Introduction and Objectives


Then this class is for you! Communication 130 is an introductory survey class in media communication. The class is required for students in the Elliott School of Communication who are planning to major in integrated marketing communications (advertising, public relations and marketing), journalism, electronic media, applied strategic communications, or open emphasis. This class will help you select an emphasis area as well as informing and entertaining you!

The course deals with the workings of the mass media in America and the world — movies, newspapers, the Internet, radio, television, advertising, public relations, social media, multi-media platforms, convergence and so on. We will take a critical look at the ways messages are created, filtered and presented to the public. We will look at media history and technology, as well as media research, theory, law, and ethics.

Course objectives will be met through selected chapter readings in the textbook, narrated PowerPoints, videos, blog entries/reactions, a creative project, a Comm Week paper, tests and study guides.

I try to make everything enjoyable, friendly and interactive. Free and open discussion is encouraged. Please call me, email me, and come to my office. I am honored to be given the chance to teach you!

Thanks!

Dan
This Course is Special

This is an online-only course. We will not meet in a physical classroom. Please start by clicking the Getting Started button and reading through that site carefully; it provides good advice on succeeding in online courses. You also should immediately read the Syllabus and frequently check the Weekly Modules to stay on top of what’s required and when. Those modules will be where all class material may be found. Announcements are located on the home page and also will be emailed to you. You need to read them.

Textbook (required)


Eight Important Pieces of Advice

1. It is critical that you interact with me and the rest of the class this semester. We want to find out what a bright, interesting person you are! Expect 2-3 emails each week from me, reminding you of upcoming reading, blogs and tests. I also will use the emails to give the class important updates on matters that affect everyone.

2. Log into Blackboard and visit our class website daily. Check your email at least once a day. Stay on top of what we are doing. Work ahead when possible. Get really, really organized. In taking an online class, it’s especially critical that you have a schedule — and follow it — for reading, studying and responding.

3. Do you have questions? Do you need help? Please don’t wait until it’s too late! Ask me. Participate with enthusiasm. The faster you stand out from the crowd, the sooner I realize what a smart, interesting person you are.

4. General Principal #4: Take the initiative to make things better. Adapt. Improvise. Overcome.

5. Deadlines are important and I expect you to get work done on time. It is your responsibility to let me know, in advance if possible, when you are unable to complete your work due to an emergency. Exceptions to this policy will only be granted after you and I have a phone or in-person discussion. Verifiable documents from a physician, school official and/or employer will be required. Paperwork showing that you visited Student Health Services is not a viable excuse.

6. Be careful about posting or otherwise sharing too much personal information about yourself. Be aware that other people can read your blog posts and discussion board entries. Protect your privacy as necessary.

7. Proofread your work carefully. Spelling and other grammar mistakes will hurt your grades. Sweat the small stuff.

8. You are in college. You decide what is important and what is not important. My advice: It is all important.

What You Will Be Graded On

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four Tests</td>
<td>50 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Blog Assignments</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Project</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm Week Paper</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 percent</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

• Tests are 50 percent of your grade

There will be 50 Multiple-Choice and True/False questions on each of the four tests. The tests, which will be taken online, will cover only the material presented/discussed since the previous test. A Study Guide will be available a week before each test. None of the tests will be dropped.

Use ONLY the Firefox browser to take tests. When taking tests, you must select and save your answer before proceeding to the next question. You may not backtrack to change your answer once it is saved. Both questions and possible answers will be randomized for each student. In all cases, select the best possible answer.

You will have a single two-hour time period (your choice) during the three-day period (from noon on Tuesdays until noon on Fridays) to take each test. Dates for the tests are indicated on the syllabus and in the Weekly Modules. It is strongly suggested that you not wait until the last few hours of the last day to take a test. If you have technical problems, contact me immediately. Test scores will show up on Blackboard minutes after you have completed the test.

