal copyright laws, may result in restriction or loss of university network access and/or disciplinary action through the Office of Student Life. For questions involving copyright issues, please consult the GC Office of Legal Affairs. Refer to the USG Policy on the Use of Copyrighted Works at <https://www.usg.edu/copyright>.

Electronic Recording Policy

Electronic video and/or audio recording is not permitted during any class unless the student obtains permission from the instructor and every student present. If permission is granted, any distribution of the recording is prohibited. Violation of this policy is grounds for removal from the class and referral for disciplinary action. Students granted specific electronic recording accommodations from Disability Services do not require special permission; however, the instructor must be notified. Any distribution is prohibited.

Georgia College Official Policies... continued

COVID-19

The health and safety of our community will always remain our top priority. Although not required, we strongly encourage students to get a COVID-19 vaccine. Similarly, unvaccinated individuals are also strongly encouraged to continue wearing a mask or face covering in the classroom as well as at social gatherings. Vaccinated individuals may also want to consider wearing a mask or face covering while indoors.

In an effort to assist students with getting vaccinated, [Student Health Services](#) will be offering on-going vaccination clinics on campus starting during our Weekend of Welcome. For more information, contact Student Health Services at 478-445-5288 or via [Email](#). Please consult the [university's website](#) for COVID related updates and resources. (Updated July 30, 2021)

Academic Grievances or Appeals

An academic grievance or appeal is an allegation by a student of substantial and/or unjustified deviation, to the student's detriment, from policies, procedures and/or requirements regarding admission, grading policies, special agreements, instructor's requirements and academic requirements of the University. Students shall have the right to file academic grievances or appeals according to the procedures approved by the University and outlined in the University Catalog.

Fire Drills

Fire drills will be conducted annually. In the event of a fire alarm, students will exit the building in a quick and orderly manner through the nearest hallway exit. Learn the floor plan and exits of the building. Do not use elevators. If you encounter heavy smoke, crawl on the floor so as to gain fresh air. Assist disabled persons and others if possible without endangering your own life. Assemble for a head count on the front lawn of main campus or other designated assembly area.

Course Schedule

You'll see that we'll take several days to cover each chapter, and that while one day may be listed as a day to specifically apply text material to mass media today, in reality, we'll do that every day. Readings will be discussed on the day they're assigned. For example, we'll start with chapter 1 on Wednesday the 11th.

Also, we may change parts of the schedule based on our progress and/or student interest. Any such changes will be noted in class and through an updated course schedule. This version (version 3) was updated Friday, Feb. 24, and accounts for both the times I was away from class as well as our shifting of the case study presentations. It also allows for more class time to present the second and third case studies.

Date:	Day	Class Topics	Assignments
Mon., 1/9	1	Introduction to the Semester	Obtain textbook
Wed., 1/11	2	Media Convergence	Chapter 1
Fri., 1/13	3	Definition of Mass Communication Mass Media and Culture	Chapter 1
Mon., 1/16		Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - No Class	
Wed., 1/18	4	Definitions and Principles of Media Literacy	Chapter 1 Journal Entry #1 due
Fri., 1/20	5	Early Mass Communication Research	Chapter 2
Mon., 1/23	6	Mainstream Mass Comm Research	Chapter 2
Wed., 1/25	7	Critical Effects Research	Chapter 2 Journal Entry #2 due
Fri., 1/27	8	Media Effects Research	Chapter 2
Mon., 1/30	9	Examining Audiences	Chapter 3
Wed., 2/1	10	Thinking about Genre	Chapter 3
Fri., 2/3	11	Defining news and the inverted pyramid	Chapter 3
Mon., 2/6	12	No class (Dr. Dreher - medical)	
Wed. 2/8	13	No class (Dr. Dreher - medical)	
Fri., 2/10	14	Media Literacy: Advertising and PR	Chapter 4
Mon., 2/13	15	Media Literacy: Advertising and PR, discussion of Super Bowl ads	Chapter 4
Wed., 2/15	16	Media Regulation (general principles) Time to work on case studies	Chapter 5 Journal Entry #3 due Case Study #1 handed out
Wed. 2/15	16	Ethics and the Mass Media	Chapter 5
Fri., 2/17	17	Time to work on case studies in class	
Mon., 2/20	18	Internet: Net Neutrality	Chapter 6
Wed., 2/22	19	Media Regulation (specific areas)	Case Study #1, Groups #1 and #2
Fri., 2/24	20	Media Regulation (specific areas)	Case Study #1, Groups #3 and #4
Mon., 2/27	21	Internet: Twitter and other new social media sites (Mastodon, etc.)	Chapter 6
Wed., 3/1	22	Internet: Future implications, virtual reality/ assisted reality, etc.	Chapter 6

Date:	Day	Class Topics	Assignments
Fri., 3/3	23	Review Day, Summation of course so far	Journal Entry #4
Mon., 3/6	24	Book Industry	Chapter 7
Wed., 3/8	25	News Industry: Newspapers	Chapter 8
Fri., 3/10	26	News Industry: Television News	Chapter 8 Journal Entry #5
March 13-17		Spring Break - No Class	
Mon., 3/20	27	News Industry: Digital and Social Media	Chapter 8
Wed. 3/22	28	Magazine Industry: History	Chapter 9
Fri., 3/24	29	Magazine Industry: Present and Future	Chapter 9 Journal Entry #6
Mon., 3/27	30	Case Study #2 presentations	Case Study #2: Groups #1 and #2
Wed., 3/29	31	Case Study #2 presentations	Case Study #2: Groups #3 and #4
Fri., 3/31	32	Recording Industry: History and Genres	Chapter 10
Mon., 4/3	33	Recording Industry: Streaming, Downloads, and what's up with vinyl?	Chapter 10 Journal Entry #7
Wed., 4/5	34	Review Day	
Fri., 4/7	35	Radio/Audio: Dayparts and clocks, what is "radio?"	Chapter 11
Mon., 4/10	36	Movie Industry: Early History/Modern History	Chapter 12 Journal Entry #8
Wed., 4/12	37	Case Study discussion time, Movie Industry, Post-COVID	Chapter 12
Fri., 4/14	38	Case Study discussion time, Movie Industry	Chapter 12 Paper #1 due
Mon., 4/17	39	Case Study #3 presentations	
Wed., 4/19	40	Case Study #3 presentations	Journal Entry #9
Fri., 4/21	41	TV/Video: Genres and TV Criticism	Chapter 13
Mon., 4/24	42	TV/Video: History and the Golden Age	Chapter 13
Wed., 4/26	43	TV/Video: Netflix, Disney+, Paramount+ and all the other pluses and channels...	Chapter 13 Journal Entry #10
Fri., 4/28	44	Video Game Industry	Chapter 14
Mon., 5/1	45	Course Wrapup	
Thurs., 5/4 3:30-5:45		Final Exam	Paper #2 due