Instructor: Dr. Eric Rasmussen, Assistant Professor, Public Relations
Media & Communication, Room 415
806-834-6870, e-mail: eric.rasmussen@ttu.edu

Office hours: T/Th 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Class meets: MWF, 11:00am – 11:50am (MC 084)

Course Catalog Description:
This course “critiques and analyzes media, the audience, the mediated environment, media industry, digital media, and media professions, particularly advertising, electronic media, public relations, and journalism” (from the undergraduate catalog).

Required Text
Other Readings as Assigned, will be posted on Blackboard.

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<th>TTU STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT METHODS</th>
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| 1. Identify methodologies of historical, literary, philosophical, and/or aesthetic research and recognize their applicability to everyday life. | • Instructor evaluation of relevant in-class activities covering outside readings as well as previous class discussions  
• Weekly topic projects |
| 2. Develop analytical arguments in written and/or oral forms. Evaluate events, ideas, and artistic expressions in terms of multiple cultural contexts and value systems. | • Instructor critiques of oral class participation during relevant in-class activities  
• Instructor evaluation of written entries in Media Use journal project and in other weekly topic projects |
| 3. Demonstrate ways in which the humanities are fundamental to the health and survival of any society. | • Instructor evaluation of relevant in-class activities covering outside readings as well as previous class discussions  
• Weekly topic projects |

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<th>COLLEGE-LEVEL COMPETENCY</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT METHODS</th>
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| Students graduating from Texas Tech University should be able to think critically and evaluate possible | • Instructor critiques of oral class participation during relevant in-class activities  
• Instructor evaluation of written entries in the |
## Course Requirements (572 possible points)

### Attendance/participation (82 points [2 points per class period])
This is a discussion-based class. Student participation is necessary for the success of this class. Students are expected to attend class regularly and engage actively and thoughtfully in class discussion. Students are expected to do all of the readings for each class period.

### Weekly projects/assignments (240 points)
There are 12 weekly projects throughout the semester. Each project is worth 20 points. You will be graded on project quality, thoroughness, relevance to the weekly topic, and critical thinking about the weekly topic. Each weekly project
will be announced at the beginning of each week, or based on the schedule outlined in the “Lecture Schedule and Readings” document/addendum to the syllabus.

**Midterm Exam (50 points)**

**Final project (200 points):** Either alone or in a group of 2 or three (your choice), you will create a 3-8 minute video on how people (you choose the demographic group—it could be children, adolescents, college students, parents, etc.) are affected by media in their daily lives. The video should also include some practical ideas on what the demographic group can/should do to help them (1) benefit from potentially positive media content or (2) resist/prevent potentially negative effects of media exposure. You can choose one type of content (again, your choice), such as violent content, sexual content, advertising, etc. and focus your project around that content. You should find something that we talk about or read during the semester that you feel like you just have to learn more about. This should be something that excites you related to media literacy, and you should focus your final project on that. All final projects must be approved by the instructor. You will upload the private video to YouTube and will e-mail a functioning URL to the instructor. A non-functioning or non-private URL will be awarded a “zero” for the final project grade. Any media content you use for this video should not be used for any other purpose besides the educational purposes of this class.

**Grading Scale:**

The following grading scale is used for determination of final letter grades in the course and as a general rubric for how student assignments are evaluated. I do not round up.

- **A = 90 - 100** *Excellent.* Mastery of the assignment/concepts at the highest level of attainment.
- **B = 80 - 89.9** *Good.* Strong performance demonstrating a high level of attainment.
- **C = 70 - 79.9** *Average.* An acceptable performance demonstrating an adequate level of attainment.
- **D = 60 - 69.9** *Inferior.* A marginal performance; a minimal passing level of attainment.
- **F = 0 - 59.9** *Failure.* Unacceptable performance revealing almost no understanding of content.

**Graded Assignments:**

Late assignments will not be accepted (and will receive a score of zero), and incompletes will not be granted except under extreme circumstances.

