UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES

B.A IN COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES

FIRST SEMESTER 2024/2024

COMM 351: Mass Communication Theory

Lecturers: Mr Bismark Odum -Sackey

Email: bsodum@uew.edu.gh

Phone: 0243565606, 0555955055 (BO-S),

Offfice Hours: Wednesdays 8:00 am-10:00am

Class Mantra.

"*We are change makers. We are capable and have a strong belief in our capabilities. We believe learning never ends therefore we will humble ourselves to acquire knowledge. With respect, love, dedication, honesty, gratitude and the help of Otumfoɔ Nyankopɔn, we shall make the world a better place for ourselves, the people around us and the generations after us. God be our helper"*

Class Affirmation

I am smart, I am capable, I am creative, I am strong and confident that I can do everything. I am rich, I am worthy and successful in everything I do.

Recitals

The above Mantra and Affirmation shall be recited before and after every lesson.

Course Description

This course will examine the evolution of mass communication theory, tracing its development from its inception as a distinct field of study to its exploration of major trends, issues, and debates. It will also address the current application of earlier paradigms and their corresponding theories, culminating in an analysis of the emergence of new theoretical frameworks. A central focus of the course will be on integrating contemporary mass communication theory with both individual and organizational online presences. Additionally, the course will explore the reciprocal relationship between digital platforms and the future of theoretical research. From a practical standpoint,

students will be equipped to apply these theories to the analysis and interpretation of media operations and content.

Course Objective

At the end of the semester, students will be able to

1. Explain and distinguishes between Mass Media and Mass Communication
2. Develop a good appreciation of Communication and Media theories
3. Gain a cognitive understanding of major mass media theories
4. Demonstrate practical application of those theories to media operations
5. Demonstrate mastery of media theories and be able to compare, contrast, and critique current theories and their potential.

Course Content

Lesson 1: Introduction to Mass Communication Theory

What is Media?

What is Mass Media?

What is Mass communication?

Processes of Mass Communication

Media and Society

Issues and Debate in the Media

Understanding Theory

Lesson 2: Understanding and Evaluating Mass Communication Theory

Science and Human Behavior

Positivist Theory

Hermeneutic Theory

Critical Theory

Normative Theory

Lesson 3: Four Era of Mass Communication Theory

The era of Mass Society and Mass Culture

Emergence of the Limited Effect Limited–Effect Perspective

Ferment in the Field

Emergence of Meaning-Making Perspective on Media

Lesson 4: Mass Society and Modernity: Early Media Theory

The rise of yellow journalism

Cycles of Mass Media Development and decline

Assumptions of Mass Society Theory

Lesson 5: The Rise of Media Theory in the Age of Propaganda

The origin of propaganda

Behaviorism

Freudianism

Propaganda and Public Opinion

Libertarianism Reborn

Lesson 6: Normative Theories of Mass Communication

Origin of Normative Theories of Media

The Origin of Libertarian Thought

Government Regulation of Media

Professionalization of Journalism

Social Responsibility Theory of the Press

The Public Interest in the Internet Era

Lesson 7: From Limited-Effect to Critical Cultural Theories: Ferment in the field

The Development of Limited Effect Theory

The two-step flow of information and influence

Limitations in the Lazarsfeld Approach

Limited Effect Theory

From Propaganda to Attitude Change Theory

Focus of Media Effect

The Selective Processes

Lesson 8: The Production Process

The censorship of money

Theories of Media Ownership and Control

Theories of Media Organization and Media Work

Lesson 9: Media Content

Telling it as it is

Questions of Media Representation

Theories of Ideology and Meaning

Lesson 10: Theories of Media effects and audiences

Power and Influence of Media

Audience and Reception Theory

Lesson 11: Media Change and Media Theory

Living in the Global Village

New Media Theories

Reading Materials

Lesson one

Baran, S. J., & Davis, D. K. (2010). *Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment and future* (6th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.

Chapter 1: p.5, 11, 17,

Williams, K. (2003). *Understanding Media Theory* . London: Hodder Arnold.

