

**\*\*\* This syllabus is subject to change \*\*\***  
**JOUR 103: Introduction to Media & Society, Summer 2022**  
Mon-Fri. , 8:30 am–11:30 am

Instructor: Dr. Laura Crosswell  
Office Hours: Tuesday, 12:00-1:00 or by  
appointment

**Required Text and Materials. (all required texts and materials will be purchased and provided to students in this course by the THINK program)**

- Berger, A. A. (2012). *Media and society: A critical perspective*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. **Third edition**
- Additional readings will be available on Canvas
- It is strongly recommended that you bring a smart device with you to class if possible.
- Per university regulations, **you must wear a mask during class**. If you do not have one or refuse to wear one, you will not be allowed to stay for class. Please remember your mask.

**Course Overview & Objectives**

The goal of this course is to help students become more critically engaged consumers and producers of media. Throughout the semester, you will learn how to systematically observe, analyze and critique mass and networked media using principles grounded in the social sciences. This class will help you understand how media are used to inform and persuade and strengthen your ability to use media critically.

**Expected Learning Outcomes**

This course builds on Core Objectives 1 and 3 and satisfies Core Objective 6:

*Core Objective 6: Cultures, Societies & Individuals*

Students will learn how to systematically analyze human social conditions (e.g., individuals, groups, communities, and cultures). In particular, students will learn to observe, theorize, model, experiment, and/or interpret as a means of inquiring into human social relations.

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- 1) Describe the media ecosystem and distinguish similarities and differences between types of media, comparing content, platforms, ownership, intent and effects.
- 2) Demonstrate knowledge of the research process and describe what constitutes evidence, inference and sound conclusions.
- 3) Observe your own media usage and hypothesize individual-level effects using published research to inform your ideas (CO1, CO3 and CO6).
- 4) Explain and critique the role of media in democracy and community using social, economic and political theories and methods (CO1, CO3 and CO6).
- 5) Construct a simple research project about a particular media phenomenon, using an appropriate method to gather empirical evidence and an appropriate theory to guide interpretation. (CO1, CO3 and CO6).

**Assignments and Grading**

- 1) *Exams (3)*: Dates of these exams have been tentatively scheduled but may change depending upon progress in the class. Exams and quizzes will cover material found only in the text, material found only in lecture, and material found both in the text and the lecture. With the exception of documented or university sanctioned absences, **NO MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN**. I will determine what is considered adequate documentation.
- 2) *Methodological Overview & Application*: Each student will research and report on a research method commonly used in the social sciences. You will present your findings in a 2–3-minute ‘explainer video,’ a written annotated bibliography, or some other [Design Driven Deliverable](#). In your video/deliverable, you should provide an overview of your method (what it is, how it’s been used, major components, etc.), offer an example of the method ‘in action,’ provide tips for executing the method effectively, and propose a research question you could answer/study you could execute using the methodical approach. You must also correctly incorporate and cite (both verbally and in text) at least one peer reviewed academic journal to support the content in your video/deliverable. Try to have fun with this- again, the more creative, the better! You will find your group members listed on Canvas under ‘People.’ It is your responsibility to reach out to and meet up with your team. In sum, this assignment requires you to:
  1. Pick a method: 5 points
  2. Develop a 2–3-minute explainer video (this is a strict time guideline): 40 points
  3. Correctly incorporate and cite at least one peer reviewed academic journal: 15 points
  4. Provide an example of the method ‘in action’: 30 points
  5. Provide tips for executing the method effectively: 30 points
  6. Propose a research question you could answer and study you could execute using the chosen method: 30 points
- 3) *Theoretical Overview and Application*: Students will work in groups to research and report on a media/communication theory. You will present your findings in a 2-3 minute ‘explainer video,’ a written annotated bibliography, or some other

