

MACS 110: Intro to Communication Studies



Instructor: Dr. Brett Pardy
Tuesday 11:30-2:20
D 139

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I will respond to emails within 24 hours (if I do not, please re-send)
Available for video calls by appointment

Calendar Description: An exploration of foundational theories in media and communication studies on such topics as propaganda, debates over high and mass culture, violence in the media, and audience uses of the media.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe theories central to the development of media and communication studies;
- Outline the effects of the mass media on society;
- Highlight some of the ways in which audiences incorporate the mass media into their everyday lives;
- Situate major communication theories in their sociohistorical context;
- Critically assess key theories in media and communication studies.

Required Text(s):

All readings will be posted on Brightspace

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

Week 1, January 6: Syllabus and Intro to Media Studies

Week 2, January 13: What do we need to know for media studies? How do we know it?

Week 3, January 20: A history of people thinking the media is bad
Due: Reflective Writing Assignment

Week 4, January 27: A history of people thinking the media is good

Week 5, February 3: News, opinion, comedy, propaganda

Week 6, February 10: Political economy of media

Week 7, February 17: No Class – Reading Week

Week 8, February 24: Semiotics and Post-Structuralism

Reading: Barthes, R. (1957). "Myth Today", *Mythologies* (pp.217-242). New York, NY: Hill and Wang.

Due: Critical Writing Assignment Draft

Week 9, March 3: Cultural Studies

Reading: Hall, S. (1980). Encoding/decoding. In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe, & P. Willis (Eds.), *Culture, media, language* (pp. 128-138). London, UK: Routledge.

Week 10, March 10: Artificial Intelligence, hype, and labour

Reading: Bourne, C. (2024). AI hype, promotional culture, and affective capitalism. *AI Ethics* 4, 757–769. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43681-024-00483-w>

Week 11, March 17: Global media**Week 12, March 24:** Media and identity**Week 13, March 31:** Media and the self

Due: Critical Writing Assignment Due

Week 14, April 7: Course Wrap-up

Due: Reading Connection Assignment

Course Evaluation:

Assignment	% of Final Grade	Due Date
Participation & Professionalism	10%	Throughout the Course
Reflective Writing Assignment	22.5%	Week 3, January 20
Critical Writing Assignment Draft	10%	Week 8, February 24
Critical Writing Assignment	35%	Week 13, March 31
Reading Connection Assignment	22.5%	Week 14, April 7

Assignments:

Details and a marking rubric for each assignment will be provided in class and posted to Brightspace.

There are no tests or exams for this course

Class Participation & Professionalism (10%): This is more than just attendance, but being present and engaged. You can quietly use your phone or laptop during class. You can not talk loudly or be disruptive to the learning environment for others. You are also expected to return from break on time.

Reflective Writing Assignment (22.5%): Write an approximately 750 word reflection on the media you use in a typical week. Pick one to three types of media (social media, music, television, video games, movies, etc) you use in a typical week and answer why do I choose this particular medium? What benefits do I receive from using it? What are possible downsides to my media engagement? **Due January 20**

Critical Writing Assignment (35%): As this is a 100 level course, throughout the semester we will discuss how to research and write for media studies. This involves working on a question like you would like to know about media and writing an approximately 1000-1500 word paper answering this question by drawing upon academic research. **Due March 31**

Part of this process will be submitting a draft (10%) by Week 8, which has your research question, your approach to answering it, at least three sources cited in APA, and a potential structure for your paper. We will cover all these elements in class.

Reading Connection (22.5%): Drawing on specific quotations and ideas from one of the three assigned readings, you will connect these ideas to a media example or examples of your own choice to demonstrate your comprehension of the readings. This assignment should be approximately 750 words. **Due April 7**

Guidelines for Written Assignments:

All assignments are to be uploaded to the assignment folder in Brightspace **by midnight** on the assigned due date listed in the Course Evaluation section above.

All written assignments must follow the following structural guidelines:

- Submit in a .docx file
- Typed in 12-point Times New Roman font;
- Double spaced with indented paragraphs and no additional space between paragraphs;
- Normal (2.54) margins on all sides;
- A title/cover page with your name, my name, the course number, year, and a creative title to your paper;
- Page numbers on all pages, including the title page and reference pages;
- Reference page should be formatted according to the American Psychological Association's (APA) standard of referencing.

A handout on how to use the APA style referencing can be found through the [UFV library](#).

Student Success:

It is my aim to support each individual learner and to create learning conditions that foster success. Please do not hesitate to ask for clarification or to ask questions. If you have a course content related question, please share it in the Questions section online. Chances are if you are wondering something so are others. I will answer all course content questions in this section of Brightspace. You may find it helpful to read some of the questions and responses – even if you don't have a specific question.