Chapter 1

Lesson Two

Baran, S. J., & Davis, D. K. (2010). *Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment and future* (6th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.

Chapter 1: p. 12-17

Lesson 3

Baran, S. J., & Davis, D. K. (2010). *Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment and future* (6th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.

Chapter 2: p. 25-40

Lesson 4

Baran, S. J., & Davis, D. K. (2010). *Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment and future* (6th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.

Chapter 3: p.46-71

Lesson 5

Baran, S. J., & Davis, D. K. (2010). *Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment and future* (6th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.

Chapter 4: p.74-95

Lesson 6

Baran, S. J., & Davis, D. K. (2010). *Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment and future* (6th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.

Chapter 5: p.99-130

Lesson 7

Baran, S. J., & Davis, D. K. (2010). *Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment and future* (6th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.

Chapter 6: p.135-154

Lesson 8

Williams, K. (2003). *Understanding Media Theory* . London: Hodder Arnold.

Section 2: p.73-96

Lesson 9

Williams, K. (2003). *Understanding Media Theory* . London: Hodder Arnold.

Section 3: p.121-145

Lesson 10

Williams, K. (2003). *Understanding Media Theory* . London: Hodder Arnold.

Section 4; p.165-190

Lesson 11

Williams, K. (2003). *Understanding Media Theory* . London: Hodder Arnold.

Section 5: p. 211-213

Expectations and Assignments

This is a 300-level course, and as such, it is expected to reflect higher-level cognitive skills, critical thinking, writing, and overall academic performance. The course is rigorous, with a strong emphasis on reading, writing, and critical analysis. It is designed to sharpen your abilities in these areas.

By the end of the course, students are expected to complete at least five individual assignments, as well as participate in a minimum of three group assignments and/or presentations. Additionally, students will submit a self-reflection paper, titled *My Take*, every four weeks.

Each assignment, presentation, or paper will be accompanied by detailed instructions on how to complete and submit them. All assignments and papers must be double-spaced, word-processed, or at least typed. Presentations should be in PowerPoint format.

My Take

At the end of every four lessons, students are required to submit a two- to three-page paper titled *My Take*. This paper should focus solely on in-class lectures, readings, activities, and assignments, and does not require references to external readings. The paper should be structured as a position paper, enabling students to demonstrate their understanding of the material and make personal connections to their own lives and work. Suggested questions for consideration include:

- What is my understanding of the theories and concepts discussed during this period?
- How are these lessons personally meaningful to me?
- In what ways are mass communication theories and paradigms relevant to my life?
- What new knowledge have I gained, and how can I relate it to my own experiences?

Submission of Assignments

On the day assignments are due, all students must sign the assignment submission form to confirm the submission of both individual and group assignments. If a group member is absent and unable to sign the form for their group project, that student will not receive a grade for the assignment.

The best four out of all completed assignments and papers will be recorded and counted toward your final grade for the course.

There will also be a mandatory mid-semester exam, conducted midway through the semester. The grade for the mid-semester exam will contribute to your overall semester grade. Students who do not participate in the mid-semester exam will not be permitted to take the final exam.

Course Grading	**1000**
Attendance	200
Assignments	150
My Take	150
Mid-semester	100
Final Exam	400

Attendance (20%)

Attendance is expected, and it is your responsibility to be present for each class. Roll will be taken within the first 15 minutes of class. If you arrive after this period, you may still attend the class, but you will be marked absent, which will affect your attendance grade. Unexcused absences will

result in a deduction of marks. If you must be absent for a valid reason, you are required to contact the lecturer in advance, explain the situation, and seek approval for your absence.

Course Rules

1. Students are ultimately responsible for their own work in this class. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to catch up on the material covered and obtain any handouts or notes from your peers.
2. If you have any questions regarding the readings or assignments, it is your responsibility to seek clarification from one of the instructors.
3. It is essential that you stay current with the readings and assignments and come to class prepared to engage actively, respectfully, and thoughtfully in discussions.

Cell Phone Policy
All cell phones must be kept in either the "off" or "silent" mode during class.