

# COMM 1307 Tentative Syllabus – Introduction to Mass Media and Culture in the Electronic Environment



## Distance Education Section (HCC)

*Credit – 3.00 \* Lecture Hrs. – 3.00 \* Course Contact Hrs. – 48.00*

*Prerequisites: Must be placed into college level reading (or take GUST 0342 as a co-requisite)  
and be placed into college level writing (or take ENGL 0310/0349 as a co-requisite).*

*Frequent Requisites: College-Level Reading & College-Level Writing.*

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### **\* Class Meeting Times & Room \***

This is a lecture-based course that is an Online Course (so, you are to come and go into the Blackboard Vista Online Classroom as much as you feel necessary). Additionally, you will be required to come into a designated HCC testing center for presentational purposes (you will only be required to be present during one testing session where you will give a presentation). This will be discussed during the semester. Those unable to make this presentational session must make

arrangements with the instructor prior to the testing date (*advice --- it would be in your best interests to be present during this date*). Also, see the [Attendance Policy](#) below.

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### **\* Instructor – Phone – Email \***

Carlton Abernathy

Location – HCC-Central (Fine Arts Center); Office # is FAC-P-228.

Office – (713) 718-6609

[carlton.abernathy@hccs.edu](mailto:carlton.abernathy@hccs.edu)

It is recommended **to utilize the Blackboard Vista Email for the fastest response**. This icon and/or tool will be on the left-hand side of your browser page. The icon is an envelope indicated as “Mail.”

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### **\* Conference Hours \***

Will be arranged by appointment (please feel free to contact me any time).

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### **\* Course Description \***

The following is the description of this course is from the HCC Course COMM Course Descriptions:

*“Analyzes communication theory and mass media in 21st century society. Surveys history, operation, and structure of the American communication system. Identifies major legal, ethical, and sociocultural issues, studies basic communication theory, and the interrelations between media and the individual, media and society, and media and the future. Examines career potential and job prospects in today’s and tomorrow’s electronic culture. Core curriculum course.”*

Moreover, the course is involves a survey of the mass media and other areas of mass communication designed to acquaint students with the basic history, law, ethics, theory, function and practice of media industries and disciplines. This course will examine the role mass communication plays in society with the intention of improving student media literacy.

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### **\* Basic Objectives \***

When you have successfully completed this course, you will be able to:

- ◆ Discuss the development of print and broadcast media, advertising, public relations, movies, books and recordings.
- ◆ Identify pioneers in mass communications.
- ◆ Examine theories, research, laws and external influences of the media.
- ◆ Illustrate how the media are everywhere through personal reflection (Media Logs).
- ◆ Become a more sophisticated mass media consumer.

Academic Discipline Program Learning Outcomes; Course Student Learning Outcomes; & Available Instructional Methods

#### Academic Discipline/CTE Program Learning Outcomes

1. Apply elemental competency in the operation of selected media.
2. Understand and explain the terms mass communication (also referred to as media communication).
3. Describe the development of print media, radio, television, and film.
4. Provide a chronology of some milestones relevant to the advancement of media from their onset to today.

#### Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

1. Discuss the development of print and broadcast media, advertising, public relations, movies, and recordings.
  - i. Subject to use various techniques to help students learn the history of media communication, and work to influence their use of creativity in the conception of media strategies for the future.
2. Examine theories about media communication, and provide clarification to others about the significance of the public viewer's critical eye to reasonably comprehend that which is produced and aired by the media.
  - i. Subject to facilitate students' recognition and comprehension of theories associated with media communication, and foster their self-confidence to help others view media information more critically.
3. Understand and define mass communication.
4. Understand and explain the functions of the mass

media.

- i. Through various assigned readings from textbooks, peer-reviewed articles, class-discussions, student & peer presentations, media projects, and practical experience.
5. Understand and describe the development of radio and television and the film industry, and explain the relationships between the two.
6. Understand the implications of electronic technology and the Internet on mass communication.
7. \*Write a media intake log or diary of his or her media usage through theory-based information learned in class utilizing MLA or APA formatting style and guidelines.

Instructional Methods for this lecture-based course may include the following: In-Class, Hybrid, Web-Enhanced, or Distance Education.

