

CLASS SYLLABUS
PSYCHOLOGY OF MASS COMMUNICATION (PSYCH 530)
SPRING 2007 #22970

Class Meetings: 8:30 MWF in Bluemont 5102

Instructor: Dr. Richard J. Harris

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Office Hours: MWF 9:30-10:20, TTh 2:30-3:20 (other times by appointment or chance)

Graduate Teaching Assistant: Michael Smith; Office: BH 566; Phone: 532-6850 (leave message), e-mail: mrs5628@ksu.edu, Office Hours:

☞ Required Readings

- 1) Harris, R.J. (2004). A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication. (4th ed.) Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. (available in bookstores)
- 2) Valkenburg, P.M. (2004). Children's Responses to the Screen: A Media Psychological Approach. Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (available in bookstores)
- 3) Other brief readings to be sent to you by e-mail or posted on K-State Online.

☞ Purposes and Objectives

By the end of this class, you should be able to

- ✓ understand how the discipline of psychology can be used to study effects of media
- ✓ have a basic understanding of the effects of media on attitudes and behavior
- ✓ intelligently critique TV programs, film, news, etc. for messages and values conveyed
- ✓ grasp the basic media literacy issues that parents need to be aware of in regard to children
- ✓ understand how media construct a reality which may or may not be similar to the "real world"
- ✓ understand how the world portrayed by media is similar to and different from the "real world"
- ✓ discuss intelligently how media affect behavior, including important moderating variables

☞ Topics, exam dates, reading assignments:

I. Mass communication in society

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|------|------------------------|
| 1-17 | A. Harris pp. 1-17 |
| 1-19 | B. Valkenburg pp. 1-14 |

II. Research and theory in mass communication

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|------|-------------------------|
| 1-22 | A. Harris pp. 18-35 |
| 1-24 | B. Valkenburg pp.15-27 |
| 1-26 | C. Harris pp. 35-52 |
| 1-29 | D. Valkenburg pp. 27-38 |

III. Group portrayals and their effects

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|------|---------------------|
| 1-31 | A. Harris pp. 53-65 |
| 2-2 | B. Harris pp. 65-78 |
| 2-5 | C. Harris pp. 78-85 |
| 2-7 | D. Harris pp. 85-91 |
| 2-9 | E. TBA |

EXAM 1 Monday 2-12

IV. Advertising

- 2-14 A. Harris pp. 92-113
- 2-16 B. Harris pp. 113-123
- 2-19 C. Harris pp. 138-144
- 2-21 D. Valkenburg pp. 83-94
- 2-23 E. Valkenburg pp. 94-107

V. Children and Media

- 2-26 A. Harris pp. 124-137
- 2-28 B. Harris pp. 144-150

VI. Sports and Music

- 3-2 A. Harris pp. 151-170
- 3-5 B. Harris pp. 170-186

EXAM 2 Wednesday 3-7

VII. News

- 3-9 A. Harris pp.187-198
- 3-12 B. Harris pp. 199-208
- 3-14 C. Harris pp. 208-217
- 3-16 D. Harris pp. 217-224

VIII. Politics

- 3-26 A. Harris pp. 225-242
- 3-28 B. Harris pp. 242-254

IX. Violence

- 3-30 A. Harris pp. 255-269
- 4-2 B. Valkenburg pp. 39-50
- 4-4 C. Harris pp. 269-286
- 4-6 D. Valkenburg pp. 50-57
- 4-9 E. Valkenburg pp. 58-69
- 4-11 F. Valkenburg pp. 69-82

EXAM 3 Friday 4-13

X. Sex

- 4-16 A. Harris pp. 287-304
- 4-18 B. Harris pp. 305-316
- 4-20 C. TBA

XI. Values and Prosocial Media

- 4-23 A. Harris pp. 317-327
 4-25 B. Harris pp. 328-335
 4-27 C. Harris pp. 335-351

XI. Managing the Media and New Technology

- 4-30 A. Harris pp. 352-370
 5-2 B. Valkenburg pp. 108-124
 5-4 C. Valkenburg pp. 124-135

