

Syllabus MCOM 409
Theories of Mass Communication
Spring 2023

Course Name: Theories of Mass Communication		
Course Code: MCOM 409	Pre-requisite: MCOM 310	Course Credits: 3
Class Timings: M, W, F—10:00 to 10:50 AM (B); T, Th 09:30—10:45 (A)	Section: A, B	Office Hours: M, W, F (9:00-10:00)
Instructor Name: Dr. Firasat Jabeen		
<p>A Note from the Instructor: Dear Students, this course aims at understanding the concept of theories in Mass Communication. We'll learn and explore different theoretical approaches in Mass Communication. We'll also have discussions on the application of Mass Communication theories on Pakistani issues of media presentation, consumption, and usage.</p>		
<p>Instructor Contact Details Email: firasatjabeen@fccollege.edu.pk Office Hours: M, W, F (9:00 to 10:00) Office Location: Room # 18-Faculty Block</p>		
<p>Course Description: Welcome to MCOM 409: the course on Theories of Mass Communication. This is an interesting course for students who have interest or want to learn—through theoretical approaches—how media functions in different sociocultural contexts. As the title of the course reveals, this course's emphasis is on theories of Mass Communication to fathom the processes, goals, and outcomes of communication in different contexts. The learning in this course will help students think about foundations and future of communication in a creative and critical way. Here, we'll learn about various media related phenomena—such as propaganda, opinion making, media representations, entertainment, and attitude change, etc.—under theoretical lenses.</p> <p>Mode of Instruction (in-person):</p>		
<p>Main Mode of Instruction: (Moodle, in-person) Technology Requirements: All notes, PowerPoint slides and additional materials will be available on Moodle. I expect my students to stay at the top of their workload (instead of piling up class assignments or exam preparation, etc.).</p>		

Course Objectives/Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

- To understand what theories (mass communication theories in particular) are and why we study them
- To understand the usage and application of different mass communication theories
- To understand the effects, interpretation, and cognition of media messages in the light of communication theories
- To grasp main postulates of prominent theoretical approaches in mass communication
- A basic understanding of theories for application in a future research project

Note: This course is extremely helpful for students who would like to pursue Mass Communication for their higher studies, i.e., M.Phil. (Theory and Research Track) & PhD. Additionally, learning in this course is essential for students who opt for a thesis writing project for the final year of their degree program.

Course Content, Learning Material & Activities Schedule

The schedule is tentative because it is not possible to anticipate exactly how much time each topic will require.

Wk	Topic/ Title	<u>Teaching/Learning Activities</u>		<u>Assessments</u>
		Details of areas to be covered	Activities/Readings	Note: I'll provide the exact exam dates and rubric later in the semester.
1	Introduction to Mass Communication Theory	Definition, importance, and scope of theory; mass communication theory; types of communication theory	I'll walk students through the course outline so that everyone knows the class protocols and requirements Baran & Davis (pp 13-25)	
2	The First Trend in Media Theory	Mass Society and Propaganda Theories; Early debates over media; the origin of propaganda; Harold Lasswell's propaganda theory; Walter Lippmann's Public Opinion; Modern Propaganda Theory (A quick revision of Herman & Chomsky's propaganda model)	Class Lecture and Discussion Student responses related to Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model learned in MCOM 310 Baran & Davis (pp 33-53)	

3	Normative Theories of Mass Communication	The origin of Normative Theories of media; Libertarian, authoritative, communist, and social responsibility theory of the press; non-profit journalism	Students will write response to the following question: What Normative theory is applicable to Pakistani political/cultural context? Explain the relevancy of your suggested theory with examples. Baran & Davis (pp 62-85)	
4	The Media-Effects Trend	Discussions from propaganda research to attitude-change theories; Research Studies of Carl Hovland and Paul Lazarsfeld ; the selectivity approach ; limited effects approach ; the Bullet Theory	Analysis of students' individual responses related to media effects Baran & Davis (pp 92-112) Severin & Tankard (pp 262-268)	Quiz I— 20%
5	The Media-Effects Trend (contd.)	The two-step flow theory (a quick revision from MCOM 310); Joseph Klapper's Phenomenistic Theory; Mass Entertainment Theory	Class Lectures Baran & Davis (pp 113-120)	
6	Theories related to effects of media on society	Agenda-Setting theory (a quick revision from MCOM 310 with some addition); The Spiral of Silence theory; Media System Dependency theory	Class Lecture and Discussions Em Griffin et al. (pp 368-380) Baran & Davis (pp 264-284)	
7	Theories related to effects of media on society (contd.)	The Knowledge Gap hypothesis; Cultivation Analysis ; Media Literacy	Baran & Davis (pp 284-294) Em Griffin et al. (pp 356-367)	

