The University of Oklahoma  
College of Continuing Education  
Advanced Programs – Course Syllabus  

Course Title:  
Mass Communication Perspectives  

Course Number:  
COMM 5343-490  

Course Description:  
This course will provide a comprehensive overview of theoretical perspectives, issues, and approaches in the field of mass communication. The overview will encompass social scientific as well as humanistic and critical/cultural approaches. By understanding these “mass communication perspectives,” you will be better able to formulate research questions, build theoretically sound arguments and connect your work to relevant research in the field. You will also acquire tools for looking more critically at media institutions and media effects.  

Course Dates:  
May 1-August 31, 2012  
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: April 2, 2012  

Site Director:  
This is a three-credit hour online course. Please see your local Site Director or e-mail our online site coordinator at aponline@ou.edu  

Professor Contact Information:  
Course Professor: Patrick C. Meirick  
Mailing Address: University of Oklahoma  
Department of Communication  
610 Elm Avenue, Room 101  
Norman, OK 73019  
Telephone Number: (405) 627-5818 cell  
Fax Number: (405) 325-7625  
E-mail Address: meirick@ou.edu  
Virtual Office Hours: Please contact the professor for this information.  
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail. Students can expect the professor to answer e-mails within one business day (usually sooner). The cell number is best reserved for use if a student has an urgent question or if the professor is traveling. The professor also will be regularly monitoring the Discussions section of the class D2L site.  

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:  
Student materials are available at the Follett/AP Bookstore located in the Oklahoma Memorial Union, 900 Asp Ave., Norman, OK. Orders can be placed online at www.oklahomaunion bkstr.com or by telephone at 866-369-9713 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-5960 (outside the U.S.). E-mail orders may be sent to oklahomaunion@bkstr.com. Representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST on Friday. Summer hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST. Faxed orders may be placed 24 hours a day to 866-223-5607 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-7140 (outside the U.S.).


3. Materials posted on the OU Desire to Learn (D2L) system: Access D2L at [http://learn.ou.edu](http://learn.ou.edu); enter your OU NetID (4+4) and password, and select course to access material. Please contact your local Site Director if you require assistance.

Note: The Follett/AP Bookstore is the Advanced Programs contractual textbook provider. Should text changes become necessary after publication of the course syllabus, Advanced Programs will facilitate text returns/refunds only for texts purchased through the Follett/AP Bookstore.

**OU E-Mail:**
All official correspondence from distance learning instructors will be sent only to students’ ou.edu address.

**Online Learning Resource Center:**
The Online Learning Resource Center of the University of Oklahoma’s College of Arts and Sciences Online Program is here to serve you and assist you with any questions, problems, or concerns you may have. For assistance go to [http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/](http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/) or contact us by telephone at: (405) 325-5854 or Email: casonline@ou.edu

**Course Objectives:**
The main goals of this course are to examine theoretical perspectives and issues on mass communication structures, technologies, contents, audiences, and effects.

**Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates:**

**Participation:**
Grades for participation are based on active and thoughtful contributions to seminar discussions in the Discussions section of D2L.

**Reflection Paper:**
Each student will write two reflection papers for this class. The first paper will be due the first day of class; the second will be due June 22. These short papers (2-3 pages) draw upon the assigned readings. Topics for each paper will be made available on the course website. Late reflection papers will not be accepted.

**Final Exam:**
The final examination will cover relevant concepts and topics from readings and discussion. Questions will be made available on July 13th and will be due July 20th.

**10 – 12 Page Paper:**
Students will choose a mass communication theory to review, analyze and critique. They will need to find at least 12 scholarly sources (e.g., journal articles, books from academic presses) that discuss or utilize the chosen theory. Using those sources and what we learned in class, students should answer the following questions in a 10- to 12-page paper:

- When and how did the theory originate?
- What are the basic tenets of the theory, and what assumptions does it make?
- How (and when) has the theory been applied in research and/or academic work? Discuss some examples of work based on this theory.
- How has the theory changed since it was first formulated?
- What are the strengths of this theory? Its weaknesses? Has it been criticized? Championed?

Due: August 10, 2012. This assignment is worth 35% of course grade.

**Grading:**
This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation (online)</td>
<td>May 1- July 13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Papers (two)</td>
<td>May 25, June 22</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Questions sent to you July 13</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Answers due July 20</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10-12 Page Paper</td>
<td>Aug. 10</td>
<td>35</td>
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</tbody>
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NOTICE: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

**Policy for Late Work:**
Please contact the professor regarding his/her policy for late work.

**Attendance Policy:**
In addition to interaction via Desire2Learn and E-mail contact, students are required to contact the instructor via E-mail or telephone BEFORE the beginning of the course term for an initial briefing. Although physical class meetings are not part of this course, participation in all interactive, learning activities is required.

