

**AMBERTON UNIVERSITY**  
**SYLLABUS FOR LECTURE/CLASSROOM COURSE**

**COM5447.01 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF the MEDIA**  
**WINTER 2024**

**Location: Garland**

**PROFESSOR INFORMATION:**

Name: Bob Phillips  
Phone Number: 972-279-6511 ext. 243  
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Office Location: Garland Room #16  
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**COURSE INFORMATION:**

COM5447.01 Critical Analysis of the Media  
Level: Graduate  
Beginning Date of Session: Saturday, December 7, 2024  
Ending Date of Session: Thursday, February 27, 2025  
The first class meeting is **December 9, 2024**, in **Room #16 (Garland)**.

All Monday-Thursday lecture classes begin promptly at 6:30 p.m.  
All Saturday lecture classes begin promptly at 8:30 a.m.

**Winter Holiday Break:**

**Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, through Friday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025**  
**(Classes resume on Saturday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025)**

**COURSE PREREQUISITES:**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**TEXTBOOK(S) AND REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

There is no textbook for this course.

Amberton University has an agreement with eCampus.com to provide a full-service online bookstore to students. The Amberton University Virtual Bookstore is accessible through the University's website, [www.Amberton.edu](http://www.Amberton.edu). There is also a bookstore link in the Student Portal.

The AU Virtual Bookstore provides an easy-to-use interface, online buyback of books, and same day shipment of most titles with an average delivery time of 2-3 days depending on the student's location. Textbook options include new, used, rental, and electronic media as available.

Since no books are sold on campus, students should plan accordingly and purchase their books in advance of the first day of class, allowing time for shipping. Be certain you are enrolled in the course before purchasing your book(s). All textbook information (Title, Author, ISBN, etc.) is available in course syllabi so students can shop competitively. Most textbooks can be purchased from many different textbook vendors. Some textbooks may only be available on the University's Virtual Bookstore. Students should be careful to obtain the exact resource(s) required for the course.

**APA Requirement**

APA (American Psychological Association) style is most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences. This resource, revised according to the 7th edition, offers examples for the general format of APA research papers, in-text citations, endnotes/footnotes, and the reference page. For more information, please consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (7th ed.). All coursework at Amberton University will comply with the standards contained in the APA Publication Manual.

**COURSE COMPETENCIES:**

The following represents the course competencies for this class. Competencies are equivalent for all lecture and distance learning courses. Following each competency is the assignment used to gain mastery of this area of study.

The course offers students the opportunity to understand the psychological effects of information provided through the media. Emphasis will be placed on questioning and evaluating information received as to its effects on target and non-target audiences.

**CAVEAT:** No graduate credit will be awarded if COM4447 has been successfully completed.

**UPON COMPLETION OF THE COURSE, THE STUDENT WILL BE COMPETENT IN:**

1. Differentiating between various types of media communication.
2. Probing sources of news media communication.
3. Critiquing decision-making processes in the media.
4. Demonstrating the use of symbolism in media communication.
5. Analyzing the psychology of group motivation in media communication.
6. Describing the effects of various types of media messages on children.
7. Examining the effects of the news media on the family.
8. Examining the effects of the entertainment media on the family.
9. Analyzing cognitive responses to media communication.
10. Analyzing emotional responses to media communication.
11. Critiquing the use of subliminal messages in media communication.
12. Examining the effect of ratings on entertainment and news media decisions.
13. Recognizing and describing ethical dilemmas in media broadcast decisions.
14. Categorizing the media's obligations to the public.
15. Contrasting persuasive versus informative media messages.
16. Understanding how social media affects our lives.
17. Examining the changes, the Internet has had on traditional media.

**COURSE POLICIES:**

- Attendance for this class will be in keeping with the general policy of the University. A student who misses a class assumes the responsibility for making up missed assignments and for obtaining necessary class notes. Since there is no textbook for this class, class attendance is extremely important to the student's grade.
- No books or notes may be used during tests. There will be no makeup tests or extra credit assignments in this class.
- This is a lecture/discussion course. Students will be expected to keep up with current events during the ten-week period when this class meets and be prepared to discuss those subjects in class.
- The professor reserves the right to alter this syllabus as necessary during the course of the class. The undergraduate project must be typed, single space lines and presented in a folder. No loose sheets of paper or handwritten papers will be accepted.
- Cell phones must be in the "off" or "silent" position during class lecture. If student must use phone, he or she is expected to leave classroom to do so.

