

Texas A&M University-Central Texas Fall 2022

COMM 5324-110 Religion and Mass Media

Instructor: Charles R. Hamilton, PhD

Office: Online

Phone: (903) 573-5124 (cell - text first)

Email: Please use CANVAS email for all communications.

Office Hours: Since this is an online course, in person office hours are not possible. However, I will be available through CANVAS email, located on the course menu, and will respond in 24 hours or less.

Mode of instruction and course access: This course is a 100% online course and uses TAMUCT *Canvas Learning Management System*: [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>].

Student-instructor interaction: Messages sent through CANVAS *Course Email* at any time will be answered within 24 hours, seven days a week. I will also make myself available between the hours of 1:30p.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, for quick email responses or online chats when requested.

Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University-Central Texas SAFEZONE. SafeZone provides a public safety application that gives you the ability to call for help with the push of a button. It also provides Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate emergency information quickly via push notifications, email, and text messages. All students automatically receive email and text messages via their myCT accounts.

Downloading SafeZone allows access to push notifications and enables you to connect directly for help through the app.

You can download SafeZone from the app store and use your myCT credentials to log in. If you would like more information, you can visit the [SafeZone](http://www.safezoneapp.com) website [www.safezoneapp.com].

To register SafeZone on your phone, please follow these 3 easy steps:

1. Download the SafeZone App from your phone store using the link below:
 - [iPhone/iPad](https://apps.apple.com/app/safezone/id533054756): [<https://apps.apple.com/app/safezone/id533054756>]
 - [Android Phone / Tablet](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.criticalarc.safezoneapp) [<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.criticalarc.safezoneapp>]
2. Launch the app and enter your myCT email address (e.g. {name}@tamuct.edu)
3. Complete your profile and accept the terms of service

For updates on COVID information, please monitor the University [website](https://www.tamuct.edu/covid19/) [<https://www.tamuct.edu/covid19/>]

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Overview/Description: COMM 5324. Religion and Mass Media. 3 Semester Credit Hours. This is a study of the ascension to power of the mass media and the current devices and practices used in the creation of a culture of online, and other media-based connections. Areas of study focus on religion & denominations, individualism, intellectualism, the Internet, races and cultures, political groups, ethical practices, science, education, the culture and economy of urban areas, etc.

The course will cover current use and future potential of the newest forms of media and goes into detail as to how media can be used to manipulate users in a variety of areas, as well as how to be aware of the potential dangers of overuse of media and the unintended messages within. In this course we will take an interesting look into one of the largest private and corporate processes in the world. Research outside the text is also required in this course in finding the "good versus the bad" forms of that type of media communication, as well as your personal analyses and conclusions of the topic (based on your research that week) and the overarching comments included in each article. A final position paper and weekly journal reviews, chapter readings, and discussion board posts are required.

Discussions: Provide one initial post per week by 6 a.m. Fridays, and two substantive, supportive responses by 6 a.m. Mondays. Cite any information you get from the text. Be sure to address your responses to another student.

You will also participate **actively** in online discussions of the assigned readings and other exciting topics.

Students are expected to write brief reviews of selections from the text.

Personal Comments: Choose something within each chapter to highlight - comment, theory, event, etc. Do not summarize the chapter - your opinion matters most. Be sure to cite any information from the text (+ page #) or any other source you might use. These should average 250-300 words. Only Microsoft Word will be accepted. (Select 3 from Part 2 & 2 from Part 3)

Summation Papers: These essays should cover items within the section that you want to highlight, contrast, compare, etc. Feel free to add personal comments, opinions, personal narratives in ways that show your connections to some of these topics. (Use as many as you want/need from the section. Feel free to include/copy information from your weekly Personal Comment papers to build these essays.)

Final Summation Essay: Combination of Summation Papers from Parts 1 & 2 - plus new information from Part 3 along with a Thesis Statement, Conclusion, & References page.

Student Requirements

Examine and then question current media policies related to fairness & ethics as they pertain to Digital Religion and Social Media.

Make intelligent observations about the benefits and shortcomings of weekly readings through both online discussions and in weekly reviews.

Collect and evaluate a library of sources concerning media involvement in political issues and ethics used in communication with public audiences, and through a variety of modes.

Course Objectives:

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to differentiate between the common media methods of communication currently in use.

Students will select and highlight communication & media usage methods they choose as most harmful/useful, based on their personal experience, and research.

Students will select the media devices they feel best fit ethical approaches to media communication.

Students will develop the ability to blend forms of media communication to fit situations where one mode alone may not be sufficient to be affective.

Competency Goals

Students will read and respond, both in essay form, and through written, online discussion, to a variety of communication and agenda-setting tactics, described in the text articles, and used for the creation online media cultures.

