



**Course Syllabus CMM 102
MASS COMMUNICATION**

Number of ECTS credits: 6

Contact Details for Professor

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Office hours: Two hours per week, changes per course/semester

Course Description

This course provides an overview of theories to describe and explain media communication. The course will look at several perspectives on media and how they are translated into contemporary research efforts. Specifically the course deals with the communication field from the perspectives of content and language, media and society, audiences and effects, and media organizations. Students will be encouraged to participate in discussions where key theories will be analyzed and possible applications discussed.

Course Prerequisites

None

Learning Objectives

Major Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, this course will contribute to

- Having a thorough knowledge of scientific levels, types and components of (technologically mediated and not mediated) communication
- Describing and comparing theories, concepts, authors and paradigms of the domains within the communication science
- Reflecting critically on the role of media and communication in social, cultural, economic, psychological, technological, political, legal and other contexts.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, this course will equip students to

Acquired Knowledge

- *Have an introductory understanding of theories on media communication*

This course will provide students with insight into past and present perspectives on media communication. Four theoretical angles will be explored – content and language, media and society, audiences and effects, and media organizations.

Applying Knowledge & Judgment (Skills)

- *Develop the ability to reflect and react on theories of media communication*

Through class discussions, reading seminars and a research paper, students will actively learn to analyze, compare and contrast the most common concepts and theories in media communication and in turn apply them to relevant media cases.

- *Draft a 2500-word research paper*

With guidance and feedback, students will need to demonstrate that they know how to make use of the relevant information they have found. The paper must prove that a significant number and variety of sources have been consulted.

Attitudes

- *Be eager to apply life-long learning skills*

The ability to understand and appreciate theories in their current context will be tested. Students are expected to explore issues using their developing critical skills and qualify (even challenge) some of the accepted assumptions.

Course Schedule

This section provides an overview of the topics and readings to be discussed on a weekly basis. Note that the end of each chapter in the course textbook includes questions to help prepare for class.

Week	Topic	Reading
W1	Introduction: Studying Media	
W2	The Media World: A View of the Terrain	Chapter 1
W3	Media in Context	Chapter 2
<i>Part of class in week 3 will include further explanation on the research proposal and paper, which are due in weeks 6 and 12.</i>		
W4	Language in the Pursuit of Meaning	Chapter 3
W5	Media Purpose, Media Performance	Chapter 4
W6	The Audience for Media: Substance and Shadow	Chapter 5
<i>The DEADLINE for the research proposal is the beginning of class in week 6. Part of class in week 6 will include a review for the mid-term exam.</i>		
W7	Mid-Term Exam	
W8	Narrative: The Media as Storytellers	Chapter 6
<i>Part of class in week 8 will include feedback on the research proposal and the mid-term</i>		

<i>exam.</i>		
W9	The News: Gates, Agendas and Values	Chapter 7
W10	The Practice of Media: Pressures and Constraints	Chapter 8
W11	The Global Arena: Issues of Dominance and Control	Chapter 9
W12	Research as Exploration and Development	Chapter 10
<i>The DEADLINE for the research paper is the beginning of class in week 12.</i>		
W13	Ever-Trending: Power Play, Illusion, Surveillance	Chapter 11
W14	Concluding Remarks	
<i>Part of class in week 14 will include a review for the final exam. Feedback on the research paper and reading seminar presentation will also be provided.</i>		
W15	Final Exam	

Course Materials

The course material consists of powerpoint presentations, lecture notes and readings from the textbook. Powerpoint presentations will be made available after the respective classes have taken place. A week-by-week overview of the course readings can be found in the section above.

The syllabus, powerpoint presentations and important messages will be uploaded to the Vesalius portal 'Pointcarré'. Students are expected to visit this site regularly to keep abreast of course evolutions. The professor is expected to upload relevant material in a timely manner.

Course material marked as 'suggested readings' and 'additional sources' is helpful for research and to gain an increased understanding, but is not mandatory. This material can be found online or will be made available upon individual request.

Textbook:

Watson, J. (2016). *Media Communication. An Introduction to Theory and Process. Fourth Edition.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Active Learning

Learning should be an active experience. Students who passively listen to lectures, copy someone else's notes, and limit their readings to required chapters are unlikely to develop their critical thinking and expand their personal knowledge system. At the exam, these students often fail to demonstrate a critical approach. Students are strongly recommended to have an updated understanding of developments in the communication field. Active learning will turn out to be enriching to the overall course and class discussions.

Students are invited to deepen their understanding of both theoretical and current issues from a variety of sources. Please find a list of suggestions compassing the entire course below. Note that every chapter in the textbook includes suggested readings as well as comprehensive references, specific to the topic at hand.

Additional sources:

- Select academic journals on communication/journalism/media: Communication Research; Communication Review; Communication Theory; European Journal of Communication; Human Communication Research; Info; Information Communication & Society; International Journal of Communication; Journal of Advertising; Journal of Communication; Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication; Journalism Studies; Mass Communication and Society; Media, Culture & Society; New Media & Society; Political Communication; Telecommunications Policy; Telematics & Informatics
- For a complete list of top-ranked communication journals: <http://science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jlresults.cgi>
- London School of Economics Media Policy Project: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mediapolicyproject/>
- Nordicom (Nordic Information Center for Media and Communication Research, includes European media): <http://www.nordicom.gu.se/en>
- EurActiv Information Society: <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/infosociety>
- EurActiv Innovation & Enterprise: <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/innovation-enterprise>
- European Commission Digital Agenda for Europe Website: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en>
- European Commission Digital Economy & Society Newsroom: <http://europa.eu/rapid/search-result.htm?query=47&locale=en>

Course Assessment

The students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance as follows:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------|
| • | Reading quizzes | 10% |
| • | Reading seminar presentation | 10% |
| • | Research proposal | 10% |
| • | Research paper | 30% |
| • | Mid-term exam | 20% |
| • | Final exam | 20% |
| • | TOTAL | 100% |