You should use your book, online lecture notes, videos, and study guides to prepare. You may use them when taking a test. I strongly encourage you to find a study partner (you may know people in the class, or you can find people on the Discussion Board).

These four tests make up the largest portion of your grade and must be taken seriously if you are to do well in the class. All tests will be available on or before their scheduled start time inside the appropriate Weekly Module. To practice taking a test, click on the Sample Test button.
Read this carefully: If you miss or do not complete a test by the deadline, expect a score of zero, not a "retake" or "do-over." This is not high school. Exceptions are sometimes made in cases of an emergency, but only after you have contacted me and I have given permission for you to retake the test. Such exceptions will be rare.

• BLOG ASSIGNMENTS are 30 percent of your grade

Six blog assignments will be required. I will ask you to write on a variety of mass communication topics. All will require you to do research and to respond creatively. Some will ask you for your opinions and to propose solutions.

These assignments will also require you to post at least one thoughtful, helpful comment to another student’s blog. You will need to make a serious contribution to the other blogger’s comment. A portion of your grade for each blog will be based on your comments.

The topics will be posted at noon on selected Tuesdays (check the class schedule and the Weekly Modules). You will need to post a thoughtful response of about 300 words no later than noon on Friday. Good grammar, spelling and punctuation are required, and the lack of such will hurt your grades. Please click on the Sample Blog button to practice blogging.

Because there are 150 students enrolled in this class, each 300-word blog assignment will require me to read, evaluate and grade an average of 45,000 words. It will usually take me two weeks to grade each blog. If you multiply the number of students and the size of each blog, that will mean that I will be grading 270,000 of your carefully chosen words this semester! I ask that you please be patient.

In addition to meeting the requirements set forth in the blog instructions, other factors are always at play, among them the quality of the writing, whether the required length was followed, the quality of content in the post, whether you provided a “canned” answer or showed intelligence and creativity, and so on. That means that portions of the grading of each post are somewhat subjective, but that’s true of any creative venture.

These blog assignments are designed to help you learn how to write tight, paring your message to its essentials. Make sure that you follow instructions, get to the point, provide examples, and eliminate off-topic rambling. If you are, like me, a sometimes wordy writer, this is good training. Many of us need to learn how to think and write more concisely. It’s part of the digital world in which we live.

• The Creative Project is 10 percent of your grade

This is another chance for your creativity to shine! Each of you will do a unique project that shows off your communication skills. The topic and the content will be your choice; feel free to bounce ideas off me. In general, you will be asked to demonstrate your ability to interact with the media in society. Reading the chapters, and thinking about your own interests and hobbies, are good places to start the process. For example, if you are interested in music, you could write and record a song. If you love the Internet, you could create a new blog or web page. Or maybe you could host a podcast, develop a visual PowerPoint presentation, shoot a clever YouTube video, do a photo essay, start and use a social media site, create a unique newspaper or magazine, plan an advertising or promotional campaign, put together a video movie trailer mashup, write/illustrate a comic book or graphic novel, etc. These are by no means the only possibilities, just several examples to get you thinking.

The emphasis here is on creating a project through visuals, audio and other technology — not in writing a research paper. Details will be announced by noon on Tuesday, Oct. 2 (inside the Week 7 module). Due by noon on Monday, Nov. 26.

• The Comm Week Paper is 10 percent of your grade

On Oct. 17-18, the Elliott School of Communication will present Comm Week, a two-day collection of more than a dozen interesting discussions, presentations and special events designed to inform and entertain communication majors. A multitude of topics — about social media, TV and print journalism, advertising and public relations, job hunting and others — will take place. You will be required to attend one session and write a 200-word paper on what happened and what you thought of it. A complete schedule of events, and instructions (including the deadline), will be posted inside a Weekly Module a week or two in advance. For those of you not in the Wichita area, one or more of the sessions will be posted for you to watch. The Comm Week paper is due by noon on Monday, Oct. 29.