Students will read and respond, both in essay form, and through written, online discussions, to a variety of media practices, described in text and journal articles they select, and used in a variety of communication modes and situations.

Students will discover, and apply, their *personal choices* of the "correct" practices necessary for specific scenarios of media communication.

Students will discover and form personal philosophies for use in specific social media communication situations, through reading, research, written reviews, and written discussion responses, and record those in essay format.

Required Reading and Textbook: *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media*, 2nd edition, editors: by Heidi A. Campbell and Ruth Tsuria, Routledge 2022. ISBN: 978-0-367-25776-7 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-367-27236-4 (pbk) ISBN: 978-0-429-29568-3 (ebk).

Course Requirements: (Use MLA or APA guidelines on all the writing that you turn in— be consistent. All work must be in Microsoft Word format and submitted through CANVAS. Also, as a rule I do not accept late assignments without prior approval.)

Participating in an online course requires quite a bit of responsibility on the part of the student (see course calendar). You must log on daily in order to check for messages from the professor or other students, read daily postings on discussion forums, respond to prompts from the professor and other students, and to remain active for attendance purposes. Those students who reserve their comments for the last day the forum is accessible do not get the full impact of the course and will not receive the full participation grade for the week. Also, simply making a comment in order to satisfy the participation component will not work.

Comments should be substantive, insightful, and should generate further discussion. Students who do not keep up with assignments and discussion forums should consider dropping the course. If you do not feel that you are ready for an online course, you can gauge your readiness by taking this assessment for online learning at (<http://tamuct.smartermeasure.com>).

Grading - Assignment Points & Total Points Available

	Total Points Available	
Personal Comments	12@25	300
Discussions	16@25	400
Summation Essays	2@50	100
Final Essay	200	200
Total Points Available		1000

Posting of Grades

Grades for Weekly Article Reviews, and Chapter Reviews, will be posted one (1) week from the due date. Grades for Discussion Participation will be posted every week. *All student grades will be posted on the Canvas Grad book. Students should monitor their grading status through this tool.*

COMM 5324 – Fall 2022 Class Schedule

Text Contents - Chapters - Assignments

Week 1 **1 Introduction** to the study of digital religion (17 pgs.)

RUTH TSURIA AND HEIDI A. CAMPBELL Discussion only.

PART 1 - Approx. 100 pgs.

Themes in the study of religion and new media

Week 2 2 Religion Discussion

GREGORY PRICE GRIEVE Personal Comment (250-300 words)

Week 3 3 Ritual Discussion

CHRISTOPHER HELLAND AND LISA KIENZL Personal Comment (250-300 words)

Week 4 4 Identity Discussion

MIA LÖVHEIM AND EVELINA LUNDMARK Personal Comment (250-300 words)

Week 5 5 Community Discussion

HEIDI A. CAMPBELL AND ZACHARY SHELDON Personal Comment (250-300 words)

For Important University Dates - use the following link:

<https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/academic-calendar.html>

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

Technology Requirements

This course will use the A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system. **We strongly recommend the latest versions of Chrome or Firefox browsers. Canvas no longer supports any version of Internet Explorer.** Logon to A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com/>] or access Canvas through the TAMUCT Online link in myCT [<https://tamuct.onecampus.com/>]. You will log in through our Microsoft portal.

Username: Your MyCT email address. Password: Your MyCT password

Canvas Support

Use the Canvas Help link, located at the bottom of the left-hand menu, for issues with Canvas. You can select "Chat with Canvas Support," submit a support request through "Report a Problem," or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

Online Proctored Testing

A&M-Central Texas uses Proctorio for online identity verification and proctored testing. This service is provided at no direct cost to students. If the course requires identity verification or proctored testing, the technology requirements are: Any computer meeting the minimum computing requirements, plus a web camera, speaker, and microphone (or headset). Proctorio also requires the Chrome web browser with their custom plug-in.

Other Technology Support

For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu

Phone: (254) 519-5466

[Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): [<http://hdc.tamu.edu>]

Please let the support technician know you are an A&M-Central Texas student.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES

Academic Accommodations

At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier-free education. The Warrior Center for Student Success, Equity, and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the university's programs, services, and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations, please contact the Office of Access and Inclusion, WH-212; or call (254) 501-5836. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information, please visit our [Access & Inclusion](https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717) Canvas page (log-in required) [<https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717>]

Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University-Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. All academic misconduct concerns will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. When in doubt about collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

For more [information regarding the student conduct process](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html), <https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html> and <https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/academic-integrity.html>.

If you know of potential honor violations by other students, you may [submit a referral](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0). [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0].

Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete the [Drop Request](#) Dynamic Form through Warrior Web.

