

# COMM 1500 Media & Society

Fall 2021 | Online with **Zoom discussion sessions, 2-3:20 p.m. Tuesdays or Thursdays**  
(depending on group)

**Professor:** Glen Feighery

**Contact:** Canvas message (*preferred*) or glen.feighery@utah.edu

**Office hours:** By appointment via Zoom

**Graduate Teaching Fellows:** Lulu Olaniyan and Ashleigh McDonald

## Materials

- All readings and other materials will be via Canvas or online. There is no textbook.
- You'll need a reliable Internet connection and webcam for the Zoom discussions.

## General Education attribute

This course fulfills the Intellectual Explorations-Humanities (HF) requirement.

## Objectives

COMM 1500 emphasizes critical consumption of media messages and the implications of producing such messages. You'll engage with technological, business, historical, legal, and ethical foundations of mediated communication to become more informed and better able to articulate your responsibilities in the media world.

To do that, this course has three units:

- **Information:** What is "news"? Where do we get it?
- **Misinformation:** How do we distinguish between inaccurate/incomplete vs. deceptive/misleading?
- **Action:** How has media activism worked in the past? How can it work today?

"How do we know what we *think* we know?"

## Where Your Course Grade Comes From

Week 1 Information Sheet . . . . .	10 points
Comments & Contributions (C+Cs) (12 pts. x 11 weeks) . . . . .	132 points
Zoom Discussions (10 pts. x 12 weeks) . . . . .	120 points
Reflection paper . . . . .	78 points
Final paper . . . . .	100 points
<b>Total:</b> . . . . .	<b>440 possible points</b>

## Grading Scale

When I calculate your course grade at the end of the semester, I will use these percentages:

100-94 A	89-87 B+	79-77 C+	69-67 D+	59-0 E
93-90 A-	86-84 B	76-74 C	66-64 D	
	83-80 B-	73-70 C-	63-60 D-	

## **How This Course Works**

► **Comments & Contributions (C+Cs):** *Anytime before midnight on Sundays, you will submit brief comments on the readings for the upcoming week. (I write specific prompts for each week, and brief means a few detailed sentences.) You'll also provide a real-world example of what the articles discuss.*

► **Lectures:** *Anytime before your discussion session, you will watch videos and/or PowerPoint presentations to highlight each week's topics and to set up the discussion. I post these in advance, so they'll be available as soon as you finish your C+Cs.*

► **Live Zoom discussions:**  
*2-3:20 p.m. Tuesdays (Group A)*  
*2-3:20 p.m. Thursdays (Group B)*  
*2-3:20 p.m. Thursdays (Group C)*  
 You will be assigned a group and will remain with that group all semester.

This class is on Canvas with 2 components: Asynchronous (on your own) and Synchronous (live).

**Asynchronous:** Available in advance; do at your own pace.

► **By 11:59 p.m. most Sundays,** you will have a Comment and Contribution due.

► **Before your discussion sessions,** you will watch a lecture on the week's topics.

**Synchronous:** Live for 80 minutes per week.

► **Zoom discussions, 2-3:20 p.m. Tuesdays or Thursdays.** *Group A will meet on Tuesdays. Group B and Group C will meet on Thursdays.*

You will be assigned a group and remain with that group all semester.

**Assignments have deadlines. Due dates are enforced.** *Canvas will lock 1 minute after each assignment deadline. (This includes papers.)*

**Note due dates and times.**

The Syllabus, Modules, and the Canvas calendar will remind you of assignment deadlines.

Questions? Let me know.

## **University Policies**

### ► **Coronavirus information and university policies:**

- The university encourages people to take advantage of COVID-19 testing services. Voluntary asymptomatic testing will continue to be available for members of the campus community.
- You must self-report if you test positive for COVID-19 via this website (see "Self-Reporting Form"). If you have been exposed or are experiencing symptoms, self-report and follow university guidelines for exposure.
- All members of the University of Utah community are encouraged to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and to wear a mask in public indoor settings per CDC guidelines.

