Course objectives
This graduate seminar will:
1. Introduce principles fundamental to the conduct of social science research.
2. Provide an introductory survey of theoretical perspectives on communication and media effects, including a broad history of milestones and a sampling of current theoretical models.
3. Introduce students to the academic landscape in communication.
4. Encourage students to write an original seminar paper that can be submitted for presentation at a conference and/or publication in an academic journal.

Required text and readings
The texts for this course is listed below and can be purchased at the University bookstore. They are also on reserve at the Marriott Library. Additional readings will be available as PDF files on Canvas unless they are directly available online. Students are expected to complete the readings before the start of the class period.


Course requirements
Grades in the class will be based on each of the following:
- Weekly response papers (30%)
- Discussion leadership (20%)
- Final paper (50%)

Weekly response papers (30%). You will write 10 response papers on the assigned readings. Response papers will be posted to the weekly discussion on Canvas as a PDF file (1,500-2,000 words, single-spaced, 12-pt font, 1-in margins) and are due 24 hours before the start of class. Where necessary, response papers should contain APA citations. Your responses should accomplish three goals:
1. Provide a summary that answers the following questions:
   - What is the main argument of each of the readings?
   - How is the main argument supported (method, empirical evidence, etc.)?
   - From which theories and fields of scholarship do the readings draw? To which do they contribute? How are the readings positioned within larger scholarly discussion?
   - How do these readings contribute to the week’s topic (synthesis)? What common thread exists between the week’s readings?
2. Engage with and critically evaluate each reading by addressing questions, such as:
   - Are the arguments well supported? Why or why not?
   - What are the broader implications of the readings?
What are the limitations of the readings?
What points of view are provided by the readings? How are they similar or different from each other?
Etc.

(3) Think about how the readings can inform your own scholarship. What are the contributions to your own work from each week’s readings?

Discussion leadership (5 classes, 20%). You are required to serve as a discussant for 5 class sessions. Ideally, you will choose weeks that coincide with your broader interests. Discussion leadership includes:

- Making sure that we have a clear understanding of all relevant conceptual and operational definitions.
- Giving a brief presentation of the week’s topic and preparing questions to facilitate discussion. Handouts and brief excerpts from outside sources are acceptable.
- Guiding us on debating the strengths and weaknesses of the readings, and encourage evidence-driven debate. This will also be a good opportunity to raise any remaining questions about the topic, more broadly, or about specific methodological topics that were unclear after you did the readings.

Final paper (50%). Each student will write and present an original seminar paper. The seminar paper should be relevant to one of the theories or themes covered in this class. It should contribute, however modestly, to theory or research in media effects. Some students may wish to use existing data. Secondary data can be obtained from sources such as the Pew Research Center, the General Social Survey, or Eurobarometer. Others may focus more on a theoretical discussion of content discussed in this seminar and propose a future study.

All papers should follow APA style guidelines and follow the general format of peer-reviewed manuscripts. Your final paper should be 6,500-8,000 words (double-spaced, 12-pt font, 1-in margins). Do not exceed 8,500 words without receiving my permission.

A 1,500-2,000 word prospectus for your seminar paper is due in-class on 25-Sep-17. The penultimate version of your paper is due on 22-Nov-17 by 3 pm. Seminar presentations will be during the final weeks of the semester. Each paper will be discussed by two other participants, like a conference presentation. For the presenters, this means that they should share their papers with discussants at least 72 hours before their presentation. The discussants, in turn, are expected to provide informed and critical feedback. Like all academic discourse, feedback should be based on evidence and information rather than normative views and opinions. The final paper is due on Dec 15, 2017 by 5 pm.

On attendance and participation
This is a graduate-level seminar and learning occurs through discussion and debate. Toward this end, your presence and involvement are required. To make this fun, you must be prepared to vigorously debate and discuss the material. It is not enough to simply attend class. You are expected to actively discuss the readings and critically analyze their contents. There is a significant amount of reading in this course. You are required to do all of the assigned readings, on time and with care. Because participation is integral to this course, you are allowed one unexcused absence without penalty. Each subsequent absence will affect your final grade. For an absence to be excused, there must be a valid reason and I must be notified in advance. Tardiness will count as unexcused absences. More information on the University attendance policy can be found here.

Course grading scale

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
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Information on how letter grades affect GPA can be found here.

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1 The cover page, abstract page, figures and tables, and references are not included in the word count.
2 One full page; references, title page, etc. are not included in the word count.
On learning strategies
Our goal is “knowledge integration,” connecting the dots between what might appear to be disparate concepts, but are ideas that fit together into a bigger picture, thereby providing a broader context for understanding. The best way to achieve knowledge integration is to:

1. Make sure you do all the reading before class, actively drawing out the implications of the readings to think you already know, have read in the news, or are learning in other classes.
2. Participate actively in class, challenging the propositions and evidence provided in the studies, by me, or by other students; and asking questions about things you may not understand. Respectful disagreement is good and encouraged in all my courses.

Course policies
You may use your laptop for note-taking purposes. Cell phones, MP3 players, and other electronic media are not permitted in the classroom. I reserve the right to ask you to leave and/or deduct points if you are disruptive to the class.

Academic misconduct will be punished to the fullest extent possible. Anyone found guilty of academic misconduct should expect to fail this course. In addition, cheating, plagiarizing on assignments, papers, or projects in this class may result in other penalties deemed appropriate by the university. Your rights and responsibilities are outlined in Policy 6-400, the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. You are responsible for obeying Policy 6-400. Ignorance of the policy is not an excuse.

In the event of a University-wide health emergency which prevents us from meeting face-to-face, students should continue to stay current with our schedule as posted in this syllabus. During this time, you will only be responsible for the material in the readings and not for any additional material that would only have been presented in class. If we have an exam or student presentations scheduled during a time period when face-to-face meetings are suspended, the presentations or exam will be postponed until after classes resume. Information about the status of assignments and other course work due during this period will be addressed on the course website (if available) and by way of email. It is critical that I have an email address for you that you check frequently. This same notification system will be used to announce any changes to the currently expected course of action.

Curriculum accommodations take two forms—schedule accommodations and content accommodations. I will make schedule accommodations for those who have a conflict that involves religious observances, University-sanctioned activities, and personal or medical emergencies, if you submit the appropriate documentation. If you anticipate or when you experience a scheduling conflict, please speak with me as soon as possible. In every case, it is your responsibility as a student to plan for any scheduling conflict.

I will not make content accommodations for this course. The material presented and assigned in this course has been selected for its pedagogical value and utility in relation to the concepts we are engaging. It is your responsibility to review the course materials to be sure that this is a course you wish to take. More information on the University’s accommodation policy can be found here.

University policies
The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you need such accommodation in this class, you must provide reasonable prior notice to the Center for Disability Services. More information can be found here.