***Student's Responsibilities***

This syllabus contains information, policies, and procedures for a specific course. By enrolling, the student agrees to read, understand, and abide by the policies, rules, regulations, and ethical standards of Amberton University as contained in the current university catalog and schedule of classes.

### **Attendance Policy:**

Regular and punctual class attendance and engagement is expected at Amberton University. In case of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the professor as soon as possible. If a student intends on withdrawing from a course, it is the student's responsibility to follow the university's policy on formally withdrawing from a course. **Ceasing to attend classes does not constitute an official withdrawal.**

Attendance in a lecture course is defined as punctual arrival to, and engagement in, a full lecture session. A Student in a lecture course missing more than 20% (two class periods for weekday classes or one class period for Saturday classes) of the class meetings may be assigned a grade of an "F" or withdrawn at the discretion of Amberton University.

Attendance in a distance learning course is defined as active participation in the weekly online class sessions. "Active participation" can be defined as: submitting an academic assignment, taking an exam, engaging in an interactive tutorial, participating in an online discussion forum (or chat session), or initiating (or responding to) a communication with a faculty member about an academic assignment or the subject matter of the course. A student not meeting these requirements may be assigned a grade of an "F" or withdrawn at the discretion of Amberton University.

### **Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as though it were your own. If you use another person's words, ideas, or information; or if you use material from an outside source – whether a book, magazine, newspaper, business publication, broadcast, speech, or electronic media – you must acknowledge that source. Plagiarism is a violation of the University's code of student ethical conduct and is one that is taken seriously. Amberton University operates on an honor system; therefore, honesty and integrity are essential characteristics of all who are associated with the institution. All Amberton students are expected to abide by the honor system and maintain academic integrity in all their work. Amberton University and its instructors monitor student work for plagiarism and reserve the right to submit such work to technology-based plagiarism detection services and applications at any time.

Self-plagiarism means reusing work that you have already published or submitted for a class. It can involve:

- Resubmitting an entire paper
- Copying or paraphrasing passages from your previous work

Self-plagiarism misleads your readers by presenting previous work as completely new and original. Students may not submit the same paper in substance in two or more classes without prior written permission of the instructors involved.

Amberton University students who use Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated content must adhere to the following policies:

**Originality:** Students must avoid presenting AI generated content as their own original work. It is essential to acknowledge the involvement of AI in the content creation process in order to maintain academic and ethical standards.

**Paraphrasing:** When using AI generated content, students must rephrase and/or modify the generated text. Paraphrased AI generated content should also be properly cited.

**Acknowledgement:** When using AI generated content in any assignment, proper credit must be given to the AI system that generated the content. <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Students agree that by taking this course, all required assignments may be subject to submission for a textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism and self-plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting

plagiarism in future papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com website.

Turnitin is a writing improvement and plagiarism prevention tool which uses special algorithms, to compare text-based student submissions to the Turnitin database and other online sources. Turnitin produces a detailed **similarity report** that can be customized and viewed by instructors and students.

Turnitin “Draft Coach” is a Google based add-on to Turnitin which supports students in developing high-quality academic writing; and serves as an integrity coach. Draft Coach helps address errors and improve the quality of student’s writing by highlighting grammar mistakes, identifying incorrectly cited sources, and scanning for similarity across several databases. By providing formative feedback on how to address citation issues, incorrect grammar, and matches with the Turnitin database, Draft Coach provides explanations to help students become more confident writers, capable of producing higher quality work both in academics and in the workplace.

**COURSE DELIVERY METHODOLOGY:**

This course is offered as a Lecture/Classroom course. This course requires that students meet at a designated time in the classroom. The presentation of this course may include lectures, group presentations, oral reports, written reports, research papers, etc.