► **Academic Integrity:** Because assignments are online, I trust you to do your own work. University policies on plagiarism and honesty are here (see Section IV and Section V).

► **ADA:** The U seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities. If you need accommodation, contact the Center for Disability and Access, Union Building Room 162; 801-581-5020; [info@disability.utah.edu](mailto:info@disability.utah.edu).

- **Content Accommodation:** This course might expose you to things you find discomforting. I will not make accommodations in course content, requirements, or expectations. (See “[Instruction and Evaluation](#),” Section III, Part Q, “Accommodations.”)
- **Safety:** The U [values the safety](#) of the campus community. 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677).
- **Respect:** [The Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action](#) is dedicated to providing a fair and equitable environment for all to pursue their academic and professional endeavors and to equally access University programs. Violence and harassment based on sex and gender (including orientation and identity/expression) is a civil-rights offense and is treated the same as those against race, national origin, color, religion, age, disabled status, veteran’s status, or genetic information.
- **Semester calendar:** Check the Registrar’s [calendar](#) for key dates.

<b>WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO COURSE AND SOME DEFINITIONS</b>	
Before Friday night, Aug. 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Read:</a> This syllabus; “How to Comment and Contribute.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">See:</a> Modules and course structure.</li> <li>• <b>Due by 11:59 p.m. Friday, Aug. 27:</b> Information Sheet (worth 10 points).</li> <li>• <b>Wait List deadline:</b> Those on the Wait List are added automatically as seats become available. That ends Friday night, and no adds will occur after that time.</li> </ul>
<b>Before Friday night</b>	<a href="#">View</a> introduction/overview lecture.
<b><a href="#">No live Zoom class this week</a></b>	Zoom discussion sections will begin next week.
<b>WEEK 2: EARLY MEDIA, INFORMATION, AND THE POWER OF WORDS</b>	
<b><a href="#">Due</a> anytime before 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 29</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Read:</a> “How Luther Went Viral.”</li> <li>• <a href="#">Comment and Contribution No. 1:</a> See specific prompts in Canvas.</li> </ul>
<i>Consult Zoom Groups in Modules to find which your discussion group you’re assigned to.</i>	
<b>Before your discussion group</b>	<a href="#">View</a> lecture on the significance of print.
<b>Join your Zoom discussion group: 2-3:20 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 31 <i>or</i> 2-3:20 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><a href="#">Discussion:</a></b> Introductions and Orientation; social media, the Protestant Reformation, and the spread of ideas.</li> <li>• <b><a href="#">Exercise:</a></b> Examples of books that are important to you and why; name that book.</li> </ul>
<b>By Friday night, Sept. 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Drop deadline:</b> If this isn’t the class for you, be sure to drop it by Friday night.</li> </ul>

<b>WEEK 3: INFORMATION AND JOURNALISM, PART 1</b>	
<b><u>Due</u></b> anytime before 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Read:</u></b> “Information Elements of Journalism” and “Information Do Americans Share Journalism Values?”</li> <li>• <b><u>Comment and Contribution No. 2:</u></b> See specific prompts and cases in Canvas.</li> </ul>
<b>Before your discussion group</b>	<b><u>View</u></b> lecture on the evolution of journalism.
<b>Join your Zoom discussion group:</b> 2-3:20 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 7 <u>or</u> 2-3:20 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Discussion:</u></b> #ParleysCanyonFire and Twitter as a news source; local news models in Utah.</li> <li>• <b><u>Exercise:</u></b> What’s news today on <i>your</i> phone?</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 4: INFORMATION AND JOURNALISM, PART 2</b>	
<b><u>Due</u></b> anytime before 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Read:</u></b> “Information Mainstream Media” and “Information Rise Fall of Media Trust.”</li> <li>• <b><u>Comment and Contribution No. 3:</u></b> See specific prompts in Canvas.</li> </ul>
<b>Before your discussion group</b>	<b><u>View</u></b> lecture on journalism and business.
<b>Join your Zoom discussion group:</b> 2-3:20 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 14 <u>or</u> 2-3:20 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Discussion:</u></b> What do we mean by “mainstream media”? Does that phrase even make sense?</li> <li>• <b><u>Exercise:</u></b> Find out who owns various news outlets.</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 5: (Mis)INFORMATION, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND COVID</b>	
<b><u>Due</u></b> anytime before 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Read:</u></b> “Misinformation COVID Local News,” “Misinformation COVID Facebook,” and “Misinformation Fighting Back.”</li> <li>• <b><u>Comment and Contribution No. 4:</u></b> See specific prompts and cases in Canvas.</li> </ul>
<b>Before your discussion group</b>	<b><u>View</u></b> lecture on COVID and information.
<b>Join your Zoom discussion group:</b> 2-3:20 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 21 <u>or</u> 2-3:20 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Discussion:</u></b> Does Facebook need to be regulated—at least for public health messages? Should U.S. have laws like Europe’s?</li> <li>• <b><u>Exercise:</u></b> What do you see on your social media <i>today</i> about COVID?</li> </ul>

