

COMM 102: MASS COMMUNICATION THEORY

Winter, 2023

Hybrid class format

T: Watch lectures on GauchoSpace asynchronously

R: 5:00-6:15 pm: Class in person: WEBB 1100

Professor: Dr. Muniba Saleem

Email: msaleem@ucsb.edu

Office hours: Wednesdays 3-4 pm (please schedule first)

Office hours Zoom Meeting ID: 945 293 2863; Passcode: Saleem.

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Office hours: Tuesdays 2-3 pm

Office hours link: <https://ucsb.zoom.us/j/85129246952>

Course Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to examine in-depth the major theories of media effects. We will: a) take a comprehensive look at media effects theories (including their specific elements, assumptions, structure, and scope), b) compare and contrast those theories to better understand how they explain current social scientific communication research, and c) explore the strengths and limitations of current theories in understanding emerging and novel communication phenomenon.

Sensitive Content

The content and discussion in this course will necessarily engage with some topics that are sensitive (race relations), graphic (violence), or charged (political attitudes). Some of this content may be emotionally and intellectually challenging to engage with. I will do my best to present this content in a way where we can engage with it bravely, empathetically, and thoughtfully. My request is that you all engage with this material in a kind, compassionate, and civil manner to allow everyone the opportunity to share and express their opinions in a respectful way. If you would like assistance in navigating through this content, please contact me using my email address.

Readings:

- Required Textbook: (Potter, 2019). *Major Theories of Media Effects: Analysis & Evaluation*. Peter Lang (ISBN:978-1-4331-6954-0). <https://doi.org/10.3726/b15812>
- Other course readings will be made available on GauchoSpace at <https://gauchospace.ucsb.edu/courses/login/>

Course Format

This is a hybrid flipped classroom format class. Tuesdays will be asynchronous lectures, and Thursdays will be in-person class lectures and discussions. My goal is for you to learn the weekly class concepts through asynchronous lectures and readings on Tuesdays but apply, expand upon, and discuss them in the in-person class sessions on Thursdays. To get the most out of this class, I expect you to stay engaged, involved, and attentive during class time to make it an enjoyable and interactive experience for all.

Tuesday Asynchronous Lectures:

- Asynchronous lectures with PowerPoint slides will be uploaded at least 1 week in advance. In-person sessions are intended to build upon (not replace) the content of the assigned readings each week.

Thursday In-Person Class Sessions:

- In-person class sessions will take place every week on Thursdays between 5:00-6:15 pm in WEBB 1100. The goal of these sessions is to expand upon **some** of the important topics from the assigned readings or asynchronous lectures and to engage with that material through class discussion and applied examples.
- Please note that in-person class sessions WILL NOT be recorded. You are responsible for any missed material and any activities completed during class.
- Prior to coming to the Thursday in-person class sessions, you should make sure to 1) read the assigned readings, and 2) watch the asynchronous lecture.

Course Evaluation

Please note that this class uses a **gamification model** for grading. This means that similar to a game, each student starts the quarter with 0 points. You can pick and choose how you want to earn points to get the grade you wish. I have designed different types of assignments to accommodate students with different learning styles and needs. Please note that you are NOT required to do all of the assignments and activities in this course. Evaluation for this course will be based on a series of points you can earn through different activities and assignments. You should choose to do the assignments/tasks that help you learn best and get the grade you wish to earn!

Assignments	Points
Cross-cutting reflections (2 points X 4 = 8)	8 points
+Apply it assignments (15 points X 2)	30 points
+Discussion points (2-4 points X 5 = 12 points) ONLY POSSIBLE IN CLASS	12 points
Reading guides (5 points x 10)	50 points
Weekly quizzes (10 points x 10)	100 points
Total points possible	200 points

+Option to work in pairs or groups (no more than 4) on these assignments

Final Grades*:

A = 177-190	B = 158-164	C = 139-145	D = 120-126
A- = 171-176	B- = 152-157	C- = 133-138	D- = 114-119
B+ = 165-170	C+ = 146-151	D+ = 127-132	F = <113

*Please note that even though there are 200 total possible points that can be earned in this class, letter grades are calculated using 190 points as the highest range. This allows you to have flexibility in how you would like to earn points based on which grade you would like to receive. Please note that given the immense flexibility built into this class upfront, I will NOT make exceptions for late assignments or missed due dates. Similarly, there are NO extra credit opportunities.