• Extra Credit?

There are no extra credit possibilities, so please don’t ask. Just do your best on the tests, blog assignments, Creative Project and Comm Week paper, and you should be fine!
Grading Philosophy

I have spent 25 years helping thousands of college students, allowing a 15-year professional writing and editing career. My evaluative skills are fair and solid. If you object to a grade or have a problem with a test question, I expect you to contact me so that we can resolve it. Spurious complaints, however, should not become a habit. To receive good grades your work needs to have excellent content and be clear, accurate, structured and creative. I reward students who complete the requirements of each weekly module, who work hard to improve, who participate in online discussions and activities, and who follow instructions. Remember that an “A” represents Superior work, a “B” is Above Average work, a “C” is Average work and a “D” is Below Average work. Receiving less than an “A” is not a disgrace.

Grading Scale

Wichita State University has plus/minus grading. The following grading scale is based on a structure developed by the Elliott School of Communication. The scale also shows the effect of each grade on your Points Per Credit Hour (transcript gpa).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>WSU does not allow</td>
<td>4.0 gpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% and above</td>
<td>3.7 gpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>3.3 gpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>3.0 gpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>2.7 gpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>2.3 gpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>2.0 gpa</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>0.7 gpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>0.0 gpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 60%</td>
<td>0.0 gpa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Checking Your Grades

Go to the Tools button on our class site to check your grades as they appear on Blackboard. If you believe a grade is incorrectly logged, contact me (nicely, please!). It’s better to fix mistakes right away rather than waiting until the end of the semester.

It’s important for you to know the right and wrong way to interpret your scores. Your grade is not based on a “points” system; therefore you should not add up all your scores and average them.

Instead, it works this way: The tests are worth 50 percent of your grade, the blog assignments are worth 30 percent of your grade, the Creative Project is worth 10 percent of your grade, and the Comm Week paper is worth 10 percent of your grade.

Blackboard will weight each category separately. Every assignment or test within those categories is graded equally. The score to pay attention to is the Weighted Total. It represents your overall grade. If you compare that percentage to the grading scale, you can track your overall grade during the semester.

Checking Your Email

You should check your WSU email at least once daily to stay on top of announcements and updates in the Weekly Modules and elsewhere.

If you would rather not check your WSU email (which has limited storage), log on to MyWSU and follow the instructions to re-route your WSU email to your personal email account. In fact, I strongly encourage you to do so. You can create a folder on your personal email site to save all your class emails in one place.

If you run into trouble, please contact the WSU Help Desk at (316) 978-HELP or at http://bit.ly/A7npnM

The Discussion Board

The Discussion Board button will take you to a place where you can “talk” to other students and exchange questions and answers. I will look at it only once in a while, so it’s usually best to contact me directly if you have questions.

Computer and Software Requirements

At the start of this semester, make sure that your computer’s browser will work with Blackboard. Click on the Getting Started! button on our website for instructions on how to check this.

In order to download materials for this class, especially videos, you will need a broadband connection. Dial-up services simply don’t provide the necessary speed or reliability. If you are having trouble calling up things, log on using a broadband connection and try again.

If you find that a computer you are using does not seem to be working well, try another computer. Later, have your computer checked to eliminate viruses, removed unneeded files, and/or defragment the hard drive. Sometimes, laptop computers will not work as well as a desktop model.

