



JEM 367: Mass Communications History

JEM 367

SEMESTER: Spring 2020

DAY/TIME: T/TH 9:40–10:55 a.m.

OFFICE HOURS: By Appointment

OFFICE LOCATION: 327 COM

COURSE COMMUNICATION: aroessne@utk.edu

COURSE ADMINISTRATION: [Canvas](#)

Dr. Lori Amber Roessner

PLACE: COM 314

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to “Mass Communications History.” Consider your media experiences here at the College of Communication & Information. You use a computer to write and edit, process photographs and design pages. You travel to newsworthy spots by car or plane. You telephone or text sources on deadline. You tweet, broadcast live, and move stories on-line. On the business side, your advertising and public relations campaigns are multi-media and synergistic. No matter what your media job, your every move – and thus every word you write and image you record – is a product of modern technology.

So, you might be wondering, what’s the point of studying media history? Today’s newsroom couldn’t be farther removed from the tiny Boston print shop where James Franklin began publishing the *New England Courant* in 1721. His newspaper had only two pages, no photos and type that was set by hand. But Franklin’s work, too, was a product of his time and its technology. He also dealt with business problems. And legal problems. And cultural problems. And family problems. Sound familiar? In the history of American media, the more things changed the more they remained the same.

In this course, we will think carefully and critically about media institutions. Our work has always been about people – our subjects, sources, clients, audience and colleagues. Together, we will consider what life was really like for our forefathers and foremothers as they struggled to report the news, to persuade, to serve publics, and to advertise products. Understanding their challenges will help us face our own.

We will learn about history as a form of inquiry. We will use sources both primary (based upon the material of a particular time period) and secondary (later interpretations) to analyze various aspects of American mass media. Historians, like journalists, use systematic reporting techniques to tell meaningful stories.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To develop an awareness of the influence of mass communications history on American culture, and vice versa.
- To gain an understanding of the role of mass communications (i.e. newspapers, magazines, radio, television and the Internet) in different historical contexts (i.e. politics, economics, identity, war, religion, science and technology).
- To critically examine historic media representations and their influence in reflecting, shaping and contesting our notions of race, gender, ethnicity and disability.
- To gain the skills to write, discuss and present thoughtful analyses of the role of mass communications in American history, and to relate these analyses to modern conditions.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

None. This course is open to all College of Communication & Information students.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Dwight Teeter, Jean Folkerts, and Edward Caudill, *Voices of a Nation: A History of Mass Media in the United States*, 5th ed. (New York: Allyn & Bacon, 2008).
- Occasional handouts and/or online readings.

COURSE GRADING:

As a student in JEM 367, you have the opportunity to select one from among several grading criteria. The course grading options, as outlined below, are for your benefit. I would strongly suggest considering your unique learning style when determining your grading criteria for the semester. You may not deviate from the option after you have chosen it and signed your contract. The contract will be issued today and turned in at the beginning of the **next** class session (Tues., Jan. 14). Students who fail to turn in the contract will automatically default to Option 1.

Option 1: Three Tests, That's All.

Your grade will be determined exclusively by your three test scores. Each test will be equally weighted at 33.3 percent. This option is best for the brilliant, but busy student or the perennial slacker. This student does not want to be burdened with extra assignments, and knows that s/he may be absent three or more times. Be forewarned, however, my tests are not easy, and half of the test is made up of original lecture material (so it would still behoove you to drop in to class as often as possible). By selecting this option, you are forfeiting your right to other means of evaluation.

Evaluation Summary:

Test 1	33.3 percent
Test 2	33.3 percent
Test 3	33.3 percent
Total	100 percent

Option 2: Three Tests, Plus Attendance.

Your grade will be determined by your three equally weighted test scores, plus class attendance. Under this option, the three tests will be equally weighted as 90 percent of your final grade (30 percent per test), and attendance will be weighted as 10 percent of your final grade. This option is best for the student who tests well, plans on being in class except in the case of emergency, and does not want to be burdened with extra assignments.