Student assignments and student/instructor communications will be conducted via Desire2Learn, although students may contact the instructor via telephone, postal mail, e-mail, or fax as needed.

**Incomplete Grade Policy:**
A grade of “I” is not automatically assigned, but rather must be requested by the student by submitting to the instructor a “Petition for and Work to Remove an Incompleted Grade” form. An “I” can never be used in lieu of an “F” nor can an “I” be assigned because of excessive failure to participate in class activities.

**Technical Support Information:**
If you experience technical problems, contact Information Technology by visiting their website at: [http://webapps.ou.edu/it/](http://webapps.ou.edu/it/) or contacting them by telephone at: (405) 325-HELP (4357).
Procedures for Completion of Course Evaluation:

Upon completion of the course students should go to the Advanced Programs Distance Learning webpage and click on the applicable semester link under “Course Evaluations” which will direct them to the evaluation. The evaluation will take approximately five minutes to complete. Completion of the online evaluation is an important tool allowing Advanced Programs to gain information and student feedback for improvement of courses.

Your responses will be kept confidential. They will be reviewed by the department and only supplied to the professor once grades for the course have been submitted.

Important information you should know about online courses:

• To sign on to Desire2Learn (D2L), log in using your 4+4 and your OU network password (note that this is the same 4+4 and password that you use to access your OU email). Once you are logged in, please look for “My Courses,” locate your course and click on it. Remember to check your course site on D2L every day.

• Students enrolled in online courses may be required to take the CAS student orientation in Desire 2 Learn. To take the orientation, sign-on to D2L and then click on “Self Registration” at the top left corner of the page. Information about and instructions for the orientation can be found at http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/public/students/orientation.htm

• If the course is using a course website, you will find a link for the website on the first page of this syllabus. Please click on this link to start your course.

• Course Materials are available at Follett/AP Bookstore. On this syllabus you will find a link to the Follett Bookstore.

• If you need to drop or withdraw from a course, please contact your Site Director. You can drop a course without a penalty up to the add/drop date. You can drop a course after the add/drop date through the first day of class with a penalty. There will be a 25% penalty if you drop 16-29 days before the start of class, 50% penalty if you drop between 15 days before and the start of the class, or 100% penalty if you drop on the first day of class or later.

• After the class has started, you can only withdraw from the course with the professor’s permission; you will not receive a refund for your tuition. You can only drop without a penalty after the add/drop date by providing proper documentation and receiving approval from the Advanced Programs Theater Director. Provide this documentation to your Site Director.
POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Note: Attendance/absences do not apply to online courses. However, participation in all course activities is extremely important to student success in online courses.

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution’s policy regarding “I” (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy.

Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any “I” (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on “financial aid probation.” If the “I” grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student’s Financial Aid may be suspended make the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Honesty

Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities and … you have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the University and is therefore unacceptable and is rigorously proscribed. Academic misconduct includes:

- cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; assisting others in any such act; or attempting to engage in such acts.

All acts of academic misconduct will be reported and adjudicated as prescribed by the student code of the University of Oklahoma. All students should review the “Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity” found at http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity

Accommodation Statement

The College of Continuing Education [Advanced Programs] is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your OU Site Director.

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course.

Copyright

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: http://www.goou.ou.edu/
INSTRUCTOR VITA
Patrick C. Meirick, Ph.D.

Education
- 2002 Ph.D., Mass Communication, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 1998 M.A., Journalism, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- 1989 B.A., English, Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota

Current Positions
- Advanced Programs Professor since 2004
- Associate Professor, Department of Communication, University of Oklahoma

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses
- COMM 5003 Quantitative Research Methods
- COMM 5343 Mass Communication Perspectives
- COMM 5363 Communication and Technology
- COMM 6383 Seminar in Political Communication

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest
- Political Communication
- Mass Media Effects
- Persuasion
- Social Cognition

Representative Publications and Presentations
Representative Honors and Awards Received

- Junior Faculty Summer Fellowship, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Oklahoma, 2003, 2005.
- Casey Dissertation Award, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Minnesota, March 2002.
- Graduate School Fellowship, University of Minnesota, 1998.
- Schumack Journalism Fellowship, Marquette University, 1996.

Major Professional Affiliations

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication