Mass Communications Courses

MASC 1100 Mass Media and Society (3 credits)
Theoretical aspects of the media in the United States. Focuses on current media industries, issues, and events from coverage of high-profile events to media criticism. Students should gain an understanding of the social, economic, and intellectual forces that have helped shape the media. The course, primarily through lectures and demonstrations, presents concise historical perspectives. Liberal Education Goal Area 9.

MASC 1840 Introduction to Media Writing (3 credits)
Applied aspects of techniques and styles of writing for mass media. Students should gain an understanding of elements common to all writing for the mass media and the differences among them. This course requires basic keyboarding skills.

MASC 2100 Minorities in the Media (3 credits)
Theoretical and applied aspects of the coverage of disenfranchised groups by the mass media. Students should gain an understanding of the complexity of the cultural, political, and economic forces that shape media coverage of disenfranchised groups. Through case studies, research, class discussion, and reporting and producing one or more stories, students learn how groups outside the power structure in society are portrayed in the mainstream media. Liberal Education Goal Areas 7 & 9.

MASC 2190 International Communication (3 credits)
Theoretical aspects of global communication processes: a comparative study of Communist, Third World, and Western media, and how systems affect global order in respect to economic, social, and political interaction. Students should gain a greater understanding of the diversity of communication systems throughout the world, the complexity of interactions between those systems, and the importance of such an understanding to maintaining successful global communication. The course incorporates lecture and discussion, and uses case studies of countries to study the theoretical issues. Liberal Education Goal Areas 7 & 8.

MASC 2223 Audio Production (3 credits)
Theoretical aspects of waveforms, transmission, and communication. Relationships of analog and digital media technology. Radio communication and broadcasting are discussed, including the FCC's role in broadcast operations. Students gain practical skills in the operation of audio equipment and are introduced to digital audio editing. Incorporates lecture, demonstration, and practical skill building. Lab hours required.

MASC 2233 Video Production (3 credits)
Theoretical and applied aspects of video communication, including international television systems. Exploration of all areas of television and delivery are discussed in detail. Creative development, including basic scriptwriting, are offered with practical opportunities for skill building in a studio setting. Students are also introduced to studio production and basic digital video editing concepts. The course incorporates lecture, demonstrations, and studio assignments. Lab hours required.

MASC 2460 Digital Photography (3 credits)
Theoretical and applied aspects of digital photography, including camera handling and Photoshop. Students become familiar with all aspects of operating a 35 mm camera and producing quality photographs for media-related work. A survey of the history and principles involved in producing digital photographs, transferring them to computers, enhancing them with software, and incorporating them in publications. Readings, discussions, and individual productions are utilized to familiarize students with the production of digital photos. Lab time required. Digital cameras provided. Lab fees.

MASC 2600 Principles of Advertising (3 credits)
Theoretical aspects of advertising processes: an overview of the field, concentrating on the sociological aspects. Students should gain an increased awareness of how advertising works, where it fits into the fabric of our society, and how it is used--sometimes ethically and sometimes not. The course incorporates lecture and discussion, and students gain appreciation for advertising techniques through weekly analysis of both print and broadcast advertising.

MASC 2690 Principles of Public Relations (3 credits)
Principles related to public relations: The history/development of public relations, the basic concepts of effective public relations, and ethical practices of public relations. Students learn analysis/critique of public relations in contemporary society. Students focus on understanding how to conduct publicity campaigns, on public relations as a strategic communication, and on problem solving processes involving the application of key principles. Prerequisites: MASC 1840.

MASC 2700 Reporting and Writing (3 credits)
Applied aspects of reporting, researching and writing stories for the mass media. Students shall gain competency in gathering and synthesizing data and producing written news stories in a timely manner. Lectures, discussion and projects cover the techniques of gathering information from a variety of sources and writing it in various news formats. The course may require working with campus media. Prerequisite: MASC 1840

MASC 2760 Documentary Film (3 credits)
Historical overview of the genre. Students view and analyze a variety of documentary films to gain an understanding of their purpose, their impact, their audiences, and their cultural and artistic value. (Might not be offered every year.)

MASC 2900 Topics in Mass Communication (1-3 credits)
Study of a specific mass communication topic or development, person, or time period, with the specific title being announced in each semester's class schedule. (Might not be offered every year)

MASC 2925 People and the Environment: Mass Media Perspectives (3 credits)
For both majors and non-majors. Theoretical aspects of the effect of the mass media on environmental processes. Students should gain an understanding of the complexity of the cultural, political, and economic forces that shape media coverage of the environment, and the importance of such an understanding to maintaining a sustainable global environment. The course is a discussion section of the interdisciplanary lecture on environmental issues for liberal education. Liberal Education Goal Area 10.

MASC 2970 Internship (3 credits)
Graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory only. Student internships may be either full-time or part-time in a public or private agency appropriate to the degree objective. Internships consist of closely supervised periods of service that are arranged in advance of the course registration. Students should consult their advisor concerning prerequisites.

