

COMM113 – Media Effects on Individuals

General Information

Lecture Uploads	TWR – UPDATE
Instructor	Frederic R. Hopp, M.A. (he/him/his)
Electronic Mail	fhopp@ucsb.edu
Internet	https://fhopp.github.io/ & https://www.medianeuroscience.org/
Office hours	Via appointment at INSERT LINK
Course webpage:	https://gauchospace.ucsb.edu (login with your UCSB netid)

Course Description

This course is a survey of mass media effects on individuals. The course discusses recent, high-impact publications across a broad range of media effects. Major topic areas include social media, video games, narratives, and the news. Each of these topics is examined in terms of major issues, quantitative research findings, and theoretical explanations of the findings. Completion of this course provides necessary skills to critically evaluate and discuss media effects research and fosters broad knowledge of the ways in which media impacts individuals. The course material is taught asynchronously via recorded lectures. Each lecture is uploaded to the course's Gauchospace. There are three lecture recordings per week.

Required Text

All required readings, recorded lectures, and slides are posted on the course webpage (please check the course webpage regularly). If you would like another point of view on, or another treatment of, any topic, please inform me, and I shall refer you to additional readings and other resources.

Course Requirements & Evaluation

This is an online course. Thus, you are expected to have unrestricted, continuous access to the Internet. Furthermore, office hours will be held via ZOOM (<https://zoom.us/>) and per appointment (INSERT LINK), so you are required to have a working ZOOM installation (including a functioning audio recording) on your computer. You will be evaluated based on your **online course participation** and your performance on **one research assignment**, **one group presentation**, and **one online debate**. There may be extra credit opportunities (3 points or 1% maximum). However, there is no guarantee that such opportunities will be available.

Course Participation (30pts)

Your course participation includes (a) watching the recorded lectures (5pts), (b) downloading the assigned literature (5pts), (c) asking and responding to questions in the discussion forum (15pts, see below), and (d) attendance to at least one of my office hours (5pts). Items (a) – (d) are automatically tracked by Gauchospace and I will manually take note of your attendance to office hours.

In the discussion forum, I will post questions to guide each course reading. You are required to respond to each question and engage each other in conversations. At the end of this course, your

discussion score (see FAQ on GauchoSpace) will determine how many of the 15 possible points you receive. If your score is equal to or greater than 75% of all scores, you will receive 15 points, if your score falls between 50% and 75%, you will receive 10 points, and if your score falls below 50% of all scores, you will receive 5 points.

Research Assignment (20pts)

There will be one research assignment where you can apply your gained theoretical knowledge to real-world contexts. Please visit GauchoSpace for a more detailed explanation of this assignment.

The assignment requires you to find a peer-reviewed media effects study that was published **no later than 2018** and is **not part of the assigned course readings**. Your task is to write a summary of this study in the format of a classical press release/news article (**2 single-spaced pages**). This requires you to a) summarize the study's main focus and findings in a language that can be understood by a broad (e.g., non-academic) audience while remaining accurate in the reporting of results, b) critique the study's employed sample, design, measures, and reported effect sizes for addressing posed hypotheses/research questions, c) discuss the kind, magnitude, and weight of the shown effect (see Potter, 2017), and d) highlight the substantial, societal significance of the effect for particular entities (e.g., media users, parents, policy makers, etc.). You can get inspiration on how to write your article by looking at news coverage of previously published studies. However, **do not copy/modify/extend an existing news article on media effects!** Failure to comply with this rule will result in your paper receiving 0 points. Furthermore, you are given the option to work on this assignment by yourself or in pairs of two (both students will receive the same amount of points, should you choose to work in pairs). Finally, note that the same study cannot be referenced by more than one student or pair of students. Hence, you must pre-register your study here: [INSERT LINK](#).

Online Debate (20pts)

This class has one, interactive online debate. For this purpose, we will be using the free online debate service *Kialo*. You will receive an email inviting you to sign up for Kialo and to join the debate. On GauchoSpace, I will provide detailed instructions on how to make good arguments and how the grading of the debate works. The central thesis of the debate will focus on a specific effect of social media on individuals. Students will vote for the specific thesis that they would like to debate using this link: [INSERT LINK](#). Voting closes on August 14th.

