

Media and Social Justice

Syllabus

HUMN 4390 / COMM 4350

Instructor: John De Frank - [profile](#)

Conference hours: TR 3:00– 4:00 PM Mountain Time or by appointment

Students may request a phone conference, IM dialog, or online video conference if they wish.

Office Phone: 747-5835

Blackboard support: 747-4357

Email: jdefrank@utep.edu

Humanities Website: utep.edu/liberalarts/humanities

Course description: This course counts as a Humanities or Communication credit and will explore through the use of media the different social justice issues that are current in the news during the semester. The course will analyze through written and video stories the similarities and differences through articles and video stories between mainstream media and alternative media as well as the different angles to a story told by different news agencies. Students will gain understanding of different social justice issues by viewing documentaries, articles for an in depth look at selected social justice topics. Students are expected to participate in discussion Forum and the post for each issue on the social justice issues and how they are reported on by the media and how our society is comprehending and acting on these issues. Students will produce multimedia content to showcase, educate and inform others of these topics explored in class as well as assessed by quiz over the materials cover over the period of the course.

Course Objectives:

Students will gain an understanding of current global issues dealing with social injustices and how governments, organizations, individuals, and other groups are addressing the matters.

Students will learn to research and decipher news and its accreditation and accountability.

Students will understand trends in how issues are covered by the media and their angle on a story.

Students will engage in discussion of ideas and actions in how to address these issues and recommend solutions or methods of change through critical thinking and shared dialog.

Students through materials, readings, videos, and discussions will learn about the history, current strategies, facts, laws, and statistics on these global issues and how they impact us on a local level.

Through the process of their assignments and course project, students will learn and utilize different software and online tools to develop multimedia stories on a particular social justice subject.

Course readings/videos: This course will consist of required readings in which you are responsible for reading on your own time as well as other required research pertaining to your assignments and projects. Some readings & videos will be subject to change but an email notice will be given.

Readings will consist of web links and will be posted in the “weekly folders” section on Blackboard by specific week.

****The Media & Social Justice syllabus in terms of schedule, dates, readings and video are subject to change upon timely notice.***

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, not doing one’s own work, plagiarism, and unacceptable collusion. Not doing one’s own work may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as one's own. And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

Academic dishonesty is an assault upon the basic integrity and meaning of a University. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University's educational and research roles and cheapen the learning experience not only for the perpetrators but also for the entire community. It is expected that UTEP students will

Understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts.

ADA statement

As per Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, if a student needs an accommodation then the Office of Disabled Student Services located at UTEP need to be contacted. If you have a condition, which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to CASS. Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) in order to meet any accommodations the student may need.

Monday thru Friday 8:00a.m.-5:00p.m.
Phone:(915) 747-5148
Union Building East Room 106
cass@utep.edu

Technology Checklist

As you prepare to take an online course at UTEP, we want to share with you some basic information about technology to make this a successful experience. Having your computer requirements checked and all software up to date is essential to access course content. Please take some time to read through this page and ensure you have the information you need to get successfully started.

Supported Browsers

For a PC: FireFox, Internet Explorer (Do NOT use IE7), and Chrome

For a Mac: Safari, Firefox, and Chrome

Browser performance hints include:

Clear browser cache

Allow pop-ups

Check Your Java

1. Go to <http://java.com>
2. Click on "Do I Have Java?"

3. Click on "Verify Java Version."

4. Update Java if needed.

In addition to having your web browser tested. You may also need additional browser plug-ins to view some content that your instructor may share on the learning management system.

Common plug-ins include:

Adobe Reader, Flash Player, Windows Media Player, QuickTime

Additional Software

When creating documents, slide presentations, spreadsheets, etc., you must use Microsoft Office or a compatible program (see 10 Free MS Word Alternatives). The UTEP Technology Support Services (3rd floor, UTEP Library) can also provide you with any applications, compatibility packs, patches, and updates you may need.

Statement of (N)etiquette

When communicating electronically, many of the feelings or impressions that are transmitted via body language in face-to-face communications are lost. Consequently, interpreting emotions and innuendos is much more difficult. Only what is written, or drawn, carries the message. Often, excitement can be misinterpreted as anger or insult. It is important that we all keep this in mind as we communicate. Words in print may seem harmless, but they could emotionally injure us when working at a distance. Hence, it is vitally important that we are conscious of how we communicate while working at a distance.

For example, avoid the use of caps in your electronic messages, as wording in caps comes across as shouting. The standard practice ("Netiquette") for participation in networked discussion requires that all participation be focused on the topic at hand, not become personalized, and be substantive in nature. (Translation: you may certainly disagree with others, but you must do so respectfully; you may express strong beliefs or emotions, but you may not get so carried away that you lose all perspective on the course itself.)

Please observe the following:

- You are required to check the Blackboard course shell daily for messages, updates and assignments.

