

SYLLABUS: COMMUNICATION 3402 CRIME AND THE NEWS MEDIA

**TR 11:10 AM-12:30 PM
220 SULLIVANT HALL**

Instructor: Dr. Felecia Jones Ross

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Office hours: Mondays, 9-11 a.m.; Tuesdays, 4-6 p.m. via Zoom

Course description

This course will primarily be delivered in person. In this course, we will examine the various media that we consume multiple times daily and how they present information about crime and the criminal justice system. How do various media outlets decide what cases to report? What types of crime cases tend to get attention and why? What role does the media play in educating the public about crime and the criminal justice system? What role should it play? To what extent is social media influencing the public's engagement with the media and criminal justice?

We will help answer these questions through readings, discussions, lectures, guest speakers and audiovisual presentations.

Please note that course activities listed in this syllabus are tentative. You will be informed in a timely manner of any changes.

Course learning goals and outcomes

By the end of this course, students will do the following:

- Appreciate the role the media plays in influencing our understanding of criminal justice and public safety
- Appreciate the ability to challenge and change the performance of the media in its representation of crime and the criminal justice system
- Understand the realities of the criminal justice system
- Understand the realities of the media in its representation of the criminal justice system

Mode of delivery

This course will be primarily presented in person, but will have some online components.

- The live distance learning component will take place the last week of the semester (Dec. 1 and Dec. 3 classes)
- A simultaneous live distance component will be added to the in-person delivery
- Zoom will be the tool for the live distance component and will be recorded and posted on Carmen
- Carmen will be the tool for written communication, assignments and the delivery of midterm examinations. See technology requirements below.

Note: Classroom services have turned smaller classrooms into drop-in spaces for students to use if students have in-person and online classes in the same day and need a space for the online class. For more information see <https://odee.osu.edu/spaces/classrooms/drop-spaces>

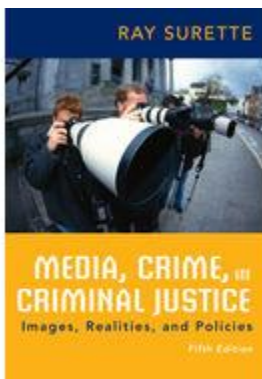
Course materials

Required

Text

Surette, R. (2015). *Media, crime, and criminal justice: Images, realities, and policies* (5th Ed.). Stamford, CT: Cengage.

Efforts will be made to get an e-version of the textbook.



Grading and faculty response

Grading

Following are the point values and/or percentages for each assignment:

| Assignments | Points and/or <u>Percentage</u> |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Participation | 10 |
| Midterm examinations | 40 |
| Mini-papers | 15 |
| Film analysis/review | 14 |
| Film analysis/review topic | 1 |
| Group project | 20 |

Assignments

Participation (10%). Attendance, as well as your contributions to class, reading and online discussion assignments will be factors in determining your participation grade. There will also be in-class group activities. Attendance will be taken via **Top Hat beginning with the Sept. 1 class**.

The check-in assignment at the beginning of the semester is in this category. There may be some Carmen discussion questions, and other submissions as well. The check-in assignment is due in the Carmen dropbox, **Thursday, Aug. 27, 11:59 p.m. EDT**

Midterm examinations (40%). The midterm examinations will be based on reading materials and in-class content that can include audiovisual presentations, guest speakers, lectures and class discussions. There will be two midterm examinations each of equal weight. **The first midterm is tentatively scheduled for Oct. 1 and the second midterm is tentatively scheduled for Nov. 5. Both examinations will be taken online using Proctorio. As in an in-person format, you will be given 80 minutes to complete it. However, because you will be taking it at different locations that may have various technological issues, the exam will open at 12:01 a.m. and close at 11:59 p.m.**

Mini-papers (15%). This consists of three focused-writing papers that include reviewing two chapters in the textbook and a critique of the media's treatment of a national case. Each paper is due at designated times during the semester. More details will be provided on a separate handout and posted on Carmen. Each paper is worth **5%**. **Deadlines are as follows: Book chapter assignment 1, Sept 3; Book chapter assignment 2, Oct. 8, national case, Oct. 22.**

