

Media & Social Justice

Syllabus, FALL 2024

HUMN 3315 (13592) / COMM 4350 (13284)

Instructor: John De Frank

Class Format: HYBRID (In –class Thursdays, 3:00 – 4:20 p.m.) **Building:** Cotton 201

Office Hours: Wednesday from 2:00 – 3:00 PM. Students may also request an appointment on a different day and time by sending a request email.

Office Phone: 747-5835

(Please leave a message on voicemail so I may return your call.)

Blackboard support: 747-4357

Email: jdefrank@utep.edu (Primary contact)

Humanities Website: utep.edu/liberalarts/humanities

Materials: There are no required textbooks for this course; readings will be provided via weblink or PDF. Students may need to pay for a rental/streaming film that is assigned. Students should always bring a pen to class in case of pop quizzes or essays assigned in class.

Course description: This course counts as a Humanities or Communication credit and will explore via media, the different social justice issues that are current in the news during the semester. The course will analyze and compare through print, video and audio stories, mainstream and alternative media as well as the different angles to a story told by different news agencies. Through this process, students will gain an understanding of different social injustices happening in our society by focusing on selected social justice topics, current laws, legislation, and policies as well as movements and remedies. The course will examine four social justice topics looking at the history, the current situation, the political and legal implications and how the media is covering the stories and public opinion. Some of the Social Justice topics may include but not limited to civil rights issues, racism, gender inequality, LGBTQA rights, ageism, income inequality, healthcare, war and oppression and environmental rights to name a few. Students will also develop skills through a project-based learning semester assignment by producing a social justice themed media story.

Semester Calendar: Found in course Blackboard.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

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

- **REQUIRE READINGS:** There are no textbooks assigned for the course, but you may be responsible for streaming/renting films selected for the course (if not available through UTEP Library Services). Please see detail description below.
- **NO DEVICES ON IN CLASS:** Laptops, tablets and phones are not to be used in class during lectures, discussions, or film screenings. Unless authorized by C.A.S.S., all devices should be off and put away. Use of laptops or phones in class will result in 1 point deducted from overall grade for each time instructor identifies use of devices in class. If you need to make a call or send a text, please step outside of class.
- **COURSE WORK SUBMISSION:** Course work must be completed and submitted via **computer (desktop or laptop) and not by smart phone or other devices.** This is an upper division college level course that is online therefore, it is insinuated that you must have the proper resources and tools necessary to participate in the course. That said, it is expected you have access to a working computer. The tests and discussion posts are not meant to be completed by smartphone or tablet but on a computer (desktop or laptop). There are technical issues sometimes with Blackboard and the compatibility with smart devices such as phones and tablets that can hinder your access or functionality in completing and submitting work. Therefore, it is advised that all work for this course be to be done via computer. Any complications or technical issues you come into using a device other than a computer will be your responsibility and will not be excused by the instructor. You can reach out to Blackboard support for help but there will be no exceptions made for technical issues involving devices other than a computer.

Hybrid Course Format

This is a Hybrid format course meaning that most of the course is online with one Face-to-Face, in-class meeting on Thursdays from 3:00 – 4:20 pm. The course is modeled on a Tuesday & Thursday schedule in that weekly folders will open on Tuesdays with first set of assigned readings and materials and additional assigned materials to be posted in the folder on Thursdays along with the in-class session. Scheduled tests will be administered on Fridays via Blackboard as per the Course Calendar.

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.

Academic dishonesty

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 persons 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.

Plagiarism Detecting Software

Some of your course work and assessments may be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used to review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase. New AI detecting software and training have been implemented to identify AI and copied sources.

Copyright Statement for Course Materials

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.

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

Much of the course in terms of readings and other course related materials, announcements, calendar, submission of work and tests will be held on BlackBoard. Therefore, it is the student's responsibility to make sure they have access to a computer and are instructed to use computers rather than smartphones and smart pads to conduct course work. It is also the student's responsibility to make sure when conducting course work including testing, that they have access to the internet that has reliable signal. Any technical issues with internet, computers or issues with Black board will be the student's responsibility to resolve. Students are encouraged to contact Helpdesk@utep.edu or call Technology Support/Blackboard for assistance.

COURSE WORK & GRADING

Instructions for any course work will be posted in the Weekly Folder section of Blackboard and sent via email announcement when work is assigned.

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 semester project. Some readings and videos will be subject to change, an email announcement will be sent informing of the change.

Readings will consist of web links **posted in the “Weekly Folders”** section on Blackboard by specific week.

Students Responsibility for Assignments: As part of their grade, students are required to complete readings, conduct research, participate in discussions, and submit work by scheduled deadlines.

Instructions for any course work will be posted in the Weekly Folder section of Blackboard and sent via email announcement when work is assigned.

Total possible points: 100

In-class exercise (TBA) X 3 = 5 points each (total 15 points)

4 tests, each worth 15 points = 60 points

Participation = 5 Points

Attendance = 5 points

Semester Project = 15 points

Grading scale:

90% - 100% = A

80%-89% = B

70 % - 79% = C

60% - 69% = D

59 – 0 % = F

In-Class Exercise / Campus Excursions

There will be three in-class exercises worth five points each for a total of 15 points. These exercises will take place during Thursday's in-class session. There are no make-up opportunities if you miss class the day of the in-class exercise.

Tests

4 Tests (60% of grade): There will be four tests (each 15% of the grade) on readings, videos, and online lectures, materials and discussions provided by the instructor. Tests will take place on scheduled Fridays; dates are marked on the semester calendar on Blackboard. Tests are a combination of multiple choice, multiple answer, T or F, fill in the blank and one or two comprehensive questions.

No make-up tests*: This is a hybrid course and tests are accessible for multiple days therefore are flexible to schedules while staying in line with course policy and responsibility.

* Under certain circumstances assessed on a case-by-case basis that meets university policy.

SEMESTER PROJECT (15% of grade)

Details about the Semester Project will be administered in instructions posted to Blackboard and in class. The Semester Project will be broken up into a 3-part assignment and must be completed in whole to receive the full 15 points. Any part not submitted/completed will jeopardize the whole Semester Project grades/points. Semester Project will be explained in class and instructions and deadlines will be posted in Blackboard in the Semester Project folder.

PARTICIPATION

Participation (5% of grade): Participation will be based on student's ability to partake in online or Face-to-Face 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.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance (5% of grade) will be taken in class every Thursday at our face-to-face meeting. Students will have three excused absences. The fourth absence is a deduction

of 5 points and **the fifth absence will result in a drop from the course.**

Optional Extra Credit

Non-Profit Volunteer Extra Credit Assignment (Optional): Schedule an appointment with instructor for further details.

Other Student Resources

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:

Technology Resources

- [Help Desk](#): Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.

Individual Resources

- [Military Student Success Center](#): Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.
- [Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#): Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#): Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessment

