

Media & Social Justice

Syllabus / FALL 2020

HUMN 3315(18636) / COMM 4350 (16090)

Instructor: John De Frank

Class Format: ONLINE

Online Forum & Office Hours: Forum on Wednesdays from 4:30 to 5:30 pm for the whole class or by appointment for individual meetings. Students may request a phone conference, IM dialog, or online video conference if they wish.

Office Phone: 747-5835

(please leave a message as we are not in the office but working remotely and checking voicemail.)

Blackboard support: 747-4357

Email: jdefrank@utep.edu (primary contact)

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 print and video stories the similarities and differences through articles and video stories between 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.

Semester Calendar: Can be found on course Blackboard.

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

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.

COVID-19 NOTICE

- Students are required to complete self-screening (screening.utep.edu) prior to every campus visit. Complete self-screening (screening.utep.edu) prior to every campus visit.
- Complete COVID-19 student training at [this site](#).
- Contact instructor if temporary accommodations due to COVID-19 are needed (i.e., due to positive COVID-19 test, symptoms, or exposure).

You must STAY AT HOME and REPORT if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. Reports should be made at screening.utep.edu. If you know anyone who should report any of these three criteria, encourage them to report. If the individual cannot report, you can report on their behalf by sending an email to COVIDaction@utep.edu.

For each day that you attend campus—for any reason—you must complete the questions on the UTEP screening website (screening.utep.edu) prior to arriving on campus. The website will verify if you are permitted to come to campus. Under no circumstances should anyone come to class when feeling ill or exhibiting any of the known COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided. Students are advised to minimize the number of encounters with others to avoid infection.

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 person's as ones' 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 submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

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 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 Discussion Expectations

Discussion Topic 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.

Online Recordings

The use of recordings will enable you to have access to class lectures, group discussions, and so on in the event you miss a synchronous or in-person class meeting due to illness or other extenuating circumstance. Our use of such technology is governed by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and UTEP's acceptable-use policy. A recording of class sessions will be kept and stored by UTEP, in accordance with FERPA and UTEP policies. Your instructor will not share the recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, teaching assistants, or graduate assistants, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners with whom we may engage during a class session. **You may not share recordings outside of this course.** Doing so may result in disciplinary action.

COURSE WORK & GRADING

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, but an email announcement will be given.

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

Students Responsibility for Assignments/Story Project Proposals and Drafts: As part of their grade, students are required to complete readings, conduct research, participate in online discussions, posts or blogs, 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 assignment is issued.

Grade percentage breakdown:

Semester Project Proposal = 5 points

Interviewer confirmation via email = 5 points

Semester Project Part 1: Draft Questions & Part 2: Interview = 10 points

Quiz points: 5 tests X 12 points each = 60 points

Participation & Discussion = 20 points (7 discussion topics total)

Total percentage earned: 100 points

Grading scale:

90% - 100% = A

80%-89% = B

70 % - 79% = C

60% - 69% = D

59 – 0 % = F

TESTS

5 Tests (60% of grade): There will be five tests (each 12% of the grade) on readings, videos, films 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 an online course and test are accessible for multiple days therefore are flexible to schedules while staying in line with course policy and responsibility.

* Under certain circumstances can tests be made-up and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION

Participation & Discussion (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. Some discussion will be posted Blackboard for discussion posts others will be held in groups online via Blackboard Collaborative Ultra virtual meeting.

SEMESTER PROJECT

StoryCorp Interview (20% of grade)

Details will be given about Semester Project in instructions and on Forum meeting.

Optional Extra 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.