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**Design Driven Deliverable.** In your video/deliverable, you should provide an overview of your theory (what it is, how it's been used, major components, limitations, etc.), offer an example of the theory 'in action,' and propose a study you could execute based on the tenets of the theoretical framework. You must also correctly incorporate and cite (both verbally and in text) at least one peer reviewed academic journal to support the content in your video/deliverable. Try to have fun with this- the more creative, the better! You will find your group members listed on Canvas under 'People.' It is your responsibility to reach out to and meet up with your team. In sum, this assignment requires you to:

1. Pick a theory: 10 points
  2. Develop a 2–3-minute explainer video/deliverable (this is a strict time guideline): 50 points
    - a. Who is the original theorist?
    - b. What are the strengths/limitations of the theory?
    - c. What type of work is the theory most often applied to?
  3. Correctly incorporate and cite at least one peer reviewed academic journal: 15 points
  4. Provide an example of the theory 'in action': 40 points
  5. Propose a study you could execute based on the theoretical framework: 35 points
- 4) **Participation/Class Assignments:** Participation accounts for 10% of your final grade. Attendance is, of course, prerequisite for participation- but it is not how I determine that portion of the grade. To earn an A in participation, I am looking for consistent, active contribution to class discussion that demonstrates a firm grasp of the material covered and adds to the learning of your fellow classmates. Participation does not mean talking simply to talk or just coming to class each day. I expect you to come to class prepared, to ask insightful questions, and to offer constructive feedback. I will also routinely assign class exercises/quizzes throughout the semester. Students *cannot* make up assignments unless the missed work is due to a university-sanctioned reason (proper documentation required).

**Composition of Course Grade:**

Exams; 20% each (SLO 1)	60%
Methodological Overview & Application (SLO 2, 3, 5)	15%
Theoretical Overview & Application (SLO 4 & 5)	15%
Participation	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Policies and Procedures**

**Importance of Quality Writing:** In this course, I will grade your ideas as well as your grammar, syntax, spelling, and other writing mechanics. Spelling and typographical errors seriously detract from the quality and clarity of your work. Be sure to proofread carefully before turning in any assignment for this class.

**Be Here, Be on Time, and Bring Your Book:** When you are on the job, you can't repeatedly miss work and hope to remain employed. Similarly, as a student, you can't repeatedly miss class and expect your grade won't be affected. Deadlines are just that—deadlines. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. If you are late, your work is late, and I do not accept late work nor offer make-ups on missed assignments. You **will not** be allowed to make-up work unless your absence is due to a university-sanctioned reason. Any excused absence requires documentation. In the case of emergency circumstances, I expect you to contact me immediately to explain your situation.

**Grading scale**

Your final grade will be based on the following grading scale. Plus/minus grading will not be used in this class.

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 0 – 59

**Classroom Etiquette:** Please be mindful of the collective classroom experience. Courtesy, diligent reading, and active participation are expected of all students. Chatting, texting, tweeting, and other disruptive behaviors are disrespectful and seriously detract from student learning. **If you do not have the self-control to remain focused in class, please don't come.**

**Tone of Discussions:** It is perfectly okay and natural to disagree with someone else's ideas, but it is never okay to offer personal attacks or use offensive language. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an idea, but you are not to attack an individual.

**Email and Communication:** I generally try to respond to student emails within 48 hours. If you haven't heard from me within that time, please send a reminder or ask me about it in class. In any email sent to me, please include in the subject heading, **JOUR103**. Otherwise, I may accidentally delete your email unread. I will occasionally send e-mails with class updates and/or outside readings based on current events. As such, I expect students to check their e-mail regularly throughout the week. **You are responsible for any information/assignments I send via email.**

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**Grades:** I do not discuss individual grades in class. You can set up an appointment with me if you have questions.