If you do not own a computer or wish to work on campus, student computer labs are available. Go to http://bit.ly/Tm5Uaq to get information. You may also access computers in the Wichita Public libraries, or at a relative’s or friend’s house. The point is, it’s your responsibility to make sure that you have access to a working computer, your main technological tool.
Mandatory Technical Requirements for Taking Tests:

- Use ONLY Firefox as your browser for class. You can get the free download at http://www.bit.ly/qUIm8u
- Log on ONLY by going to http://blackboard.wichita.edu. Do not use MyWSU.
- Make sure that you have a reliable computer before taking a test
- Make sure that you have a strong Internet connection before taking a test
- A strong broadband connection is required
- If using a laptop, plug it in before taking a test
- Turn off software updates before taking a test
- Turn off all other software and applications (even Facebook, Twitter and email) before taking a test
- Do not refresh your browser while taking a test
- Do not hit the Back button on your browser while taking a test
- Do not close the browser window while taking a test
- Do not take the test using a cell phone or an iPad
- Taking an extended break can sometimes cause Blackboard to log you off
- Contact me by phone and email IMMEDIATELY if you experience a problem

Accessing Files and Videos

Most of the files you will access from our site will be PDF files. Almost all computers ship from the factory with Adobe Reader software installed, allowing you to open such files no matter what computer you are using. However, if your computer needs the Adobe software, it is available for Windows and Mac users free at http://get.adobe.com/reader/. Just click on the appropriate version, download it, and you should be ready to go.

You will need to make sure that you have a basic word processing program installed. Word or something like it will work just fine. Please do not use WordPerfect. Google Chrome also sometimes does not play well with others.

You should easily be able to watch the videos that will be posted. They are in a format common to all computers. Most chapter videos will be in the 30-60 minute range. I may also occasionally post videos from YouTube and other sites to help you understand particular chapters (and for fun!). To make sure that you can watch the videos, make sure that you are using the Firefox browser and that you have the free Quicktime software for both Mac and Windows at http://support.apple.com/downloads/#quicktime

It is your responsibility to make sure that your computer can read PDF files and download videos at the start of the semester. Again, if you have difficulties you can contact me, or the WSU Help Desk at (316) 978-HELP or at http://bit.ly/A7npnM.

Learning and Libraries

Click on the e-Learning Help button on our site to access Blackboard’s best website. The Chat Room inside can be especially helpful for getting answers to some questions. You also can go to the WSU Libraries website at http://bit.ly/a9kcljH for research help.

Students With Disabilities

If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, or learning disability that may affect your ability to carry out assigned course work, you should contact the Office of Disability Services (DS) immediately.

All information and documentation of your disability is confidential and will not be released by DS without your written permission.

Click on the Tools button and select the DS website for more information. Or, go directly to the site at http://bit.ly/NhWtYE.

If you are certified by the university as a disabled student, I will be happy to work with DS and you to make appropriate accommodations. You must contact me to let me know that you are using Disability Services.

Plagiarism

Not attributing the source of your ideas, be they in words, sound, or picture form, is stealing intellectual property.

“The explosive development of the World Wide Web has opened a great many wonderful opportunities to all of us. It has also made it easier than ever to misrepresent someone else’s work as our own. Don’t do it. Plagiarism is a fool’s shortcut. Not only do you cheat yourself of the opportunity to learn and grow, but you expose yourself to severe academic penalties. Plagiarism is dishonest. In the I Ching there is a saying that sincerity inspires respect. Earn your self-respect through your own efforts.”

(Quoted portions, courtesy of Dr. Stephen Cooper, Marshall University, CRTNET webposting. Used with permission).

Students are required to abide by the “Student Code of Conduct” at http://bit.ly/wih3wV on the Wichita State website. Violations of academic policies are
subject to grade penalty at my discretion, and may be referred to the ESC director or WSU dean of students for further disciplinary action.

ESC Updates

The Elliott School of Communication provides a regular email providing information about ESC events, scholarships, jobs and other activities. Click on the ESC Updates button to read them and subscribe.

SPTE Course Evaluation

The Elliott School of Communication asks students to take the SPTE (Student Perception of Teaching Effectiveness) survey so we can find out what you thought of the class and me.

The Social Science Research Lab will send you the SPTE evaluation. You will need our course CRN number, which is 10289. You can fill out the evaluation between Wednesday, Nov. 28 and Thursday, Dec. 6. The evaluation is anonymous. I will never be told your name or ID number. I won’t see the overall results and comments until well after final grades are posted by the university.

