

## Communication 5160: Seminar in Mass Media – Audience and Medium

Fall 2016. Section 001. 3 Credit Hours

Room: Coleman Hall 1771 W 7-9:30

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**Instructor:** Dr. Scott Walus  
**Email:** smwalus@eiu.edu

**Office:** 1810 Coleman Hall  
**Office Hours:** M 6-8 p.m. / TR 10-11 a.m.

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### Required Texts:

All texts for the semester will be provided via USB/hard drive transfer in class. Bring a notebook and pen as well.

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### Course Description:

From the EIU catalog: “A theoretical study of aspects of Mass Communication requiring original research. Electronic media are emphasized. May be repeated once with a change in course content.”

This seminar explores how various audiences engage with a wide array of mediated messages and how the medium shapes those audiences. The course examines various screen media audiences (television, new media, social media) through various theoretical perspectives and various methodological approaches based on both foundational and contemporary audience, reception, and mass communication studies.

### Course Objectives:

1. To deconstruct the concept of the audience as it relates to media.
2. To become familiar with different methodological approaches to audience studies.
3. To conduct original research about content and medium.
4. To link audience data to mass communication theory to add richness to both theory and data.

### Professionalism/attendance:

This is a graduate class in an area of which we all share interest. I expect you to read. I expect you to discuss. I will not take attendance, but I would strongly suggest not missing a single session. There is no possible way to succeed in this class without reading and discussing these complex topics.

### Assignment/Late Work Policy

Simply: I do not accept late work. I do not accept electronic versions of work.

Complexly: All out-of-class assignments are to be typewritten, printed, and brought to class the day that they are due at the beginning of class. I do **NOT** accept e-mailed assignments. Late work is **NOT** accepted in this class.

### General Grading Guidelines:

Grades will be assigned as follows:

100-90% = A	89-80% = B	79-70% = C	69-60% = D	59- 0% = F
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In any course, it is important to remember that each of you begins with zero points and must earn your way up to each of these grades. I am here to support you in this process, but this process is ultimately your own evolution as a scholar as you demonstrate not only an understanding of the material, but also the ability to apply to real life situations and critically evaluate the material and case studies. Grading will be done as follows:

**C:** Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect. This score does not indicate any shortcoming. All the work was done adequately and completely, and the work showed basic understanding and mastery of the course material.

**B:** Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements. Not only were all the basic expectations met, they exceeded minimum expected quality levels. This work probably showed one or more of the following characteristics: excellent understanding of the class material, excellent application of theory to practice, unusual thought and thoroughness in thought and preparation.

**A:** Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. This work is superior in every respect and represents the highest level of achievement. Its quality is good enough that even though there is still room for improvement, it would be unreasonable to expect a college student to do better.

**D:** Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it does not fully meet course requirements. While there was merit to what was done, there were also deficiencies that meant the work did not fully meet the minimal expectations.

**F:** Represents performance that fails to meet the course requirements and is unworthy of credit. This work shows serious deficiencies in regard to the expectations for the assignment.

### **Point breakdown:**

#### **Criteria for Evaluation**

State of Theory, Audience & Medium	4
Final Research Paper	10
Data presentation	1
Check-ins	4

These are check-ins on your research project for the semester. They will help to keep you on track and to continuously be refining and advancing your research. On the weeks noted, you will bring a typed copy of what I have requested. 2 check-ins = 1 point.

“Brings” 3

These happen every class. For each reading, I expect you to have written down three topics you wish to discuss. These do not have to be formal and may be written by hand on the article itself. 5 brings = 1 point.

Total points:	22
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### **Academic integrity:**

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. You are expected to write your own papers and generate your own answers on quizzes and exams. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Consequences of academic dishonesty range from failing of the course to expulsion from the university.

**Students with disabilities:**

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

**The Student Success Center:**

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, text taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

**Student Standards:**

All faculty in the Department of Communication Studies are expected to uphold the standards of good scholarship and we expect our students to do the same. Students earning a degree in Communication Studies will develop superior reasoning/critical thinking, argumentation, writing and presentational skills while also building comprehensive knowledge of their content area. Students in Communication Studies classes will be expected to read all assigned materials, write extensively, complete their own work, and engage in respectful interactions in the classroom. We, as a faculty, agree to hold our students to these standards.

**Tentative Class Schedule:** I reserve the right to change the schedule as necessary.

Note: For each reading, I expect you to have written down three topics you wish to discuss. These do not have to be formal and may be written by hand on the article itself.

Week 1: Syllabus day (8/24)

Beginning the discussion of audiences

Week 2: Understanding the context of the media audience (8/31)

Baran & Davis – “Mass Communication Chronology timeline”

McQuail - “Ch. 15 – Audience Theory and Research Traditions”

Sparks “A brief history of media effects research”

Ruddock “Cultural Studies and Audience Research”

Couldry - “The Necessary Future of the Audience... and how to research it”

Check-in: Three areas of media in which you are interested in studying during your master's degree. Include notes on why each is interesting and worth studying.