- Respect and courtesy must be provided to fellow classmates and the instructor at all times, in all contexts. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- Be professional and careful in what you say about others.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address and focus on the ideas, not the person who posted them.
- Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications your joke may be viewed as criticism.

Online Communication Expectations and Discussion Board Tips

Communication Expectations

Learning online is not a spectator sport. It is everyone's responsibility to participate as fully as they can so everyone can get the most from the experience. Here are some simple tips to follow to ensure your participation and engagement in the learning process:

Ask questions: If you don't know the answer, someone else will. The discussion board is the area for asking questions related to content OR any problems, related to the class, you are having. Make sure that you have clearly indicated the subject of your message.

Reach out to others: Offer a fact, article, link or other item that can help others learn something you can share.

Be appropriate: The online classroom is not the place for insulting or insensitive comments, attacks, or venting. Inappropriate behavior will usually subject to disciplinary action, as well.

Be diplomatic: When sending messages on emotionally charged topics, make sure you write the message and then walk away for at least an hour before rereading the message and then sending it. Re-reading emotionally charged messages ensures that they are constructive instead of destructive. Think of the person at the other end.

Stay focused: Stay on topic to increase the efficiency of your learning.

Discussion Board Tips

We use an online discussion forum in our class. It is expected for you to discuss, demonstrate, and connect your understanding of the assigned readings and media. Questions will be provided to focus your attention on the important elements of each module. Discussion board postings are NOT a summary of course materials, debates, or your opinion. They are critical analysis and academic discussions among students. Your

professor may participate with replies to some, but not all, of your postings because it is their job to facilitate the conversation as for the whole class, not just individuals.

Keep your messages concise and clearly written. Most ideas can be stated in a couple of paragraphs, although sometimes a longer message may be needed to develop your thoughts adequately. Keep in mind that people are more apt to read and digest shorter messages than long ones.

Be respectful of other's ideas, opinions, and beliefs. It's fine to disagree with someone, but please respect their right to think differently.

Avoid posting simple two or three word statements such as "I agree" or "Good point." If you think someone has made an especially strong point and you want to say so, and then explain why by adding a few sentences describing your response or adding to the original point.

COURSE WORK & GRADING

Students Responsibility for Assignments: As part of their grade, students are required to complete readings, conduct research, participate in online discussions posts or blogs, and submit on time.

There are also two assignments in which instructions will be posted in the weekly folder section of Blackboard and sent via email announcement when assignment is issued.

Course Readings & Materials: All readings will be made available on Blackboard in the weekly folders.

Grade percentage breakdown:

Semester Project Part 1 = 10 points

Semester Project Part 2 = 10 points

Quiz points: 5 X 10 points each = 50 points

2 Assignments = 10 points (5 points per assignment)

Discussion participation = 7 Discussion Boards (each post worth 3 points except the Intro post which is worth 2 points) = 20 points

Total percentage earned: 100 points

QUIZZES

5 Quizzes (50% of grade): There will be five quizzes (each 10% of the grade) on readings, videos, films and online lectures, materials and discussions provided by the instructor. Quiz dates are marked on the calendar and in the syllabus. Quizzes will be posted on Thursdays (set dates), at 6:00 AM and will close on Friday at 6:00 AM (with the exception of week 13, for Thanksgiving, the quiz will be on Wednesday). You will have 24 hours to start the quiz. Once you start the quiz you will have 30 minutes to complete the quiz before it closes. Quizzes are multiple choice, T or F and one comprehensive question. The quizzes are open-resource so you can use the materials assigned to review during the quiz.

There are NO make-up quizzes: My only concern is this class, not your personal life, job schedule or other classes, therefore there will be no make-up quizzes. You have the dates ahead of time and you should plan accordingly.

DISCUSSION and BLOG PARTICIPATION

Participation/Discussion Posts (20% of grade): Participation will be based on student's ability to partake in online discussions by offering insight on the subject matter including research information, asking questions, reiterating or disputing another student's view with sufficient backing and sourcing. Participation (posts) will be monitored every week by instructor. Students must post once and reply to two other students on each assign discussion post. Participation DOES NOT include 'yes' or 'no' answers or repetition of another student's POV or statement. Each Discussion Post will have a minimum word count with no maximum and you may post more than once but you are required to post once as well as two replies. Each reply must be to a different student's post of your choice.

ASSIGNMENTS

2 Assignments (5% of grade): Students will work on 2 assignments. These are individual assignments.

SEMESTER PROJECT Part 1 & 2

Project Parts 1 & 2 (10% of grade each): Student will work on a multimedia project using web-based tools provided by the instructor. Instruction will be posted on Blackboard at the time the project is assigned.