<b>WEEK 6: TRANSITION — WAR OF THE WORLDS AND FAKE NEWS, 1938</b>	
<b>No</b> Comment and Contribution this week.	Enjoy! (And, feel free to work ahead on future readings.)
<b>Before your discussion group</b>	<b>View</b> lecture on Orson Welles.
<b>Join your Zoom discussion group:</b> 2-3:20 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 28 <i>or</i> 2-3:20 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discussion and Exercise:</b> It's not Halloween, and those aren't Martians. Look up historical events to assess how Orson Welles affected people and changed the media world.</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 7: MISINFORMATION — JOE MCCARTHY AND SAM SHEPPARD, 1950s</b>	
<b>Due</b> anytime before 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Read:</b> "Misinformation McCarthy."</li> <li>• <b>Comment and Contribution No. 5:</b> See specific prompts and cases in Canvas.</li> </ul>
<b>Before your discussion group</b>	<b>View</b> lecture on Joe McCarthy and Sam Sheppard.
<b>Join your Zoom discussion group:</b> 2-3:20 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 5 <i>or</i> 2-3:20 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discussion:</b> Is it the responsibility of journalists to say, "This is a lie"?</li> <li>• <b>Exercise:</b> Dr. Sam Sheppard, Dr. John Brickman Wall, and 1st Amendment vs. 6th Amendment.</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 8: FALL BREAK</b>	
<b>► Reflection Paper assignment posted this week.</b> (Due Oct. 31; we'll discuss in Week 10.)	
<b>WEEK 9: MISINFORMATION AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION</b>	
<b>Due</b> anytime before 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Listen to:</b> RadioLab, "What Up Holmes?"</li> <li>• <b>Comment and Contribution No. 6:</b> See specific prompts and cases in Canvas.</li> </ul>
<b>Before your discussion group</b>	<b>View</b> lecture on the First Amendment.
<b>Join your Zoom discussion group:</b> 2-3:20 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 19 <i>or</i> 2-3:20 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discussion:</b> Should social media impose limits on free expression? Should the government? Is deplatforming a violation of free speech, or is it a public safety measure?</li> <li>• <b>Exercise:</b> Things you didn't know were registered trademarks.</li> </ul>

