

# JOUR 2250: Media Literacy

## Fall 2026: August 17- December 11

**Class Meets:** Online (3 Credit Hours)

**Instructor:** Hoda Emam [Hoda.Emam@unt.edu](mailto:Hoda.Emam@unt.edu)

Office: SYMR 218

In-Person office hours: Thursdays 9am-11am

By appointment and via Zoom Tuesdays 12pm-2pm

**Teaching Assistant:** Kristi Williams [KristiWilliams@my.unt.edu](mailto:KristiWilliams@my.unt.edu)

### Course Description

This online course involves criticism and analysis of the function, role, and responsibility of the mass media in modern society from the consumer perspective. Includes the ethical problems and issues facing each media format, with the effect of political, economic, and cultural factors on the operation of the media. This course also delves into the production of media, the methods consumers use to interpret media content, and the impact of different levels of individual media literacy on civic and socioeconomic, and communication issues.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances.

Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.

Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.

Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.

Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.

**Federal regulations state that students may apply only 3 fully-online semester credit hours (SCH) to the hours required for full-time status for F-1 Visa (DOC) holders. Full-time status for F-1 Visa students is 12 hours for undergraduates and 9 hours for graduate students.**

**By the end of this class students should be able to:**

Understand the goals and methods of various media industries. Identify and understand the effects media has on us, as well as the benefits and potential negative effects of media content.

- Identify techniques to become more media literate as individuals and a society
- Develop teamwork skills, which is defined as the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.
- Develop critical thinking skills, which is defined as applying creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information in the pursuit of problem solving.
- Develop and maintain personal responsibility, which is defined as the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision making.
- Develop effective communication skills, which is defined as effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.

## **How to succeed in this course**

**Important: Email Your instructor...aka me!**

Please keep in mind that I only answer emails to my UNT address: I cannot guarantee a quick response to Canvas mail.

**Your emails are expected to contain a professional tone; emails to your professor should not look like a text message to a friend.**

Every student in this class should have the right to learn and engage within an environment of respect and courtesy from others. We will discuss our classroom's habits of engagement and I also encourage you to review UNT's student code of conduct so that we can all start with the same baseline civility understanding (Code of Student Conduct) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>).

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal privacy law that protects your academic records. As a measure of compliance, I DO NOT communicate with students via private email accounts like Gmail, Yahoo, and others. If you have a question about anything related to this course, you must contact me from your UNT email address.

### **Required/Recommended Materials**

#### **Required Textbook:**

*Media Literacy*, Edition 10, W. James Potter (ISBN 978-1071814451)

#### **Additional Course Requirements**

- Reliable, consistent internet access. The Internet is available in the library and at many other establishments.
- Basic computer skills, including the ability to type papers and produce Power Point presentations. All papers should be saved as .doc or .pdf documents to ensure Canvas compatibility.

### **Course Requirements/Schedule**

|                                |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Individual Assignments:</b> | <b>(10 at 50 points each)</b> |
| <b>Quizzes:</b>                | <b>(4 at 75 points each)</b>  |
| <b>Midterm and Final:</b>      | <b>(100 points each)</b>      |

|                                         |                     |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Total Possible Points in Course:</b> | <b>1,000 points</b> |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------|

Students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class and describe that the calendar is subject to change. Campus Closures Policy can be found at (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006>).

### **Assessing Your Work**

Every student in my class can improve by doing their own work and trying their hardest with access to appropriate resources. Students who use other people's work without citations will be violating UNT's Academic Integrity Policy. Please read and follow this important set of guidelines for your academic success (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>). If you have questions about this, or any UNT policy, please email me or come discuss this with me during my office hours.

### **Grading Scale:**

|                  |          |
|------------------|----------|
| 900-1,000 points | <b>A</b> |
| 800-899 points   | <b>B</b> |
| 700-799 points   | <b>C</b> |
| 600-699 points   | <b>D</b> |
| 0-599 points     | <b>F</b> |

### **Submitting Work**

All work must be turned in through Canvas. Please do not send any assignments to me through email. If you have any problems submitting, please let me know immediately. To avoid technical glitches, it's best not to wait until the last minute to submit assignments since you have an entire week in most cases. **Note that I am much more understanding about extenuating circumstances if you communicate with me before the due date.**

### **JOURNALISM REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES**

- By registering for this course, you are stating that you have taken the required prerequisites according to your catalog year and major/minor status. If the instructor later determines that you haven't taken and passed these

requirements, then you may be dropped at any point in the semester. If you have questions about your prerequisites, please see an advisor.

