



MASSCOMM 420
Emergent Media Workshop: Censorship and Consequences

Spring 2019 – 3 credits – Online

Catalog Description

Ideas are dangerous, and censorship exists all around us. In this course, we will explore the various ways ideas are censored in contemporary media, and debate how individuals, communities, schools, governments, businesses, and other organizations should respond to communication that offends or injures other people. We will examine current instances of censorship to better understand the context and consequences of such controversies.

As a Workshop class, we will create digital analyses in written, audio, or video form and post them online. Students will apply technological skills they’ve learned through the Emergent Media program and other Mass Communication courses. MASSCOMM 220: Multimedia I is a prerequisite.

Quick Links

Assignments	Assignment Descriptions	Class Meetings	Course Objectives
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The current version of the course syllabus will be uploaded to BOLT with the revision date included in the file name



Instructor: Dennis Owen Frohlich, Ph.D.

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Office Hours

Tuesdays: 10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Wednesdays: 10 a.m. to Noon

Thursdays: 10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

If these times do not work, please email me three (3) possible times that work better for you.

Readings

There are no required textbooks or materials for this course. Every week there will be several online readings which supplement the video lectures, tutorials, and assignments. We will discuss numerous current events this semester, so you should be in the habit of following the news regularly.

I will regularly ask you to share examples of censorship. Every week, somebody gets in trouble for posting something offensive on social media, businesses get in hot water over questionable advertisements, technology companies are consistently under pressure to police their spaces, and so forth. If you view censorship in broad terms, you'll easily find examples!

Course Objectives

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

- Explain what censorship is, and identify current instances of censorship
- Discuss contemporary examples of censorship
- Analyze contextual factors that inspire censorship, and evaluate the consequences of censorship
- Apply media theory on First Amendment and censorship to a variety of situations
- Create and distribute content to a digital audience about censorship

Class Meetings

Because this class is online, there are no set meeting times. There are, however, assignments, discussions, readings, and video lectures every week. I recommend that you set aside 2-3 blocks of time each week to devote to this course. If you can develop a regular routine of logging into BOLT and checking your school email, you will be most successful in this course.

Controversial Content

Because the focus of this course is censorship, we will naturally examine ideas that some people find offensive. These ideas could be sexist, racist, homophobic, bigoted, or discriminatory for other reasons. In the media, imagery often accompanies these discussions that some find offensive: sexual, violent, graphic, or otherwise objectionable. I will forewarn you ahead of time in the Weekly Overviews, found on BOLT, of the types of content we are discussing that week.

If you suspect that specific material is likely to be challenging for you, I'd be happy to discuss any concerns you may have before the subject comes up in class or discussions. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to course material with me individually, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our classwork.

Assignments

Your grade will be based on the following assignments:

Discussion Cycles (4 times):	240 points
Introductory Blog Post:	30 points
Meetings (2 times):	30 points
Censorship Analysis 1:	100 points
Censorship Analysis 2:	150 points
Censorship Analysis 3:	200 points
<u>Censorship Analysis 4:</u>	<u>250 points</u>
Total:	1,000 points

Grading

Grades are calculated by totaling all points from graded work, based on the following scale:

A	925-1,000	C	720-779
A-	900-924	C-	700-719
B+	880-899	D+	680-699
B	820-879	D	600-679
B-	800-819	F	0-599
C+	780-799		

The grading scale is non-negotiable. A final grade of 879, for instance, is a B. All grades are final unless questions about grades are addressed in writing within **2 weeks** after the grade is posted. If you have concerns about your grades check with me *sooner* in the semester rather than *later*.

The reason I do not round up grades is to remain fair for all students. If I round up a grade for a student who is one point below the cut-off, what do I do for the student who is 2 points below the cut-off? Three points? Five? At some point, there has to be a cut-off to ensure fairness.

Assignment Descriptions

The following are brief descriptions of your assignments this semester. More detailed directions are provided on BOLT, along with grading rubrics.

Discussion Cycles (60 points each; 240 points total)

When it comes to censorship, people have varying perspectives on what is appropriate and what is not, which ideas are offensive and which are not. Four times this semester, you will discuss different types of censorship. Each discussion cycle features four rounds: an initial prompt that you will respond to, and then three rounds of replies to your classmates. This way, we can discuss relevant issues in a deeper fashion than typically happens in online courses. You will be broken into discussion groups of roughly 10 students, and remain in these groups the entire semester. That way, you will get to know a few classmates in the course.

