Instructor: James E. Mueller, Ph.D., associate professor
Office: 116 GAB
Phone: 940-565-2278
E-mail: jmueller@unt.edu
Office Hours: 9:30-10:30 a.m. and noon-1 p.m. Monday and Wednesday and by appointment.

Required Texts:


Note: A student of this institution is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from a university-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

You will be required to read five books selected by you with the instructor’s approval. You are not required to buy these books but instead may borrow them from a library. You will need to use either the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* or *The Chicago Manual of Style* to prepare your book reports.

Course Description and Objectives:

This course involves the study of leading bibliographical tools in mass communication, readings of biographies and analysis of the field. The chief aim of the course is becoming acquainted with a large number of the books related to mass communication. The course goals are achieved largely through book reports that students write and present to the class.

After completing the course, you should be able to:

- Describe a variety of important books in the study of mass communication.
- Critically evaluate professional and academic works about mass communication.
- Create presentations of academic research.
- Create a bibliography for a mass communication research project.
- Use academic citation methods.
Grading:

Your grade will be determined by performance on all activities. All graded activities will be given a point value, and the following grading scale will apply:

- 90-100 percent of total points possible: A
- 80-89 percent: B
- 70-79 percent: C
- 60-69 percent: D
- Less than 60 percent: F

Approximate Breakdown of Points:

I reserve the right to adjust our points and assignments as the semester progresses if the need should arise. Every effort will be made, however, to adhere to the following:

- 6 reports: 100 points each
- Final: 100 points

Total possible: 700 points

The final will be short answer/essay about the book reports and class discussion.

If a student demonstrates exceptional improvement and effort during the semester, I will consider raising a borderline grade to the next highest level. This decision will be based in large part on your attendance and participation in class discussion. For classes that are held online, students will be considered absent if they do not sign in and participate in the discussion.

**Students who have more than one unexcused absence will have their semester grade lowered by one letter grade.**

Course policies:

You are expected to attend every class and turn in assignments at the beginning of class. Students who participate online may turn in their assignments via email.

Two letter grades will be deducted from unexcused late assignments. Late assignments will not be accepted after 10 a.m. the Wednesday immediately following the due date. Repeated late assignments will result in failing the class.

An excused absence and making up missed work for full credit will only be allowed in the rare case of documented illness or family emergency. Documentation for an illness is a note from a doctor or nurse that states explicitly that the student was too ill to attend class. Documentation for a family emergency could be a note from a relative explaining the emergency and should include a phone number so the instructor can verify the note. **You are responsible for turning in such documentation during the class period within one week of the absence(s). You will not be allowed to make up an assignment if you miss this deadline.**

Cheating, including but not limited to plagiarism, copying from another student’s exam or using a book that you have read for another class, will not be tolerated. See the Journalism Department Honor Code for more detail on these standards. The minimum punishment in this class for such cheating will be an F for the assignment in which the offense occurred, but the instructor may assign an F for the course depending upon the nature of the offense. The offense may also be reported to the department administration for possible further disciplinary action.
Students who disrupt the class by talking, entering the classroom late, using cell phones, and/or using laptops for games or surfing may be asked to leave. The instructor may drop students who repeatedly disrupt the class with these types of behaviors.

The Journalism Department complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodation for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a qualifying disability as defined in the ADA and would like to request accommodation, please see the instructor by the 12th class day.

Email

I will make every effort to respond within 24 hours to student email sent to me Monday through Friday. But because of the number of students I have in my undergraduate class and my other commitments for the university, I will not always be able to answer your email within that time frame. You should therefore avoid asking me important questions at the last minute.

Your email subject line should include “Readings.” Your email should address me as Dr. Mueller, and you should include your full name. You should use the email address at the top of the syllabus.

Reports

Each book or article you read for this class must be approved by the instructor, and it must not be a book or article that you read for another college class. Two students may not do reports on the same book or article.

Students will choose books from the general categories listed on the syllabus calendar. Students should first consult the readings list for this class when they choose books. However, in order to give students more freedom to develop their study program, I will not restrict the class to this list. Students who want to use a book that is not on the list must get permission from the instructor. With the instructor’s permission, students may also change books or trade topic categories with another student up to one week before the report is due.

The reports must be at least three pages double-spaced (excluding notes) but no longer than five pages (excluding notes). You may use either APA or Chicago in citing sources. Each report should include at least three sources, including the book or article you are reviewing. Possible sources include book reviews, author biographies, surveys of the field, and journal and magazine articles about the topic the book addresses.

Students must present their reports to the class on the date the reports are due. The reports should last about 12 minutes, and we will allow about four minutes for questions. The reports should include a Power Point slide show, a handout, or an outline on the whiteboard. Students are encouraged to use other creative ways—in addition to the outlines—of presenting the material such as photographs, video or audio. Students should exercise common sense and avoid the use of explicit videos or photographs that would be offensive to others.

The reports should be written in a narrative form, not an outline. Be sure to properly cite references to the book itself and any other sources you use.

The narrative should include:

- An introduction explaining what the book is about.
- A description of the author, and an evaluation of the author’s qualifications to write the book.
- An evaluation of the author’s research methods, sources of information, and style of writing.
- If possible, a summary of what another reviewer wrote about the book.
- At least one direct quote from the book.
- A conclusion stating your analysis of the value of the book, including whether you would recommend it.

The reports will be graded based on the written and oral component. Students will lose points for not following the above directions. Students will also lose points for grammar, spelling and punctuation errors.
Tentative Course Calendar

Every effort will be made to adhere to the following schedule. However, I reserve the right to change the schedule should the need arise.

Week beginning:

Aug. 31 Introduction.

Sept. 7 Monday, no class.

Sept. 14 Report 1—Politics.

Sept. 21 Report 1—History/biography.

Sept. 28 Report 2—Theory

Oct. 5 Report 2—Ethics.


Nov. 2 Report 4—Professional Practices.

Nov. 9 Report 5—Business/Management.

Nov. 16 Report 5—Advertising/Public Relations.


Nov. 30 Report 6—Diversity.

Dec. 7 Review and Summary.

The final exam will be held 6:30-9:20 p.m. Monday, Dec. 14, in this classroom.
Statement of Student Learning Outcomes, UNT Journalism

Since 1969, the UNT Department of Journalism has been accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. This national accreditation also extends to the Mayborn Graduate School of Journalism, the only accredited professional master’s program in Texas. About one-fourth of all journalism and mass communication programs in the United States are accredited by ACEJMC. National accreditation enhances your education here, because it certifies that the department and graduate school adhere to many standards established by the council. Among these standards are student learning outcomes, covered by journalism courses in all sequences.

This course, JOUR 5050, will help to meet the student learning outcomes that have been checked by your professor, Dr. James E. Mueller.

Each graduate must:

- Understand and apply First Amendment principles and the law appropriate to professional practices.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications.
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
- Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

August 23, 2005