

COMM 1307: Introduction to Mass Communication

Course Syllabus | Fall 2026

South Plains College

Course: COMM 1307, Introduction to Mass Communication

Credit Hours: 3 semester hours

Core Curriculum Requirement: Language, Philosophy, and Culture

Prerequisites: None

Class Meetings: Monday, Wednesdays: 1 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

Location: CM 151

Instructor Information

Instructor: Kati Moody

Office: CM 158

Email: kmoody@southplainscollege.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 9 a.m.–noon; Friday, 9 a.m.–noon; also available by appointment, online or in person. Email is the best way to reach me. Please allow 24 hours for a response (up to 48 hours over a weekend). To meet during office hours, email ahead to confirm I'll be available.

Required Textbook and Course Materials

No textbook is required. All materials — readings, slides, handouts, assignment instructions, and videos — are posted in Blackboard. Students are responsible for checking Blackboard regularly and keeping up with deadlines.

Technical Requirements

Students need reliable internet access and a device that supports:

- Blackboard and email
- Viewing and submitting files, including Word-compatible documents and videos
- Creating or uploading basic media when an assignment requires it

Contact the instructor as soon as possible if a technology problem affects your work. I can't help with a problem I don't know about.

Course Description

Introduction to Mass Communication is a survey of the basic content, structure, functions, and social influence of mass media. Students will examine how media messages are created, distributed, consumed, interpreted, shared, and challenged across news, advertising, public relations, entertainment, social media, streaming platforms, sports media, gaming, music, podcasts, and emerging digital technologies.

This course emphasizes media literacy, audience behavior, ethics, representation, technology, civic life, and the role of media in shaping culture and society, using both historical and current examples — including influencers, algorithms, misinformation, branding, fandoms, artificial intelligence, online communities, and local media.

Throughout the semester, students will ask how mass communication shapes what people know, believe, value, buy, share, debate, and imagine.

Core Objectives Addressed

This course addresses the following core curriculum objectives:

Communication Skills: practiced through discussion, written reflection, media analysis, class activities, and a final project.

Critical Thinking Skills: developed through inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis applied to media messages, platforms, audiences, industries, and effects.

Social Responsibility: examined through media's connection to intercultural knowledge, civic responsibility, representation, public debate, and local, national, and global communication.

Personal Responsibility: connected to ethical decision-making around media use, sharing information, artificial intelligence, privacy, bias, and misinformation.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the fundamental types, purposes, and relevance of mass communication.
- Demonstrate understanding of mass media in historical, economic, political, and cultural contexts.
- Demonstrate understanding of the business aspects of mass media and the influence of commercialism.
- Demonstrate understanding of evolving media technologies and relevant issues and trends.
- Demonstrate understanding of mass media values, ethics, laws, and industry guidelines.
- Demonstrate understanding of the globalization of mass media.
- Demonstrate understanding of media effects on society.
- Analyze media messages by considering audience, purpose, platform, source, credibility, bias, ownership, representation, ethics, and possible social effects.
- Apply course concepts to current media examples through discussion, written assignments, media diary reflections, and creative work.
- Communicate ideas clearly in written, oral, and visual formats appropriate for a college-level communication course.

Course Theme

The central question for this course is:

“How do media systems shape what people know, believe, value, buy, fear, share, and imagine?”

We will return to the following questions throughout the semester:

1. Who made this message?
2. Who is the audience?
3. What is the purpose?
4. Who benefits?
5. Who might be harmed or left out?
6. What does this reveal about society?
7. What responsibility do creators and audiences have?

Course Expectations

Students are expected to attend class regularly, participate in discussions and activities, complete assignments on time, and engage respectfully with course material and classmates.

This course is discussion-based. Students do not have to agree with every idea presented in class, but they are expected to listen carefully, speak respectfully, support claims with evidence, and remain open to different perspectives.

Because this course focuses on media and society, class examples may include current events, pop culture, social media trends, advertising, political communication, and controversial public issues. The goal is not to tell students what to think — it is to help students think more carefully about how media messages work.

Grading

This course uses a 1,000-point grading system.

Course Work	Points
Media Diary Exit Tickets	150
Classwork, Discussion, and Activities	150
Media Check-Ins	150
Applied Media Assignments	250
Midterm Concept Check	100
Final Project: Media Influence Vlog Series	200
Total	1,000

Grading Scale

- A: 900–1,000 points
- B: 800–899 points
- C: 700–799 points
- D: 600–699 points
- F: 0–599 points

Reasonable changes to assignments, deadlines, or point values may be made based on class progress, campus events, weather, technology issues, or unexpected closures. Changes will be announced in Blackboard before they affect student work.