Grading Scale of Vesalius College

Vesalius College grading policy, in line with the Flemish Educational norms, is now as stated follows:

Letter grade	Scale of 20	Scale of 100
A	17.0-20.0	85-100
A-	16.1-16.9	81-84
B+	15.3-16.0	77-80

B	14.5-15.2	73-76
B-	13.7-14.4	69-72
C+	13.1-13.6	66-68
C	12.3-13.0	62-65
C-	11.5-12.2	58-61
D+	10.7-11.4	54-57
D	10.0-10.6	50-53
F	0-9.9	0-49

Description of Activities and Grading Criteria

Reading Quizzes (10%)

Attendance and active participation are vital to the student's progress. It is highly recommended to prepare for class using the textbook readings in order to be able to follow classes and pose questions. The end of each chapter of the course textbook includes activities and questions to help prepare for class. Readings will be discussed in class and several (*marked*) reading quizzes will take place. Students who are absent are responsible for finding out what was covered in class.

Reading Seminar Preparation (10%)

Part of class in weeks 2 through 13 will include a reading seminar to help students understand, analyze and apply each week's readings. At the start of the seminar, one or more students will give a five-minute presentation on a question or concept determined by the course instructor. It is the student's responsibility to ask the course instructor for guidance on the topic to be prepared in a timely manner.

Research Proposal (10%) and Research Paper (30%)

Students should write a research paper analyzing a media case study (event, genre, organization, etc.) through a selected theoretical lens. It is of utmost importance that you allocate time throughout the semester to work on the paper. As a first step I advise you to consult the textbook in order to identify topics of interest. In a second stage, further exploration of academic (and popular) literature will help in defining the research puzzle/problem and formulating the research question.

You are requested to consult the course instructor and get her approval on your selected research topic **by week 4**. In addition, you need to submit a research proposal for your research paper **by the beginning of class in week 6**. A hard copy should be submitted in class. Please send an electronic copy via email (trisha.meyer@vub.ac.be) as well. The research proposal is the first step towards the final paper. It should include:

A clear research question	<p>The questions should be as clear and simple as reasonably possible. The research question may be a mere empirical or factual question, it may be theoretically inspired, above all it should be clear and straightforward.</p> <p>Often research questions change throughout the research in the light of</p>
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	new additional empirical/theoretical information. Irrespective of eventual changes your initial research question should be as clear as possible.
A paper outline	The paper outline should provide an indication of how the student is going to investigate the research question. The student has to explain how she/he is going to research the topic at hand. This entails an identification of the selected <i>media case study</i> (event, genre, organization, etc.) and <i>theoretical approach/concepts</i> in particular.
A tentative layout	The tentative structure and headings likely to appear in the final paper.
Preliminary bibliography	A bibliography directly related to the research question or research topic, listing a minimum of 2 different peer reviewed academic sources.
Length	500 words

Research proposals should be submitted in Helvetica font, 12 points type, 1,5 spaced with 2 cm margins. **The research proposal should be around 500 words, excluding the cover page and the bibliography, and listing a minimum of 2 different peer reviewed academic sources.**

Your research paper is due **at the beginning of class in week 12**. A hard copy should be submitted in class. Please submit an electronic copy via email (trisha.meyer@vub.ac.be) and on Turnitin as well. When submitting to Turnitin, postings should be entitled with your surname and the issue covered (for example "Meyer_Uses and Gratifications Theory"). Extensions will not be granted except for attested emergency situations. Having a computer problem, attending to a wedding or doing an internship are not considered emergency situations. Students are responsible to start well in advance and have backups of their work. This policy will be strictly enforced. **NOTE: your paper only counts as accepted if you handed in both a hard and electronic copy. Failure to do so will result in an 'F'.**

Your research paper must be structured in 4 sections, distinguishable by clear headings and subtitles (see the table below for more details). Make sure that each section is coherent and that the argument draws on and follows the selected subtitle. The paper should be structured as follows:

An introduction	A brief summary of the core analytical puzzle, the research question, the rationale sustaining the selection of your case study; your theoretical framework and information on the structure of the paper.
A review of the theories adopted in the analysis	A section introducing the definition of the concepts/theories applied in the research. This section presents and compares different interpretations of the same concept or contending perspectives on an issue and critically reviews the literature on the selected topic.
A theoretically grounded analysis	This section analyzes the topic through the lenses of your selected theoretical approach(es) or with reference to the selected concept(s).
Your conclusions	A summary of your argument sustained by a critical analysis of both selected theories/concepts and events.
Bibliography	This section should include clear documentation of sources using

	Harvard style. At least 3 peer reviewed academic references.
Length	2500 words

Research papers should be submitted in Helvetica font, 12 points type, 1,5 spaced with 2 cm margins. **The research paper should be around 2500 words, excluding the cover page and the bibliography, and using a minimum of 3 different peer reviewed academic sources.**

Grading Criteria

The following criteria will be applied in assessing your research paper and proposal:

- A well-framed research question that is linked to the literature review;
- Evidence of understanding of the concepts, ideas and theories linked to the research question;
- Provision of a clearly focused topic, a logical and well-organized analysis;
- Grammatically correct text; and
- Clear documentation of your sources (see below for more details).

System of Bibliographic Referencing

There are many systems for the citation of references. For this course, I expect you to use the Harvard style of referencing which is a name and date system.

In the Harvard system, the author's surname, year of publication and, for direct quotes, page number are **cited** in the text of your work. Full details of the books/articles are included in a **bibliography** at the end of the assignment.

Student can find a detailed Harvard Guide at the following website: <http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/referencing.htm>. Please, also consult the following short guide for "Acknowledging, Paraphrasing, and Quoting Sources", available at: http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Acknowledging_Sources.pdf.

Harvard Style of Referencing - Examples

In-text citation:

Both unities of discourses and objects are formed "by means of a group controlled decisions" (Foucault, 2011:32).

