

Austin Peay State University
Department of Communication & Theater
COMM5030 APPLIED COMMUNICATION THEORY
Fall 2009 Syllabus (3 credits)

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Course Description

This course tackles one overarching question: What are the effects of mass media in people's lives? While this course takes a social scientific approach. It will cover such questions as who is affected and how, what is involved, and what factors make media effects more or less likely. You will read scientific studies on these topics. You will be familiar with such studies with tables, figures, and statistics but no statistical expertise is required in this course. The emphasis is on understanding uses and effects rather than memorizing a laundry list of effects.

While to many of you, "theory" seems to be mere academic exercises, too abstract and remote, hopefully you will find that theory is indispensable to future mass communication professionals, responsible citizens, and life-long learners. You will learn logical, critical and creative thinking, and apply theories to practical settings.

Course Objectives

Provide students with

1. a survey of mass communication theory;
2. a general understanding of scientific research on mass communication uses and effects;
3. basic conceptual tools needed to evaluate critically the assumptions, theories, and empirical evidence;
4. the ability to comprehend communication research articles and synthesize areas of research;
5. the expertise in conducting original empirical research in mass communication;
6. the ability to apply communication theories and research to professional practices.

Required Texts

Severin, W. J. & Tankard, Jr., J. W. (2001). *Communication theories: Origins, methods, and uses in the mass media* (5th ed.). New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

(Severin & Tankard)