

J561: Mass Communication and Society

Spring 2010

HUMANITIES 1111, 02:30 PM - 03:45 PM

Professor Lewis Friedland

lfriedla@wisc.edu

263-7853

Office Hours: Weds 12:00-1:30 or by appointment

TA: Stephanie Edgerly, Ph.D. candidate

edgerly@wisc.edu

Course web site is on Learn@UW: <https://learnuw.wisc.edu/>

J561: Mass Communication and Society addresses four basic themes.

First, we ask how communication and society create each other. Society has a basic structure and communication is interwoven into the very fabric of society. We will be moving back and forth between building an idea of social structure—how society works—the general structures of communication and media, and how they fit together.

Second, we will ask what the unique features of American society are that make this link between society and communication so important. One of the most important is the relation between communication and democracy. We think of democracy as a political system, which it is, of course. But it is also a social and cultural system, or, in the words of John Dewey, a "way of life." We'll explore what social and communication structures make the democratic way of life sustainable, and ask whether they are still strong enough in a networked society.

Third, we'll ask how communication and community do and do not work together. We'll ask what community means, how it is changing, whether communication is necessary for community, and whether community is necessary for a democratic society.

Fourth, we'll look at the networked society and ask how it transforms all of these previous themes: society, democracy, and community.

Contract

This section describes what you are being offered in this course so that you can clearly understand at the beginning of the semester whether this is the right course for you.

This is a hard course. Many students believe that there is too much reading and that the grades are too low for the amount of work they have to do.

Generally, three kinds of students take this class: those that are genuinely interested in

the core issues of communication and society; those that are going on to become practitioners in the communication fields, but are interested in the question and problems that we discuss here; and those that are primarily here to get a requirement out of the way.

So in the interest of disclosure, you should know that *this class is designed primarily for the first two groups*. The reading averages 100 pages a week, although some weeks it will be more (an entire book) some weeks a bit less. *This is a reading load that is relatively light for top universities*. Because the University of Wisconsin–Madison is one of the best public universities in the nation, I feel I owe it to you not to teach down to you. That means you will read difficult material, you will read a fair amount of it, and *you will be graded not just on whether you have read the material, but your mastery of it*. If you don't want to do this much work, but choose to take the course anyway, that is, of course, your right. But if you don't read the material and master it, it will be reflected in your grade, as discussed below.

I owe you the best education that I can provide in a large lecture setting. My standard for “the best” is the same as used in top universities in the U.S.

Class Policy

Requirements and Grading

Grades are determined as follows:

Five graded blog posts:	30%
Take home mid-term examination (out on March 3; back on March 8)	25%
Final Paper (due May 12 , 5pm)	30%
Participation	15%

Blog posts. The blog weeks are posted in the syllabus calendar. For each designated set of readings on these weeks, you should be able to articulate the *major arguments* (major claims), evaluate supporting and opposing arguments, and discuss their *validity* in a brief paragraph. These terms are all discussed in the *Craft of Research* section post on Learn@UW. I will also discuss them in class. Entries are due 10 am Thursday morning unless otherwise notified.

All entries should be posted in Learn@UW under that week's blog thread for your section.

Your entries will not be given a letter grade but you'll receive points for each entry:

- 0: No credit if you did not turn the assignment in *on time*;
- 3: if you turned the assignment in and showed that you *read all of it*;

4: if you, in addition, demonstrated some *grasp of major arguments*.

5: if, in addition, you clearly demonstrate extra work in wrestling with an argument, linking of weekly arguments to other course themes, and/or *exceptional understanding* at the discretion of your section instructor.

Late entries will not receive credit.

PLEASE NOTE: Blog point total *does not* equal a percentage. Total points are normalized in final grading.

Mid-term. The take home mid-term will consist of two written questions drawn from the first half of class. The exam will be given out on March 3 and must be returned by class time on March 8.

Final paper. A written paper drawn from the major themes of the class (a list will be provided just *after* Spring Recess) will be due on May 12^h at 5pm in the Journalism office in Vilas Hall (or electronically, at the discretion of your section instructor). The paper should be built on themes developed in your posts and notes. You are encouraged to draw from the arguments that you have already developed. The paper for undergraduates will be 7 pages or under. Graduates will write 20 pages or under.

Class participation. Participation in sections constitutes 15% of your grade. This can count for up to a full grade.

Grading

The grading policy for class is as follows.

A: To receive a grade of "A" you must: complete *all* assignments on time; demonstrate a clear understanding of major arguments in blog posts, tests, and paper; build on arguments creatively by demonstrating a knowledge of: 1) relations between arguments across assignments and/or 2) creative application of key arguments and concepts to examples drawn from your own interpretation, including events in the news. You must achieve an average of 93% or above in all assignments.

AB: Generally meet requirements for an A; achieve an average of 88-92%.

B: To receive a grade of "B" you must: complete *all* assignments on time; demonstrate a clear understanding of major arguments in blog posts, tests, and paper. You must achieve an average of 83-87%

BC: Generally meet requirements for a B; achieve an average of 78-82%

C: To receive a grade of "C" you must: complete all assignments; demonstrate that you have actually read assigned material; and achieve an average of 70-77% over all assignments.

D: To receive a D you must achieve an average of 60-69%.

F: If you average below 60% you will receive an F.

Attendance

Attendance in section is not mandatory, but your grade is likely to drop an entire letter if you do not attend regularly (because if you don't attend, you can't participate).

