



Syllabus

CMN 141: Media Effects		
MW 2:10 - 4:00 PM WELLMN 26		
Professor Hyunseo Hwang 373 Kerr Hall	E-mail: dihwang@ucdavis.edu	Office hour: Thur 10:00 – 12:00

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, March 21 at 6:00 pm (WELLMN 26)

**Prerequisite: course 101, 102 (or equivalent course in research methods), and 140.
The prerequisite is a requirement that must be met before you take this course!**

Course Description:

This course examines the use and effects of mass communication for individuals and societies. It will cover such questions as who is affected, what effects occur and how much, what different media content is involved, and what situations make effects more or less likely. The focus will be on learning how to think about and understand mass communication use and effects, rather than on memorizing a catalogue of facts.

This is a social science course. That is, almost all we know about effects and how they do or do not occur comes from research using content analyses, surveys, and experiments. Thus, the student must expect to deal with the results of studies and the uncertainties researchers experience in interpreting those results. This does not require any statistical expertise, but can involve readings and lectures displaying tables and figures from studies.

Texts:

Glenn G. Sparks. (2009). Media Effects Research: A Basic Overview (3rd edition). Thomson/Wadsworth.

ISBN-10: **049556785X** | ISBN-13: **978-0495567851**

The additional required readings are available on the course web site.

Lectures will move quickly and will assume knowledge of readings assigned for that day. Lectures and readings will complement each other, rather than being redundant, so you will need to do the readings regularly. The amount of reading is moderate, but you will often need to read carefully and analytically - going for comprehension and explanation rather than memorization of detail.

Exams and Grading:

Your grade will be determined by your scores on two mid-terms and a final exam (50 points for each exam). Test questions will cover material presented in lecture and in the readings, including supplemental readings. Although your grade will not be based on your attendance in class, missing class means missing information that will be on the tests (There will be some attendance questions for each exam). Tests will follow a multiple-choice and true-false format, but will emphasize *synthesis and application* of course material, not just recognition of definitions or details. You are required to bring a blank Scan-tron form to class each day an exam is scheduled. The final exam will only be comprehensive in that a few 'big picture' questions will be included, and the theories that have been stressed throughout the quarter will be included.

If you miss a test for any reason other than a documented medical emergency, you will not be allowed to make it up. In cases of anticipated university-excused absences, arrangements to make up a test should be made well in advance, and appropriate documentation provided. **The final exam** will be administered at the scheduled time. This is the only time that you will be able to take the final exam.

In keeping with department and college policy, the average grade given in this course will be roughly B-/C+. A curve will be applied to your total score (summed score from three exams). The following breakdown provides a guideline for the assignment of final grades.

A: Top 15th percentile

B: 16th – 50th percentile

C: 51st – 90th percentile

D: 91st – 95th percentile

F: Bottom 5th percentile

Extra Credits for Research Participation

It is usually possible to earn extra credits in this course by participation in research projects. Students who take advantage of this option will receive one point for each participation. Credit is available only once per studies, i.e., students cannot participate in the same study twice and receive credit both times. Extra credits from participation in research projects will be added after the curve has been applied. The opportunities for extra credit points will be announced via class email and the course web site.

After each midterm, scores will be posted. **The best indicator of your performance is how you're doing relative to other students in the class.** Extra credit, if any, will be added after the curve has been applied.

Frequently asked questions

- *What do I do if I miss a class?* If you miss, it is your responsibility to copy notes from

one of your peers. Due to time constraints and the number of students in this course, I cannot repeat lectures in person or by email for students who have missed a class meeting.

- Will the test cover mostly the lecture, or mostly the readings? Yes. Learn both.
- Can I drop a test or do some extra credit if I get a bad grade? There are no dropped tests in this course. **There is no 'extra' extra-credit. Also, no extra-credit will be allowed after the final regular day of classes (no last-minute extra-credit).**
- Do we have to memorize numbers, dates, and names? Not too many—instead of dates, learn general time frames; instead of the names of each researcher, learn their methods, theories, and results.

Schedule of Lectures & Exams:

Jan 9	Introduction to the Course	
Jan 11	Nature and History of Mass Communication Theory I	Ch. 1 & Ch. 2
Jan 16	<i>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i>	
Jan 18	Nature and History of Mass Communication Theory II	Ch. 3
Jan 23	Uses and Gratifications	Ch. 4, *Dimmick, J., Kline, L. (2000)
Jan 25	Effects of Media Violence	Ch. 5, *Chia et al., 2004
Jan 30	Social Cognitive Theory	*Bryant, Jennings & Thom (2002) - Ch. 5
Feb 1	1st Midterm	
Feb 6	Sexual Content in the Media	Ch.6
Feb 8	Cultivation	Textbook (Glenn G. Sparks)
Feb 13	Effects of Media Stereotypes	Ch. 10
Feb 15	Media & Emotions	Ch. 7
Feb 20	<i>Presidents' Day</i>	
Feb 22	Media & Cognition	No required readings
Feb 27	2nd exam	
Feb 29	Media & Persuasion	Ch. 8
Mar 5	Advertising Effects	*Bryant, Jennings & Thom (2002) - Ch. 6
Mar 7	Media & Health	No required readings
Mar 12	New media technologies	Ch. 11
Mar 14	The effects of News	Ch. 9
Mar 19	<i>Assorted topic</i>	No required readings
Mar 21	Final Exam	

* The additional required readings are available on the course web site.