Habermas acknowledges the crucial function of language as a "medium of domination and social force" (1974:17, in Forchtner, 2011:9).

In your reference list:

How to quote books:

Held, D. (1980). *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

How to quote chapters in edited books:

Wæver, O. (1995), 'Securitization and Desecuritization', in Ronnie, D. L. (ed.) *On Security*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 46-86.

How to quote articles:

Foucault, M. (1982), 'The Subject and Power'. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4): 777-795.

How to quote electronic sources:

Thatcher M (1992), Europe's Political Architecture, Speech in the Hague delivered on the 15th May 1992, available at the Margaret Thatcher Foundation: <http://www.margarethatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=108296>, retrieved on 8 June, 2012.

Mid-Term and Final Exams (40%)

The mid-term and final will be in-class exams. The midterm exam (20%) will be held in the middle of the semester (week 7). The mid-term exam pertains to all course material covered in weeks 1 through 6. The final exam (20%) will be held at the end of the course (week 15). The final exam pertains to all course material covered in weeks 8 through 14. The course material consists of powerpoint presentations, lecture notes and readings from the textbook.

Structure of the Exams

The exams will consist of:

- 2 short open answers on concepts/facts (one-two paragraphs each, 40% of the final grade)
- 1 long open answer on definitions and attributes/characteristics/principles connected to concepts/facts (half to one page, 25% of the final grade)
- 1 essay (one page, 35% of the final grade).

Grading Criteria

The following criteria will be applied in assessing exam responses:

- Capacity to grasp and convey factual, conceptual and theoretical knowledge;
- Capacity to synthesize and apply concepts and theory to concrete cases; and
- Capacity to develop a systematic argument based on theory and practice.

Further Description of Assessment Activities

Grading Form for Reading Seminar Presentation

	Superior	Proficient	Poor	Unsatisfactory
Factual information	Used many facts to support all arguments	Used some facts to support all arguments	Used few facts to support arguments	Did not present facts to support arguments
Comprehension	Demonstrated thorough understanding of information	Demonstrated accurate understanding of information	Demonstrated minimal understanding of information	Demonstrated misunderstanding of the information
Persuasiveness	All arguments were logical and convincing	Most arguments were logical and convincing	Some arguments were logical and convincing	Few arguments were logical and convincing

Delivery	Communicated clearly & confidently; maintained eye contact; excellent voice inflection and delivery rate	Communicated clearly; frequent eye contact; good voice and delivery rate	Seldom communicated clearly; poor eye contact; poor voice and delivery rate	Failed to communicate clearly; no eye contact; monotone delivery
Rebuttal	Addressed all audience's questions	Addressed most of audience's questions	Addressed some of audience's questions	Did not address audience's questions
	100 / 100	75 / 100	50 / 100	25 / 100

Grading Form for Research Papers

	A	B	C	D	F
Structure of Research	The structure of the research is solid and allows the author to unfold the argument in a pertinent way.	Some minor flaws in the structure occasionally weaken the strength of the analysis.	Some flaws in the structure do not allow the author to unfold the argument at best.	The work attempts to address the question, but it remains loosely structured.	The structure is flawed and does not allow the author to develop a coherent argument.
Mastery of Literature and Theoretical Approach	Outstanding mastering of relevant literature and ability to gather and independently assess relevant sources beyond required levels of reading. The work coherently tests theoretical propositions.	The work is underpinned by the ability to master relevant theoretical literature and coherent attempt to apply this literature to empirical phenomena.	Good level of understanding of the relevant theoretical literature. Attempts to critically apply these frameworks to the topic at hand.	The work meets the requirements of the assignment in terms of mastery of the literature and learning outcomes.	Basic knowledge of theoretical frameworks. Minimal or incoherent attempt to adopt a theoretical framework in the analysis.
Analysis	Advanced knowledge of empirical background and theoretical/conceptual	Successful attempt to pursue an original analysis. Some minor weaknesses in	The work does not adequately engage with the critical assessment of either relevant theoretical	Sub-optimal focus or coherence of the argument.	The work engages with the question, but does so in an inadequate way. The work demonstrates

	frameworks.	the profundity of the analysis.	frameworks or the topic at hand.		insufficient understanding of the topic at hand and remains below the required level.
Critical Thinking	Solid, critical and original analytical skills and ability to relate theoretical knowledge to empirical case(s).	Strong critical ability to tackle both relevant literature and the topic at hand. Occasionally inconsequential reasoning.	Successful attempts to critically assess the theoretical frameworks and the topic at hand.	The work does not adequately engage with the critical assessment of either relevant theoretical frameworks or the topic at hand.	The work uncritically tackles relevant literature and the topic at hand.
Expression, Referencing and Bibliographic Systems	Well-communicated work, which demonstrates a pertinent and original ability to communicate complex dynamics. The bibliographic and referencing systems are correct. 5 or more academic references, covering both factual information and theoretical framework.	Minor weaknesses in terms of language, referencing, depth of sources. At least 3 academic references, covering both factual information and theoretical framework.	Good written expression and the referencing and bibliographic systems are overall correct. At least 3 references, covering both factual information and theoretical framework.	Language, reference and bibliographic systems are generally correct although with some weaknesses. Less than 3 academic references.	Language is poor. Inappropriate selection of sources. The referencing and bibliographic system is incorrect or incomplete. Less than 3 academic references.

Grading Form for Exams: Short and Long Answers

	A	B	C	D	F
Accuracy	The author pertinently and succinctly addresses the question	Overall, the answer accurately addresses the question. Some minor omissions or imprecisions	The answer meets the basic requirements for this assignment. Some imprecisions	Major flaws, imprecisions	The answer sheet is left in blank or the answer fails dramatically to address the question.