MASC 3100 Media Ethics (3 credits)
Theoretical aspects of social and professional ethical issues in the mass media, strengths and weaknesses of the media, and consequences of making critical judgements under pressure. Students are expected to be involved in class discussions, and to research and present relevant material. Assumes a good, basic understanding of the media.

MASC 3107 Politics and the Media Workshop (1-3 credits)
Theoretical aspects of the interaction between politics and the media in the United States. Students gain an understanding of how the political process and the mass media work to shape each other nationally. Offered for both majors and non-majors in cooperation with the Washington Center in Washington, DC.

MASC 3150 Photojournalism (3 credits)
Applied aspects of press photography and picture editing. Students should gain competence in creating photographs and designing and laying out photo essays. Demonstration and hands-on experience covers darkroom processing, picture story planning and execution, and computer manipulation of images. The course concentrates on the application of basic principles of both photography and journalism, and requires laboratory work, as well as in-class participation. Prerequisites: MASC 1840 and MASC 2450. (May not be offered every year.)

MASC 3270 Media Theory and Criticism (3 credits)
Provides an overview of thinking about the mass media and an introduction to the major social science approaches to the study of journalism within the context of mass communication. Explores critical and theoretical approaches to understanding contemporary mass media. Focuses on television, newspapers, and new media in an examination of the meanings, benefits, and practices of one of the most widespread sign systems of our time. Students learn how to decode the media messages that proliferate around us. Prerequisites: MASC 1840 and junior or senior status.

MASC 3310 Directing Visual Media (3 credits)
Course focuses on the techniques required to successfully direct a video production. Two distinct styles of directing include directing live multi-camera and on-location single camera production. Students gain experience by directing studio news and entertainment, live sports, and single camera commercial and documentary programs. This course also explores in detail the creative decisions that a director must make, how to manage a production crew, and how to direct on-camera talent. Prerequisite: MASC 2233.

MASC 3330 Audio/Video Studio Production (3 credits)
An advanced media production course that provides an in-depth understanding of audience analysis, news and sports programming, advanced multi-camera live production, and field news reporting. Implementation of new digital technologies and production techniques for Web casting are included. Lab hours required. Prerequisites: MASC 2223 and MASC 2233.

MASC 3340 Editing (3 credits)
Theoretical and applied aspects of editing journalistic writing on both a macro and micro level. Topics include language, structure, style, and usage within a historical and journalistic context. Students gain experience in coaching other writers to strengthen their editing skills. Prerequisite: MASC 2700.

MASC 3450 Single Camera Field Production (3 credits)
An advanced media course in which students learn hands-on, single camera production on-location. Areas of study include cinema verite, documentary, advanced news gathering, and experimental/music video. All projects are edited with non-linear computer systems and published to DVD and Web. Lab hours required. Prerequisite: MASC 2233.

MASC 3460 Multimedia Production (3 credits)
Understanding of current technology, techniques, and design theories for conceptualizing and using multiple media for story-telling. Students blend photography, audio, video, and text to produce a journalistic multimedia project. Prerequisites: MASC 1840, MASC 2223, MASC 2233, and MASC 2460. (Might not be offered every year)

MASC 3500 Media Design (3 credits)
Study and application of the elements of design used in producing magazines, newspapers, and corporate communication pieces such as brochures and newsletters, as well as basic design for online content. Students work with current desktop publishing software and learn production principles and considerations in creating communication pieces.

MASC 3760 Documentary Film Workshop (3 credits)
A hands-on course in which students write, produce, and direct a "short subject" documentary. In the process of working together, the student crew learns documentary storytelling methods and cinematic technique. Together, the student production team selects a worthy topic regarding persons or activities locally and tells a compelling human-interest story that culminates in a public film debut. Prerequisites: MASC 2233. (Might not be offered every year.)

MASC 3770 Ethnographic Reporting (3 credits)
Students learn how to do fieldwork, a method of inquiry traditionally used in cultural anthropology that uses participant-observation, in-depth interviewing, and examining rituals, among other tools. Students choose a sub-culture in Bemidji to do fieldwork in and write an in-depth article about the community after they come to know the cultural values and behaviors of their group. Readings of ethnographic works from a variety of disciplines. Prerequisite: MASC 2700. (Might not be offered every year)

MASC 3780 Environmental Journalism (3 credits)
Students learn the gathering and presentation of stories about environmental issues. They also study the effect of mass media on the environmental movement and environmental topics. While recognizing the historical roots of environmental journalism, students focus on reporting and writing stories for newspapers, magazines, and Web sites. Part of the class is spent on how stories with complex scientific explanations can be conveyed to a general audience. Journalistic standards of ethics and other conventions are expected. Prerequisites: MASC 2700. (Might not be offered every year)

MASC 3790 Screenwriting (3 credits)
This is an advanced writing course in which students learn the process of writing a dramatic screenplay for film and digital cinema. Students learn to develop the critical dramatic elements that are central to a successful screenplay: characterization, plot development, and cinematic description. Each student develops and writes a screenplay that is formatted to film industry standards. Prerequisites: ENGL 1151 and MASC 1840. (Might not be offered every year.)