Film analysis/review (14%). Write a 2-3-page review of a movie in the style of the *New York Times*. (<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/movies/index.html>) The movie should be on the topic of some aspect of the criminal justice system; however, I must approve it. A form will be posted on Carmen. Take a sophisticated position on the movie. In other words, do not just write that you thought it was good or bad. What was the movie's strengths/weaknesses with regard to helping us understand the criminal justice system? You are encouraged to interview anyone associated with making the movie or anyone who has knowledge about the criminal or justice-related issues portrayed in the movie. **Deadline is Oct. 15.**

Film analysis/review topic (1 %). You are required to submit your topic for the film analysis/review for approval. **Deadline is Sept. 18.**

Group project (20%). Each group of people, assigned by Carmen, will select a famous/infamous case study involving the media and crime, and make a multimedia presentation to the class. The time will be based on the number of groups. Each person will complete a form explaining, in detail, her/his role in the group, what went well and what could have gone better behind the scenes. Each group must present a different case. **Presentations can begin Nov. 24.**

Late assignments

No assignments will be accepted late. This means a grade of a zero for the missed assignment. Considerations will be given in instances when there are technical issues and illnesses. You must inform the professor within seven days if such problems kept you from completing assignments on time.

Grading scale

93–100: A
90–92.9: A-
87–89.9: B+
83–86.9: B
80–82.9: B-
77–79.9: C+
73–76.9: C
70 –72.9: C-
67 –69.9: D+
60 –66.9: D
Below 60: E

Please note: Carmen Canvas, OSU’s grading and class management software, does not round fractions up. I do round fractions up in cases where students show significant participation and improvement over the semester. Please take that into account in computing grades.

EXTRA CREDIT

There will be opportunities for you to complete work for extra credit. You may earn up to 6 points of extra credit that will be added to your examination scores. The extra credit can come from C-REP (Communication Research Experience Program) participation and/or from events/activities the professor will announce in advance. For non-C-REP activities, the professor will provide the requirements for earning the points. You are also encouraged to suggest ideas for extra credit. These ideas will be considered on the basis of their relevancy to course goals and their accessibility to the whole class. See below for more details for earning C-REP credits.

C-REP (Communication Research Experience Program) Research Credits: All students enrolled in COMM 3402 may participate in the Communication Research Experience Program (“C-REP”). C-REP is designed to give students direct exposure to the topics, goals, methods, and ethical issues of communication research. Participation can take the form of:

- Completing two hours of C-REP research studies, OR
- Completing two C-REP alternative written assignments, OR

- Completing a combined total of two hours of research studies and alternative writing assignments. You should NOT wait until the last minute to sign up for participation. It is wise to complete this as early as possible, when demands on your time are the lightest. Please take the time to read the detailed C-REP Student Guide posted on the course website listed under Important Documents/Links. Please direct any questions regarding C-REP to Shannon Poulsen at poulsen.6@osu.edu.

Attendance, participation, and discussions

Credit hour and work expectation

This is a 3-credit-hour course. According to Ohio State policy, students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average. [ASC Honors](#) provides an excellent guide to scheduling and study expectations.

Student participation requirements

*The following are outlines. Please update with your policy.

Because this is a 100% distance-education course, your attendance is based on your online activity and participation. The following is a summary of everyone's expected participation:

- **Viewing lectures:**
Provide how often, where to find, and time expectations
- **Weekly assignments**
Provide expectations, where to find, and how to engage
- **Office hours:**
We are available to help you to learn, understand, and grow as individuals. If your question is something that you believe may be of interest to others in the class, please post to the "Ask the instructor" discussion board. Office hours are digital via Carmen Zoom.

Faculty feedback and response time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can call **614-688-HELP** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

Grading and feedback

For large weekly assignments, you can generally expect feedback within **7-10 days**.

E-mail

I will reply to e-mails within **24 hours on school days**.

Discussion board

I will check and reply to messages in the discussion boards every **24 hours on school days**.

Discussion and communication guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across online. The instructor and TA both work very hard to provide a positive learning experience. Please keep this in mind and remain civilized and respectful in your email and discussion board communications.
- **Citing your sources:** When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up what you say. (For the textbook or other course materials, please use MLA style. For online sources, be sure to include a link.)

Encouraging an optimal learning experience

Here are a few tips from previous students to encourage your success in this online course:

- Students kept up with the Schedule and assignment due dates.
- Students made sure they had access to a reliable internet connection.
- Students had access to at least one reliable device and a backup plan in case of a technological issue.
- Students have made plans to back up work. OSU provides free access to data storage through [BuckeyeBox](#) and [Microsoft One Drive](#).
- Students reported that completing assigned readings before viewing lectures (or attending synchronous lectures) helped them to be prepared to follow along with lectures and participate in discussions.
- Students scheduled time to complete activities at a steady pace during the week. Keeping a schedule prevented a last minute rush and kept the workload manageable.