Week	Topic	Assignment	Competencies Covered	Due Date
One	Course Introduction	Class notes and class discussion participation	All Competencies	December 9 2024
Two	Communications Theory	Class notes and class discussion participation	Defining media and news and recognizing different types of media	December 16, 2024
Three	Continuation of Communication Theory	Class notes and class discussion participation	Defining media and news and recognizing different types of media	January 6, 2025
Four	Media Studies	Class notes and class discussion participation	questioning news sources, ratings influences, news decisions, news effects	January 13, 2025
Five	Media and human needs	Class notes and class discussion participation	understanding how people process media, emotional response theories.	January 20, 2025
Six	Mid-Term Exam	Complete exam	All competencies	January 27, 2025
Seven	Audience and mass media	Class notes and class discussion participation	analyzing social influence of media	February 3, 2025
Eight	Media content and the real world	Class notes and class discussion participation	analyzing social influences of media, psychology of group motivation	February 10, 2024
		Research paper		
Nine	Social Media	Class notes and class discussion	understanding how the Internet and	February 17, 2025

		participation	social media influence our lives.	
Ten	Final Exam	Complete exam covering all information from week one through week nine	All competencies	February 24, 2025

## GRADUATE PROJECT

Graduate students must pick one project from the following list:

- An interview with a current or past media professional (journalist, advertising, or marketing professional, cinematographer, film or video editor, writer, website manager, rich web developer, podcast producer and/or host, etc.). Specifically, in addition to general information regarding that person's duties, abilities, responsibilities and knowledge of their business, students should ask interviewee to *compare their area of expertise* today to what their business was like 5, 10 and 25 years ago.
- A comprehensive log of how various news media outlets cover a single news story over a three-week period including examples of that coverage and comments by students giving examples of media agenda (or lack thereof). Students may compare "traditional news media" (newspaper, television, magazine, etc.) to "new media" outlets (online news sources, blogs, etc.) or compare and contrast only traditional news media coverage. Students must complete an analysis of how much alike or how different the coverage of same events are reported via the logged media outlets. (example: While Fox News reported that...., CNN completed omitted that aspect of the story.)
- A comprehensive paper giving specific details of how the student feels his or her life has been affected by media and how his or her life would be different absent media influence. This may be a series of events throughout the student's life or a single event that changed the student's life or specific examples of how the presence of media in his or her life has specifically influenced his or her life. Note: student must give specific examples of how his or her life has been influenced and not simply "this makes me feel this way."
- The graduate paper must be typed, double spaced and at least 5 pages in length.

## GRADING CRITERIA:

Graduate students' grades will be determined by averaging the mid-term exam (25%), the graduate project (25%) and the final exam (50%).

Graduate papers and presentations will be judged using the following criteria: content, references, facts, presentation, and clarity. The professor will judge the student as exceeding standards (3 points), meeting standards (2 points) or failing to meet standards (1 point) in each category and will award points based on how the professor feels the student performed in each area. A perfect score will be 15 points, an average score will be 10 points and a below average score will be 5 points. The points will then be converted to the graduate letter grade scale (below) with a score of 11-15 points falling in the 92-100 range, a score of 6-10 points falling in the 82-91 range and a score of 0-5 points falling in the 72-81 range.

Graduate

92 – 100	A
82 – 91	B
72 – 81	C
62 – 71	D
Below 62	F

## **GRADE NOTIFICATION AND INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK:**

Each assignment/exam submitted will be reviewed, graded, and returned to the student in a timely manner, along with appropriate commentary.

Final grades are processed approximately one week after the last day of the session and may be located in the My Grades section of the online registration portal as well as being mailed to the student's Amberton University email. Amberton University staff will not release grades over the phone. University instructors will not leave a message with comments or grades in any type of media that is not secure.

For questions regarding grades after the semester has ended, students should use their email account and contact the instructor at the faculty email address as provided above in *Professor Information* area.

### ***Incomplete Grades***

An "I" (incomplete grade) is given at the discretion of the professor and may be given only when an emergency or illness prevents the student from completing course requirements. Should an "I" be granted, the student has 30 days from the end of the session to complete the conditions of the incomplete. An "I" which is not properly removed within 30 days following the session enrolled will become an "F" grade.

### ***How to Withdraw From a Course***

To be official, the class withdrawal must be in writing and signed by the student requesting the withdrawal; no withdrawal is accepted verbally. Please review the "Schedule of Classes" (online or in-print) for procedures for class changes or withdrawals and the refund policy and schedule.