The 10-percent attendance portion is determined as follows:

0-2 absences= full credit
3 absences=3/4 credit
4 absences= 1/2 credit
5 or more absences= no credit

Students who are late to class, or who waste class time checking electronic messages, posting on Facebook or surfing the Internet, will be counted as absent. In this class, there is no such thing as an excused absence. After four or more absences, you will not receive credit for the attendance portion of your grade.

Evaluation Summary:

Attendance	10 percent
Test 1	30 percent
Test 2	30 percent
Test 3	30 percent
Total	100 percent

Option 3: Three Tests + Attendance + One, 5 to 10-page “mentor” essay.

Your grade will be determined by your three equally weighted test scores, plus class attendance and one, 5 to 10-page “mentor” essay. Under this option, the three tests will be equally weighted as 60 percent of your final grade (20 percent per test), attendance will be weighted as 10 percent of your final grade (see Option 2 to review attendance grading policy), and the essay will be weighted as 30 percent of your final grade. This option is best for students who may not test well, and want to hedge their bets with an attendance and essay grade.

For the “mentor” essay, you will seek a “mentor,” a prominent media practitioner from another era. (In other words, this person must be dead.) This 5 to 10-page essay will outline what advice your mentor might give to you as a media worker of the 21st century, highlighting specific issues or problems you might face in your career.

Here’s the tricky part: You **MUST** use primary sources (either that person’s own words, or writings about him/her FROM THE ERA) and secondary sources for this essay. You must use Chicago Manual of Style for citations.

If you select this option, you will be given more information about finding and using primary and secondary sources as the semester progresses. And you will be given tips on finding a workable focus for your paper.

Evaluation Summary:

Attendance	10 percent
“Mentor” Essay	30 percent
Test 1	20 percent
Test 2	20 percent
Test 3	20 percent
<u>Total</u>	<u>100 percent</u>

Option 4: Three Tests + Attendance + One, 5 to 10-page “Mentor” Essay + The Ida Initiative= One Busy Student.

Your grade will be determined by your three equally weighted test scores, plus class attendance, one, 5 to 10-page “mentor” essay, and the Ida Initiative. Under this option, the three tests will be equally weighted as 50 percent of your final grade (16.7 percent per test), attendance will be weighted as 10 percent of your final grade (see Option 2 to review attendance grading policy), the “mentor” essay will be weighted as 20 percent of your final grade (see Option 3 to review “mentor” essay explanation), and the Ida Initiative will be weighted as 20 percent of your final grade. This option is best for the true lover of mass communication history or the person who does not want any one evaluative assessment to ruin his/her life, I mean, grade. Tennessee native Ida B. Wells (1862-1932) was a daring journalist, anti-lynching crusader, and civil and women’s rights advocate. Unfortunately, until the 1970s, relatively little had been written about Ida’s role in journalism or American culture. The University of Tennessee is determined to help preserve Ida’s place in the nation’s collective memory. In conjunction with that initiative, students in this course will have the opportunity to hone their media history and multi-platform journalism skills by contributing materials to the conference website.

Evaluation Summary:

Attendance	10 percent
“Mentor” Essay	20 percent
Ida Initiative	20 percent
Test 1	16.7 percent
Test 2	16.7 percent
Test 3	16.7 percent
<u>Total</u>	<u>100 percent</u>

Option 5: Three Tests + Mix and Match.

Your grade will be determined by three equally weighted test scores, as well as some combination of the assignments mentioned above (attendance, which can count for only up to 10 percent of your final course grade, “mentor” essay or Ida Initiative). If you select this option, you will submit a

proposal to me by Tues., Jan. 14. You should include which assignments that you have selected, as well as how you would like the assignments weighted.