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### **\* Required Text \***

Media and Culture, (Most Current Edition), by Richard Campbell.

It is a somewhat expensive book (sorry folks), but it is a necessity. The reason is because not everything on the exams will be strictly from lectures; that is, some aspects of a chapter could be from your reading and not from the lectures. If you have not already purchased your book, you may order your textbook from the HCC Bookstore online at <http://hccs.bkstore.com>. You can ask for it to be sent to your nearest campus bookstore at no charge, or you can have it mailed to your home with a mailing fee.

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### **\* Grading & Assignments \***

Assignments and exams will be graded on a 100-point scale: 100-90 = 'A' (four points per semester hour); 89-80 = 'B' (three points per semester hour); 79-70 = 'C' (two points per semester hour); 69-60 = 'D' (one point per semester hour); 59 and below = 'F' (zero points per semester hour). Other potential postings include the following: W (Withdrawn, which equals zero points per semester hour); I (Incomplete, which equals zero points per semester hour); and AUD (Audit, which equals zero points per semester hour). To compute grade point average (GPA), divide the total grade points by the total number of semester hours attempted. The grades "IP," "COM" and "I" do not affect GPA. The final grade will be determined based upon the following:

- ◆ Quizzes:-----20 %
- ◆ Exams (2 including final):-----20 %
- ◆ Semester Assignments-----20 %
- ◆ Discussion Forums:-----15 %
- ◆ Term Paper/Presentation:-----15 %
- ◆ Media Logs (1):-----10 %

**Quick Note** – All semester assignments, discussion forums, and media logs begin with the grade of a 95 %; a grade more than 95 % will be reserved for those who go above and beyond the call of the assignment’s instructions (*this higher grade [or a grade more than 95 %] will be assigned at the instructor’s discretion*).

**Discussion Forums** – Once each discussion forum topic is posted, it will remain online for the duration of the semester **(or the designated deadline specified by your instructor)**.

The icon will be on the left-hand side of your browser page. The icon is a thumb tack indicated as “Discussions.” This tool will be provided to you for the semester. You will be given a statement, thought, or opinion (this is the discussion forum topic); and, from that, you will be required to respond with your own idea or opinion (that is, your “*best educated guess*” or “*best thoughtful insight*”). An example topic for the discussion forum could be: “***The media have much control and influence in our society and our lives.***” With this example in mind, you would offer your own idea as a response. Your grade from the discussion forum will be based from the following:

**Proficient = 95 % or ‘A’** --- To receive a proficient grade during each discussion forum, you must deliver a thought and/or **individual** insight (in other words, your own idea and not someone else’s) and provide some kind of backup information supporting your claim. Here is a potential ‘A’ student response to the example topic mentioned above:

***Example – “I agree with the statement, because when the media give us a suggestion we do what they tell us to. For example, when Hurricane Rita came everyone left the city of Houston (due to a suggestion by city officials***

***and the media).***”

Each student’s response should be different and unique. You are encouraged to elaborate on another student’s ideas (remember, everyone will be posting a response in a discussion format). For instance, to elaborate on the response above, you could say, “***I agree as well. I drove from Houston to San Antonio because the news made it seem like I absolutely had to get out of Houston.***”

‘Gimme-Grade’ or ‘Free-‘B’ = 85 % or ‘B’ --- To receive a ‘Free-‘B’ grade, you must make some kind of statement or posting. Here’s a discussion forum example:

***Example – “I agree with what Jane Doe said.”***

This might seem easy, but it is incentive to give some kind of statement to get some credit.

No Response = 0 % or ‘F’ --- If you do not respond to the discussion forum topic during the assigned week, you will receive 0 % as a grade. There is no exception for this; so, either you make the response or you don’t. The discussion forum is your chance to very easily score highly and get some easy points for your final grade. Don’t wait to the last minute; get your discussions out of the way each week so you do not have to face a potential ‘No Response’ grade.

**Exams** – Each exam will also remain online for the duration of the semester **(or the designated deadline specified by your instructor)**.

**Quizzes** – You will be given Chapter Post Quizzes following every chapter; these quizzes will remain online for the entire semester (**or the designated deadline specified by your instructor**), but it is highly recommended that you take the quiz as soon as you can after it has been posted (in other words, do not wait until the last minute to do all of your quizzes).

