

**COMM 1500-091: Media and Society**  
 University of Utah, Spring 2025, 3 Credits  
 Online via Canvas

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 Office Hours: By appointment

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### Course Description

Most people take it for granted that media are an important part of society and, consequently, of their own lives. Yet few understand the media environment broadly—its history and practices, the policies that guide it, the nature of its audiences/effects, and so on. COMM 1500 introduces students to these aspects of media and society (primarily, though not exclusively, in the U.S. context). This course fulfills the Intellectual Explorations–Humanities (HF) requirement.

### Course Outcomes & Objectives

- Gain knowledge about the structural forces at work shaping major media in the U.S., and the implications of these forces for media content
- Think critically and creatively about the impact of media on individuals and society, and about the ethical and productive use of media
- Draw connections between course concepts and your own engagement with media, thereby gaining greater media/information literacy

### Required Texts

No textbook is required for this course; readings will be made available on Canvas as needed.

### Course Requirements & Grading

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>% of Final Course Grade</i>
Introductory Survey	5% (graded complete/incomplete)
Module 1 Exam	20% (graded on a 100% scale)
Module 2 Exam	20% (graded on a 100% scale)
Module 3 Exam	20% (graded on a 100% scale)
Module 1 Paper	10% (graded complete/incomplete)
Module 2 Paper	10% (graded complete/incomplete)
Module 3 Paper	10% (graded complete/incomplete)
Concluding Survey	5% (graded complete/incomplete)

Course grades will be determined by the (weighted) average of the introductory survey, three exams, three (700–1,000 word) papers, and concluding survey, according to the following scale:

A 93 or above	B 83 – 86	C 73 – 76	D 63 – 66
A- 90 – 92	B- 80 – 82	C- 70 – 72	D- 60 – 62
B+ 87 – 89	C+ 77 – 79	D+ 67 – 69	E 59 or below

Please note that grades are not curved or otherwise adjusted at the aggregate level. However, students who score lower than 50% on an exam will be assigned a grade of 50%, so that one low score does not too severely jeopardize their chance of passing the course. However, cheating or failing to take an exam will result in a score of 0%.

### **Adding the Course**

In most cases, the automated waitlist is used to add students to this course. In cases where that is not possible, students can request a permission code from me during the first week of class; I will provide one if circumstances allow. I do not add students after the first week of class.

### **Community and Belonging**

This course strives to well serve students from all backgrounds—an approach that enriches the educational experience of the entire university community. Accordingly, I will work to present materials that are respectful of students’ varied experiences and identities along the lines of, for example, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, age, religion, and socioeconomic status. Any suggestions you have along these lines are always welcome.

### **Student Wellness**

Your personal health and wellness are essential to your success as a student. Personal concerns like stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, or cross-cultural differences can interfere with a student’s ability to succeed and thrive in this course and at the University of Utah. For helpful resources to manage your personal wellness and counseling options, contact: [University Counseling Center](#) (801-581-6826); [Center for Campus Wellness](#) (801-581-7776). Additionally, the [Basic Needs Collective](#) is a coordinated resource referral hub. They educate about and connect students to campus and community resources to help them meet their basic needs. As a central location for resource referrals related to food, housing, health insurance, managing finances, legal services, mental health, etc., any student experiencing difficulties with basic needs is encouraged to contact them.

### **Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities.

All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the [Center for Disability & Access](#) (CDA). CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. Prior notice is appreciated. To read the

full accommodations policy for the University of Utah, please see Section Q of the Instruction & Evaluation regulations.

In compliance with ADA requirements, some students may need to record course content. Any recordings of course content are for personal use only, should not be shared, and should never be made publicly available. In addition, recordings must be destroyed at the conclusion of the course.

If you will need accommodations in this class, or for more information about what support they provide, contact:

Center for Disability & Access

801-581-5020

[disability.utah.edu](http://disability.utah.edu)

65 Student Services Building

201 S 1460 E

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

### **Safety at the U**

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more safety information and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [safeu.utah.edu](http://safeu.utah.edu).