### Week 3: Audience positioning and activity (9/7)

Rubin "Audience activity"

Hall "Encoding/ Decoding"

Morley "Cultural Transformations: The Politics of Resistance"

Ang "On the Politics of Empirical Audience Research"

Jenkins "Out of the closet and into the universe"

Check in: Articulate your thoughts on audiences (activity, selectivity, etc.). How do audiences process messages and what do they "do" to the audience members (effects and meanings)? Articulate the specific type of sample you will get together for your study this semester for the area of media that you selected from last check-in.

### Week 4: Foundational studies and considering audience data (9/14)

Ang "Dallas and the Ideology of Mass Culture"

Jhally & Lewis "Enlightened Racism"

Willis "The Golden Age"

Hine "Towards ethnography of television on the Internet"

Awan & Gauntlett - "Creative and Visual Methods in Audience Research"

Check in: Write out the methodology for this study (how will you collect data, how will analyze that data). Be sure to note the readings that you use to construct your rough method section.

### Week 5: Uses and Gratifications of the medium (9/21)

Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch "Uses and Gratifications Research"

Ruggiero "Uses and Gratifications in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"

Dimmick, Kline, & Stafford "The Gratification Niches of Personal E-mail and the Telephone"

Dobrow - "The Rerun Ritual: Using VCRs to Review"

### Week 6: Uses and Gratifications of content (9/28)

Sundar & Limpero "Uses and Grats 2.0"

Gudelunas "Uses and gratifications of social networks for gay men"

Albarran et al "Radio and new technology uses and gratifications"

Leung - "Gratifications of user-generated content on the Internet. Civic engagement and psychological empowerment"

Check-in: Map out three concepts from uses and gratifications that you could use/research in your article. Include rough in-text citations.

### Week 7: Cultivation of the medium (10/5)

Gerbner "On Cultivation"

Ruddock "Cultivation Analysis and Media Violence"

Williams - "Virtual Cultivation: Online Worlds, Offline Perceptions"

Busselle, Ryabovolova, and Wilson - "Cultivation and narrative"

## Week 8: Cultivation of the content (10/12)

Harrison - "Cultivation and Body Image"

Segrin & Nabi "Cultivation of marriage"

Bilandzic & Rossler "Life according to television"

Bilandzic & Busselle "Transportation and Transportability in the cultivation of genre-consistent attitudes and estimates"

Check-in: Map out three concepts from cultivation that you could use/research in your article. Include rough in-text citations.

## Week 9: Medium and the Message (10/19)

McLuhan "The Medium is the Message"

Meyrowitz - "Medium Theory"

Winston "How are media born?"

Goodwin "Rationalization and Democratization in New Technologies of Popular Music"

Check in: Map out the symbolic traits of the medium which you will be studying this semester.

## Week 10: Praxis (10/26)

### **Due: Theory, medium, and audience.**

In-class research activity

## Week 11: Audience by medium: Television (11/2)

Morley "Understanding the uses of television"

McQuail, Blumler, & Brown "The Television Audience"

Halloran - "On the social effects of television"

Press & Cole - "Working-class women respond to television representations of abortion"

Check in: Get IRB certified and submit your study for IRB approval.

## Week 12: Audience by medium: Social media (11/9)

Rocamora "Hypertextuality and remediation in the fashion media"

Levinson - "YouTube"

Green & Jenkins "Spreadable Media"

Press & Livingstone - "Taking audience research into the age of new media"

Check-in: In 1-2 pages, provide context and justify why you have chosen to study the medium and audience that you have. Hook the audience and sell them on why studying this is of extreme importance.

Week 13: Audience by medium: Mobile communication (11/16)

Goggin "The iPhone and Communication" (Studying mobile media)

Valcanis "An iPhone in every hand"

Patterson, Lammers, & Tubbs "Cell phone encounters"

Ramirez, Dimmick, Featest & Lin - "Revisiting Interpersonal Media Competition"

Check in: In 1-2 pages, detail the research and concepts will you be expanding upon and researching in your study. Include in-text citations.

Thanksgiving Break 11/21-25

Week 14 (11/30) - Data analysis in class

**Due: Multiple copies of transcripts / field notes / surveys / etc.**

Check-in: Bring a title and the headings to all of the sections of your paper.

Week 15: Material culture and the digital constructive audience (12/7)

Bjarkman "To have and to hold: The video collector" (Newcomb)

Hebdige "Style as homology and signifying practice"

Muniz Jr. & Schau "Vigilante Marketing"

Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel "Emotional branding and the doppelganger brand"

Check-in: Bring in your paper with a title page, abstract, and all of the sections filled in written throughout the semester. Under any section without content, do a sentence outline of the section where one sentence = one paragraph.

Week 16 Finals (12/14)

Wednesday, December 14, 7:30-9:30 p.m. as scheduled by the university.

**Due: Final audience analysis paper**

You will also present your profound findings to the class