## **COURSE COMMUNICATIONS:**

This course is offered as a lecture course; however, several technological options are available to faculty and students that can enhance communication both during the session and after the session has ended. The **Student Portal** is the gateway to email, Remote Research, General Tools, and Electronic Instructor Folders (FTP). The Student Portal may be accessed through a link on the University's website, <http://www.Amberton.edu>, or at <http://apps.Amberton.edu>.

After selecting the "Student Portal" link, you will be prompted for a Username and Password. Use your assigned **username and password** (AUID) as described below:

**Username** = your capitalized firstname **initial**+lastname+last 3 digits of your SSN.

\* Use your name exactly as it is listed on the University's records, including any suffixes or hyphenations, such as Jr, Sr, or II, as a part of your username.

For example: James Jones, Jr. SSN: 123-45-6789  
Username: JJonesJr789

**Password** = your Amberton University ID# (AUID) **including the dashes**

For example: 04-999-999

### **Email Communication**

Each student enrolled is assigned an Amberton email account, which gives the student access to the Amberton email system ([my.Amberton.edu](mailto:my.Amberton.edu)). This email account is provided by Google Apps for Education. Students are encouraged to check their email regularly for University news, notices, and to communicate with instructors.

The student's assigned email address would be Username@my.Amberton.edu

Example: LJones-Smith789@my.Amberton.edu

The student Username is determined by:

firstname initial+lastname+last 3 digits of student ssn.

For example: Linda Jones-Smith    SSN: 123-45-6789

Email Address = LJones-Smith789@my.Amberton.edu

Students will be prompted for a Username and Password when accessing their email account. Use the Username portion of the email address as the username (Example: LJones-Smith789) and your Amberton ID# (including the dashes) as the password.

If you already have a Google Gmail account, you might be prompted to add this account to your current settings. Click 'Yes' and you will be logged into your my.Amberton.edu email account. It will be a separate email account from your personal Gmail account.

If you need assistance with your email account, please visit <https://support.google.com/mail>

### **The Amberton University Moodle Website**

Students enrolled in this course will also be using the Moodle Learning Platform, with access available through the Student Portal or by going to <http://Moodle.Amberton.edu>.

For those utilizing Moodle for the first time, the username and password for the Moodle Learning Platform will be emailed to the student's email account prior to the start of the course. For those returning to Moodle who do not remember their username and/or password, click on the link "Forgotten your username and password" available on the Moodle login page ([moodle.amberton.edu](http://moodle.amberton.edu)) otherwise use the same username and password as previous sessions.

### **Moodle Tutorial**

Upon successful login and access to the Moodle learning platform, there is a Student Moodle Tutorial course available to learn about the basics of Moodle. Simply click on the link for the Student Moodle Tutorials and read through the various learning topics, Navigating, Communicating, Assignments and Exams, Grades and Student Resources.

### **INSTRUCTOR/COURSE EVALUATION:**

Each session, all Amberton students are requested to evaluate their courses. The evaluation process is an important one and provides students with an anonymous and confidential way to give meaningful feedback to the University. Summary information and comments are provided to faculty after the close of the session. Students' identities are not disclosed.

Students will be notified through the Amberton email system of the Course Evaluation procedures. Usually, the evaluations take place in class during week 9 of the session. Please take advantage of this opportunity and participate in the evaluation process.

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### **RESEARCH RESOURCES**

The library provides access to full-text, and peer reviewed articles and digital research tools. Students can search Library holdings through the online catalog and databases search engines available on the Library website or browse the physical library space and holdings located at the Garland campus.

Research items not contained in the Amberton Library collection can be located through interlibrary loan (ILL) or through the TexShare program with the help of the Library staff. Students with questions about available services, resources, or research, may contact the Library via email at [Library@amberton.edu](mailto:Library@amberton.edu).

## **RESEARCH ACCESS**

Databases can only be accessed by authorized users, and students at Amberton must enter their Amberton ID credentials – same as Moodle log-in – to gain access when off-campus. Use an Amberton website, such as the University site (Amberton.edu) or the Library site (Library.amberton.edu) to find links to databases and digital books. Online resources are available all day, every day.

### ***Library Live Chat Feature***

Library staff are available to assist students with research problems or questions during Library hours through a live online chat feature, email, telephone, “How To” videos or in person. The library telephone is 972-279-6511 ext. 185. You can email questions to [Library@amberton.edu](mailto:Library@amberton.edu) or visit the library in person on the Garland campus for assistance.