FINAL EXAM Wednesday, May 9, 11:50 p.m. BH 5102 (non-cumulative)

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GENERAL INFORMATION

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☞ **Exams:** What I hope that you learn from this course are largely concepts, themes, trends, and ways of thinking about the psychology of mass communication. For this reason the four exams (100 pts. each) will stress ideas and applications, as well as factual information. You will receive the short answer and essay questions one week in advance and be responsible for preparing for an in-class exam of questions to be selected from this list of questions. If you fall behind in the reading, expect a very rough week preparing for the exam! Exams must be taken at the scheduled times unless prior arrangement has been made. Collaborative studying with other students is permitted, though not either encouraged or discouraged.

☞ **Written assignments:** There will be frequent short written assignments of varying point value due throughout the semester. The purpose of these is to help you think more about the concepts studied in this class and apply them to your own life and thus understand them more deeply and find them more meaningful. Assignments will generally be handed out in class about two class periods in advance of their due date. If you wish to submit this to the TA or Dr. Harris electronically via e-mail, that is okay. It must reach us by 5:00 on the due date to avoid a late penalty.

☞ **Attendance:** Because class discussion and participation are so important, and because we will frequently be watching videos or slides in class, you will receive one point for each day you attend class. These points are figured into the curve like any other points. Please come on time, although I would prefer you come late rather than not at all.

☞ **Lecture Notes:** Abbreviated lecture notes in Power Point will be posted on K-State Online. You might want to print these out before coming to class. However, these are not meant to be a substitute for coming to class and taking notes, and you will find that you need to write down more than is on the posted lectures. This may help you be able to do more thinking in class and less writing.

☞ **Course grades:** Grades are figured from your total number of points on exams, assignments, and attendance. The likely grade categories are 91-100%= A, 81-90%= B, 71-80%= C, 61-70% =D, 0-60%=F. The grades will NOT be curved. You can check your current grade at any time through K-State Online.

☞ **General contact policy:** I am generally in my office during normal working hours except for regular commitments posted on my door. Sometimes if I am nearby there will be a note telling where I am. *If the door is open and I am not there, I will be back very soon.* I will be glad to meet with you individually to discuss class material or set an appointment by e-mail or phone. E-mail is a good way to reach me, as I have mine on all day in my office and usually check at least once from home in the evening.

☞ **Bad weather:** This class will meet unless all university classes are canceled due to weather. I live very close and can always get here on foot. If you live some distance away and weather prevents you from attending, contact me if there is written work due or an exam that day. In case the university cancels classes, keep up with the reading as scheduled. Any assignment or exam scheduled on a snow day will occur or be due during the next class meeting. You will be notified by e-mail if there is any change in this.

☞ **Children:** If you have child care problems and need to bring your child to class sometime, I have no objections as long as you take responsibility for them, including removing them if they become disruptive. Of course, enrolled students get priority on seating, and there will be certain days with class material not particularly appropriate for children.

☞ **Cell Phones:** Please turn cell phones off during class. If you must accept a call in an emergency, please step outside the class to take it.

☞ **Accommodations and Disabilities:** Any student with any disability who needs special accommodation or assistance in this course should speak with the instructor as soon as possible about this.

☞ **Academic Honesty:** Kansas State University has an Undergraduate Honor System based on personal integrity in academic matters. This presumes that all of one's work is performed honestly and without unauthorized assistance. Students, by registration at KSU, acknowledge the jurisdiction of the KSU Honor System. A vital component of the Honor System is the Honor Pledge which applies to all assignments, examinations, or other course work undertaken by undergraduate students. The Honor Pledge is implied, *whether or not it is stated*: "On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work." A grade of XF can result from a breach of academic honesty. An XF would be failure of the course with the X on the transcript indicating failure as a result of a breach of academic honesty. For more information, visit the Honor System home web page at: <http://www.ksu.edu/honor>. If you have any questions about what constitutes allowable collaboration or appropriate citation style, please ask the instructor.

"All television is educational television. The only question is, 'What is it teaching?'"

–Nicholas Johnson, former FCC Commissioner

"Art is a lie through which we can see the truth."

–Pablo Picasso