Completeness	The answer correctly addresses all aspects and angles of the question and provides an answer with an excellent level of detail	Some minor omissions or imprecisions	The answer sufficiently addresses the question	The answer is incomplete and fails to address the question	The answer is left in blank or fails dramatically to address the question.
Evidence of Reading	Excellent reference to and application of major course material	Good reference to and application of major course material	Average reference to and application of major course material	Little reference to and application of major course material	The answer lacks any reference to any course material
Critical Thinking (if applicable)	The answer demonstrates an excellent level of critical thinking and an original application of independent thought	The answer highlights a good level of critical thinking and independence of thought	The answer shows some evidence of critical thinking and independent thought	The answer does engage only to a very limited extent critically with facts and literature and shows little evidence of independent thinking	The answer lacks any critical reflection and independent thought

Grading Form for Exams: Essay Questions

	A	B	C	D	F
Accuracy	The author pertinently and succinctly addresses the question	Overall, the answer accurately addresses the question. Some minor omissions or imprecisions	The answer meets the basic requirements for this assignment. Some imprecisions	Major flaws, imprecisions	The answer sheet is left in blank or the answer fails dramatically to address the question.
Completeness	The answer correctly addresses all aspects and angles of the question and provides an answer with an excellent level of detail	Some minor omissions or imprecisions	The answer sufficiently addresses the question	The answer is incomplete and fails to address the question	The answer is left in blank or fails dramatically to address the question.
Evidence of Reading	Excellent reference to and	Good reference to and	Average reference to and	Little reference to and	The answer lacks any reference to

	application of major course material	application of major course material	application of major course material	application of major course material	any course material
Critical Thinking	The answer demonstrates an excellent level of critical thinking and an original application of independent thought	The answer highlights a good level of critical thinking and independence of thought	The answer shows some evidence of critical thinking and independent thought	The answer does engage only to a very limited extent critically with facts and literature and shows little evidence of independent thinking	The answer lacks any critical reflection and independent thought
Structure of the Answer	The essay is well structured, with a clear introduction, detailed main body with a logical flow of arguments and strong conclusion	The answer has a good structure with an introduction, main body good flow and conclusion	The answer is generally structured, but does not include a clear introduction, logical flow in the main body or conclusion	The answer is largely unstructured, but shows some evidence of an intro, main body and conclusion	The answer lacks sufficient structure
Expression	The examinee uses and applies accurate concepts and excellent language	The examinee uses and applies mostly accurate concepts and good language	Some application of accurate concepts, but flawed language	Concepts are not used accurately, some level of confusion arises out of poor language	Poor conceptual use and poor language that inhibit the understanding of the core message

Additional Course Policies

Late Assignments and Make Up Exams

Failure to submit your assignment on time will result in a **penalty of 10% of the assignment grade for the first 24 hours and an additional 10% of the assignment grade for the following 24 hours**. Papers submitted more than 48 hours late will not be accepted and graded as 0 (F). Make up exams will not be accepted unless there are serious legitimate reasons. Provision of a signed medical note is required, and notice must be given prior to the deadline.

Academic Honesty Statement

Academic dishonesty is **NOT** tolerated in this course.

Academic honesty is not only an ethical issue but also the foundation of scholarship. Cheating and plagiarism are therefore serious breaches of academic integrity.

Following the College policy, cheating and plagiarism cases will be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean for Students and submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action.

If you refer to someone else's work, appropriate references and citations must be provided. Grammar, spelling and punctuation count, so use the tools necessary to correct before handing in assignments.

Suggested Readings

- Baran, S. & Davis, D. (2010). *Mass Communication Theory. Foundations, Ferment, and Future. Sixth Edition.* Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- McQuail, D. (2010). *Mass Communication Theory. Sixth Edition.* London: Sage.
- McQuail, D. (Ed.) (2010). *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory.* London: Sage.
- Scannell, P. (2007). *Media and Communication.* London: Sage.
- Severin, W. & Tankard, J. (2001). *Communication Theories. Origins, Methods, and Uses in the Mass Media. Fifth Edition.* London: Addison Wesley Longman.

ANNEX: Course Assessment Requirements As 300 Level Course

Important! This annex only mentions the course assessment requirements necessary to take CMM102 as a 300 level course. This document needs to be consulted in addition to the course syllabus.

- Readings: 60-80 pages per week
- Reading quizzes: 2
- Reading seminar presentation: 15 minutes plus reading brief
- Research proposal and paper: primary research, 500+4500 words
- Mid-term and final exams: 2 long questions, 1 long essay

Course Materials

The course material consists of powerpoint presentations, lecture notes and readings from the textbook. Powerpoint presentations will be made available after the respective classes have taken place. A week-by-week overview of the course readings can be found in the section above.

The syllabus, powerpoint presentations and important messages will be uploaded to the Vesalius portal 'Pointcarré'. Students are expected to visit this site regularly to keep abreast of course evolutions. The professor is expected to upload relevant material in a timely manner.

Course material marked as 'suggested readings' and 'additional sources' is helpful for research and to gain an increased understanding, but is not mandatory. This material can be found online or will be made available upon individual request.

Textbook:

- Watson, J. (2016). *Media Communication. An Introduction to Theory and Process. Fourth Edition.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

In addition, at 300 level select chapters will be provided from:

- McQuail, D. (2010). *Mass Communication Theory. Sixth Edition.* London: Sage.
- McQuail, D. (Ed.) (2010). *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory.* London: Sage.
- Scannell, P. (2007). *Media and Communication.* London: Sage.

Course Assessment

The students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance as follows:

•	Reading quizzes	10%
•	Reading seminar presentation	10%
•	Research proposal	10%
•	Research paper	30%
•	Mid-term exam	20%
•	Final exam	20%
•	TOTAL	100%

Description of Activities and Grading Criteria

Reading Quizzes (10%)

Attendance and active participation are vital to the student's progress. It is highly recommended to prepare for class using the textbook readings in order to be able to follow classes and pose questions. The end of each chapter of the course textbook includes activities and questions to help prepare for class. Readings will be discussed in class and several (*marked*) reading quizzes will take place. Students who are absent are responsible for finding out what was covered in class.