Introductory Blog Post (30 points)

Your 4 Analysis assignments will be posted to a course blog. This way, it is easy for your classmates to have access to your work, and will help promote a sense of community among the class. The first, short assignment will refresh you on how to post content to WordPress. You will share with the class one type of censorship that you are interested in learning more about.

Meetings (15 points each; 30 points total)

Twice during the semester you will visit me during office hours for a brief meeting of 5-10 minutes. Because of the distance that can occur between instructor and student in an online class, these meetings will help us better connect with each other. We can also discuss any concerns you have about the course or the assignments during these meetings. These meetings can also be completed virtually if needed.

Censorship Analyses (100 points, 150 points, 200 points, 250 points; 700 points total)

After each of the four discussion cycles, you will create a digital analysis on some aspect of censorship. These analyses can take the form of blog posts, podcasts, or vlogs. Your analysis will then be posted to the class blog. The discussion cycles are meant to prepare you for these analyses. You will discuss among your classmates different types of censorship, and then examine a new issue on your own. Each analysis will get progressively more sophisticated, hence the escalating point values.

**The Academic Honesty, Discussion Group, Grading, and Special Needs Policies
are available on BOLT under the START HERE module.
You should review these policies frequently.**

Course Schedule

In addition to the following schedule, you will find under the “Content” tab on BOLT weekly modules. These modules will include a Weekly Overview, which explains the focus of the week, as well as video lectures, readings, discussions boards, and assignments.

I endeavor hard to never change due dates, though rarely it happens. The due dates for all assignments are included in the following schedule, as well as on BOLT. You might consider printing this schedule, or putting these due dates into a planner or digital device.

Week	Week Begins	Activities
1	Monday, Jan. 21	<p>Monday, Jan. 21: Martin Luther King Jr. Day: NO CLASSES Tuesday, Jan. 22: CLASS BEGINS</p> <p>Video Lectures (31:25 total)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.1 Course Introduction (15:37) • 1.2 Censorship Broadly Defined (15:48) <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (START HERE module on BOLT): Course Syllabus, Academic Honesty and Plagiarism Policies, Grading Policies, and Special Needs • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Dr. Dennis WordPress username or email address. DUE Sunday, Jan. 27 at 11:55 p.m. • Meeting 1: Meet with Dr. Dennis during office hours, sometime during Weeks 1, 2 or 3.
2	Monday, Jan. 28	<p>Tuesday, Jan. 29: ADD/DROP ENDS</p> <p>Video Lectures (40:04 total)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1 Sources of Censorship (20:22) • 2.2 Common Consequences (19:42) <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ash, T. G. (2016). “Chapter 5: Diversity.” In <i>Free Speech</i>, p. 207-252. • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory Blog posted on Class Blog by Sunday, Feb. 3 at 11:55 p.m. • Meeting 1: Meet with Dr. Dennis during office hours, sometime during Weeks 1, 2 or 3.

Week	Week Begins	Activities
3	Monday, Feb. 4	<p>Video Lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1 Offensive Words • 3.2 Political Correctness, and Authenticity in Communication <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (START HERE module on BOLT): Discussion Cycle Guidelines • Wolfson, N. (1997). "Chapter 2: Pragmatism and Words That Hurt." In <i>Hate Speech, Sex Speech, Free Speech</i>, p. 11-40. • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Cycle 1: Initial Post (Round 1) due to BOLT by Thursday, Feb. 7 at 11:55 p.m. • Discussion Cycle 1: Replies (Round 2) due to BOLT by Sunday, Feb. 10 at 11:55 p.m. • Meeting 1: Meet with Dr. Dennis during office hours, sometime during Weeks 1, 2 or 3.
4	Monday, Feb. 11	<p>Video Lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.1 Censorship and Comedy • 4.2 Extra Credit Opportunities <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Cycle 1: Replies (Round 3) due to BOLT by Thursday, Feb. 14 at 11:55 p.m. • Discussion Cycle 1: Replies (Round 4) due to BOLT by Sunday, Feb. 17 at 11:55 p.m.
5	Monday, Feb. 18	<p>Video Lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.1 Double Standards • 5.2 Censorship Analysis Options <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Censorship Analysis 1 due to Class Blog by Sunday, Feb. 24 at 11:55 p.m.