**Term Paper/Presentation** – Instructions for this task will be given and discussed during the semester.

**Media Logs** – Instructions for this task will be given and discussed during the semester.

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### **\* Blackboard Vista Login Page \***

This page will get you into the Distance Education (web-based) portion of this class (**this is the login page to lead you to where you will go to class**):  
<http://hccs.blackboard.com/webct/entryPageIns.doweбct>

If you have login problems, please try to use your [DE Technical Support Center](#). If you still have problems, then please contact me (your instructor).

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### **\* Blackboard Student User ID \***

Your Blackboard login user ID will be **your HCC User ID (sometimes referred to as the “W” number)**. All HCC students have a unique User ID. If you do not know your User ID you can look it up by visiting the HCC home page:

From [www.hccs.edu](http://www.hccs.edu), click on [Student System Sign In](#) (on the right-hand side of the page below ‘Connect’) and then click [Retrieve UserID](#). From here, follow the directions to get your ID number.

Once you have this number readily available, you can use the following direct link to get you to the Blackboard Login Page:

<http://hccs.blackboard.com/webct/entryPageIns.doweбct>

The default student password is “distance.” Students will then be prompted to change their password after their first login. Please visit DE Technical Support FAQs if you need additional assistance with your log in.

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## **\* HCC Course Withdrawal Policy \***

The State of Texas imposes penalties on students who drop courses excessively. Students are limited to no more than SIX total course withdrawals throughout their educational career at a Texas public college or university.

To help students avoid having to drop/withdraw from any class, HCC has instituted an Early Alert process by which your professor will “alert” you and Distance Education (DE) counselors that you might fail a class because of excessive absences and/or poor academic performance. Contact your DE professor regarding your academic performance or a DE counselor to learn about helpful HCC resources (e.g. online tutoring, child care, financial aid, job placement, etc.).

**In order to withdraw from your DE class, you MUST first contact your DE professor, PRIOR to the withdrawal deadline to receive a “W” on your transcript.** After the withdrawal deadline has passed, you will receive the grade that you would have earned. Zeros averaged in for required coursework not submitted will lower your semester average significantly, most likely resulting in a failing grade of an “F”. It is the responsibility of the student to withdraw from the class; however, your professor reserves the right to withdraw you without your request due to excessive absences. If you do not feel comfortable contacting your professor to withdraw, you may contact a DE counselor. However, please do **not** contact both a DE counselor and your DE professor to request a withdrawal; either one is sufficient.

**The final withdrawal deadline for each term can be found under the calendar which is on the [HCC Home Page](#). If you click on [View Academic Calendar By Term](#) and select the term you are currently enrolled in, you will be able to find exactly when the withdrawal deadline is for the semester (and various other important dates as well).** Classes of various durations (regular term, second start, mini-term, flex-entry, 8-weeks, etc.) may all have different final withdrawal deadlines. Please review HCC’s online [View Academic Calendar By Term](#) or contact the HCC Registrar’s Office at 713.718.8500 to determine mini-term class withdrawal deadlines.

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## **\* Distance Education Advising and Counseling Services \***

Much DE student information can be found on the DE Student Services website: <http://de.hccs.edu/portal/site/de/>. Advising or counseling can be accomplished by telephone at (713) 718-5275 - option # 4 or via email at [decounseling@hccs.edu](mailto:decounseling@hccs.edu). Student Services Associates (SSA) and Counselors can assist students with admissions, registration, entrance testing requirements, degree planning, transfer issues, and career counseling. In-person, confidential sessions, can also be scheduled, if necessary, as HCC counselors maintain a



local referral base in order to provide appropriate referrals to students with personal or family issues that may require long-term solutions.

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### **\* International Students \***

International Students are restricted to ONLY ONE online/distance education class per semester. Please contact the International Student Office at (713) 718-8520 if you have additional questions about your visa status.

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### **\* Students with Disabilities \***

"Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the appropriate HCC Disability Support Service (DSS) Counselor at the beginning of each semester. Faculty is authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office.