Weekly Assignment Pattern

Please note that there is a very consistent and predictable weekly schedule for assignment due dates in this class. I would strongly recommend that you create reminders on your calendar weekly for these due dates and times so that you do not forget them. Although students tend to prefer classes without midterm and final exams, they can easily get behind if they do not keep up with weekly assignments and due dates. I will also send weekly reminders for your ease. Please note that late assignments are NOT accepted.

Days	Tasks/Due Dates
Mondays-Tuesdays	Read the assigned reading materials and watch the asynchronous lecture. Work on the reading guide simultaneously.
Wednesdays	Submit the reading guide by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace.
Thursdays	Come to in-person class at 5:00-6:15 pm in WEBB 1100. Some weeks we will also have discussion reactions and assignments in class.
Fridays	Complete the weekly quiz by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace. Submit a cross-cutting reflection if you choose to do one for this week by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace. Note, cross-cutting reflection assignments only need to be completed four times during the quarter.

Course Assignments

Reading guides

To assist you with the assigned readings, I have developed an outline of questions for you to answer. Think about this as a key for what information to pay attention to in the reading. Research shows that students learn and retain information better when they can write it down in their own words. Try to answer the questions within these guides in **your own words** rather than copying and pasting the content from readings/lectures. The idea is to see if you can succinctly answer the question in your own words based on the knowledge you gained from your readings/lectures. Try to answer each question within **one or two sentences**. All reading guides are due by **11:59 PM PST each Wednesday**.

Grading:

- Each reading guide will contain 10 questions (0.5 point per question x 10 = 5 points per week)
- Automatic grade will be assigned for answering eight of the 10 questions
- Two questions in each reading guide will be randomly graded based on the quality of your response, i.e., your ability to answer the question succinctly, accurately, and in your own words.

Open book weekly quizzes

There will be weekly multiple-choice quizzes over the assigned readings/lectures on Gauchospace. These 10 randomly generated questions are designed to serve as knowledge checks for the assigned content. In other words, if you complete the assigned readings and lectures, you will easily be able to answer these questions. You will have up to **15 minutes** to complete each weekly quiz on Gauchospace. All weekly quizzes are due by **11:59 pm PST every Friday**. Please note that some quiz questions cover material covered on Thursdays in class. My recommendation is to wait until Friday to complete your weekly quiz.

Grading:

- Quiz questions will be automatically graded on Gauchospace based on correct answers (1 point per question x 10 questions = up to 10 points weekly).

Cross-cutting reflections

Many concepts in this class will build upon each other. Information that you have learned in previous weeks will often be relevant in future weeks. The idea behind this assignment is to encourage you to think about the cross-cutting themes discussed in this class from one week to another. You have the flexibility to complete this assignment for any four weeks of the quarter (**due Fridays at 11:59 PM PST**). Please note that you can only submit one response per week for this assignment. You will submit a 2-4 sentence response on Gauchospace for your submission. In your submission, you should first describe the concept, theory, or idea covered in a previous week in your own words. Next you should briefly discuss how that concept discussed in a previous week is relevant to something that we are discussing in the current week.

Discussion points

As stated above, the “flipped classroom” approach emphasizes engagement with and application of class content. At different points during the quarter, you will be asked to engage with a “real world” problem associated with concepts learned in that week. We will use the knowledge learned in lectures and readings to problem-solve and critically analyze the issue at hand. Given the importance of working together and reacting to each other’s comments for this activity, this assignment can only be completed in class.

- In checking your discussion responses, we will look for not just completion of the instructions but rather the quality of your responses (i.e., your engagement with the question beyond the surface level, ability to answer the question in your own words, ability to cite examples illustrating course concepts, the connection of course material with different topics, etc.).

Apply it assignments (2 times in the quarter, 15 points each)

The content of our course is readily applicable to the real world and our everyday lives. Throughout the quarter, you will see me: 1) applying the course content to understanding real-world issues, and 2) using media examples to illustrate different concepts and examples. In the apply it assignments, you will be asked to do the same! Your goal is to present information in a succinct, creative, and interesting manner (e.g., presentations, [Ted-ed videos](#), animations, [podcasts](#), interviews, etc.). Respecting students’ different learning styles and interests, I am allowing you the flexibility to choose any one of these apply it assignments. You are further encouraged (but not required) to work in pairs or in groups on these assignments. Please check the course schedule for due dates.

Choices for apply it assignments:

1. Teach course concepts through the use of media examples. Pick **one** course concept/theory and teach it in your own way to someone who has no background knowledge about communication phenomenon (e.g., parents, grandparents, friends not in class, imaginary audience). You are free to choose the medium through which you would like to teach (using slides, infographic, animated creation, video, podcast, etc.). The different assignment components and the associated points are described in detail below. The approximate length for each section is given if you were using slides but please remember that you are free to choose whatever format you’d like to teach in. Slides are mentioned simply for reference.