- Students approached the material by thinking about the connections between readings, lectures, and assignments.
- Students followed the instructor's preference for camera and microphone settings during online synchronous meetings.

Course technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

- **Carmen:**
 - Carmen, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit [Carmen.osu.edu](https://carmen.osu.edu). Log in to Carmen using your name.# and password. If you have not setup a name.# and password, visit my.osu.edu.
 - Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen>
 - **This online course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.**
 - [Carmen accessibility](#)
- **Secured Media Library and Kanopy**
 - Some of the videos for this course will be posted in the University's Secured Media Library and from the OSU Libraries Kanopy.
 - The link will be posted on the class Carmen page and you will be automatically directed to the correct video.
 - [Secured Media Library](#) help guide
- **Carmen Zoom:**
 - Office hours will be held through Ohio State's conferencing platform, Carmen Zoom. A separate guide to accessing Carmen Zoom and our office hours is posted on the course Carmen page under Files.
 - Students may use the audio and video functions if a webcam and microphone are available. If not, there is still a chat function within Carmen Zoom for the student to live chat with the professor or TA in the virtual office hours room.
 - [Carmen Zoom](#) help guide
- **Proctorio:**

- Proctorio, an online proctoring tool, will be used during this course to administer examinations. Proctorio offers you flexibility to take your exams at the time and in the location of your choosing. Students are required to have a webcam (USB or internal) with a microphone and a strong and stable internet connection. During the course of an exam, Proctorio will record the testing environment, therefore students should select private spaces for the exam session where disruptions are unlikely and where recording devices can be enabled. Instructions for Proctorio use will be provided. To use Proctorio you **must be over 18 years of age**. Additionally, the tool has **limitations in its accessibility for students reliant upon screen readers and keyboard navigation**. If you have concerns about using an online proctoring tool for the reasons listed above or in general, please work with your instructor to find an equivalent alternative. Additional information on academic integrity at Ohio State and recommended proctoring options are available. You also use Google Chrome to access the examinations.
- Proctorio offers free [24/7 student support](#) through web chat or email.
- **Self-Service and Chat support:** <http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice>
- **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
- **Email:** 8help@osu.edu
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen

Necessary equipment

- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- Web cam and microphone

Necessary software

- Word processor with the ability to save files under .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf. Most popular word processing software programs including Microsoft Word and Mac Pages have these abilities.
- OSU students have access to Microsoft Office products free of charge. To install, please visit https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=kb04733

Other course policies

Student Academic Services

Arts and Sciences Advising and Academic Services' website provides support for student academic success. Information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors can be obtained through this website. The site is: <http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml>

Student Services

The Student Service Center assists with financial aid matters, tuition and fee payments. Please see their site at: <http://ssc.osu.edu>

Copyright Disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Diversity

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Interim Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Molly Peirano, at titleix@osu.edu

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or

stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you are or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614--292--5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766.

If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24-hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445)

COVID-19 and Illness Policies

University COVID policies

Health and safety requirements: All students, faculty and staff are required to comply with and stay up to date on all university safety and health guidance (<https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu>), which includes following university mask policies and maintaining a safe physical distance at all times. Non-compliance will be warned first and disciplinary actions will be taken for repeated offenses."

Student illness or absence

If *you* are too ill to participate in this course due to COVID-19 or another illness, please contact the instructor as soon as you are able. All materials will be made available on Carmen, including lecture recordings and slides. Alternate assignments or extensions may be arranged. As stated above, if you are unable to personally attend class, you will be able to attend via zoom.

Instructor illness or absence

If the *instructor* is too ill to teach the course for a period of time, the designated backup for this course will step in. For shorter time periods, the instructor will provide instruction online. You will be notified via email from either the instructor or the School of Communication.

Academic integrity policy

Policies for this course

- **Written assignments:** Your written assignments, including discussion posts, should be your own original work. In formal assignments, you should follow **MLA** style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. You are

encouraged to ask a trusted person to proofread your assignments before you turn them in--but no one else should revise or rewrite your work.