Evaluation Summary:

Test 1	? percent
Test 2	? percent
Test 3	? percent
<u>M&M Assignments</u>	<u>? percent</u>
Total	100 percent

EXTRA CREDIT:

Extra credit opportunities are up to the discretion of the instructor, but may be offered during the course of the semester.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW:

Note: These are simple overviews of assignments. A more detailed description of each assignment will be provided in class on a separate handout.

Tests:

Tests will either consist of essay questions or a blend of multiple choice, true/false, short answer and mini-essay questions. Tests are equally weighted and non-cumulative. Tests are drawn from lectures, texts, and other print or audio/video material covered in class. You will be expected not just to regurgitate facts but also to interpret them. Opinions are great, but **ONLY IF THEY CAN BE BACKED UP WITH CONCRETE EVIDENCE.**

To study:

- List trends and issues that cross time periods.
- List important individuals, publications, events, and movements and know *why* they were important.
- Relate these elements to modern media issues and to the everyday lives of media workers.

5 to 10-page “Mentor Essay” (if applicable):

For this assignment, you will seek a “mentor,” a prominent media practitioner from another era. (In other words, this person must be dead.) This 5 to 10-page essay will outline what advice your mentor might give to you as a media worker of the 21st century, highlighting specific issues or problems you might face in your career. You must use primary and secondary sources. Citations must be in Chicago Manual of Style.

Ida B. Wells Initiative (if applicable):

Tennessee native Ida B. Wells (1862-1932) was a daring journalist, anti-lynching crusader, and civil and women's rights advocate. Unfortunately, until the 1970s, relatively little had been written about Ida's role in journalism or American culture. The University of Tennessee is determined to help preserve Ida's place in the nation's collective memory. In conjunction with that initiative, students in this course will have the opportunity to hone their media history and multi-platform journalism skills by contributing materials to the Ida Initiative website. Each of you will have the opportunity to contribute a 500-word written, two-minute audio, or two-minute video package about Ida's life & legacy.

COURSE POLICIES:**Attendance:**

Students who enroll in JEM 367 have three responsibilities:

- prepare
- attend
- engage

Central to these responsibilities is **attendance**. Although attendance is not required (unless the student chooses that evaluative schema), it is highly recommended. A great deal of test material is drawn from original lectures. Students who want to do well in this class will attend the lectures.

Tardiness:

Tardiness is not accepted for any reason. Students who fail to arrive on time for class will be asked to leave.

Deadlines:

Deadlines are extremely important in any media job. In this class significant points will be taken off for work turned in late. You are expected to fully participate in any team projects, and to do honest and thoughtful peer evaluations of your teammates' participation.

Make-up Exams:

Make-up exams are only given in the event of a death in the immediate family or a medical emergency. If such is the case, the student will be required to take an essay make-up exam.

Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty is unacceptable.

Plagiarism is a serious offense – both in this course and in media professions. You must attribute and properly cite all information you use. You can **NOT** steal or “borrow” ideas, words or direct phrases from published sources. In this class, you must use Chicago Manual of Style for citations. Failure to properly cite material from published sources is a form of plagiarism.

Other examples of academic dishonesty include cheating on tests or quizzes, being aware of cheating but failing to report it, etc. All activity deemed as a breach in the honor code will result in an investigation by an impartial panel and due process will be guaranteed to any individual whose behavior may be questioned. When in doubt about any of this, just ask the instructor in advance. Please also see [Hilltopics](#) for the UT statement about plagiarism and academic honesty.

Special Needs:

Any student who feels [insert your gender pronoun] may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please see the campus syllabus for information regarding [Student Disability Services](#).

Diversity & Inclusion:

CCI recognizes and values diversity. Exposing students to diverse people, ideas and cultures increases opportunities for intellectual inquiry, encourages critical thinking, and enhances communication and information competence. When all viewpoints are heard, thoughtfully considered, and respectfully responded to, everyone benefits. Diversity and fairness unite us with the wider professional and global community (see <http://www.cci.utk.edu/diversity-statement> for CCI's full Diversity Statement).