[<https://federation.ngwebsolutions.com/sp/startSSO.ping?PartnerIdpId=https://eis-prod.ec.tamuct.edu:443/samlso&SpSessionAuthnAdapterId=tamuctDF&TargetResource=https%3a%2f%2fdynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com%2fSubmit%2fStart%2f53b8369e-0502-4f36-be43-f02a4202f612>].

Faculty cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the Academic Calendar for which the form must be completed. Once you submit the completed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid a penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

Important information for Pregnant and/or Parenting Students

Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant, experiencing pregnancy-related conditions, and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and related guidance from the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. Students should seek out assistance as early in the pregnancy as possible. For more information, please visit

[Student Affairs](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/pregnant-and-parenting-students.html) [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/pregnant-and-parenting-students.html]. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these [requirements and guidelines](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf) online, please visit the website [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf].

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender—including pregnancy, parenting, and all related conditions. A&M-Central Texas is able to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to pregnant and parenting students. All pregnant and parenting students should contact the Associate Dean in the Division of Student Affairs at (254) 501-5909 to seek out assistance. Students may also contact the University's Title IX Coordinator.

Tutoring

Tutoring is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both virtually and in person. Student success coaching is available online upon request.

If you have a question, are interested in becoming a tutor, or in need of success coaching contact the Warrior Center for Student Success, Equity and Inclusion at (254) 501-5836, visit the Warrior Center at 212 Warrior Hall, or by emailing WarriorCenter@tamuct.edu.

To schedule tutoring sessions and view tutor availability, please visit [Tutor Matching Services](https://tutormatchingservice.com/TAMUCT) [https://tutormatchingservice.com/TAMUCT] or visit the Tutoring Center in 111 Warrior Hall.

Chat live with a remote tutor 24/7 for almost any subject from your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M-Central Texas students to log in and receive online tutoring support at no additional cost. This tool provides tutoring in over 40 subject areas except for writing support. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.

University Library & Archives

The University Library & Archives provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 400,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 96,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at A&M-Central Texas are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available 24 hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place virtually through WebEx, Microsoft Teams or in-person at the library. [Schedule an appointment here](#)

[https://tamuct.libcal.com/appointments/?g=6956]. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the A&M-Central Texas main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our [Library website](#)

[http://tamuct.libguides.com/index]

University Writing Center

University Writing Center: Located in Warrior Hall 416, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas (A&M-Central Texas) is a free service open to all A&M-Central Texas students. The hours of operation are from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday in Warrior Hall 416 (with online tutoring available every hour as well) with satellite hours available online only Monday thru Thursday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. and Saturday 12:00-3:00 p.m.

Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the UWC is here to help!

Students may arrange a one-to-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by making an appointment via [WOnline](https://tamuct.mywconline.com/) [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu if you have any questions about the UWC, need any assistance with scheduling, or would like to schedule a recurring appointment with your favorite tutor.

OPTIONAL POLICY STATEMENTS

A Note about Sexual Violence at A&M-Central Texas

Sexual violence is a serious safety, social justice, and public health issue. The university offers support for anyone struggling with these issues. University faculty are mandated reporters, so if someone discloses that they were sexually assaulted (or a victim of Domestic/Dating Violence or Stalking) while a student at TAMUCT, faculty members are required to inform the Title IX Office. If you want to discuss any of these issues confidentially, you can do so through Student Wellness and Counseling (254-501-5955) located on the second floor of Warrior Hall (207L).

Sexual violence can occur on our campus because predators often feel emboldened, and victims often feel silenced or shamed. It is incumbent on ALL of us to find ways to actively create environments that tell predators we don't agree with their behaviors and tell survivors we will support them. Your actions matter. Don't be a bystander; be an agent of change. For additional information on campus policy and resources visit the [Title IX webpage](https://www.tamuct.edu/compliance/titleix.html) [https://www.tamuct.edu/compliance/titleix.html].

Behavioral Intervention

Texas A&M University-Central Texas cares about the safety, health, and well-being of its students, faculty, staff, and community. If you are aware of individuals for whom you have a concern, please make a referral to the Behavioral Intervention Team. Referring your concern shows you care. You can complete the [referral](#) online

[https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=2].

Anonymous referrals are accepted. Please see the [Behavioral Intervention Team](https://www.tamuct.edu/bit) website for more information [https://www.tamuct.edu/bit]. If a person's behavior poses an imminent threat to you or another, contact 911 or A&M-Central Texas University Police at 254-501-5805.

Copyright Notice

Students should assume that all course material is copyrighted by the respective author(s). Reproduction of course material is prohibited without consent by the author and/or course instructor. Violation of copyright is against the law and Texas A&M University-Central Texas' Code of Academic Honesty. All alleged violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