Mid-Term Assignment—20%				
8	Audience-centered theories	The Uses and Gratifications Approach (a quick revision from MCOM 310 with some additions); Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding —a criticism on American style effects-research	Baran & Davis (pp 205–218) Em Griffin et al. (pp 344–355)	
9	Theories of Persuasion	Attitude-Change theory & Schema Theory	Severin & Tankard (pp 153-160)	
10	Theory Versus Research	How theory and research inform each other ; the process of theory construction	I'll provide you the notes on Moodle Group Exercises to understand the process of theory construction	
11	Changing Times— Critical/Cultural trend in theories	What is cultural studies? What is critical theory? What is Marxist Approach? What is Political Economy Theory?	As all the concepts here are lengthy and require detailed discussion/study, my purpose here is ONLY to familiarize students with these ideas and help them develop a basic understanding. We'll, however, NOT go into the lengthy details of these concepts. Lectures & Class Discussions Baran & Davis (pp 135-150)	Quiz II— 20%
12	Changing Times— Critical/Cultural trend in theories (contd.)	Marshall McLuhan's "The Medium is the Message and the Massage"	Baran & Davis (pp 154-160)	
13	Feminism in Communication Theories	A brief understanding of radical, liberal, and cultural feminism		

14	Future of Mass Communication Research/Theory	Effects of technology/computer on the scope of communication theories	Student reflections and discussions I'll provide you notes on Moodle	
15	Media Journal Submission and Presentations	Students will submit their Media Journal and present their observations regarding media events to the class	Multimodal Presentations	Media Journal Submission and Presentations— (30%)
16	Media Journal Submission and Presentations	I'll discuss the details of Media Journal in the first week of the semester	Multimodal Presentations	Media Journal Submission and Presentations— (30%)

'Out-of-class' Study Required

Important: In this course, I expect students to read newspapers and watch news bulletins on TV. Consuming media on Netflix/Roku/Amazon Prime and Cable TV is also recommended. To analyze media content and conceptualize that content in the context of theories, it is important to be an active media user. Your consuming patterns can help you identify issues, problems, and areas to investigate in the context of mass communication theories and paradigms. In addition, students can take advantage of following online resources:

<https://academic.oup.com/ct>

<https://www.communicationtheory.org/list-of-theories/>

<https://www.afirstlook.com/theory-resources/by-theory>

Furthermore, students can also read relevant chapters from the following book (Optional):

McQuail, Denis. *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*. 6th ed., Sage Publications, 2010.

Required Readings:

Baran, Stanley J. & Dennis K. Davis. *Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future*. 7th ed., Cengage Learning, 2015.

Griffin, Em., Andrew Ledbetter, & Glenn Sparks. *A First Look at Communication Theory*. 10th ed., McGraw Hill Education, 2019.

Severin, Werner J. & James W. Tankard, Jr. *Communication Theories: Origins, Methods and Uses in Mass Media*. 5th ed., Pearson Education, 2014.

Note: All books are available at the FCC library. However, I'll also provide you the pdf copies of relevant parts. I'll also provide you several pdf copies of relevant material during the semester.

Course Requirements:

Note: I'll explain the rubrics for each assignment at a later stage in the semester.

Activities/Assignments	Percentage
Quiz I	20%
Midterm Theory-Analysis Paper (Assignment)	20%
Quiz II	20%
Class Participation	10%
Media Journal & Presentation	30%
Total	100%

Attendance Policy:

-There aren't any marks for attendance per se for this course. However, if you have low attendance, that may affect your performance in exams and presentations.

Grade Determination & Course Assessment as per FCC Policy:

- As you all are communication students, I pay **special attention to grammar, punctuation, sentence structures, argument building, and eloquence in writing**. Furthermore, my purpose of giving you exam will be to assess your **critical thinking skills and reflection of knowledge through application**.

NOTE: In exams, there will be absolutely NO component that assesses your memorizing ability. For exam/assignment/project preparation, please focus ONLY on understanding, concept building, usage, and application of knowledge.

- There will be **deduction of marks for late work and missed exams/assignments/presentation**.

-You will develop a **Media Journal** during the semester to keep a record of your media observations and translate those observations in theoretical frameworks. You will submit that journal toward the end of semester and present your observations/applications to the class. Additionally, your journal must have details of at least five media events and their relevancy to any of the media theories discussed in class.

Grading Legend

Below is the grading legend of FCCU (published in all catalogues and available on the FCCU website) as approved by the Academic Council and applies for Spring semester as well

Grade	Point Value	Numerical Value	Meaning
A	4.00	93-100	Superior
A-	3.70	90-92	
B+	3.30	87-89	Good
B	3.00	83-86	
B-	2.70	80-82	

C+	2.30	77-79	Satisfactory
C	2.00	73-76	
C-	1.70	70-72	
D+	1.30	67-69	Passing
D	1.00	60-66	
F	0.00	59 or below	Failing

Student Conduct & Other Issues:

- If any student faces any issues or has any concerns regarding the classroom climate and interactions, please feel free to contact VR office gloriacalib@fccollege.edu.pk

Changes to the Syllabus:

This syllabus was designed to convey course information and requirements as accurately as possible. It is important to note, however, that it **may** be subject to change during the course depending on the needs of the class and other situational factors. Such changes would be for your benefit, and you will be notified of them as soon as possible.

Student Support Services

[Student Counseling Services](#)

[Writing Center](#)

[Mercy Health Center](#)

Other Useful Policy Documents:

[Sexual Harassment Policy](#)

[Anti-Corruption Policy](#)

[Academic integrity](#)

[Plagiarism Policy](#)

[Academic Calendar](#)

I expect that you will strictly follow the core values of FCCU and put your entire efforts to learn as per the course requirements, attend classes, read the textbook(s)/other assigned reading material and do the assignments in the stipulated time period

Note:

This syllabus is prepared using the template provided by Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT) at Forman Christian College.