To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, contact:

Campus Police & Department of Public Safety

801-585-COPS (801-585-2677)

[dps.utah.edu](http://dps.utah.edu)

1735 E. S. Campus Dr.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

### **Addressing Sexual Misconduct**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status, or genetic information.

If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to university officials:

Title IX Coordinator & Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

801-581-8365  
[oeo.utah.edu](http://oeo.utah.edu)  
 135 Park Building  
 201 Presidents' Cir.  
 Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Office of the Dean of Students

801-581-7066  
[deanofstudents.utah.edu](http://deanofstudents.utah.edu)  
 270 Union Building  
 200 S. Central Campus Dr.  
 Salt Lake City, UT 84112

To file a police report, contact:

Campus Police & Department of Public Safety

801-585-COPS (801-585-2677)  
[dps.utah.edu](http://dps.utah.edu)  
 1735 E. S. Campus Dr.  
 Salt Lake City, UT 84112

If you do not feel comfortable reporting to authorities, the U's Victim-Survivor Advocates provide free, confidential, and trauma-informed support services to students, faculty, and staff who have experienced interpersonal violence.

To privately explore options and resources available to you with an advocate, contact:

Center for Campus Wellness

801-581-7776  
[wellness.utah.edu](http://wellness.utah.edu)  
 350 Student Services Building  
 201 S. 1460 E.  
 Salt Lake City, UT 84112

### **Academic Misconduct**

It is expected that students comply with University of Utah policies regarding academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which they are preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for their profession/discipline may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah's Student Code: Policy 6-410: Student Academic Performance, Academic Conduct, and Professional and Ethical Conduct.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, and/or failure in the course. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code:

*“...Includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one’s work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct.”*

For details on plagiarism and other important course conduct issues, see the U’s Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

**Course Calendar**

*This schedule is tentative. Any changes will be announced on Canvas.*

<b>Course Introduction (Jan. 6 – Jan. 15)</b>	
During this portion of the class you should familiarize yourself with this syllabus and the Canvas course, watch the welcome video and read the FAQs on Canvas, and let Prof. Coe know if you have any questions. Once you have done those things you should complete the first assignment (the introductory survey).	
<i>*Submit the introductory survey by 11:59pm on Wednesday, Jan. 15*</i>	
<b>Module 1: Structures &amp; Influences (Jan. 16 – Feb. 12)</b>	
Lecture 1.1	Media and the Public Good
Lecture 1.2	Media Literacy
Lecture 1.3	Economics
Lecture 1.4	Ownership
Lecture 1.5	Content Regulation
Lecture 1.6	Privacy and Surveillance
Lecture 1.7	Artificial Intelligence
Lecture 1.8	Ethics
<i>*Submit both the exam and the paper for this module by 11:59pm on Wednesday, Feb. 12*</i>	
<b>Module 2: Usage &amp; Effects (Feb. 13 – Mar. 19)</b>	
Please note that there is no expectation of course activity during Spring Break (Mar. 9 – Mar. 16), which is why Module 2 runs one week longer than Modules 1 and 3.	
Lecture 2.1	Usage and Audiences
Lecture 2.2	Networks and Activism
Lecture 2.3	Selection and Processing
Lecture 2.4	Researching Media Effects
Lecture 2.5	Framing
Lecture 2.6	Priming
Lecture 2.7	Propaganda
Lecture 2.8	Democracy
<i>*Submit both the exam and the paper for this module by 11:59pm on Wednesday, Mar. 19*</i>	

<b>Module 3: Content &amp; Contexts (Mar. 20 – Apr. 16)</b>	
Lecture 3.1	Journalism
Lecture 3.2	Advertising
Lecture 3.3	Violence
Lecture 3.4	Sex
Lecture 3.5	Health
Lecture 3.6	Sports
Lecture 3.7	Fandom
Lecture 3.8	Incivility
<i>*Submit both the exam and the paper for this module by 11:59pm on Wednesday, Apr. 16*</i>	
<b>Course Conclusion (Apr. 17 – Apr. 22)</b>	
During this portion of the class you should complete the final assignment (the concluding survey). Note it is due on a Tuesday rather than a Wednesday because that Wednesday is Reading Day.	
<i>*Submit the concluding survey by 11:59pm on Tuesday, Apr. 22*</i>	

*Please note that your continued enrollment in this course constitutes an agreement to abide by the policies and procedures explained in this syllabus.*