- First, give a brief explanation of the relevant course concept in your own words (3 points). Be sure to explain the concept clearly as if you are teaching it to someone who has no background knowledge in communication, going beyond the definition and book explanation (1-2 slides).
- Second, explain your concept through **two related** media examples and give a detailed overview of your media examples (4 points). We may not be very familiar with the media example you choose so please provide a bit of background information so that we can understand it (2-3 slides).
- Third, specifically relate the media examples to the concept described in your first paragraph (4 points). Convince the audience why these are good or different examples of the concept you are describing and how different parts of the concept/theory are depicted in the media example. What are the similarities or differences between the examples and how they relate to the concept/theory? (2-3 slides).
- Presentation style, clarity, grammar, writing. Please note that any spelling/grammar issues will automatically make you lose a point. Further, students who spend time creating professional, creative, and innovative presentations will be allocated higher points. (4 point)

- *Helpful notes*
 - Be sure to include your name (e.g., slide with title, state your name in the beginning of the video/podcast, include your name in the infographic/animation).
 - No references are required but you should use in-text citations based on APA guidelines if you include them.
 - You will upload your presentations on Gauchospace before the due dates specified below.
 - Examples of this assignment for those who taught using slides are available on Gauchospace. Please look over those before submitting yours.
 - References for approximate length:
 - Slides: 6-10 slides (including a title slide with your name)
 - Video/Podcast: ~ 10 minutes
 - Other formats: no reference but feel free to ask me if you are unclear

2. *Teach course concepts by interviewing people.* Pick one of the course concepts/topics/theories covered in class and interview 2-3 people (not in class) about the topic. You will have to develop interview questions similar to a talk show or podcast host. Talk to your TA or Dr. Saleem for ideas for your topic and how to develop interview questions for it. Present your findings in an interesting manner as if you are teaching about this concept/theory based on the experiences of everyday individuals. In presenting the assignment, explain the concept/premise/theory in your own words (3 points). Next, briefly summarize the experiences of each person (2 points). Then, apply the course concept/theory/phenomenon to the experiences shared by the interviewees (3 points). Finally, summarize how much the interviewees' examples/experiences support or qualify the theories/existing research on this topic (3 points). Teach and summarize the information learned in any format you prefer (using slides, infographic, animated creation, video, podcast, etc.). Students who spend time creating professional (e.g., no background noise), creative (e.g., unique formats), and innovative (e.g., technologically-savvy) presentations will be allocated higher points (4 points for presentation style/clarity/writing/creativity).

Course Policies:

Attendance: Not required but strongly encouraged in the in-person class sessions on Thursdays. Please note that the in-person class sessions will NOT be recorded as I do not intend to lecture the entire time. Instead, at least half of class time will be used for interactive and discussion-related activities. The discussion assignments can only be completed in person on Thursdays. Please DO NOT ask me for information covered in class if you were unable to attend.

Assignment Grading: Grades assigned by the TA are final and regrades are rare. Appeals for re-grades must be made within 48 hours of receiving the grade. If students wish to appeal an assignment graded by a TA, the instructor will regrade the entire assignment based on the instructor's independent assessment. Because the instructor might catch things missed by the TA, the assignment grade can go down if the instructor regrades it. If you feel the grade you received on an assignment was calculated incorrectly or contains a very clear error, you can file a grade appeal with the instructor. The appeal process consists of the following two steps.

1. Contact the TA (through email) within 48 hours of when your assignment grade is passed back or posted on Gauchospace.
2. In your email, include a detailed description of the grading error and a substantive reason for your grade appeal— state exactly where you believe the grading error occurred in the assignment. Stating that you worked really hard on the paper and/or need a higher grade for GPA purposes are not valid reasons for an appeal and will not be considered. No regrading will be done after an assignment grade has been posted for 48 hours.

Course Add/Remove Policies: We have limited seats in this classroom and thus cannot go above the enrollment number. Please check the following website for the Department of Communication's waitlist policy: <https://www.comm.ucsb.edu/courses/waitlist>. Please check the following website for UCSB policies regarding

adding/removing classes: <https://registrar.sa.ucsb.edu/fees-residency/fee-information/payment-deadlines/2020-2021-registration-fee-payment-deadlines>

Communication. The best way to reach me or your TA quickly is by directly emailing us on our UCSB email accounts (see first page). Please allow us 48 hours to respond. Please don't use GauchoSpace to message us as we may not check those daily. I will communicate with the class using GauchoSpace announcements. You will receive weekly announcements outlining all your due dates.

