COMM-4381.001 Senior Seminar in Media Studies  
Fall 2016  
MW 11-11:50 AM  
Bay Hall 201  

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Office Hours: MW 2-3:00/TR 11-12:30 and by appointment  

Course Description:  
The capstone course for Communication majors in the Media Studies track offers students opportunities to synthesize information learned in other Communication and Media courses through in-depth study of a particular topic. Students will demonstrate their abilities to think and write critically, and to conduct independent research or produce media projects at an advanced level. Topics vary by instructor.  

Course Topic:  
This semester students will be surveying the media landscapes as it exists today. Students will accomplish this by crafting a schedule of research and completing an in-depth report on a topic of their choosing.  

Student Learning Outcomes:  
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:  
- Demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving abilities;  
- Create individual projects that demonstrate effective use of media studies theory and insights;  
- Understand and apply critical theories, research methods, and/or production skills.  

REQUIRED BOOK:  

Course Policies:  
» Attendance is required – both physically and mentally. Unexcused absences will have a **direct effect on your final grade for this course, with each one equaling a 40-point deduction (out of a possible total of 1600 points)**. Attendance will be taken starting exactly at 1:00 p.m. and completed within the first five minutes of class. Arrivals after that time will be considered late. Late arrivals and departures prior to the finish of the class period will count as half-absences, meaning that two of either type will be counted as a full absence.  
» You are allowed one fully excused absence throughout the semester. This is to be employed at your discretion, but it should be used to cover illness, religious holiday observances, or most any other events or circumstances that cause you to miss class. Only extreme hardship with back-up documentation (e.g. a doctor’s note) will allow for consideration of any additional absences being excused. Classes missed due to university-approved activities (athletic teams, student government, etc.) will also be considered excused. For those absences, I will need official TAMUCC documentation. If appropriate, you may arrange to make up quizzes or exams missed due to excused absences, but it will be your responsibility to get any information from a missed class lecture or discussion from one of your classmates.  
» All absences not fitting into the excused categories described immediately above, will be considered unexcused. Any work missed due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up.
» Late work will be penalized by a reduction of ten percent of its total possible points for each day it is late.

» A note on competing media devices: Laptops are permitted for note taking purposes during lecture only, but please do not abuse this privilege. While you may personally feel capable of multitasking during class while still paying attention to lecture and discussion, your surrounding classmates will more likely find your in-class extracurricular activities distracting, so please, for the sake of your peers, respect this restriction. No laptop use will be permitted during screenings.

» Please remember to check your Islander email account regularly during the week and monitor the course Blackboard site for any course updates.

» If you would like to discuss any course readings, lectures, or assignments outside of class, you should feel free to contact me via email or by arranging to visit me during my office hours. If you need to schedule a time to meet outside of office hours, please let me know.

» All writing for this course must be composed using a standard, 12-point font size, double spacing, and standard 1” margins.

Academic Integrity:
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work. For a more expansive definition of plagiarism please see the relevant passage from the University’s student handbook.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade (F) for the assignment, at the very least, or a report to the Chair of the Department of Communication and Media, the Dean of the School of Arts, Media, and Communication, and the Office of Student Affairs.

» For the purposes of citation, please follow American Psychological Association (APA) Style Guide. For reference, see: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Dropping a Class:
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the class be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. November 7, 2014, is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Classroom/Professional Behavior:
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.
**Academic Advising:**
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Notice to Students with Disabilities**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Grade Appeal Process:**
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

**Grade Scale:**
A  1440-1600 points  
B  1280-1439 points  
C  1120-1279 points  
D  960-1119 points  
F  959 points or below
Grade Distribution:
» Attention and Participation (225 points overall): Each student is expected to be attentive to her/his Peer Review Partner’s work and willing to participate in class discussion when appropriate. These points will reflect how well you accomplish these goals. These are this area’s components:
  » In-Class Attentiveness (50 points)
  » Poster Session Participation (50 points)
  » Peer Review of Resume (25 points)
  » Peer Review of Preliminary Research Proposal (25 points)
  » Peer Review of Literature Review (25 points)
  » Peer Review of Sample Section of Data Analysis (25 points)
  » Peer Review of Rough Draft of Research Report (25 points)
Reminder: Attendance is required. It is assumed that you will be present for all class meetings unless you have a valid excuse. Unexcused absences will have a direct effect on your FINAL GRADE (not the Attention & Participation component) for this course, with each one equaling a 40-point deduction (out of a possible total of 1600 points).
» Resume (50 points): You will create a resume showcasing the skills you have acquired in your academic and work experiences.
» Blackboard Discussions (50 points total): You will share your experience with each stage of your research project.
» Preliminary Research Proposal (50 points): You will create a document in which you will establish: (1) your research topic and its importance, (2) your proposed method(s) of studying the topic, and (3) what theories will most likely be utilized in analyzing your findings. Peer review will be a component of the points earned. Length: 500-750 words.
» Revised Research Proposal (100 points): An expanded version of the Preliminary Research Proposal with improvements based on Peer Review Partner and Instructor recommendations, in which you will also articulate a specific research question. Length: 750-1000 words.
» Preliminary Bibliography (75 points): An APA-formatted list of 15 secondary sources (scholarly articles or books) that are relevant to your research topic, methods, and/or prospective theoretical framework.
» Literature Review (100 points): A short paper, which will ultimately be a section of your Research Report, in which you provide an overview of: (1) what scholarly work has already been done on your topic, (2) what methods that work has relied upon, and (3) what the conclusions of that body of work are. Peer review will be a component of the points earned. Length: 750-1250 words.
» Research Poster (100 points): A visual presentation of your basic topic area, background literature, research question, and proposed method(s) of data collection and analysis.
» Research Poster Session Presentation (100 points): During the poster session you will be expected to be present and able to answer questions asked by those in attendance.
» Sample Sections of Findings and Analysis (150 points): A short paper, which will ultimately be sections of your Research Report, in which you share and analyze most of your research findings. Peer review will be a component of the points earned. Length: 1000-1500 words (more if appropriate).
Research Presentation (100 points): A summary presentation of your research project and its findings.