- A journalism major enrolled in any restricted 3000 and 4000 level classes must have taken and passed all foundational courses. Students must earn and maintain a 2.5 UNT and/or overall GPA (depending upon catalog year) to be eligible for major-level courses.
- **RE-TAKING FAILED JOURNALISM CLASSES**  
Students will not be allowed to automatically take a failed journalism course more than two times. Once you have failed a journalism course twice, you will not be allowed to enroll in that course for one calendar year after the date you received the second failing grade. Once a student has waited one calendar year after failing a course twice, the student may submit a written appeal to the director to be approved to enroll a third time. Students will not be allowed to retake a failed journalism course more than three times.
- **TEXTBOOK POLICY**  
The Mayborn School of Journalism doesn't require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other book stores or online.
- **ATTENDANCE:** One absence in the course is the limit without penalty toward your final grade unless you have communicated with me from the beginning about an extraordinary problem.

Coming to class late or leaving early may constitute an absence for that day. This is a seminar course, and it requires your attendance and participation in each class meeting.

## **FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) UNDERGRADUATES**

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per semester. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose financial aid eligibility. **If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so has the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility.**

Please visit [UNT Financial Aid](#) for more information about financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress. It may be wise for you to schedule a meeting with your MSOJ academic advisor or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

## **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

All first-time-in-college students at UNT are required to schedule an appointment with their Academic Advisor and receive an advising code to register for classes both fall and spring semesters of the first year in college. ALL students should meet with their Academic Advisor at least one time per long semester (Fall & Spring). It is important to update your degree plan on a regular basis to ensure that you are on track for a timely graduation.

**It is imperative that students have paid for all enrolled classes. Please check your online schedule daily through late registration to ensure you have not been dropped for non-payment of any amount.** Students have been unknowingly dropped from classes for various reasons such as financial aid, schedule change fees, parking fees, etc. MSOJ will not be able to reinstate students for any reason after late registration, regardless of situation. It is the student's responsibility to ensure all payments have been made.

## **ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Understanding the academic organizational structure and appropriate Chain of Command is important when resolving class-related or advising issues. When you need problems resolved, please follow the steps outlined below:

- Individual Faculty Member/Advisor
- Associate Dean, Mayborn School of Journalism
- Dean, Mayborn School of Journalism

## **OFFICE OF DISABILITY ACCESS**

The University of North Texas and the Mayborn School of Journalism make reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time. However, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class.

**Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student.**

For additional information see the website for the [Office of Disability Access](#)  
You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

## **COURSE SAFETY STATEMENTS**

Students in the Mayborn School of Journalism are urged to use proper safety procedures and guidelines. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use property safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the University of North Texas is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance for this insurance program. Brochures for this insurance are available in the UNT Health and Wellness Center on campus. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the UNT Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If you have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, please be sure that your plan covers treatment at this facility. If you choose not to go to the UNT Health and Wellness Center, you may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. You are responsible for expenses incurred there.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or exams; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor, the acquisition of tests or other material belonging to a faculty member, dual submission of a paper or project, resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructors, or any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. Plagiarism includes the paraphrase or direct quotation of published or unpublished works *without* full and clear acknowledgment of the author/source. Academic dishonesty will bring about disciplinary action which may include expulsion from the university. This is explained in the UNT Student Handbook.

## **MSOJ ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

The codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, American Advertising Federation and Public Relations Society of America address truth and honesty. The Mayborn School of Journalism embraces these tenets and believes that academic dishonesty of any kind – including plagiarism and fabrication – is incongruent with all areas of journalism. The school's policy aligns with UNT Policy 06.003 and requires

reporting any act of academic dishonesty to the Office for Academic Integrity for investigation. If the student has a previous confirmed offense (whether the first offense was in the journalism school or another university department) and the student is found to have committed another offense, the department will request the additional sanction of removing the student from the Mayborn School of Journalism. The student may appeal to the Office for Academic Integrity, which ensures due process and allows the student to remain in class pending the appeal.

### **FINAL EXAM POLICY**

Final exams will be administered at the designated times during the final week of each long semester and during the specified day of each summer term. Please check the course calendar early in the semester to avoid any schedule conflicts.

### **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

As you know, your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs within the [My.UNT site](#)

If you do not regularly check EagleConnect or link it to your favorite e-mail account, please do so, as this is where you learn about job and internship opportunities, MSOJ events, scholarships, and other important information. Visit the [Eagle Connect website](#) for more information including tips on how to forward your email.

### **COURSES IN A BOX**

Any MSOJ equivalent course from another university must receive prior approval from the MSOJ academic advisor to ensure that all MSOJ degree plan requirements are met. For example, courses that are taken online or from a program that offers course material via CD, booklet, or other manner of correspondence must have prior advisor approval.

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR F-1 STUDENTS TAKING DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES**

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in multiple on-campus lectures or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course. If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

(1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.