Week	Week Begins	Activities
6	Monday, Feb. 25	<p>Video Lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.1 Censorship and Social Media • 6.2 Social Networks and Responsibility <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-Semester Evaluation due to BOLT by Sunday, March 3 at 11:55 p.m. <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Cycle 2: Initial Post (Round 1) due to BOLT by Thursday, Feb. 28 at 11:55 p.m. • Discussion Cycle 2: Replies (Round 2) due to BOLT by Sunday, March 3 at 11:55 p.m.
7	Monday, March 4	<p>Video Lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7.1 Limits on Technology <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon, J. (2015). "Chapter 5: Web Wars." In <i>The New Censorship</i>, p. 93-111. • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Cycle 2: Replies (Round 3) due to BOLT by Wednesday, March 6 at 11:55 p.m. • Discussion Cycle 2: Replies (Round 4) due to BOLT by Sunday, March 10 at 11:55 p.m.
8	Monday, March 11	Spring Break Week!
9	Monday, March 18	<p>Video Lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9.1 Guilt by Association <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Censorship Analysis 2 due to Class Blog by Sunday, March 24 at 11:55 p.m. • Meeting 2: Meet with Dr. Dennis during office hours, sometime during Weeks 9, 10 or 11.

Week	Week Begins	Activities
10	Monday, March 25	<p>Video Lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10.1 Censorship and Sensuality <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tushnet, M. V., Chen, A. K., & Blocher, J. (2017). "Chapter 2: Art and the First Amendment." In <i>Free Speech Beyond Words</i>, p. 70-113. • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Cycle 3: Initial Post (Round 1) due to BOLT by Thursday, March 28 at 11:55 p.m. • Discussion Cycle 3: Replies (Round 2) due to BOLT by Sunday, March 31 at 11:55 p.m. • Meeting 2: Meet with Dr. Dennis during office hours, sometime during Weeks 9, 10 or 11.
11	Monday, April 1	<p>Video Lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11.1 Pornography, and Freedom of Expression • 11.2 Body Disparities <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Cycle 3: Replies (Round 3) due to BOLT by Thursday, April 4 at 11:55 p.m. • Discussion Cycle 3: Replies (Round 4) due to BOLT by Sunday, April 7 at 11:55 p.m. • Meeting 2: Meet with Dr. Dennis during office hours, sometime during Weeks 9, 10 or 11.
12	Monday, April 8	<p>Video Lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.1 Piercings, Tattoos, and Body Modifications • 12.2 Cultural Appropriation <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Censorship Analysis 3 due to Class Blog by Sunday, April 14 at 11:55 p.m.

Week	Week Begins	Activities
13	Monday, April 15	<p>Video Lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13.1 Censorship and Sensibility • 13.2 Regulation of Media Products <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silverman, D. S. (2007). "Chapter 1: Television Censorship and Regulation." In <i>You Can't Air That: Four Cases of Controversy and Censorship in American Television Programming</i>, p. 1-31. • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Cycle 4: Initial Post (Round 1) due to BOLT by Thursday, April 18 at 11:55 p.m. • Discussion Cycle 4: Replies (Round 2) due to BOLT by Sunday, April 21 at 11:55 p.m.
14	Monday, April 22	<p>Video Lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14.1 Pressuring and Pressing • 14.2 In My Defense: The Art of the Apology <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Cycle 4: Replies (Round 3) due to BOLT by Thursday, April 25 at 11:55 p.m. • Discussion Cycle 4: Replies (Round 4) due to BOLT by Sunday, April 28 at 11:55 p.m.
15	Monday, April 29	<p>Video Lectures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15.1 To Watch What You Say, or to Speak Boldly? • 15.2 Career Implications of Censorship <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2018). "Chapter 8: The Speech We Hate: The Romantic Appeal of First Amendment Absolutism." In <i>Must We Defend Nazis?</i>, p. 137-162. • Current Event Articles found in Weekly Overview <p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Censorship Analysis 4 due to Class Blog by Sunday, May 5 at 11:55 p.m.
16	Monday, May 6	<p>Monday, May 6: LAST DAY OF CLASSES May 7-10: FINALS WEEK There will be no final exam for this course. Censorship Analysis 4 functions as the final exam.</p>
17	Friday, May 17	<p>Friday, May 17: GRADES AVAILABLE TO VIEW ON MyHusky</p>