I would very much appreciate it if you would take about 20 minutes or so to do the survey. Your thoughtful responses will let me know what worked well, and what needs improvement, before I teach my next online class.

The GSP Test

Those of you who plan to major in communication at the Elliott School of Communication must pass the Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation (GSP) test prior to being admitted to Comm 301, “Writing for the Mass Audience.” The three other prerequisites for taking Comm 301 are: a C- or better in Comm 130 (this class), English 101 and English 102 — or their equivalents from an approved higher education institution. Near the end of the semester, if you are making a C- or better in this class, go ahead and try to pass the test.

You are allowed to take the GSP up to two times per semester (Spring, Summer and Fall) for a total of six times per year. That includes this semester. Students may take the GSP until they receive a passing score. If you do not plan to major in communication, you do not have to take this test. The test is also not a requirement for this class.

The GSP consists of 50 multiple-choice questions over grammar, spelling and punctuation in the English language. A passing score is 35 or more correct, which translates to a score of 70 percent on a 100-point scale. You are allowed 60 minutes to complete the test. No practice tests are available from the Elliott School, but various online sites can help you hone your GSP skills prior to taking the test.

Due to Blackboard technological restrictions, you will NOT be able to take the GSP electronically. Instead, you will need to take the written test in the Elliott School’s office (Room 102, Elliott Hall) between 8:15 a.m. and 3:45 p.m. on Mondays through Fridays. No appointment is necessary. There is no fee. Your contact person for more information about the test is Bill Molash, ESC senior operations assistant, (316) 978-6069.

For those of you not living near Wichita, I regret that you will not be able to take the GSP from your locale. If you are going to be away from Wichita for an extended period of time, please contact me; it may be possible to make other arrangements.

You usually will receive your score immediately after taking the test. If you pass, you will be given electronic approval by Mr. Molash to enroll in a specific Comm 301 section (assuming you have met the other prerequisites). Authorization is not enrollment, and it does not guarantee a seat in a class. After authorization, you must still enroll in the course and pay fees as outlined in the Wichita State course schedule.

Whenever you decide to take Comm 301, you are encouraged to enroll for that semester as early as possible. The Comm 301 sections sometimes fill quickly, especially in the summer.

When you pass the GSP test, you also will be assigned an ESC faculty adviser, and be given their business card. You should contact your ESC adviser frequently for help in selecting communication classes. Comm majors should continue to see an adviser in the Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) college for general WSU advising.

Your Notes and Questions:
Class Schedule

This is a snapshot of the schedule and is subject to change. For additional instructions and details of what we are doing each week, please look under the Weekly Modules.

Week 1: Monday, Aug. 20 — Friday, Aug. 24
Introduction to the class: Syllabus and Video
Sample Blog, Study Guide and Test

Week 2: Monday, Aug. 27 — Friday, Aug. 31
Note: Aug. 29 is my birthday! Guess my age!
Reading: Chapter 1, “Mass Communication: A Critical Approach”
Chapter 1 PowerPoint, PDF and Video(s)

Week 3: Monday, Sept. 3 — Friday, Sept. 7
Below all posted at noon on Tuesday, Sept. 4
Reading: Chapter 2, “The Internet, Digital Media, and Media Convergence”
Chapter 2 PowerPoint, PDF and Video(s)
Blog Assignment 1: Posted at noon on Tuesday, Sept. 4. Due by noon on Friday, Sept. 7.

Week 4: Monday, Sept. 10 — Friday, Sept. 14
Below all posted at noon on Tuesday, Sept. 11
Reading: Chapter 3, “Sound Recording and Popular Music”
Chapter 3 PowerPoint, PDF and Video(s)
Study Guide for Test 1

Week 5: Monday, Sept. 17 — Friday, Sept. 21
TEST 1 (over Chapters 1-3) — Posted at noon on Tuesday, Sept. 18. Due by noon on Friday, Sept. 21.

