

Syllabus/Media History Journalism 335/Fall, 2015 Texas A&M University-Commerce

Instructor: Dr. Lamar W. Bridges, Professor of Journalism
(Room 127, inside Room 126, south end of building)

Office Hours: afternoons MWF or you can set an appointment or see me
at class

Telephones: (903) 886-5229 (office) or 886-4703 (home)

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E-Mail: Lamar.Bridges@tamuc.edu (I prefer face-to-face conversation.)

Catalog description: "A survey of the origins and development of journalism and the mass media from their beginnings in Germany and England to the present time. Emphasis on the ideas, economic forces, and cultural realities touching the development of American Journalism. Prerequisite: Journalism 114 or consent of instructor."

Textbook: *The News Media, A Documentary History* by William David Sloan and David A. Copeland, Vision Press, softcover edition, copyright 2012. I will explain this book's approach to press topics and eras.

Other readings: Assignments may be made utilizing journals and publications in Gee Library or online to expand the textbook and lecture topics (see points). You are, of course, responsible for any outside materials for quizzes and classroom discussion.

The content: Journalism 335 is a panoramic look at the historical development of the press in America. With such an expansive period of time to cover, the instructor will attempt to "highlight" press/media issues which are important to the understanding of the "fourth estate's" role in American history.

Not all areas will be covered equally nor does the Sloan book do so in emphasis. Some topics will be given more emphasis than others. Nor will the emphasis be placed *solely* upon the memorization of dates and names; the student should realize that knowing the facts is a first step to understanding history, but the student must also realize that grasping the *meanings* behind the facts is the key to understanding history. Therefore, you should read with care, and you should listen with care to what is said in class. There is no substitute for listening, for it is a key component of a student who wishes to enter journalism-related fields.

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Class Attendance: The University's attendance policy is in the Catalog (web). Read it carefully. I expect attendance, and absences are recorded, as mandated by University policy. Consistent and prompt attendance is important in this class. A student who misses more than three (3) classes will be dropped from the class unless there are circumstances that can be justified by the student. **This policy begins September 3, 2015.**

I also expect students to be in class on time. **If you are late and the door is closed, you are absent.** AND, the instructor expects all students to act with civility toward other persons in the classroom. In addition, please note these two advisories.

◆One: Students enrolled at the University should exhibit common decency and acceptable behavior toward their fellow classmates, faculty and staff members, and individuals they encounter on campus.

◆Two: Students requesting accommodations for disabilities should contact the Office of Student Disability Resources and Services. That office's statement will be distributed in class.

◆◆**Dr. Bridges' comments:** Turn off your cell telephone during class and do not answer a call or talk on your cell telephone if it does ring. Do not text your friends. Do not read *The East Texan* or use a computer other than for note-taking. Talking between students or among students while the instructor or a fellow student is talking is annoying and possibly disruptive. You might be asked to leave a class session or permanently if your behavior is unacceptable.

Plagiarism: A copy of a statement about plagiarism will be furnished. Please read this policy, and be aware that I fully support this statement. You will be asked to submit a signed copy of the statement, which remains in my files for the fall semester of 2015. Be sure you do not take this signing lightly.

Course suggestions: First, attend class and be on time. Second, read the assignments and any other readings *before you come to class*. Third, listen, listen, listen – it is a skill to be developed. And, fourth, ask questions if you do not understand. And, of course, study outside of the class sessions we have Tuesdays and Thursdays.

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Course outline: History is not a subject one can master without reading and study. It is not a vocational subject. We do not push computer keys in this class. Meaning(s) is (are) important in history; ideas and interpretations are subjected to rigorous examination in "seeking the historical truth." Facts are important, but going beyond facts will serve you better as a student of history.

With that said, approach the course with an open mind and with the intention of applying historical events to the "bigger picture" in terms of the development of the mass media in America. And, although early U.S. press history has lots of newspaper emphasis because of the dominance of that medium into the early 20th century, do not narrow your thinking about press history solely to newspapers. Nor should you narrow your thinking about media history simply to the "great man" approach -- that is, that history revolves only about the exploits of personalities. The ignorance of the U.S. public about American history and its development is well-documented, so for aspiring communicators I hope you will have a better understanding of media developments in December and how you might benefit from them.

Tapes may be utilized at times in the course. The tapes add visual elements to the textbook and demonstrate some key individuals or topics in media advancement in America. I, however, may use tapes not exclusively focused on mass media. I do not use tapes merely to fill time.

Points for various requirements

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| (1) four quizzes (tests) at 50 points each | 200 points | (dates on sked) |
| (2) chapter exercises/questions (varies) | 150 points | (bold on sked) |
| (3) readings/writing exercises | 100 points | (TBD) |
| (4) attendance (25 dates at 2 each) | 50 points | |

Total 500 points

Explanations follow.

Explanations: No. 4 should be self-evident. If you attend regularly, you have 50 points (-2 per absence). So these are easy points.

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No. 1: 4 quizzes spread the information over the class. Questions are usually short-answer, essay and must be answered in a blue examination booklet, so you will need to buy several from the bookstore. Good writing is important. If I change from the format for questions for these four quizzes, you will be advised in advance. I also give review sheets with topics covered to that quiz. And, at times, I hold review sessions at the class hour or outside of the class hour if requested by enough students.

No. 3: readings outside to incorporate writing into the class. Comprehending data and the ability to summarize that data in clear text is important for our fields of study. One should be cognizant of the importance of being able to comprehend data and present that data in written formats with context.

No. 2: you may be given names, events, topics ahead of time, based upon class and the textbook, and at the time of the weekly chapter exercises, some of these will be chosen for testing. I may also use multiple choice or True or False questions. I may ask short-answer questions. I will vary these exercises, partly depending upon the enrollees.

-LWB, 9-1-2015 revised

Addendum: at any time, if you have concerns in this class, talk to me in my office. But do NOT wait until days before the end of the term to do so.