Reading Seminar Presentation (10%)

The in-class oral assignment consists of a short presentation of the seminar readings. Each week one or more students will briefly synthesise the weekly seminar reading and steer discussions in the class. The presentation a) introduces the main points that the article raises; b) raises up to 4 questions emerged by the reading of the article; c) steers discussions in class about the reading.

Each student will complement his/her presentation with a reading brief. The reading brief should present a brief abstract (no more than 150 words) of the article; push forward 4 questions to discuss in class (what are the main points raised in the article? Is the theoretical framework coherent? How does this theoretical explanation compare and contrast to other communication theories? And so forth). The reading brief will be no longer than 1 page.

Students need to send me the electronic version of the reading brief by e-mail (trisha.meyer@vub.ac.be – with Reading Brief in the heading) the day before class and to hand in a hard copy in class.

Research Proposal (10%) and Research Paper (30%)

Students should write a research paper analyzing a media case study (event, genre, organization, etc.) through a selected theoretical lens. It is of utmost importance that you allocate time throughout the semester to work on the paper. **Note in particular that this research paper includes primary research.** As a first step I advise you to consult the textbook in order to identify topics of interest. In a second stage, further exploration of academic (and popular) literature will help in defining the research puzzle/problem and formulating the research question.

You are requested to consult the course instructor and get her approval on your selected research topic **by week 4**. In addition, you need to submit a research proposal for your research paper **by the beginning of class in week 6**. A hard copy should be submitted in class. Please send an electronic copy via email (trisha.meyer@vub.ac.be) as well. The research proposal is the first step towards the final paper. It should include:

A clear research question	The questions should be as clear and simple as reasonably possible. The research question may be a mere empirical or factual question, it may be theoretically inspired, above all it should be clear and straightforward. Often research questions change throughout the research in the light of new additional empirical/theoretical information. Irrespective of eventual changes your initial research question should be as clear as possible.
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A paper outline	The paper outline should provide an indication of how the student is going to investigate the research question. The student has to explain how she/he is going to research the topic at hand. This entails an identification of the selected <i>media case study</i> (event, genre, organization, etc.) and <i>theoretical approach/concepts</i> in particular.
A tentative layout	The tentative structure and headings likely to appear in the final paper.
Preliminary bibliography	A bibliography directly related to the research question or research topic, listing a minimum of 5 different peer reviewed academic sources.
Length	500 words

Research proposals should be submitted in Helvetica font, 12 points type, 1,5 spaced with 2 cm margins. **The research proposal should be around 500 words, excluding the cover page and the bibliography, and listing a minimum of 5 different peer reviewed academic sources.**

Your research paper is due **at the beginning of class in week 12**. A hard copy should be submitted in class. Please submit an electronic copy via email (trisha.meyer@vub.ac.be) and on Turnitin as well. When submitting to Turnitin, postings should be entitled with your surname and the issue covered (for example "Meyer_Uses and Gratifications Theory"). Extensions will not be granted except for attested emergency situations. Having a computer problem, attending to a wedding or doing an internship are not considered emergency situations. Students are responsible to start well in advance and have backups of their work. This policy will be strictly enforced. **NOTE: your paper only counts as accepted if you handed in both a hard and electronic copy. Failure to do so will result in an 'F'.**

Your research paper must be structured in 5 sections, distinguishable by clear headings and subtitles (see the table below for more details). Make sure that each section is coherent and that the argument draws on and follows the selected subtitle. The paper should be structured as follows:

Introduction	Introduction should introduce the topic, explain its importance, introduce the research questions and discuss its significance. It should clearly identify the puzzle of the research (what does the paper seek to explain?) and provide core factual background information on the selected topic (what? when? who?...). A well-framed research question should help to frame the literature review. This section should also give an overview of the entire paper.
Theoretical Framework / Literature Review	The second part reviews the literature and proposes a theoretical explanation (why?) for the selected topic. It summarises the core assumptions of the selected theoretical approach. It offers a coherent explanation of the selected topic through the lens of this theoretical approach. This part should also provide justification for choosing this theoretical framework by explaining how it supports the research question. Studies that focused on similar research questions can be also used as justification for the selection.
Methodology	The third part presents the methodology applied in the research; the rationale for case selection; the data analysed. This section should address the following questions: Why a particular methodology was

	selected? What units of analysis does it include and how does it link back to the theoretical framework? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen methods?
Analysis including (1) secondary sources/literature review; (2) primary sources	The fourth part analyses the selected case study through your selected theoretical and methodological lens. This part reveals a personal and critical understanding of the sources & methodologies analyzed in the literature review. Points to the gap in the literature and/or the significance of the proposed study based on the research question. Integrates primary research findings with the secondary literature in a coherent way. The analysis supports the research question.
Concluding remarks	A summary of your argument sustained by a critical analysis of both selected theories/concepts and events. This section links back to the introduction, addresses the research question and the main points discussed in the analysis section. This section also paves the way for further research, pointing to the gaps that this study highlights and explains what can be done to fill them.
Bibliography	The bibliography should include separate sections for primary and secondary sources. This section should include clear documentation of sources using Harvard style. At least 10 peer reviewed academic references.
Length	4500 words

Research papers should be submitted in Helvetica font, 12 points type, 1,5 spaced with 2 cm margins. **The research paper should be around 4500 words, excluding the cover page and the bibliography, and using a minimum of 10 different peer reviewed academic sources.**

Grading Criteria

The following criteria will be applied in assessing your research paper and proposal:

- A well-framed research question that is linked to the literature review;
- Evidence of understanding of the concepts, ideas, theories *and* methodologies linked to the research question;
- Provision of a clearly focused topic, a logical and well-organized analysis;
- Grammatically correct text; and
- Clear documentation of your sources, including both primary and secondary sources (see below for more details).