**Special Grading Policies (please take note):**

1. No extra credit is available.
2. Grades are not rounded up.
3. No special assignments are available to “boost” a student’s grade.
4. There is no curve.

**Questions about your grades:**
I am more than happy to talk with you about your grade and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your graded work. That said, I require a 24-hour “cool off” period. We will not discuss your grade until we both have time to gather our thoughts and have a productive conversation. After the initial 24 hours, students have one week to meet with the instructor to discuss the grade. If the student does not meet with the instructor within a week, then the instructor considers the matter closed. All discussions regarding grades are conducted in person, in my office; I do not discuss grades during class time, over the phone, or via email.

**Attendance and other class policies:**

Students are expected to attend every class, arrive on time, stay for the entire class, and participate in class discussions while present. There are no excused absences, except for religious holidays and for officially approved TTU trips greater than 40 miles from campus (with advanced notification). It is up to you to manage your absences.

Attendance is required and necessary for your success in the course. You are responsible for all material covered in class, including readings, class discussions, and any other material introduced by the instructor, guest speakers, or other students during presentations. Students missing class must obtain class notes from another student, even if the absence is excused.

**No Make-ups:**

Students will not be allowed to make up missed assignments. Weddings, family vacations, commitments related to other classes, etc. don’t count. No exceptions, so please don’t ask.

**Expectations for Class Participation/Conduct:**

The Student Code of Conduct applies to all work related to this class (available online at [http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentaffairs/](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentaffairs/)). All students are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars and professionals. Please reference [OP 34.12](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentaffairs/) regarding Academic Integrity.

Please be respectful of your instructor and the other students in the class; again, the class relies on healthy, constructive discussion and debate.

Please turn your mobile devices off while in class. Use your laptops and other devices for class-related purposes only. Please no texting during class.

I reserve the right to remove you from the class should it become necessary to maintain a civil and constructive classroom environment. If necessary, I will reduce your class participation grade to provide the appropriate ‘motivation’ to secure your compliance with the policies regarding classroom conduct.

**Students with Challenges:**
Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor’s office hours. Please note instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, you may contact the Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or 806-742-2405. Please reference OP 34.22 for additional information.

Observance of Religious Holidays:

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an exam or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. Please reference OP 34.19 for additional information.

TTU Resources for Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Violence

Texas Tech University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other Title IX violations are not tolerated by the University. Report any incidents to the Office for Student Rights & Resolution, (806)-742-SAFE (7233) or file a report online at titleix.ttu.edu/students. Faculty and staff members at TTU are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available resources are: TTU Student Counseling Center, 806-742-3674, https://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc/ (Provides confidential support on campus.) TTU Student Counseling Center 24-hour Helpline, 806-742-5555, (Assists students who are experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. If you call the helpline, you will speak with a mental health counselor.) Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center, 806-763-7273, voiceofhopelubbock.org (24-hour hotline that provides support for survivors of sexual violence.) The Risk, Intervention, Safety and Education (RISE) Office, 806-742-2110, rise.ttu.edu (Provides a range of resources and support options focused on prevention education and student wellness.) Texas Tech Police Department, 806-742-3931, http://www.depts.ttu.edu/ttpd/ (To report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus.)

Miscellaneous:

• The instructor reserves the right to make any changes to the syllabus, schedule, assignments, readings, forms, lecture topics, assessments, and any other course content if deemed necessary to facilitate classroom management and to achieve the learning objectives for the course. Students are responsible to stay aware of these changes.

• I take plagiarism very seriously. I expect your work in this class to be completely your work. It should also be original for this class—you may not receive credit for work you do in this class for another class, or vice versa. If you have a question about the originality of your work, please discuss with the instructor as soon as possible. I reserve the right to report plagiarism or suspected plagiarism to the university. The same policy
goes for both presenting another’s work as your own, for recreating another’s work in substantially the same form, or for using work you’ve done for another class in this class. The instructor will be the sole judge of what constitutes “substantially the same form.” Any and all instances of plagiarism will receive a zero, and your final course grade will be Fail, at the instructor’s discretion.