**Scholastic Dishonesty – Don't Do It:** Plagiarism is defined as the unacknowledged inclusion of someone else's words, ideas, or data. You must give credit where credit is due by noting outside contributions with an in-text citation that includes the author's last name and the date of publication. **If more than three consecutive words are quoted verbatim, you must use quotation marks in addition to the in-text citation.** You are to include a list of references with all of your assignments. Please use APA formatting in this class. Students are encouraged to visit [UNR's Office of Student Conduct webpage](#) to learn more about academic standards, policy procedures, and university sanctions for academic misconduct. **UNR's Statement on Academic Dishonesty:** "Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the [University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog](#)."

**Diversity:** Open inquiry, freedom of expression, and respect for difference are fundamental to a comprehensive and dynamic education. This course and the instructor are committed to upholding these ideals by fostering an environment that is conducive to exploring, engaging, and expressing diverse perspectives and respecting diverse identities.

**Special Accommodations:** Students who have special conditions that make it difficult to complete class work in the time, format, quantity, or quality required should notify the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible to arrange appropriate accommodations. **UNR's Statement of Disability Services:** "Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the [Disability Resource Center](#) (Pennington Student Achievement Center, Suite 230) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations."

**Audio and Video Recording:** Surreptitious or covert videotaping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

**Equal Opportunity & Title IX:** "The University of Nevada, Reno is committed to providing a safe learning and work environment for all. If you believe you have experienced discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, whether on or off campus, or need information related to immigration concerns, please contact the University's Equal Opportunity & Title IX Office at 775-784-1547. Resources and interim measures are available to assist you. For more information, please visit: <http://www.unr.edu/equal-opportunity-title-ix>."

**Academic Success Services:** Your student fees cover usage of the [Math Center](#) (775) 784-4422, [Tutoring Center](#) (775) 784-6801, and University [Writing Center](#) (775) 784-6030. These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE; SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

**•WHEN A READING IS LISTED FOR A GIVEN DAY, YOU SHOULD READ IT PRIOR TO THAT CLASS MEETING\***

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>READING/ASSIGNMENT</b>
Mon 7/11	What Is Media and How Does It Relate to Society? Understanding Communication Models and the Media Industry	Syllabus Berger, Ch. 1
Tue 7/12	Media in Our Thoughts and Lives <b>Library Overview</b>	Berger, Ch. 2
Wed 7/13	Semiotics and Media Aesthetics Media Representation and Miss Representation	Berger, Ch. 3
Thur 7/14	Understanding Media Influence and Social Constructivism	Berger, Ch. 4
Fri 7/15	Media, Advertising, and Consumer Culture	

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<b>Mon 7/18</b>	<b>Exam 1</b>	
Tue 7/19	Theory Overview Audience Segmentation and Audience Effects	Berger, Ch. 5
Wed 7/20	Media Effects Research Methodological Approaches & Research Variables	Berger, Ch. 6
<b>Thur 7/21</b>	<b>IRB Visit (Tentatively Scheduled)/In-class workshop</b> Research Ethics (Jane Elliot)	
<b>Fri 7/22</b>	Reliability, Validity, and Causality <b>Methodological Overview &amp; Application Due</b>	
<b>Mon 7/25</b>	<b>Exam 2</b> Theory Discussion Continued	
Tue 7/26	Digital Media & Participatory Culture Ethos   A Time for Change (Tentatively Scheduled)	Berger, Ch. 7
Wed 7/27	In-Class Workshop The Social Impact of New Media Technologies	
Thur 7/28	<b>Theoretic Overview &amp; Application Due</b> The Future of Media	Berger, Ch. 8 & 10
Fri 7/29	<b>Exam 3</b>	

For more help with writing style, the following Web sites are recommended:  
The Guide to Grammar and Writing - <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>  
The Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University - <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

*\*\*We will watch various documentaries throughout the semester. For each film we watch, you will be asked to turn in a brief overview of the film's focus, along with your interpretation and critique of the major themes addressed in the documentary. Not all the films are publicly available, so it is important that you are in class on the days we watch a documentary- otherwise you will be unable to complete the assignment.*