Civility:

CCI & JEM want to build and maintain a climate that is comfortable for all. In communication, it is especially important that everyone display respect for all and avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of campus and classrooms. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents the minimal standards that help make JEM a productive place for all concerned. Please see UT's [Principles of Civility and Community](#).

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Note: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations from the syllabus, including adjustments to the course schedule may be necessary and announced by the instructor in class.

Weekly readings range between 50 and 60 pages. All readings listed must be completed before arriving to class.

Week 1, Jan. 9: Why is mass communications history important?

Read: *Voices of A Nation*, Intro, Chapter 1 & 2.

Week 2, Jan. 14 & 16: Revolution, Nation Building & The Early Republic

Read: *Voices of A Nation*, Chapter 3 & 4; Sheila McIntyre, "I Hear It So Various Reported: Newsletters, Newspapers and the Ministerial Network in New England, 1670-1730," *New England Quarterly* 1998 71 (4): 593-614.

Week 3, Jan. 21 & 23: Birth of A Mass Audience

Read: *Voices of a Nation*, Chapters 5 & 6.

Week 4, Jan. 28 & 30: Communication in the Anti-Slavery Movement & Civil War

Read: *Voices of a Nation*, Chapter 7.

Week 5, Feb. 4 & 6: Tying Up Loose Ends, Review & Test

Read: N/A.

Week 6, Feb. 11 & 13: The Reform Press; Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice; The Ida Initiative.

Read: *Voices of A Nation*, Chapters 8-11.

Week 7, Feb. 18 & 20: Mass Markets/Mass Culture; The Birth of Sports Journalism.

Read: *Voices of A Nation*, Chapter 12.

Week 8, Feb. 25 & Feb. 27: Media in a Modern World; The Progressive Movement & the Media.

Read: *Voices of A Nation*, Chapter 13.

Week 9, March 3 & 5: The Power of Media as Entertainment; Depression, Disillusion & Debate.

Read: *Voices of A Nation*, Chapter 14-15.

Week 10, March 10 & 12: Mediated Images of World War II & the Cold War.

Week 11, Spring Break; March 16-20: No Class.

Week 12, March 24 & 26: Review & Test 2.

Week 13, March 31 & April 2: The Mass Media in the Civil Rights Era

Read: *Voices of A Nation*, Chapter 16.

Week 14, April 7 & 14: & The Mass Media in the Sixties: Vietnam.

Week 15, April 16 & 21 The Mass Media in the Seventies: Watergate & the Women's Movement

Read: *Voices of A Nation*, Chapter 17.

Week 16, April 23: Modern Mass Communication Trends & Technology & Final Review.

Read: *Voices of A Nation*, Chapter 18.

TENTATIVE DUE DATES OF MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:

- Thurs., Feb. 6: Test 1
- Thurs., March 26: Test 2
- Tues., April 7: "Mentor" Essay (if applicable)
- Tues., April 21: Ida Initiative (if applicable)
- Tues., April 28, 8 a.m.: Test 3

PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON TUES., JAN. 14

I, _____, **(please print name in blank space)** have carefully read and reviewed the syllabus. I understand all information and policies outlined in this document, and I promise to the best of my ability adhere to all course policies.

I understand that the course schedule is tentative and subject to change. The instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary to this syllabus. If changes are necessitated during the course of the semester, the instructor will immediately notify students of such changes through in-class announcement, T-mail communication and/or Online@UT.

I, _____, **(please print name in blank space)** have selected **Course Grading Option** _____. I know that my final grade for the course will be based on this grading schema. I know that I may not deviate from this selection after Tues., Jan. 14.

Student Signature

Date

Name: _____

E-mail address: _____

Local Address: _____

Birthplace: _____

High School: _____

Major: _____

Expected graduation date: _____

Please review this form, sign and return by Tues., Jan. 14. Receipt of form will serve as documentation of attendance. A student who fails to return this form or to select a course grading option will default to Option 1, three equally weighted tests.