Major Course Assignments

Media Diary Exit Tickets — 150 points

Students complete short media diary entries throughout the semester, usually as an exit ticket responding to a prompt tied to that day's lesson. The goal is to help students notice their own media habits, think critically about the messages they encounter, and connect course concepts to everyday life.

Topics may include social media, streaming, music, podcasts, news, gaming, sports media, advertising, influencer content, memes, texting, artificial intelligence, and online communities. Responses should usually run 5 to 8 sentences unless a prompt says otherwise.

Classwork, Discussion, and Activities — 150 points

Points come from in-class activities, small-group work, media analysis exercises, class discussions, and short writing tasks. See the Attendance and Participation Policy below for how these points are graded.

Media Check-Ins — 150 points

Short responses connecting course concepts to current media examples, completed in Blackboard or during class — analyzing a trend, ad, news story, influencer post, PR campaign, streaming show, controversy, media habit, or platform feature. Check-ins are designed to help students practice applying concepts before larger assignments.

Applied Media Assignments — 250 points

Students complete five applied media assignments during the semester, each asking them to use course concepts to analyze real media examples:

- Media Habits Analysis
- News and Credibility Analysis
- Advertising or Public Relations Analysis
- Representation Analysis
- Platform and Audience Map

Complete instructions, deadlines, and grading criteria will be posted in Blackboard.

Midterm Concept Check — 100 points

Assesses understanding of major course concepts from the first half of the semester, including short answer, vocabulary, applied examples, and brief media analysis. The focus is on understanding and application, not memorizing isolated facts.

Final Project: Media Influence Vlog Series — 200 points

Students choose an ongoing media trend, topic, platform, controversy, fandom, campaign, creator, public issue, media habit, or online community and analyze it across the semester, creating a short series of vlog-style reflections that track how their understanding develops as they learn course concepts.

“Vlog” does not have to mean face-on-camera — students may use a video diary, voiceover with slides, screen recording, podcast-style audio, Canva video, private Blackboard video upload, or another instructor-approved format.

The project applies concepts related to audience, purpose, platform, media effects, ethics, representation, credibility, commercial influence, and social responsibility. Components may include a topic proposal, media artifact collection, short vlog reflections, written analysis or script, a creative component, and a final presentation or gallery walk.

Complete instructions will be posted in Blackboard.

Attendance and Participation Policy

This course depends on discussion, group work, and in-class analysis, so attendance matters. Participation credit is earned through active engagement — attending class, contributing to discussion, completing in-class work, and participating respectfully in group activities. Being physically present does not by itself earn full credit.

Students may miss up to two class meetings without penalty. Beyond that, unexcused absences will affect the participation grade. Absences may be excused for documented illness, college-sponsored activities, family emergencies, religious observance, military service, legal obligations, or other situations approved by the instructor — students should contact the instructor as soon as possible, and documentation may be requested.

Students who miss class remain responsible for everything covered that day: check Blackboard, get notes from a classmate, and follow up with questions. Extended absence without communication may lead to administrative withdrawal under SPC procedure.

Phone and Technology Policy

Phones, tablets, and laptops are welcome when they support a class activity — looking up an example, responding to a prompt, or taking notes. Otherwise, they should be put away. Texting, scrolling, gaming, or working on other coursework during class is not permitted, and headphones should stay off unless an activity or accommodation calls for them.

Students expecting an urgent call should let the instructor know before class and step out quietly if needed. Repeated distraction will affect the participation grade and may mean a seat change or a conversation with the instructor. Since this is a communication course, part of what students are practicing is professional attention — using technology with purpose, not habit.

Deadline and Late Work Policy

This course is deadline-driven. Assignment instructions and due dates are posted in Blackboard, and students are responsible for tracking them — the instructor will not send individual reminders.

Whether late work is accepted depends on the assignment, the reason, and whether the student communicated in advance. Students who know they will miss a deadline should contact the instructor as soon as possible. In-class work — exit tickets, activities, discussions — usually cannot be made up, since it depends on being there. Deadlines matter here for the same reason they matter in any media or professional setting: plan ahead, and communicate when something goes wrong.

Blackboard Policy

Students are responsible for checking Blackboard regularly for announcements, assignment instructions, due dates, slides, and grades. Students who miss class should check Blackboard before emailing the instructor with general questions about what was missed.

