

Request to add JMC 100 Media Issues to the Social Science menu

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The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication requests that JMC 100 Media Issues become a choice in the Social Science menu of the General Education Curriculum.

Because the mass media play a prominent role in many aspects of contemporary society, many students would benefit from a clearer understanding of how the media will affect their careers, society and personal lives.

While mass communication is not included specifically in the listed menu of disciplines, it dovetails cleanly into the criteria and cuts across nearly all of the disciplines mentioned, from economics to international studies, from political science to psychology. In fact, all four subsections of the Social Science Criteria's definition are addressed in substantial ways by the survey course known as JMC 100 Media Issues, which has long served as a foundational course for all Journalism and Mass Communication majors:

- a. The study of the effects of mass media on the individual consumer is the mainstay of modern research in this field.
- b. The role of social variables at higher levels of aggregation cannot be fully explored without including mass media's impact, such as the effect of advertising on a consumer-based economy or the effect of the First Amendment-mandated free press on American government.
- c. Powerful new forms of mass media that are more commonly called "social media" have led to fundamental changes in the interactions among small groups and their larger communities.
- d. The modern place of mass media is best understood by laying a historical foundation of past practices extending back to the Middle Ages with the advent of Gutenberg's press.

Besides mirroring these four definitional aspects of the Social Science Criteria document, JMC 100 Media Issues also satisfies both of the SSC's requirements for course content by blending an introductory overview of the mass media industries in their current state with an historical perspective that emphasizes U.S. development during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Below is a more detailed explanation of the course taken from two sections of its syllabus:

Purpose of the Course

The mission statement of the Department of Mass Communication is "to engage students in critical and creative thinking in the classroom, in the laboratory and through mentoring relationships, leading them to become exceptional, ethical and agile communicators in a rapidly changing media environment, embracing technology, valuing global diversity and embodying Christ-centered service." As an initial step toward accomplishing that mission, Media Issues will:

- Introduce definitions and principles of several ongoing or current issues in mass media.
- Present principles and philosophies that are the foundation of the First Amendment, and other mass communication principles, such as the public's right to know, the functions of mass communication and theories concerning mass communication.
- Examine the historical roots of and relationships among media – magazines, newspapers, books, sound recording, motion pictures, radio, television and Internet – and the media-related industries of public relations and advertising.

- Explore and debate issues such as media bias, the extent of media power, media convergence, the effects of media products and the influences of public relations and advertising in the mass media.
- Provide opportunity for students to develop their understanding of various media issues in an environment that encourages and protects free speech in open student forums.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Technology:** Students will be exposed to the history of technologies used in the mass media.
- **Research and evaluation:** Students will be exposed to the history of theories on mass media effects on individuals, groups, and societies and to related research efforts.
- **Clear and correct writing:** As part of multiple class projects, students will apply their writing skills in producing critiques of media messages.
- **First Amendment:** Students will be exposed to historic issues and legal cases related to the free expression clause of the First Amendment.
- **Ethics:** Students will gain understanding of current incidents and ethical issues in mass media, including plagiarism, bias, and deception.
- **Global diversity:** Students will be exposed to the global effects of mass communication in a number of specific cultures, comparing how each uses mass media.
- **Domestic diversity:** Students will be exposed to the role of the mass media as it pertains to issues of race, gender, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation.
- **Visual theory:** Students will be exposed to basic theoretical models of communication.
- **History:** Students will be exposed to historical roots of and relationships among mass media and the related industries of public relations and advertising.