COMMON COURSE OUTLINE: Course discipline/number/title: MCOM 2130: Mass Communication Theory

A. CATALOG DESCRIPTION
   1. Credits: 3
   2. Hours/Week: 3
   3. Prerequisites (Course discipline/number): College level reading and writing
   4. Co-requisites (Course discipline/number): None

   This course provides grounding in mass communication theory from the historical development of media theory, to issues and problems created by the media, through contemporary conceptualizations of media. This course seeks to develop students’ understanding of theories so that they can make better use of media and play an informed role in the development of new media industries as professionals.

B. DATE LAST REVISED (Month, year): September, 2012

C. OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS:
   1. Theory development and major issues in mass communication
   2. Major historical eras in the development of mass communication theory
   3. Media industries and mass society theory
   4. Propaganda theories
   5. Normative theories and the social responsibility of mass media
   6. Limited-effects theories
   7. Functional analysis and TV violence theories
   8. Critical and cultural theories
   9. Audience theories and uses of media
   10. The role of media in society and social change
   11. Cultural impact of media
   12. Media literacy theory
   13. Contemporary and future directions in media theory

D. LEARNING OUTCOMES (GENERAL): The student will be able to:
   1. Explain the process of theory development and testing in mass communication scholarship.
   2. Name the four historical eras of mass communication theory.
   3. Trace the historical development of media theories and link this development to historically important societal, political, and technological events.
   4. Describe the major tenets of mass society theory in its influence as a research paradigm.
   5. Recognize the devices used in propaganda and explain propaganda’s influence on theory development.
   6. Identify the major political influences on normative theories.
   7. Describe the major normative theories of the media in society.
   8. Recount the historical rise of limited effects theories.
   9. Identify the major issues surrounding functionalism and the use of media by children.
   10. Name the authors instrumental in the development of critical theory.
   11. Describe the concept of active audience and the research paradigm of uses and gratifications.
   12. Articulate preferences for various theories and offer cogent reasons for these preferences.
   13. Describe how conceptualizations of the role of media have changed over the years and assess the advantages and limitations of these ideas. Describe how these conceptualizations will change as new media evolve over the next decade.
   14. Explain the theoretical impact of social constructionism and symbolic interactionism on media research.

E. LEARNING OUTCOMES (MNTC):
   Goal 2/Critical Thinking: The student will be able to:
   1. Gather factual information and apply it to a given problem in a manner that is relevant, clear, comprehensive, and conscious of possible bias in the information selected.
E. LEARNING OUTCOMES (MNCT): Continued . . .

2. Imagine and seek out a variety of possible goals, assumptions, interpretations, or perspectives, which can give alternative meanings or solutions to given situations or problems.
3. Analyze the logical connections among the facts, goals, and implicit assumptions relevant to a problem or claim; generate and evaluate implications that follow from them.
4. Recognize and articulate the value assumptions, which underlie and affect decisions, interpretations, analyses, and evaluations made by ourselves and others.

Goal 5/History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences (SS): The student will be able to:
1. Employ the methods and data that historians and social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.
2. Examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods and cultures.
3. Use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.
4. Develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.

F. METHODS FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING:

May include any or all of the following:
1. Objective exams
2. Quizzes
3. Small group discussions and projects
4. Oral presentations
5. Written journals
6. Essay exams
7. Or any other activities deemed appropriate by an individual instructor

G. RCTC CORE OUTCOME(S) ADDRESSED:

☐ Communication ☐ Civic Responsibility
☒ Critical Thinking ☐ Personal/Professional Accountability
☐ Global Awareness/Diversity ☐ Aesthetic Response

H. SPECIAL INFORMATION (if any): None