Email and Communication Policy

Students should use their SPC email account, include a clear subject line, their name, and the course number, and write professionally. Expect a response within 24 hours on school days; weekend emails may not get a reply until Monday.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to submit their own original work. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, submitting work completed by someone else, submitting AI-generated work without permission or disclosure, using unauthorized notes or materials during an exam, copying another student's work, or presenting another person's ideas or language as one's own. Plagiarism occurs when a student uses words, ideas, images, media, or other materials from another source without proper acknowledgment.

Students are responsible for understanding how to cite sources and how to distinguish between their own work and the work of others. Academic dishonesty may result in reduced credit, no credit, or additional academic consequences according to South Plains College policy.

Course Artificial Intelligence Policy

AI tools may be used only when an assignment explicitly allows it, and any permitted use must be disclosed as directed by the instructor. Students remain responsible for the accuracy, originality, and ethical quality of everything they submit. AI can help with brainstorming or organizing ideas, but it cannot replace the research, writing, analysis, or reflection the course requires.

Unauthorized or undisclosed AI use may result in reduced credit, no credit, or referral for academic integrity procedures. See the full Artificial Intelligence Statement in the Institutional Statements section below.

Course Schedule

The schedule is organized by instructional week. Complete assignment instructions and deadlines will be posted in the corresponding Blackboard folder. The instructor may adjust the schedule based on class progress, campus events, weather, technology issues, or unexpected closures. Any changes will be announced in Blackboard.

Week	Weekly Topic	Focus and Major Concepts	Work Due This Week
1	What Is Mass Communication?	Course orientation, syllabus, media diary routine, basic definition of mass communication, media in everyday life	Media Diary Exit Tickets; Media Check-In 1

Week	Weekly Topic	Focus and Major Concepts	Work Due This Week
2	Media History and Technology	Print, broadcast, internet, convergence, disruption, major shifts in media access and audience power	Media Diary Exit Tickets
3	Media Literacy and Credibility	Source evaluation, bias, verification, misinformation, context, evidence, platform habits	Applied Assignment 1: Media Habits Analysis
4	Media Effects and Influence	Agenda-setting, framing, cultivation, uses and gratifications, influence, attention	Media Check-In 2
5	Audiences and Algorithms	Target audiences, personalization, algorithms, engagement, data, platform power	Applied Assignment 2: Platform and Audience Map
6	News and Journalism	News values, local news, watchdog role, objectivity, fairness, press freedom, credibility	Media Check-In 3
7	Advertising and Consumer Culture	Persuasion, branding, emotional appeal, target markets, sponsored content, consumer identity	Applied Assignment 3: Advertising Analysis
8	Public Relations and Image Management	Reputation, publics, crisis communication, stakeholders, transparency, influencer apologies	Midterm Review
9	Midterm Concept Check	Review and synthesis of course concepts from Weeks 1–8	Midterm Concept Check
10	Entertainment and Streaming	Film, television, streaming platforms, celebrity, fandom, genre, cultural influence	Media Check-In 4
11	Social Media and Creator Culture	Influencers, creator economy, parasocial relationships, platform identity, viral content	Applied Assignment 4: Social Media or Creator Analysis
12	Representation and Identity	Stereotypes, inclusion, symbolic representation, regional identity, race, gender, class, age, disability, and culture	Media Check-In 5
13	Media Law and Ethics	First Amendment basics, privacy, copyright, libel basics, plagiarism, AI ethics, public responsibility	Applied Assignment 5: Representation or Ethics Analysis
14	Global Media and Civic Life	Globalization, civic responsibility, activism, polarization, local versus national versus global coverage	Final Project Workshop
15	Future of Media	Artificial intelligence, deepfakes, platform shifts, media careers, digital responsibility	Final Project Presentations or Gallery Walk
16	Final Exam Week	Course reflection, final synthesis, final project submission	Final Project Due

Required Institutional Syllabus Statements 2026-2027

The following statements are provided by South Plains College. The current institutional version is available at:

<https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>

Students are responsible for reviewing and understanding the current college policies related to intellectual exchange, disability accommodations, non-discrimination, Title IX pregnancy and parenting accommodations, CARE Team support, campus concealed carry, COVID-19 procedures, student identification verification pictures, and artificial intelligence.

These statements are considered part of this course syllabus. Students should review them carefully and contact the instructor with questions about how any policy applies to this course.

Intellectual Exchange Statement

In South Plains College courses, the instructor will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group difference and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves. By promoting intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

Disabilities Statement

Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of the individual's disability to the Disability Services Office.