<b>WEEK 10: MISINFORMATION — WHEN IS IT OK TO LIE?</b>	
<b><u>Due</u> anytime before 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Read:</u></b> “Misinformation Jimmy’s World” and “Misinformation Roadrunner.”</li> <li>• <b><u>Comment and Contribution No. 7:</u></b> See specific prompts and cases in Canvas.</li> </ul>
<b>Before your discussion group</b>	<b>View</b> lecture on Immanuel Kant, Sissela Bok, and lying.
<b>Join your Zoom discussion group:</b> <b>2-3:20 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 26</b> <b><u>or</u></b> <b>2-3:20 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 28</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Discussion:</u></b> Your reactions to the readings.</li> <li>• <b><u>Exercise:</u></b> Share some of your contributions of (possibly) justifiable “lying in the service of truth.”</li> </ul>
Available from October 15 and <b><u>Due</u> by 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 31</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reflection Paper</b> (78 points; see assignment in Modules).</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 11: ACTION — RALLYING SUPPORT TO END SLAVERY</b>	
<b><u>Due</u> anytime before 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 31</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Read:</u></b> “Action Uncle Tom’s Cabin.”</li> <li>• <b><u>Comment and Contribution No. 8:</u></b> See specific prompts and cases in Canvas.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Also due</u> by 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 31</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reflection Paper (78 points)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Before your discussion group</b>	<b>View</b> lecture on religious tracts, a book, and a war.
<b>Join your Zoom discussion group:</b> <b>2-3:20 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 2</b> <b><u>or</u></b> <b>2-3:20 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Discussion:</u></b> Separating the motivations and impact of <i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i> from the myth and hype.</li> <li>• <b><u>Exercise:</u></b> Media that have inspired you to act.</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 12: ACTION — RALLYING SUPPORT FOR CONSERVATISM</b>	
<b><u>Due</u> anytime before 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Read:</u></b> “Action Rush Limbaugh Forbes” and “Action Rush Limbaugh The Daily.” (You can listen to the second reading; see link in PDF.)</li> <li>• <b><u>Comment and Contribution No. 9:</u></b> See specific prompts and cases in Canvas.</li> </ul>
<b>Before your discussion group</b>	<b>View</b> lecture on FDR and the power of radio.
<b>Join your Zoom discussion group:</b> <b>2-3:20 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 9</b> <b><u>or</u></b> <b>2-3:20 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Discussion:</u></b> Is radio dead, and can podcasts replace it? And who pays for all of this?</li> <li>• <b><u>Exercise:</u></b> Examples of your favorite podcasts.</li> </ul>

<b>WEEK 13: ACTION — RALLYING SUPPORT FOR BLACK LIVES MATTER</b>	
<b><u>Due</u> anytime before 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Read:</u></b> “Action Black Lives Matter Reshapes” and “Journalism Black Lives Matter.”</li> <li>• <b><u>Comment and Contribution No. 10:</u></b> See specific prompts and cases in Canvas.</li> </ul>
<b>Before your discussion group</b>	<b>View</b> lecture on social movements and media.
<b>Join your Zoom discussion group:</b> <b>2-3:20 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 16</b> <b><u>or</u></b> <b>2-3:20 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Discussion:</u></b> Has media coverage of Black Lives Matter been fair, accurate, or contextualized?</li> <li>• <b><u>Exercise:</u></b> Comparing media portrayals of the Civil Rights Movement (<i>e.g.</i>, “Heed Their Rising Voices,” 1960, and the Selma march, 1965) with portrayals of Black Lives Matter.</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 14: THANKSGIVING WEEK</b>	
<b><u>No</u> Canvas readings class this week</b> <b><u>No</u> Zoom discussion groups this week</b>	Happy Thanksgiving—and <i>stay safe!</i>
<b>► Final Paper assignment posted this week.</b> (Due Dec. 12; we’ll discuss it next week.)	
<b>WEEK 15: WRAP-UP, REVIEW, AND PREPARE FOR FINAL PAPER</b>	
<b><u>Due</u> anytime before 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 28</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Comment and Contribution No. 11:</u></b> No readings this last week. Instead, two things: First, your reflections about this class. Second, propose your Final Paper topic.</li> </ul>
<b>Before your discussion group</b>	<b>View</b> lecture with a few final ideas and reminders.
<b>Join your Zoom discussion group:</b> <b>2-3:20 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 30</b> <b><u>or</u></b> <b>2-3:20 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Discussion:</u></b> What will you take away from this class?</li> <li>• <b><u>Exercise:</u></b> Answering your questions and offering advice on your Final Paper.</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 16: FINAL PAPER DUE</b>	
<b><u>Due</u> by 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Final Paper</b> (100 points; see assignment in Modules).</li> </ul>