MASC 3820 Literary Journalism (3 credits)
Readings and analysis of non-fiction writers who employ the aims, techniques, and standards of fiction. This may include both historical and contemporary writers. Students also complete literary journalistic writing projects. Discussion topics include understanding the line between fact and fiction, reconstructing events, and ethics. Prerequisite: MASC 1840 and MASC 2700. (Might not be offered every year)

MASC 3880 Communication Law (3 credits)
Theoretical aspects of the U.S. legal system as it affects the media. Students should gain a grounding in the history and application of First Amendment and media case law. Readings, class discussion, and case studies focus on statutes, case law and agency regulations that comprise the precedents for the laws that govern media professionals. Prerequisite: Junior status.

MASC 3900 Topics in Mass Communication (1-3 credits)
Focuses on the aesthetics and skill development in editing video and sound for multimedia, broadcast and cinematic productions. This course emphasizes the capture, editing, and outputting of video and audio using a desktop computer. Prerequisites for this course include MASC 2223 and MASC 2233.

MASC 3970 Internship (3 credits)
Graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory only. Student internships may be either full-time or part-time in a public or private agency appropriate to the degree objective. Internships consist of closely supervised periods of service that are arranged in advance of the course registration. Students should consult their advisor concerning prerequisites.

MASC 4110 Media Research Methods (3 credits)
Assists students in turning research questions into substantive research designs with understanding of the concepts involved. This course focuses on 1) survey of methods for investigating mass communication processes and effects; 2) practice of survey research, including planning, sampling, interviewing, and analysis of data; and 3) introduction to quantitative and qualitative research methods. Other goals are to develop a deeper appreciation of research strategies and decisions and to make students aware of the variety of available research and analysis techniques. Prerequisite: MASC 1840 and junior or senior status.

MASC 4330 Engineering for Electronic Media (3 credits)
A very practical "mini course" in electronic fundamentals. Explores the basic theory of how things function in a broadcast environment. Practical use and repair of audio/video connectors, components, and circuitry. Reading of instruments, levels, and oscilloscope patterns in a television/radio studio. Techniques of soldering connectors, and cable repair used in everyday television/radio stations. Audio theory and components, as well as video signal operation. At the end of this course, students will have sufficient electronic knowledge to pass the FCC Amateur Radio license exam. This class builds confidence and understanding of broadcast operations. Lab hours required. Prerequisites: MASC 2223 or MASC 2233.

MASC 4340 Digital Cinema (3 credits)
Introduction to the theory and practice of motion picture filmmaking as it applies to digital media. Topics include familiarity with filmmaking equipment; basic cinematic techniques; converting ideas to images; the use of lighting, editing, and sound in cinema; scheduling, casting, and location scouting; and the role of acting, directing, and good storytelling in the filmmaking process. Students work in small groups to make short digital video films that manifest their ideas and beliefs in content and process. Forms of distribution are also explored, including DVD, the Internet, and Web streaming. Prerequisites: MASC 1840 and MASC 2233. (Might not be offered every year.)

MASC 4350 Media Management (3 credits)
Explores information theory and how all forms of media dissemination revolve around this concept. Emphasis on broadcasting operations and the study of departments within a management organization. Functionality, creativity, and control of new media. Relationships of media resources to the general public and government regulation. The primary role of sales and marketing to any form of media dissemination is explored in relation to the structure of the broadcasting business in general. This class contains a heavy writing and presentation element as well as trips to area broadcast stations. Prerequisite: MASC 3330.

MASC 4892 Senior Thesis/Project (3 credits)
Students focus on a culminating thesis or project that addresses a specific topic or area of research and interest in mass communication. Using the appropriate methodology, students pursue, in depth, literature and current research in order to support their thesis. Students may elect to do either an academic research paper or media project that supports their thesis and demonstrates an understanding of their research project. Prerequisite: MASC 4110 or consent of instructor.

MASC 4900 Topics in Mass Communication (1-3 credits)
Study of a specific mass communication topic or development, person, or time period, with the specific title being announced in each semester's class schedule.

MASC 4970 Internship (3 credits)
Graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory only. Student internships may be either full-time or part-time in a public or private agency appropriate to the degree objective. Internships consist of closely supervised periods of service that are arranged in advance of the course registration. Students should consult their advisor concerning prerequisites.

All-University Courses

The course numbers listed below, not always included in the semester class schedule, may be registered for by consent of the advisor, instructor, or department chair, or may be assigned by the department when warranted. Individual registration requires previous arrangement by the student and the completion of any required form or planning outline as well as any prerequisites.

1910, 2910, 3910, 4910 DIRECTED INDEPENDENT STUDY
1920, 2920, 3920, 4920 DIRECTED GROUP STUDY
1930, 2930, 3930, 4930 EXPERIMENTAL COURSE
1940, 2940, 3940, 4940 IN-SERVICE COURSE
1950, 2950, 3950, 4950 WORKSHOP, INSTITUTE, TOUR
1960, 2960, 3960, 4960 SPECIAL PURPOSE INSTRUCTION
1970, 2970, 3970, 4970 INTERNSHIP
1980, 2980, 3980, 4980 RESEARCH
1990, 2990, 3990, 4990 THESIS