Week 6: Monday, Sept. 24 — Friday, Sept. 28
Below all posted at noon on Tuesday, Sept. 25
Reading: Chapter 5, “Television and Cable: The Power of Visual Culture”
Chapter 5 PowerPoint, PDF and Video(s)
Blog Assignment 2: Posted at noon on Tuesday, Sept. 25. Due by noon on Friday, Sept. 28

Week 7: Monday, Oct. 1 — Friday, Oct. 5
Below all posted at noon on Tuesday, Oct. 2
Reading: Chapter 6, “Movies and the Impact of Images”
Chapter 6 PowerPoint, PDF and Video(s)
Creative Project assignment provided. (Due by noon on Monday, Nov. 26. Start working now!)

Week 8: Monday, Oct. 8 — Friday, Oct. 12
Below all posted at noon on Tuesday, Oct. 9
Reading: Chapter 7, “Newspapers: Rise & Decline of Modern Journalism”
Chapter 7 PowerPoint, PDF and Video(s)
Study Guide for Test 2

Week 9: Monday, Oct. 15 — Friday, Oct. 19

Week 10: Monday, Oct. 22 — Friday, Oct. 26
TEST 2 (over Chapters 5-7) — Posted at noon on Tuesday, Oct. 23. Due by noon on Friday, Oct. 26.

Week 11: Monday, Oct. 29 — Friday, Nov. 2
Comm Week paper is due by noon on Monday, Oct. 29
Below all posted at noon on Tuesday, Oct. 30
Reading: Chapter 10, “Advertising and Commercial Culture”
Chapter 10 PowerPoint, PDF and Video(s)
Blog Assignment 4: Posted at noon on Tuesday, Oct. 30. Due by noon on Friday, Nov. 2
**Week 12: Monday, Nov. 5 — Friday, Nov. 9**

*Below all posted at noon on Tuesday, Nov. 6*

Reading: Chapter 11, “Public Relations and Framing the Message”
Chapter 11 PowerPoint, PDF and Video(s)
Study Guide for Test 3
Blog Assignment 5: Posted at noon on Tuesday, Nov. 6. Due by noon on Friday, Nov. 9.

**Week 13: Monday, Nov. 12 — Friday, Nov. 16**

TEST 3 (over Chapters 10-11) — Posted on noon on Tuesday, Nov. 13. Due by noon on Friday, Nov. 16.

**Week 14: Monday, Nov. 19 — Friday, Nov. 23 (Thanksgiving Holiday is Nov. 21-25)**

*Below all posted at noon on Tuesday, Nov. 20*

Reading: Chapter 14, “Media Effects & Cultural Approaches to Research”
Chapter 14 PowerPoint, PDF and Video(s)
SPTE Course Evaluation will be sent to you from the WSU Social Science Research Lab. It will be available from Wednesday, Nov. 28, through Thursday, Dec. 6.

**Week 15: Monday, Nov. 26 — Friday, Nov. 30**

Do SPTE Course Evaluation this week if you have not already done so
Creative Project is due by noon on Monday, Nov. 26
*Below all posted at noon on Tuesday, Nov. 27*

Reading: Chapter 15, “Legal Controls and Freedom of Expression”
Chapter 15 PowerPoint, PDF and Video(s)

**Week 16: Monday, Dec. 3 — Thursday, Dec. 6**

Note change in deadlines this week
Do SPTE Course Evaluation by Thursday, Dec. 6, if you have not already done so
Test 4 Study Guide will be posted at noon on Tuesday, Dec. 4

**Test 4 will be taken during the general final exam period**

TEST 4 (over Chapters 14-15) — Posted at noon on Tuesday, Dec. 11. Due by noon on Friday, Dec. 14.

**Final grades will be posted no later than Friday, Dec. 21**