(2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Advising Office. The UNT International Advising Office has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, students should contact the UNT International Advising Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email [international@unt.edu](mailto:international@unt.edu)) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

### **EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION & PROCEDURES**

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials. If Canvas is not accessible during the emergency, contact me via email or phone for more information. Students should confirm that their Eagle Alert contact information is correct via the myUNT portal.

### **STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING (SPOT)**

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The short SPOT survey will be made available to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. You will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via *IASystem* Notification" ([no-reply@iasystem.org](mailto:no-reply@iasystem.org)) with the survey link. Please look for the email in your UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete your survey. Once you complete the survey you will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](#) or email [spot@unt.edu](mailto:spot@unt.edu).

### **ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found on the [Dean Of Students website](#)

### **CLASSROOM POLICIES**

The Mayborn School of Journalism requires that students respect and maintain all university property. Students will be held accountable through disciplinary action for any

intentional damages they cause in classrooms. (e.g., writing on tables). Disruptive behavior is not tolerated (e.g., arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, talking on the phone, texting or game playing, making inappropriate comments, ringing cellular phones/beepers, dressing inappropriately).

## **SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, & ASSAULT**

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

[UNT's Dean of Students' website](#) offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached through email at [SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu](mailto:SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu) or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565- 2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

## **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

UNT provides mental health services to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

1. [Student Health and Wellness Center](#)  
1800 Chestnut St. (Chestnut Hall)  
Phone: 940-565-2333 M-Th, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
2. [Counseling and Testing Services](#)– Free to UNT Students  
801 N. Texas Blvd., Suite 140 (Gateway Center)  
Phone: 940-565-274 M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
3. [UNT CARE Team](#)– Free to UNT Students  
Dean of Students, University Union  
Phone: 940-565-2648  
Email: [careteam@unt.edu](mailto:careteam@unt.edu)
4. [Psychiatric Services](#)  
Phone: 940-565-2333
5. [Individual Counseling](#)– Free to UNT Students Phone: 940-369-8773

If at any time you are feeling alone or in jeopardy of self-harm, reach out to any of the following:

- National Suicide Hotline 800-273-8255
- Denton County MHMR Crisis Line 800-762-0157
- Denton County Friends of the Family Crisis Line (family or intimate partner violence) 940-382-7273
- UNT Mental Health Emergency Contacts
  - o During office hours, M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m: Call 940-565-2741
  - After hours: Call 940-565-2741
  - o Crisis Line: Text CONNECT to 741741
  - o [Live chat](#)

### **Statement of Student Learning Outcomes, UNT Mayborn School of Journalism**

Since 1969, the UNT Department of Journalism (Mayborn School of Journalism effective September 1, 2009) has been accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. This national accreditation also extends to the Mayborn Graduate Institute of

Journalism, the only accredited professional master's program in Texas. About one-fourth of all journalism and mass communication programs in the United States are accredited by ACEJMC. National accreditation enhances your education here, because it certifies that the department and graduate institute adhere to many standards established by the council. Among these standards are student learning outcomes, covered by journalism courses in all sequences.

This course, JOUR 2250, will help to meet the student learning outcomes that have been checked by your professor, Hoda Emam

Each graduate must:

Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.

-Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity

-Think critically, creatively and independently

-Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve

-Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness

-Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work

### **Policy reminders and helpful tips:**

#### **"FAQ: What happens if I forget to take the quiz or exam?"**

There are no make-up opportunities for quizzes or exams. If you forget to take a quiz or exam, you will get a zero. Please keep in mind that your professor can access your Blackboard activity, including the exact date and time you open a quiz or exam, as well as how much time you spend on each attempt, so it will not benefit you to be untruthful about quiz or exam attempts. If you forgot, you forgot. Own it. You probably won't forget again.

#### **FAQ: How do I make up missed assignments?**

This is an online class. There are very few legitimate reasons for missing an assignment. That being said, if you have a legitimate reason for which you *can provide verifiable documentation* (prolonged illness, travel delays, personal trauma, etc.), you may complete the missed assignment on your own and email it to your professor within 7 days of your "return" to campus. Credit will only be given if documentation is received. If you miss an assignment and just email it to me without a doctor's note or other documentation, no credit will be given". Also, it is your responsibility to know the dates and times of assignments. Note, not everything closes on Sunday. You have had this information since August; there is no excuse to miss a test or assignment because you didn't know when they were. On Assignments, please be sure and read the assignment very closely. There are typically multiple questions embedded, and you are responsible for all of them. I recommend restating the question in your responses before answering. Also on Assignments, there are questions designed to ensure you read all the materials. It is very obvious to me when you haven't read the study materials, and I will deduct accordingly.

**Remember, this is an online class, and details matter.**