System of Bibliographic Referencing

There are many systems for the citation of references. For this course, I expect you to use the Harvard style of referencing which is a name and date system.

In the Harvard system, the author's surname, year of publication and, for direct quotes, page number are **cited** in the text of your work. Full details of the books/articles are included in a **bibliography** at the end of the assignment.

Student can find a detailed Harvard Guide at the following website: <http://libweb.anlia.ac.uk/referencing/referencing.htm>. Please, also consult the following short guide for "Acknowledging, Paraphrasing, and Quoting Sources",

available at: http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Acknowledging_Sources.pdf.

Harvard Style of Referencing - Examples

In-text citation:

Both unities of discourses and objects are formed “by means of a group controlled decisions” (Foucault, 2011:32).

Habermas acknowledges the crucial function of language as a “medium of domination and social force” (1974:17, in Forchtner, 2011:9).

In your reference list:

How to quote books:

Held, D. (1980). *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

How to quote chapters in edited books:

Wæver, O. (1995), ‘Securitization and Desecuritization’, in Ronnie, D. L. (ed.) *On Security*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 46-86.

How to quote articles:

Foucault, M. (1982), ‘The Subject and Power’. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4): 777-795.

How to quote electronic sources:

Thatcher M (1992), Europe’s Political Architecture, Speech in the Hague delivered on the 15th May 1992, available at the Margaret Thatcher Foundation: <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=108296>, retrieved on 8 June, 2012.

Grading Form for Research Papers

	A	B	C	D	F
Structure of Research	The structure of the research is solid and allows the author to unfold the argument in a pertinent way.	Some minor flaws in the structure occasionally weaken the strength of the analysis.	Some flaws in the structure do not allow the author to unfold the argument at best.	The work attempts to address the question, but it remains loosely structured.	The structure is flawed and does not allow the author to develop a coherent argument.
Mastery of Literature and Theoretical Approach	Outstanding mastering of relevant literature and ability to gather and independently assess relevant sources beyond	The work is underpinned by the ability to master relevant theoretical literature and coherent attempt to apply this literature to	Good level of understanding of the relevant theoretical literature. Attempts to critically apply these frameworks to the topic at hand.	The work meets the requirements of the assignment in terms of mastery of the literature and learning outcomes.	Basic knowledge of theoretical frameworks. Minimal or incoherent attempt to adopt a theoretical framework in the analysis.

	required levels of reading. The work coherently tests theoretical prepositions.	empirical phenomena.			
Methodological Approach	Engagement with methodological literature. Ability to relate the theoretical framework to the selected methodology. The methodology is clearly stated and coherently applied to selected case(s).	Overall, good engagement with methodological literature. Some minor pitfall in the relation between theoretical framework, selected methodology and case study.	Fairly satisfactory understanding of methodological literature. Instances of failure in the attempt to establish a relation between theoretical framework, selected methodology and case study.	Some attempt to adopt a methodological framework to the analysis. Information on the rationale of the selection of case(s) and sampled material is limited.	Minimal or no attempt to adopt a methodological framework. Missing information on the rationale of the selection of case(s) and sampled material.
Analysis	Advanced knowledge of empirical background and theoretical/ conceptual frameworks.	Successful attempt to pursue an original analysis. Some minor weaknesses in the profundity of the analysis.	The work does not adequately engage with the critical assessment of either relevant theoretical frameworks or the topic at hand.	Sub-optimal focus or coherence of the argument.	The work engages with the question, but does so in an inadequate way. The work demonstrates insufficient understanding of the topic at hand and remains below the required level.
Critical Thinking	Solid, critical and original analytical skills and ability to relate theoretical knowledge to empirical case(s).	Strong critical ability to tackle both relevant literature and the topic at hand. Occasionally inconsequential reasoning.	Successful attempts to critically assess the theoretical frameworks and the topic at hand.	The work does not adequately engage with the critical assessment of either relevant theoretical frameworks or the topic at hand.	The work uncritically tackles relevant literature and the topic at hand.
Expression, Referencing and	Well-communicated work, which demonstrates	Minor weaknesses in terms of language,	Good written expression and the referencing	Language, reference and bibliographic systems are	Language is poor. Inappropriate selection of

Bibliographic Systems	a pertinent and original ability to communicate complex dynamics. The bibliographic and referencing systems are correct. 15 or more academic references, covering both factual information and theoretical framework.	referencing, depth of sources. At least 10 academic references, covering both factual information and theoretical framework.	and bibliographic systems are overall correct. At least 10 references, covering both factual information and theoretical framework.	generally correct although with some weaknesses. Less than 10 academic references.	sources. The referencing and bibliographic system is incorrect or incomplete. Less than 10 academic references.
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Mid-Term and Final Exams (40%)

The mid-term and final will be in-class exams. The midterm exam (20%) will be held in the middle of the semester (week 7). The mid-term exam pertains to all course material covered in weeks 1 through 6. The final exam (20%) will be held at the end of the course (week 15). The final exam pertains to all course material covered in weeks 8 through 14. The course material consists of powerpoint presentations, lecture notes and course readings from the textbook and additional course readings.

Structure of the Exams

The exams will consist of:

- 2 long open answers (one page each, 60% of the final grade)
- 1 essay (two and a half to three pages, 40% of the final grade).

Grading Criteria

The following criteria will be applied in assessing exam responses:

- Capacity to grasp and convey factual, conceptual and theoretical knowledge;
- Capacity to synthesize and apply concepts and theory to concrete cases; and
- Capacity to develop a systematic argument based on theory and practice.



**Course Syllabus CMM 102
MASS COMMUNICATION**

ANNEX: Course Assessment Requirements As 300 Level Course

Important! This annex only mentions the course assessment requirements necessary to take CMM102 as a 300 level course. This document needs to be consulted in addition to the course syllabus.