- **Reusing past work:** In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it. If you want to build on past research or revisit a topic you've explored in previous courses, please discuss the situation with me.
- **Falsifying research or results:** All research you will conduct in this course is intended to be a learning experience; you should never feel tempted to make your results or your library research look more successful than it was.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>

Accessibility accommodations for students with disabilities

Requesting accommodations

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's [request process](#), managed by Student Life Disability Services. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu;

614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Course schedule (tentative)

| Week and Dates | Week Overview | Assignments |
|--------------------|---|---|
| 1 8/25-8/29 | Welcome and Introduction to the topic Read Surrette, Chapter 1 No in-person class, Aug. 27; lecture will be delivered asynchronously | Discussion post on Thursday's lecture will count toward participation grade (due Friday, 8/28, 11:59 p.m. EDT) Submit check-in assignment (due Thursday, 8/27, 11:59 p.m. EDT) |
| 2 8/30-9/5 | Media and Social Constructionism Read Surrette, Chapter 2 Explanation of book chapter assignment | Submit book chapter assignment (due Thursday, 9/3, 11:59 p.m. EDT) |
| 3 9/6-9/12 | What Does Crime Look Like? Read Surrette, Chapter 3 | Discussion Post (due Thursday, 9/10, 11:59 p.m. EDT) |
| 4 9/13-9/19 | Criminogenic Media Read Surrette, Chapter 4 Watch <i>Mean World Syndrome</i> Explain film review assignment | Discussion Post: Mean World Syndrome (due Thursday, 9/17, 11:59 p.m. EDT) Film Review topic (due Friday, 9/18, 11:59 p.m. EDT) |
| 5 9/20-9/26 | Law, Order & BLM Read Surrette, Chapters 5-6 Possible guest speaker | Discussion Post: "How Black Lives Matter Changed the News:" (due Thursday, 9/24, 11:59 p.m. EDT) Prepare for midterm |

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| <p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9/27-10/3</p> | <p>Read Surrette, Chapter 6</p> <p>Midterm Review</p> <p>Midterm 1 is Oct. 1 (opens 12:01 a.m. and closes 11:59 p.m. EDT; timed for 80 minutes)</p> | <p>Read and answer questions “A Rape On Campus,” <i>Rolling Stone</i> and “Woman says Roy Moore initiated sexual encounter when she was 14, he was 32”</p> <p>(due Monday 10/5, 11:59 p.m. EDT)</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10/4-10/10</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Journalism Wrong and Right</p> <p>Watch and discuss “What Happened to Jackie?”</p> <p>Discuss the right way to cover sex crimes; possible guest speaker</p> | <p>Submit book chapter review (due Thursday, 10/8, 11:59 p.m. EDT)</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10/11-10/17</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Corrections and Crime Control</p> <p>Read Surrette Chapters 7-8</p> | <p>Submit film review (due Thursday 10/15, 11:59 p.m. EDT)</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10/18-10/24</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Crime Control and Criminal Justice Policy</p> <p>Read Surrette, Chapters 8-9</p> | <p>Submit national case mini paper (due Thursday, 10/22, 11:59 p.m. EDT)</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10/25-10/31</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">New Media, Crime and the Future</p> <p>Read Surrette, Chapters 10-11</p> <p>Explain group project</p> | <p>Prepare for midterm</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">11</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11/1-11/7</p> | <p>Midterm review</p> <p>Midterm 2 is Nov. 5 (opens 12:01 a.m. and closes 11:59 p.m. EST; timed for 80 minutes)</p> <p>Work on group projects</p> | <p>Submit group project topic (due Friday 11/6, 11:59 p.m. EST)</p> |

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| <p style="text-align: center;">12</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11/8-11/14</p> | <p>Work on group projects</p> | <p>Submit part of project (due Thursday 11/12, 11:59 p.m. EST)</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">13</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11/15-11/21</p> | <p>Work on group projects</p> | <p>Submit part of project (due Thursday, 11/19, 11:59 p.m. EST)</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">14</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11/22-11/28 Thanksgiving</p> | <p>Begin Presentations</p> <p>No class Thursday, 11/26, Thanksgiving Holiday</p> | <p>Work on projects as needed</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">15</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11/29-12/5 Virtual Instruction Period</p> | <p>Presentations</p> | <p>Discussion Post (due Friday, 12/4, 11:59 p.m. EST)</p> <p>Submit project for grading (due Saturday, 12/5, 11:59 p.m. EST)</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Final Exam</p> | <p>Submit reflection papers (due Tuesday, 12/8, 11:59 p.m. EST)</p> | |