Optional credit

Non-Profit Volunteer Extra Credit Assignment (Optional): A student may replace a low grade by volunteering at a local, not for profit organization that is 501 c3 certified for five hours to receive 5 points. Student must submit organization name for instructor's approval before contacting the organization for volunteer time. If approved, student must submit organization's contact person with ph # and email to verify student hours. Aside from confirming volunteer hours, student must keep a video journal of their progress. Students must submit four, 30 sec video clips of their progress at the chosen organization. These video clips would take place onsite and include themselves in the video giving a short recap of what they did that day. Further instructions will be given once student is approved for extra credit volunteer.

Grading scale:

90% - 100% = A

80%-89% = B

70 % - 79% = C

60% - 69% = D

59 – 0 % = F

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

1st week (8.27 – 9.2): Introduction to Course

Introduction to class: Review post/announcement provided by instructor about the course. Review instructor's [bio](#). Review syllabus and course rules and tips.

Meet and greet (discussion post): Post on *meet & greet* discussion to tell the class a little about yourself and your studies. Instructions are posted in the weekly folder in the discussion Post

Review syllabus (Q&A discussion blog): I will initiate blog so students can ask any questions or comment any concerns about the syllabus, schedule, contact info, grading procedures, etc.

2nd week (9.3 – 9.9): Defining Social Justice, Understanding Bias and Story Angles

Review readings and other materials: Posted in Weekly Folder (modules)

Discussion post: Discussion topic will be posted in Weekly Folders.

Assignment 1: Identifying story angles in the media (compare & contrast)

Instructions will be provided in the weekly folder for this week.

3rd week (9.10 – 9.16): TOPIC 1 – Immigration: Child Separation

Review readings and other materials: Posted in Weekly Folder (modules)

4th week (9.17 – 9.23): TOPIC 1 – Immigration: Child Separation

Review readings and other materials: Posted in Weekly Folder (modules)

Discussion post 3: Discussion topic will be posted in Weekly Folders.

Quiz 1: Quiz will open at 6:00 AM and close 6:00 AM on Friday. You will have 30 minutes to take the quiz once you begin. Quiz will be posted in weekly folder.

5th week (9.24 – 9.30): TOPIC 2 – Gun Control (Gun Law Reform)

Review readings and other materials: Posted in Weekly Folder (modules)

6th week (10.1 – 10.7): TOPIC 2 – Gun Control (Gun Law Reform) continued

Review readings and other materials: Posted in Weekly Folder (modules)

Discussion post 4: Discussion topic will be posted in Weekly Folders.

Quiz 2: Quiz will open at 6:00 AM and close 6:00 AM on Friday. You will have 30 minutes to take the quiz once you begin. Quiz will be posted in weekly folder.

7th week (10.8 – 10.14): TOPIC 3 – Flint Water

Review readings and other materials: Posted in Weekly Folder (modules)

8th week (10.15 – 10.21): TOPIC 3 – Flint Water

Review readings and other materials: Posted in Weekly Folder (modules)

Discussion post 5: Discussion topic will be posted in Weekly Folders.

Quiz 3: Quiz will open at 6:00 AM and close 6:00 AM on Friday. You will have 30 minutes to take the quiz once you begin. Quiz will be posted in weekly folder.

9th week (10.22 – 10.28): Project Part 1: StoryCorps – Identifying Interview Subject and Prepping Interview Questions

Instructions will be posted in Weekly Folder and sent via email announcement.

Part I: Identify and person to interview on a social justice topic and obtain their permission to record the interview.

Deadline: Sunday, 10.28 by Midnight (11:59 PM)

10th week (10.29 – 11.4): Continuing Project Part 1...Obtaining email consent for interview and drafting interview questions.

Assignment 2: Draft interview questions for StoryCorps

11th week (11.5 – 11.11): TOPIC 4 - TBA

Review readings and other materials: Posted in Weekly Folder (modules)

Discussion post 6: Discussion topic will posted in Weekly Folders.

12th week (11.12 – 11.18): TOPIC 4 - TBA

Review readings and other materials: Posted in Weekly Folder (modules)

Quiz 4: Quiz will open at 6:00 AM and close 6:00 AM on Friday. You will have 30 minutes to take the quiz once you begin. Quiz will be posted in weekly folder.

13th week (11.19 – 11.25): TOPIC 5 – TBA (Thanksgiving)

Review readings and other materials: Posted in Weekly Folder (modules)

Discussion post 7: Discussion topic will posted in Weekly Folders.

14th week (11.26 – 12.2): TOPIC 5 – TBA

Review readings and other materials: Posted in Weekly Folder (modules)

Quiz 5: Quiz will open at 6:00 AM and close 6:00 AM on Friday. You will have 30 minutes to take the quiz once you begin. Quiz will be posted in weekly folder.

15th week (12.3 – 12.9): Project Part 2 – Conducting Interview for StoryCorps

16th week (12.10 – 12.14): Final Week of Class – StoryCorps Interview due