Group Presentation (30pts)

The aim of the group presentation is to present a media effects study from a selection of studies that I provide (see GauchoSpace for detailed descriptions on this assignment). Note that **the same study cannot be presented by multiple groups**. Each group consists of five members that I chose randomly. **Group assignments cannot be changed**. Your group assignment is displayed on the second sheet of this file: [INSERT LINK](#). It is your responsibility to reach out to your group members via email, discuss which study you would like to present, and place your group ID next to a study that your group decided to present. Group sizes may vary in the first week due to students dropping/joining the class, but will be finalized by August 7th. Note that group presentations supplement weekly lecture topics, so the due date of presentation uploads (described below) varies. Every presentation will consist of **five components**: introduction, theory, method, results, and discussion. Each member of the group will present one component with exactly **two slides**. Note that the person presenting the introduction also presents an additional title slide, whereas the person talking about the discussion should also include an additional reference/thank you slide. Every group will produce **one coherent, audiovisual recording** that is uploaded to UCSB Box via a link on GauchoSpace. For this purpose, you

can choose between two options: (a) Every group member records their component individually (e.g., via Loom; <https://www.loom.com/>) and eventually you concatenate all individual recordings into one coherent video file (e.g., using QuickTime); (b) all group members meet in Zoom and record their presentation synchronously. I recommend that all group members work on the same presentation (e.g., via Google Slides) to have a standardized presentation layout. The total presentation time should **not be less than 10 minutes** and **no longer than 15 minutes**. Every presenter will be graded individually (20pts), and every group can earn an additional 10 points based on the overall impression of the presentation (30pts total).

Summary

Course Participation	30pts
Research Assignment	20pts
Group Presentation	30pts
Online Debate	20pts

Total Course Points **100pts**

At the end of the term, points for each assignment and any extra credit points (if offered) will be summed. This sum will be divided by the number of points that could have been earned with all assignments (that is 100 points). This number, the proportion of points earned, is multiplied by 100 to transform it into a percentage. The grading scale that will be employed is as follows.

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A+	≥ 97%	C	≥ 73%
A	≥ 93%	C-	≥ 70%
A-	≥ 90%	D+	≥ 67%
B+	≥ 87%	D	≥ 63%
B	≥ 83%	D-	≥ 60%
B-	≥ 80%	F	< 60%
C+	≥ 77%		

Note: I am sorry if you just missed the next highest grade, but it is against UCSB policy to change a grade for any reason other than a clerical error. Please do not ask me to raise your grade.

Procedures & General UCSB Policies

This course will be held online for a total of six weeks. Every week addresses a specific media effects topic (see schedule below) from three different perspectives. For each of these perspectives, I will record an online lecture and make it available via GauchoSpace. Watching these lectures is mandatory and will be monitored. Listening to the main focus of the lectures, engaging with the discussion questions for assigned course readings, and providing input to the wiki will prepare you well to excel on the assignments. No make-up assignments will be given except in the case of extreme emergency. If you experience an emergency, it is your responsibility to (1) inform the instructor before the scheduled assignments date and time, and (2) give the instructor written documentation of the emergency (such as an official note on letterhead from a certified physician or from a funeral home). Examples of events that do not qualify as emergencies include: Internet problems, computer crashes, conflict with work schedule, conflict with social or athletic events, conflict with family events, conflict with family vacation plans or plane ticket, minor ailments, depressed roommate, unspecified “family emergency,” or death of a pet.

Academic dishonesty on any assignment or exam will lead to the student receiving 0 points on that assignment and may lead to further disciplinary action. In keeping with the UCSB guidelines for academic honesty, students are asked not to make their answers available to others and not to distribute any assignment. To do so will result in a grade of 0 points for that assignment.

This course establishes an inclusive, open-minded, and friendly learning environment. Discrimination of any student, including, but not limited to, the student's ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation is not tolerated and will be prosecuted. In addition, academic argumentation in discussion forums is highly encouraged, but must remain factual and professional at all times.

Email Policy

Course related questions (e.g., questions about course readings, lecture slides, assignments, etc.) must be posted in the discussion forum of the course. I will monitor these questions and answers to ensure that responses are correct. Furthermore, please allow me 24 hours to respond to your emails. Should you not have received an answer by then, please reach out again as previous emails have ended up in my spam folder.