Students who are requesting special testing accommodations must first contact the appropriate (most convenient) DSS office for assistance:

#### **Disability Support Services Offices:**

- ◆ **System** – (713) 718.5165
- ◆ **Central** – (713) 718.6164 – also for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and Students Outside of the HCC District service areas.
- ◆ **Northwest** – (713) 718.5422
- ◆ **Northeast** – (713) 718.8420
- ◆ **Southeast** – (713) 718.7218
- ◆ **Southwest** – (713) 718.7909

After student accommodation letters have been approved by the DSS office and submitted to DE Counseling for processing, students will receive an email confirmation informing them of the Instructional Support Specialist assigned to their professor.

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### **\* Notice for Students who Live Outside of Houston \***

Students who live or work outside the Houston area and cannot take paper exams at one of our HCC testing locations MUST make arrangements for a proctor. Please see the DE Student Services Additional Resources webpage for more information.

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**\* School of Continuing Education Guidelines; Student Rights, Policies & Procedures; and Distance Education Policies \***

The following link will take you to the School of Continuing Education for links including information on email, parking, attendance, earning Continuing Education Units, policies, and more: <http://hccs.edu/CE-student-guidelines>. For other detailed information about HCC policies and procedures including rights and responsibilities of our students, please visit: <http://hccs.edu/student-rights>

The Distance Education Student Handbook contains policies and procedures unique to the DE student. Students should have reviewed the handbook as part of the mandatory orientation. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the handbook's contents. The handbook contains valuable information, answers, and resources, such as DE contacts, policies and procedures (how to drop, attendance requirements, etc.), student services (ADA, financial aid, degree planning, etc.), course information, testing procedures, technical support, and academic calendars. Refer to the DE Student Handbook by visiting this link: <http://de.hccs.edu/de/de-student-handbook>.

**Virtual Classroom Conduct:**

As with on-campus classes, all students in HCC Distance Education courses are required to follow all HCC Policies & Procedures, the Student Code of Conduct, the Student Handbook, and relevant sections of the Texas Education Code when interacting and communicating in a virtual classroom with faculty and fellow students. Students who violate these policies and guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action that could include denial of access to course-related email, discussion groups, and chat rooms or being removed from the class.

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**\* Attendance Policy \***

This is an Online Course, and your grade will be reflected upon your involvement or lack thereof within the class. Logging on and checking the content of the course frequently is not only a good idea, but it is also imperative for your success in this online course. The instructor can see the length of time you've logged into Blackboard Vista and even what pages or sections you have visited while logged on. Consequently, the instructor can virtually see all of your movements throughout the course. If you never log on, you will miss work and essentially miss class. So, show up for class. It is recommended to visit the class daily to check for important updates, announcements, and changes.

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### **\* Late Work \***

It is your responsibility for making up all class related materials. You will receive a 0, if you do not make arrangements for makeup quizzes, exams, and/or assignments. Do not expect me to come to you for what you miss or do not turn in.

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### **\* Academic Dishonesty \***

HCC commits itself to the preparation of Mass Media professionals and scholars. Such a mission demands the highest standard of academic honesty and integrity. Violations of academic honesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, collusion, deception, conflict of interest and theft are not tolerated and can lead to severe penalties. Disciplinary actions are outlined in the Student Handbook. Don't take any chances with this; it's simply not worth it.

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### **\* Use of Cameras or Recording Devices \***

Use of recording devices, including camera phones and tape recorders, is prohibited in classrooms, laboratories, faculty offices, and other locations where instruction, tutoring, or testing occurs. The duplication and/or reproduction of any class material(s) without the consent of the author or instructor is strictly prohibited. \Students with disabilities who need to use a recording device as a reasonable accommodation should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities for information regarding reasonable accommodations.

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### **\* EGLS3 -- Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System \***

At Houston Community College, professors believe that thoughtful student feedback is necessary to improve teaching and learning. During a designated time near the end of the term, you will be asked to answer a short online survey of research-based questions related to instruction. The anonymous results of the survey will be made available to your professors and department chairs for continual improvement of instruction. Look for the survey as part of the Houston Community College Student System online near the end of the term.

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**\* If you have questions about the syllabus or about the course, please email the instructor with the Blackboard Vista Email System. \***

*If you are unable to reach the instructor via Blackboard Vista Email (again, for the best and quickest response, you must attempt to contact the instructor through Blackboard); you may then contact the instructor via email or by phone (please see [Contact Information](#) listed above).*

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