Course Schedule:
Recommended readings are best completed prior to the first class meeting in the week under which they are listed. This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

Week 1 (August 24) – Introduction to Senior Seminar
Introductions and Preliminary Discussion
Peer Review Partners will be assigned.

Week 2 (September 29 & 31) – Research Tutorial
Recommended Readings: The Craft of Research, Chapters 3 and 4
A schedule of Research Presentations will be established.

Week 3 (September 7) – Preliminary Research Proposals
Submit your preliminary Research Proposal via Blackboard before class on September 7 and bring a copy with you to class.
Partners will review, evaluate, and make recommendations to each other in class on September 12.

Week 4 (September 12 & 14) – Revised Research Proposals
Recommended Readings: The Craft of Research, Chapters 5 and 6
Submit Revised Research Proposal via Blackboard before class on September 14. The Proposal Discussion Topic will be closed before class as well.

Week 5 (September 19 & 21) - Preliminary Bibliographies
Submit Preliminary Bibliographies via Blackboard before class on September 21.

Week 6 (September 26 & 28) – Literature Reviews
Submit Literature Review via Blackboard before class on September 28 and bring a copy with you to class. The Literature Review Discussion Topic will be closed before class as well.
Partners will review, evaluate, and make recommendations to each other in class.

Week 7 (October 3 & 5) – Research Consultations
Recommended Readings: The Craft of Research, Chapters 7-11
No Regular Class Meetings. Extra time should be used for data collection and analysis.
Dr. Thompson will schedule one-on-one consultations to take place this week.

Week 8 (October 10 & 12) – Research Poster Sessions
Students will present posters that describe their topic areas and their research approaches.
The Poster Discussion Topic will be closed before class on October 12.

Week 9 (October 17 & 19) – Resume Building
Guest speaker (10/17): Nancy Salinas from Career Services

Week 10 (October 24 & 26) – Sharing of Sample Sections of Findings and Analysis
Submit Sample Sections of Findings and Analysis via Blackboard before class on October 24 and bring a copy with you to class. The Findings and Analysis Discussion Topic will be closed before class as well. Partners will review, evaluate, and make recommendations to each other in class on October 26.

**Week 11 (October 31 & November 2) – Resume Week**
Submit Resumes via Blackboard before class on October 31 and bring a copy with you to class. Partners will review, evaluate, and make recommendations to each other in class on November 2.

**Week 12 (November 7 & 9) – Preparation Week**
No Regular Class Meetings (unless more partner time is needed). Time should be spent improving and building upon initial analyses and creating Rough Draft of Research Paper.

**Week 13 (November 14 & 16) – Exchange of Rough Drafts**
Submit Rough Draft of Research Report via Blackboard before class on November 14. The Rough Draft Discussion Topic will be closed before class as well. Partners will review, evaluate, and make recommendations to each other in class on November 16.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

**Week 14 (November 28 & 30) – Consultations on Finalizing Reports and Presentations**
Recommended Readings: *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 14, 16, and 17
No Regular Class Meetings. Time should be spent working to finalize your Research Reports and prepare your Research Presentations. Dr. Thompson will schedule one-on-one consultations to take place these weeks.

**Week 15 (December 5) – Research Presentations**
Research Presentations will take place based on schedule determined early in the semester.

**Finals Week – Research Presentations**
Research Presentations will take place based on a schedule determined early in the semester.

Final Research Reports due via Blackboard by FINAL EXAM TIME. SEE SCHEDULE.
Schedule of Assignments:
Assignments are to be completed prior to the beginning of class on the designated days unless otherwise specified.

September 7 – Preliminary Research Proposal
September 12 – Peer Review Form for Preliminary Research Proposal
September 14 – Revised Research Proposal and Proposal Discussion Topic closed
September 21 – Preliminary Bibliographies
September 28 – Literature Review and Literature Review Discussion Topic closed
October 1 – Peer Review Form for Literature Review
October 12 – Research Poster and Research Poster Discussion Topic closed
October 24 – Sample Sections of Findings and Analysis and Findings and Analysis Discussion Topic closed
October 26 – Peer Review Form for Sample Sections of Findings and Analysis
October 31 – Resume
November 2 – Peer Review Form for Resume
November 14 – Rough Draft of Research Report and Rough Draft Discussion Topic closed
November 16 – Peer Review Form for Rough Draft
December 5 – Research Presentations begin
December 12 – Final Draft of Research Report