For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at Levelland, Student Health & Wellness Office, 806-716-2577, or Lubbock and other centers, located at the Lubbock Downtown Center, 806-716-4675.

Non-Discrimination Statement

South Plains College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Vice President for Student Affairs, South Plains College, 1401 College Avenue, Box 5, Levelland, TX 79336. Phone number: 806-716-2360.

Title IX Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations Statement

If you are pregnant or parenting, paternal or maternal, with children under the age of 18 per Texas Education Code 51.982 and Title IX, you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education.

To activate accommodations, you must submit a Title IX pregnancy and parenting accommodations request, along with specific medical documentation, to the Health and Wellness Center. Once approved, notification will be sent to the student and instructors. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to arrange accommodations. Contact the Health and Wellness Center at 806-716-2529 or email rcanon@southplainscollege.edu for assistance.

CARE Team Statement

South Plains College is committed to ensuring the safety, health, and well-being of its students and community. To support its campus community, SPC has a CARE Team. This is a dedicated group of campus professionals responsible for assessing and responding to students who could benefit from academic, emotional, or psychological support, as well as those presenting risk to the health or safety of the community.

If you see someone experiencing challenges, appearing distressed, posing a threat to their safety or someone else's safety, or causing a significant disruption to the SPC community, please submit a CARE Team referral. You may also submit a referral for yourself if you would like additional support.

NOTE: In cases where a person's behavior poses an imminent threat to you or another, contact 911.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Government Code 411.2031, et al. authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in South Plains College buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so.

Pursuant to Penal Code 46.035 and South Plains College policy, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations and frequently asked questions, please refer to the Campus Carry page.

Pursuant to Penal Code 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all South Plains College campuses. Report violations to the College Police Department at 806-716-2396 or 911.

COVID-19 Statement

To prevent virus spread on campus, please do not attend class if you are sick or have tested positive for COVID-19. Students should seek medical attention or testing when appropriate.

Students should notify DeEtte Edens, FNP-C, Associate Director of Health & Wellness, at dedens@southplainscollege.edu or 806-716-2376 if they test positive for COVID-19.

SPC will follow the recommended isolation and reporting procedures provided by the college. Students are responsible for reviewing the current COVID-19 syllabus statement and following current campus guidance.

Student Identification Verification Pictures

In order to comply with institutional identity-verification procedures, students enrolled in courses at South Plains College must have a current photo available in the college's student information system. Approved photos are used solely for instructional, advising, and security purposes and are protected under applicable privacy laws. Students without a photo on file must update their record during the first week of class.

Artificial Intelligence Statement

AI applications are advanced language models designed to aid and engage in meaningful conversations, as well as generate and revise content. AI is intended to supplement learning, stimulate critical thinking, and enhance academic discourse. However, its use comes with certain responsibilities.

Using AI to generate academic work, including essays, reports, or assignments, without proper attribution is a violation of SPC academic integrity policies. Plagiarism undermines the learning process and is strictly prohibited. Students must ensure that their work reflects their own ideas, research, synthesis, and analysis and appropriately cites all sources, including AI.

While AI can be a valuable resource, it is essential to strike a balance between seeking assistance and maintaining personal responsibility. Collaboration with peers, consulting instructors, and utilizing other approved learning resources should be prioritized. Overreliance on AI for solutions without actively engaging in the learning process is discouraged and can be grounds for academic integrity violations. Utilizing AI as a tool for brainstorming or research is allowed only when permitted by the assignment, but the writing should be the student's own work and thoughts.

AI usage can provide suggestions and information, but it is essential to critically evaluate the responses and exercise independent thought. Relying solely on AI for answers deprives students of the opportunity to develop their analytical and problem-solving skills.

AI is trained on large amounts of data from the internet, which may include biased or inaccurate information. Students must verify that information is from reliable sources, question potential biases, and ensure that information and sources used in assignments are appropriate for college-level work.

Students should engage with AI in a respectful and responsible manner and avoid using offensive language, discriminatory remarks, harassment, or inappropriate behavior. Students should also uphold the standards of respectful communication in addressing both AI and fellow classmates.

Policies regarding the appropriate use of AI in South Plains College courses are set by instructional departments and individual instructors. Appropriate use of AI may range from strict prohibition to assignments that may require the use of AI. Misusing or violating the guidelines outlined in this syllabus may result in disciplinary action, including academic penalties.

Remember, AI can be a tool to support your learning in certain courses and assignments, but it cannot replace the critical thinking, creativity, and independent work that are integral to your overall academic growth.