Etiquette

There are some basic rules in the class that I expect everyone to follow. The most important one is to **turn off your cell phones before you come to class**. The first time your phone rings in class, I'll take note. The second time, I'll ask you to leave for the day.

I'm not your computer cop, but this also goes for texting, surfing, IM, and emailing during class. If you sit in class checking your computer it will affect your participation grade up to receiving zero credit.

Plagiarism

You should know at this point in your SJMC careers that plagiarism in journalism is a firing offense in a job. It is in this class as well. Simply, if you present the work or words of someone else as your own, in whole or in part, you will receive an F for the course. This includes sentences or paragraphs in your blog posts, mid-term, or papers.

If you are *at all* unclear what constitutes plagiarism, ask me. If you are so stressed out for personal reasons that you feel tempted to plagiarize to keep up, please don't. Come talk to me. And to be clear, this is not an excuse for plagiarism.

All books are available at the University Bookstore.

Required Books:

Starr, Paul	<i>Creation of the Media</i> (Basic 2004)
Bishop, Bill	<i>The Big Sort</i> (Houghton Mifflin 2008)
Shirkey, Clay	<i>Here Comes Everybody</i> (Penguin 2008)
Baym, Gilbert	<i>From Cronkite to Colbert</i> (Paradigm 2009)
Gladwell, Malcolm	<i>The Tipping Point</i> (Back Bay 2002)
Rosenberg, Scott	<i>Say Everything</i> (Crown 2009)
Schudson, Michael	<i>Discovering the News</i> (Basic 1978)

Recommended:

Booth, Columb, and Williams, *Craft of Research* 3rd Ed. (Chicago 2008)

A reader, for those who wish, is available at:

StudentPrint

3301 Student Services
333 East Campus Mall

Additional Material:

I may ask you to read newspaper or short articles from week to week. They will be posted in Learn@UW.

Reading Schedule:

January 20 Introduction

January 25-27 The Early Public Sphere

January 25 The Public Sphere

Habermas, "The Public Sphere: Encyclopedia" (1964)

Starr, pp. 1-19, 23-46

January 27 The First Amendment

The First Amendment

Starr, *The Creation of the Media*, Introduction, pp. 47-82

February 1-3 Democracy and Association POST ONE

February 1 The First Information Revolution

Starr 83-111

February 3 Tocqueville: Democracy and the Press

Excerpts from Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835/1840)

"Freedom of the Press in the United States," pp. 180-188

"Political Association in the United States," pp. 189-195

"On the Connection between Associations and Newspapers," pp. 517-520

POST on Tocqueville readings; due Thursday at 10am.

February 8-10 Industrial Society and the 19th Century

February 8 Newspapers

Schudson, *Discovering the News*, pp. 12-60

Starr, pp. 113-150.

February 10 The Telegraph

Starr, pp. 153-189

February 15-17 1890-1920

February 15

Schudson, *Discovering the News*, pp. 61-120

February 17 Revolution in Consumption and Mass Market

Gitlin *Media Unlimited*, pp. 12-53

February 22-24 1920-1930 The Modern Public Sphere POST TWO

February 22

Middletown, excerpt

Schudson, *Discovering*, pp. 121-159

February 24

Lippmann, "Public Opinion," excerpt
Dewey, "The Public and its Problems," excerpt, pp. 110-126

POST on Dewey and Lippmann; due Thursday 10am.

March 1-3 Mass Market and Mass Consumption: Radio

March 1 Depression and Radio

Lenthall, *Radio's America*, pp. 53-81, 83-114

March 3

Lenthall, *Radio's America*, pp.143-173

Cantril and Allport, "The Influence of Radio upon Mental and Social Life," pp. 110-115

MIDTERM: Out March 3-Due March 8.

March 8-10 Television and the Reorganization of Social Life

March 8

Baughman, *Republic of Mass Culture*, pp. 9-29, 30-58
Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, pp. 311-342

March 10

Fuller-Seeley, "Learning to Live with Television," pp. 91-110
Lazarsfeld and Katz, "Between Media and Mass," pp. 358-364

March 15-17 From Mass Society to a Networked World

March 15

Bell, "Welcome to Post-Industrial Society"

March 17

Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp. 15-28, 48-64, 216-246

March 22-24 From Bowling to Nicheing POST THREE

March 22

Bishop, *The Big Sort*, pp. 19-57, pp. 81-104

March 24

Bishop, pp. 128-155

Post on Bishop; due Thursday 10am.

SPRING BREAK March 27-April 4

April 5-7 A Networked World POST FOUR

April 5

Gladwell, *Tipping Point*, pp. 3-132

Thursday November 12

Gladwell, pp. 133-215, 253-280.

Post on Gladwell; due Thursday 10am.

April 12-14 Search, Google, and the Long Tail

April 12

Anderson, "The Long Tail," *Wired*,
<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html>

Batelle, *Search*, pp. 1-37, pp. 251-280

April 14

Hindman, *The Myth of Digital Democracy*, pp. 1-19, 38-81, 102-128.

April 19-21 The Blogosphere

April 19 Rosenberg, *Say Everything*, 1-164

April 21 Rosenberg, pp. 165-228, 269-359

April 26-28 Here Comes Everybody POST FIVE

April 26
Shirkey, *Here Comes Everybody*, pp. 1-142

April 28
Shirkey, pp. 143-304

BLOG POST on Shirkey; due Thursday 10 am

May 3-5 The New News

May 3
Baym, *From Cronkite to Colbert*, pp. 1-77

May 5
Baym, pp. 78-176