If you have a personal question or concern please email me directly. Don't wait until you have a major problem before you get in touch. The more proactive we can be the more successful you will be.

Late Policy:

It is your responsibility to submit assignments on time. However, on occasion (and rarely) life does happen and circumstances need to be accommodated. If you find yourself in a serious situation please contact me prior to the due date, preferably at least **three days** before, to discuss a workable solution.

If a proactive request is not made or no justification is provided prior to the due date, late assignments will receive a 3% deduction per week day.

AI Policy:

Please do not use ChatGPT or similar programs to help you write. The purpose of writing is to show you are thinking about course topics. ChatGPT also does a poor job writing essays, in both format and content. Three common traits of ChatGPT writing are excessive use of praise adjectives – like nuanced, powerful, insightful, impactful – without provided reasons why, giving each paragraph its own title, and writing essays as numbered lists. **If I see any of these traits in your paper, I will not mark it and ask you to resubmit.**



2025-2026 College of Arts: Policies and Procedures

Grading

All undergraduate students at UFV are evaluated using the same grade scale:

A+	90–100	C+	67–69
A	85–89	C	63–66
A–	80–84		
B+	77–79	C–	60–62
B	73–76	D	50–59
B–	70–72	F	Below 50

GPA calculations are based on this scale, and +/- modifiers affect your GPA accordingly. All students admitted to or declaring a program require a minimum [Program Grade Point Average \(PGPA\) of 2.00](#) (3.00 for graduate level) on all courses taken at UFV used to meet program requirements. To declare a major/minor or inquire about program requirements, schedule an appointment with an Academic Advisor: <http://www.ufv.ca/advising>

Academic Misconduct (Policy 70)

This includes, but is not limited to: plagiarism, cheating (including unauthorized use of tools such as artificial intelligence), impersonation, improper access to exam materials, falsification or unauthorized modification of academic documents or records, resubmission of work, improper research practices, obstructing another's academic activity, and aiding or abetting misconduct.

Attendance (Policy 62)

Instructors may withdraw students who do not attend the first class and may penalize lack of regular attendance. The course syllabus establishes attendance expectations and penalties.

Audit Policy (Policy 108)

Students intending to audit a course must declare their intent before 30% of the course is complete. Refer to <https://www.ufv.ca/registration/deadlines/> at www.ufv.ca.

Final Exams

Final exams are held during the official final exam period. Students must be available throughout the entire duration of the exam period and should not make travel or personal plans that conflict with scheduled examinations.

Final Grade Appeals (Policy 217)

Students may appeal final grades within 14 days of grades becoming available. The process is outlined in UFV Policy 217.

Prerequisites (Policy 84)

The minimum grade required for a prerequisite course is C- unless otherwise stated.

Safe Student Learning Community (Policy 204)

“Students are required to conduct themselves in a mature and responsible manner, consistent with the university's mission, policies, and regulations, and in compliance with federal, provincial, and municipal laws. Students will be held accountable for their actions, whether acting alone or in a group.” For more details, visit the Safe Student Community website.

Withdrawal (Policy 81)

Students may withdraw without penalty before completing 60% of the course. Withdrawals before 30% completion will not appear on the transcript; withdrawals between 31% and 60% will result in a “W” grade (not included in GPA). Withdrawals after 60% require a Late Withdrawal application.

Student Support Referral

Faculty and staff may submit a confidential referral to the Student Support Centre to connect students with academic and wellness resources. Students will be notified of referrals, and participation is voluntary. For more info or self-referral: <https://www.ufv.ca/student-services/student-support-centre/>

Communicable Disease Prevention

Follow the Environmental Health & Safety guidelines: <https://ufv.ca/communicable-disease-prevention/>

If you are sick:

- Do not come to campus.
- Notify your instructor.
- Submit a [Student Declaration of Absence](#) form.
- Work with your instructor on a plan to catch up or request an [Incomplete Grade Contract](#) if needed.

An Incomplete (“I”) is a temporary grade assigned when extenuating circumstances prevent a student from completing coursework by term-end, provided sufficient progress has been made.

Safety and Security

Use UFV’s online tools to [report incidents or near-miss events](#). The [Safewalk](#) program is available to escort any UFV community member safely on campus.

Course Copyright

Instructors are the authors of original course materials (lectures, notes, presentations, etc.). These are for enrolled students’ private study only. Materials may not be recorded, posted online, or distributed without the instructor’s written permission. Refer to UFV Intellectual Property policy for details.