Important Due Dates

Online Debate	UPDATE – UPDATE
Research Assignment	UPDDATE
Group Presentation	Variable, sign up here: INSERT LINK

Schedule of Topics & Readings

- **Week 01 (UPDATE): Introduction**

- General Reading

- *Media Effects Theories: An Overview*
 - Procedures, Introduction, and History
 - Read: *Syllabus*
 - Read: *Accounts, Nature, and History of Media Effects*
 - Read: *A History of Media Effects Research Traditions*
 - Media Effect on Individuals: Definition and Content
 - Read: *Conceptualization of Media Effect*
 - Read: *Individual Differences in Media Effects*
 - Interpreting Media Effect
 - Read: *Media Effects: Methods of Hypothesis Testing*
 - Read: *An Effect Size Primer: A Guide for Clinicians and Researchers*

- **Week 02 (UPDATE): Narratives**

- General Reading

- *Narrative Effects*
- Narrative Exposure and Social Cognition
 - Read: *Repeated Exposure to Daytime Soap Opera and Shifts in Moral Judgment Towards Social Convention*
 - Read: *Fiction Reading Has a Small Positive Impact on Social Cognition: A Meta-Analysis*
- Narrative Enjoyment as Media Effect
 - Read: *Entertainment and Enjoyment as Media Effect*
 - Read: *Predicting Media Appeal From Instinctive Moral Values*
- Sex Differences in Responding to Narrative (Guest Lecture: Chelsea Lonergan)
 - Read: TBD
 - Read: TBD

- **Week 03 (UPDATE): Social Media**

- General Reading

- *Social Media*

- Cyberostracism
 - Read: *Social Media Ostracism: The Effects of Being Excluded Online*
 - Read: *"I know you've seen it!" Individual and Social Factors for Users' Chatting Behavior on Facebook*
- Well-being and Life-Satisfaction
 - Read: *Social Media's Enduring Effect on Adolescent Life Satisfaction*
 - Read: *The Association Between Adolescent Well-Being and Digital Technology Use*
- Polarization
 - Read: *How Social Network Sites and Other Online Intermediaries Increase Exposure to News*
 - Read: *Is the Internet Causing Political Polarization? Evidence from Demographics*

- **Week 04 (UPDATE): Mobile Technology**

- General Reading

- *Effects of Mobile Communication: Revolutions in an Evolving Field*

- Permanently Online, Permanently Connected
 - Read: *Permanently online: A challenge for media and communication research.*
 - Read: *Permanently online–Permanently connected: Explorations into university students' use of social media and mobile smart devices.*
- Need Satisfaction & Well-being
 - Read: *The Relationship between Online Vigilance and Affective Well-Being in Everyday Life: Combining Smartphone Logging with Experience Sampling*
 - Read: *Permanently on Call: The Effects of Social Pressure on Smartphone Users' Self-Control, Need Satisfaction, and Well-Being*
- Multitasking

- Read: *Hard to resist? The effect of smartphone visibility and notifications on response inhibition.*
- Read: *No Evidence that Smartphone Notifications Lead to Goal-Neglect*

- **Week 05 (UPDATE): Video Games**

- General Reading

- *Video Games*
 - Positive Effects of Video Gameplay
 - Read: *The Winner Takes it All: The Effect of In-Game Success and Need Satisfaction on Mood Repair and Enjoyment*
 - Read: *The Therapeutic Value of Video Games*
 - Negative Effects of Video Gameplay
 - Read: *Does Playing Violent Video Games Induce Aggression? Empirical Evidence of a Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Study*
 - Read: *Violent Video Game Engagement is not Associated with Adolescents' Aggressive Behaviour: Evidence from a Registered Report*
 - Critical Perspectives on Video Game Effects
 - Read: *Video Game Violence and Interactivity: Effect or Equivalence?*
 - Read: *Twenty-five years of research on violence in digital games and aggression*

- **Week 06 (UPDATE): Current Trends and Critical Perspectives in Media Effects Research**

- Media Neuroscience
 - Read: *Media Psychophysiology and Neuroscience*
 - Read: *A Drama Movie Activates Brains of Holistic and Analytical Thinkers Differentially*
- Computational Approaches to Media Effects
 - Read: *Big Data Under the Microscope and Brains in Social Context: Integrating Methods from Computational Social Science and Neuroscience.*
 - Read: *Predicting Box Office from the Screenplay: A Text Analytical Approach*
- Critical Perspectives on Media Effects Research
 - Read: *Discipline in crisis? The shifting paradigm of mass communication research*
 - Read: *Five Challenges for the Future of Media-Effects Research*