Late Work/Extra Credit Assignments: Late work will NOT be accepted especially because you are not required to complete all the assignments and activities. Please be sure to mark the due dates for all assignments and tasks in your calendars. There are no extra credit opportunities in this class to keep things fair and equitable for all.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism: Plagiarism is using other people's work and ideas without giving them credit. This is a violation of both the university rules and regulations and the rules of this class. Please see the university policy. This applies to work on tests, papers, projects, interviews, reports, or anything else unless we specify that you can work with another class member. The purpose of the course is for you to learn – you do not learn by copying someone else's work. Another form of academic dishonesty is using the same assignment for two different courses without the permission of both instructors. If you have any questions, please talk to me.

Sharing Course Materials: All course materials (class lectures and discussions, handouts, examinations, web materials) and the intellectual content of the course itself are protected by United States Federal Copyright Law and the California Civil Code. The UC Policy 102.23 expressly prohibits anyone from recording lectures or discussions and from distributing or selling lectures notes and all other course materials without the prior written permission of the instructor (see <http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710530/PACAOS-100>). Students are permitted to take notes solely for their own private educational use. Exceptions to accommodate students with disabilities may be granted with appropriate documentation. To be clear, in this class students are forbidden from making/completing study guides and selling them to any person or organization. Please don't post my videos online or give access to people outside the class.

Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a documented disability (registered with the DSP program: 893-2668, www.sa.ucsb.edu/dsp) and would like to arrange accommodations, please contact me ASAP and I will be happy to discuss alternative arrangements. If you are confused about an assignment or having difficulty, talk to us. We are glad to answer questions by email or through zoom. **IMPORTANT:** If you have a question about an assignment, **please email me and your TA.** This will ensure you the quickest response possible.

Basic Needs: If you are facing any challenges securing food or housing, and believe this may affect your performance in the class, you are urged to meet with a Food Security and CalFresh Advocate, who is aware of the broad variety of resources that UCSB has to offer (see their drop-in hours at food.ucsb.edu). Please visit food.ucsb.edu for additional resources including CalFresh, the AS Food Bank, and more. Furthermore, please notify instructors or your TA if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable us to provide any resources or support that we can.

Mental Health Services: If you are experiencing any difficulties meeting class requirements, or any difficulties in your personal life, please contact Counseling and Psychological Services. For information, please call (805-893-4411) or visit their web site (www.counseling.ucsb.edu).

Tentative Nature of the Syllabus: This syllabus represents a contract in the works. Sometimes events arise that necessitate modification of the course schedule and/or assignments. If any changes are needed to the

course administration, they will be announced. To ensure you are always aware of any changes, regularly attend class, check your UCSB email, and visit GauchoSpace.

Covid-19 related Policies:

- General compliance. Student non-compliance with COVID-19 health and safety requirements or with related directions from the instructor is a violation of the UCSB Student Code of Conduct and will be adjudicated accordingly.
- Sickness policy. If you are feeling ill or suspect you may have been exposed to someone who is ill, please stay home. Attendance is NOT required in this class and thus for everyone's safety please DO NOT come to class if you are sick or suspect you may be sick.
- Masking: Please note that although masking is no longer required in classrooms, it will be **strongly recommended**. Free surgical face masks are available on campus at many locations: Library, UCEN, RecCen, and Housing front desks; N95 respirators are also available upon request at the UCEN Bookstore Customer Service Desk and the Pardall Service Center.
- Testing & Quarantine Guidelines
 - For return-to-campus after travel outside of California:
 - Whether you're vaccinated or not, get tested 3-5 days after returning with either a PCR or at home rapid antigen test.
 - If you are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including a booster shot if eligible, CDC requires that you stay home and self-quarantine for a full 5 days after travel.
 - PCR tests are available at Loma Pelona by appointment. PCR test kits can be picked up at Loma Pelona, the UCEN, RecCen, Library, SRB or some campus Housing front desks, samples prepared and then dropped off at your appointment time at Loma Pelona (within 4 hours of sample preparation).

Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings	Due Dates for Assignments/Tasks
1	Introduction to course	Syllabus	<p>*Please note the weekly schedule is different for the first week to acclimate you into class</p> <p>Monday-Tuesday: Complete week 1 reading, asynchronous lecture, and reading guide.</p> <p>Wednesday: Work on reading guide 1 due on Friday, 11:59 PM (just for this week)</p> <p>Thursday: Come to in-person class at 5:00-6:15 pm in WEBB 1100.</p> <p>Friday: Complete week 1 quiz and reading guide by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace.</p>
2	Role of theory and methods	Chapter 1 of book	<p>Monday-Tuesday: Complete week 2 reading, asynchronous lecture, and reading guide.</p> <p>Wednesday: Submit week 2 reading guide by 11:59 PM PST on GauchoSpace.</p> <p>Thursday: Come to in-person class at 5:00-6:15 pm in WEBB 1100.</p> <p>Friday: Complete week 2 quiz by 11:59 PM PST on GauchoSpace. Submit a cross-cutting reflection by 11:59 PM PST on GauchoSpace (only 4 needed in the entire quarter).</p>
3	Field of media effects/analysis	Chapters 2 & 3 of book	<p>Monday-Tuesday: Complete week 3 reading, asynchronous lecture, and reading guide.</p> <p>Wednesday: Submit week 3 reading guide by 11:59 PM PST on GauchoSpace.</p> <p>Thursday: Come to in-person class at 5:00-6:15 pm in WEBB 1100.</p> <p>Friday: Complete week 3 quiz by 11:59 PM PST on GauchoSpace. Submit a cross-cutting reflection by 11:59 PM PST on GauchoSpace (only 4 needed in the entire quarter).</p>

4	Cultivation Theory	Chapter 4 of book	<p>Monday-Tuesday: Complete week 4 reading, asynchronous lecture, and reading guide.</p> <p>Wednesday: Submit week 4 reading guide by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace.</p> <p>Thursday: Come to in-person class at 5:00-6:15 pm in WEBB 1100.</p> <p>Friday: Complete week 4 quiz by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace. Submit a cross-cutting reflection by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace (only 4 needed in the entire quarter).</p>
5	Agenda Setting Theory	Chapter 5 of book	<p>Monday-Tuesday: Complete week 5 reading, asynchronous lecture, and reading guide.</p> <p>Wednesday: Submit week 5 reading guide by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace.</p> <p>Thursday: Come to in-person class at 5:00-6:15 pm in WEBB 1100.</p> <p>Friday: Complete week 5 quiz by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace. Submit a cross-cutting reflection by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace (only 4 needed in the entire quarter).</p>
6	Review, videos/Apply it assignment questions		<p>No in-person class this week!</p> <p>Apply it assignment 1 due 11:59 PM PST on Friday, 2/17.</p> <p>All assignments are due by 11:59 PM PST on Friday of this week!</p>
7	Framing Theory	Chapter 6 of the book	<p>Monday-Tuesday: Complete week 7 reading, asynchronous lecture, and reading guide.</p> <p>Wednesday: Submit week 7 reading guide by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace.</p> <p>Thursday: Come to in-person class at 5:00-6:15 pm in WEBB 1100.</p> <p>Friday: Complete week 7 quiz by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace. Submit a cross-cutting reflection by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace (only 4 needed in the entire quarter).</p>

8	Uses & Gratification Theory	Chapter 7 of book	<p>Monday-Tuesday: Complete week 8 reading, asynchronous lecture, and reading guide.</p> <p>Wednesday: Submit week 8 reading guide by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace.</p> <p>Thursday: Come to in-person class at 5:00-6:15 pm in WEBB 1100.</p> <p>Friday: Complete week 8 quiz by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace. Submit a cross-cutting reflection by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace (only 4 needed in the entire quarter).</p>
9	Social Cognitive Theory	Chapter 8 of book	<p>Monday-Tuesday: Complete week 9 reading, asynchronous lecture, and reading guide.</p> <p>Wednesday: Submit week 9 reading guide by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace.</p> <p>Thursday: Come to in-person class at 5:00-6:15 pm in WEBB 1100.</p> <p>Friday: Complete week 8 quiz by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace. Submit a cross-cutting reflection by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace (only 4 needed in the entire quarter).</p>
10	Evaluation & Comparison	Chapters 10 & 11 of book	<p>Monday-Tuesday: Complete week 10 reading, asynchronous lecture, and reading guide.</p> <p>Wednesday: Submit week 10 reading guide by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace.</p> <p>Thursday: Come to in-person class at 5:00-6:15 pm in WEBB 1100.</p> <p>Friday: Complete week 10 quiz by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace. Submit a cross-cutting reflection by 11:59 PM PST on Gauchospace (only 4 needed in the entire quarter).</p>
Finals week			<p>Apply it assignment 2 due Monday, March 20 11:59 PM PST.</p> <p>Enjoy Spring Break!</p>