- Readings: 60-80 pages per week
- Reading quizzes: 2
- Reading seminar presentation: 15 minutes plus reading brief
- Research proposal and paper: primary research, 500+4500 words
- Mid-term and final exams: 2 long questions, 1 long essay

Course Materials

The course material consists of powerpoint presentations, lecture notes and readings from the textbook. Powerpoint presentations will be made available after the respective classes have taken place. A week-by-week overview of the course readings can be found in the section above.

The syllabus, powerpoint presentations and important messages will be uploaded to the Vesalius portal 'Pointcarré'. Students are expected to visit this site regularly to keep abreast of course evolutions. The professor is expected to upload relevant material in a timely manner.

Course material marked as 'suggested readings' and 'additional sources' is helpful for research and to gain an increased understanding, but is not mandatory. This material can be found online or will be made available upon individual request.

Textbook:

- Watson, J. (2016). *Media Communication. An Introduction to Theory and Process. Fourth Edition.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

In addition, at 300 level select chapters will be provided from:

- McQuail, D. (2010). *Mass Communication Theory. Sixth Edition.* London: Sage.
- McQuail, D. (Ed.) (2010). *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory.* London: Sage.
- Scannell, P. (2007). *Media and Communication.* London: Sage.

Course Assessment

The students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance as follows:

•	Reading quizzes	10%
•	Reading seminar presentation	10%
•	Research proposal	10%
•	Research paper	30%
•	Mid-term exam	20%
•	Final exam	20%
•	TOTAL	100%

Description of Activities and Grading Criteria

Reading Quizzes (10%)

Attendance and active participation are vital to the student's progress. It is highly recommended to prepare for class using the textbook readings in order to be able to follow classes and pose questions. The end of each chapter of the course textbook includes activities and questions to help prepare for class. Readings will be discussed in class and several (*marked*) reading quizzes will take place. Students who are absent are responsible for finding out what was covered in class.

Reading Seminar Presentation (10%)

The in-class oral assignment consists of a short presentation of the seminar readings. Each week one or more students will briefly synthesise the weekly seminar reading and steer discussions in the class. The presentation a) introduces the main points that the article raises; b) raises up to 4 questions emerged by the reading of the article; c) steers discussions in class about the reading.

Each student will complement his/her presentation with a reading brief. The reading brief should present a brief abstract (no more than 150 words) of the article; push forward 4 questions to discuss in class (what are the main points raised in the article? Is the theoretical framework coherent? How does this theoretical explanation compare and contrast to other communication theories? And so forth). The reading brief will be no longer than 1 page.

Students need to send me the electronic version of the reading brief by e-mail (trisha.meyer@vub.ac.be – with Reading Brief in the heading) the day before class and to hand in a hard copy in class.

Research Proposal (10%) and Research Paper (30%)

Students should write a research paper analyzing a media case study (event, genre, organization, etc.) through a selected theoretical lens. It is of utmost importance that you allocate time throughout the semester to work on the paper. **Note in particular that this research paper includes primary research.** As a first step I advice you to consult the textbook in order to identify topics of interest. In a second stage, further exploration of academic (and popular) literature will help in defining the research puzzle/problem and formulating the research question.

You are requested to consult the course instructor and get her approval on your selected research topic **by week 4**. In addition, you need to submit a research proposal for your research paper **by the beginning of class on Monday in week 6: February 22, 11:00 AM**. A hard copy should be submitted in class. Please send an

electronic copy via email (trisha.meyer@vub.ac.be) as well. The research proposal is the first step towards the final paper. It should include:

A clear research question	The questions should be as clear and simple as reasonably possible. The research question may be a mere empirical or factual question, it may be theoretically inspired, above all it should be clear and straightforward. Often research questions change throughout the research in the light of new additional empirical/theoretical information. Irrespective of eventual changes your initial research question should be as clear as possible.
A paper outline	The paper outline should provide an indication of how the student is going to investigate the research question. The student has to explain how she/he is going to research the topic at hand. This entails an identification of the selected <i>media case study</i> (event, genre, organization, etc.) and <i>theoretical approach/concepts</i> in particular.
A tentative layout	The tentative structure and headings likely to appear in the final paper.
Preliminary bibliography	A bibliography directly related to the research question or research topic, listing a minimum of 5 different peer reviewed academic sources.
Length	500 words

Research proposals should be submitted in Helvetica font, 12 points type, 1,5 spaced with 2 cm margins. **The research proposal should be around 500 words, excluding the cover page and the bibliography, and listing a minimum of 5 different peer reviewed academic sources.**

Your research paper is due **at the beginning of class on Monday in week 12: 18 April, 11:00 AM**. A hard copy should be submitted in class. Please submit an electronic copy via email (trisha.meyer@vub.ac.be) and on Turnitin as well. When submitting to Turnitin, postings should be entitled with your surname and the issue covered (for example “Meyer_Uses and Gratifications Theory”). Extensions will not be granted except for attested emergency situations. Having a computer problem, attending to a wedding or doing an internship are not considered emergency situations. Students are responsible to start well in advance and have backups of their work. This policy will be strictly enforced. **NOTE: your paper only counts as accepted if you handed in both a hard and electronic copy. Failure to do so will result in an ‘F’.**

Your research paper must be structured in 5 sections, distinguishable by clear headings and subtitles (see the table below for more details). Make sure that each section is coherent and that the argument draws on and follows the selected subtitle. The paper should be structured as follows:

Introduction	Introduction should introduce the topic, explain its importance, introduce the research questions and discuss its significance. It should clearly identify the puzzle of the research (what does the paper seek to explain?) and provide core factual background information on the selected topic (what? when? who?...). A well-framed research question should help to frame the literature review. This section should also give an overview of the entire paper.
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Theoretical Framework / Literature Review	The second part reviews the literature and proposes a theoretical explanation (why?) for the selected topic. It summarises the core assumptions of the selected theoretical approach. It offers a coherent explanation of the selected topic through the lens of this theoretical approach. This part should also provide justification for choosing this theoretical framework by explaining how it supports the research question. Studies that focused on similar research questions can be also used as justification for the selection.
Methodology	The third part presents the methodology applied in the research; the rationale for case selection; the data analysed. This section should address the following questions: Why a particular methodology was selected? What units of analysis does it include and how does it link back to the theoretical framework? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen methods?
Analysis including (1) secondary sources/literature review; (2) primary sources	The fourth part analyses the selected case study through your selected theoretical and methodological lens. This part reveals a personal and critical understanding of the sources & methodologies analyzed in the literature review. Points to the gap in the literature and/or the significance of the proposed study based on the research question. Integrates primary research findings with the secondary literature in a coherent way. The analysis supports the research question.
Concluding remarks	A summary of your argument sustained by a critical analysis of both selected theories/concepts and events. This section links back to the introduction, addresses the research question and the main points discussed in the analysis section. This section also paves the way for further research, pointing to the gaps that this study highlights and explains what can be done to fill them.
Bibliography	The bibliography should include separate sections for primary and secondary sources. This section should include clear documentation of sources using Harvard style. At least 10 peer reviewed academic references.
Length	4500 words

Research papers should be submitted in Helvetica font, 12 points type, 1,5 spaced with 2 cm margins. **The research paper should be around 4500 words, excluding the cover page and the bibliography, and using a minimum of 10 different peer reviewed academic sources.**

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The following criteria will be applied in assessing your research paper and proposal:

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- Evidence of understanding of the concepts, ideas, theories *and* methodologies linked to the research question;
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- Grammatically correct text; and
- Clear documentation of your sources, including both primary and secondary sources (see below for more details).

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There are many systems for the citation of references. For this course, I expect you to use the Harvard style of referencing which is a name and date system.

In the Harvard system, the author's surname, year of publication and, for direct quotes, page number are **cited** in the text of your work. Full details of the books/articles are included in a **bibliography** at the end of the assignment.

Student can find a detailed Harvard Guide at the following website: <http://libweb.anqlia.ac.uk/referencing/referencing.htm>. Please, also consult the following short guide for "Acknowledging, Paraphrasing, and Quoting Sources", available at: http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Acknowledging_Sources.pdf.

Harvard Style of Referencing - Examples

In-text citation:

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Grading Form for Research Papers

	A	B	C	D	F
Structure of Research	The structure of the research is solid and allows the author to unfold the argument in a pertinent way.	Some minor flaws in the structure occasionally weaken the strength of the analysis.	Some flaws in the structure do not allow the author to unfold the argument at best.	The work attempts to address the question, but it remains loosely structured.	The structure is flawed and does not allow the author to develop a coherent argument.
Mastery of	Outstanding	The work is	Good level of	The work	Basic

Literature and Theoretical Approach	mastering of relevant literature and ability to gather and independently assess relevant sources beyond required levels of reading. The work coherently tests theoretical prepositions.	underpinned by the ability to master relevant theoretical literature and coherent attempt to apply this literature to empirical phenomena.	understanding of the relevant theoretical literature. Attempts to critically apply these frameworks to the topic at hand.	meets the requirements of the assignment in terms of mastery of the literature and learning outcomes.	knowledge of theoretical frameworks. Minimal or incoherent attempt to adopt a theoretical framework in the analysis.
Methodological Approach	Engagement with methodological literature. Ability to relate the theoretical framework to the selected methodology. The methodology is clearly stated and coherently applied to selected case(s).	Overall, good engagement with methodological literature. Some minor pitfall in the relation between theoretical framework, selected methodology and case study.	Fairly satisfactory understanding of methodological literature. Instances of failure in the attempt to establish a relation between theoretical framework, selected methodology and case study.	Some attempt to adopt a methodological framework to the analysis. Information on the rationale of the selection of case(s) and sampled material is limited.	Minimal or no attempt to adopt a methodological framework. Missing information on the rationale of the selection of case(s) and sampled material.
Analysis	Advanced knowledge of empirical background and theoretical/ conceptual frameworks.	Successful attempt to pursue an original analysis. Some minor weaknesses in the profundity of the analysis.	The work does not adequately engage with the critical assessment of either relevant theoretical frameworks or the topic at hand.	Sub-optimal focus or coherence of the argument.	The work engages with the question, but does so in an inadequate way. The work demonstrates insufficient understanding of the topic at hand and remains below the required level.
Critical Thinking	Solid, critical and original analytical skills and	Strong critical ability to tackle both relevant literature and	Successful attempts to critically assess the	The work does not adequately engage with the critical	The work uncritically tackles relevant

	ability to relate theoretical knowledge to empirical case(s).	the topic at hand. Occasionally inconsequential reasoning.	theoretical frameworks and the topic at hand.	assessment of either relevant theoretical frameworks or the topic at hand.	literature and the topic at hand.
Expression, Referencing and Bibliographic Systems	Well-communicated work, which demonstrates a pertinent and original ability to communicate complex dynamics. The bibliographic and referencing systems are correct. 15 or more academic references, covering both factual information and theoretical framework.	Minor weaknesses in terms of language, referencing, depth of sources. At least 10 academic references, covering both factual information and theoretical framework.	Good written expression and the referencing and bibliographic systems are overall correct. At least 10 references, covering both factual information and theoretical framework.	Language, reference and bibliographic systems are generally correct although with some weaknesses. Less than 10 academic references.	Language is poor. Inappropriate selection of sources. The referencing and bibliographic system is incorrect or incomplete. Less than 10 academic references.

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- 1 essay (two and a half to three pages, 40% of the final grade).

Grading Criteria

The following criteria will be applied in assessing exam responses:

- Capacity to grasp and convey factual, conceptual and theoretical knowledge;
- Capacity to synthesize and apply concepts and theory to concrete cases; and
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