SYLLABUS
FALL 2016
COM 520 Media Studies
Department of Communication Studies
Harrington School of Communication and Media

Instructor
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Focus of the Course
This course introduces students to the study of digital media, mass media and popular culture by examining media institutions, audiences and effects. This semester, we focus on contemporary propaganda in the context of the Internet and social media. Students participate as members of a research team and consider how research may contribute to creative, collaborative and business opportunities in the media as well as identify and address the critical challenges people experience with life in an always-on, constantly connected culture.

Time/Location
This is a blended class that included both face-to-face (F2F) and online learning components. Weekly meeting, Wednesday 6 – 8:45 p.m. Classroom location: Swan 211. Our course hashtag for Twitter, YouTube and Facebook is #COM520. All learning resources are available at the course website: http://urimediastudies.wordpress.com

Office Hours
Davis Hall 106, Wednesdays, 4 - 6 p.m. and by appointment

WHY TAKE THIS COURSE?

Rationale
All around the world, people participate in media culture by listening to music, watching television and movies, using the Internet, playing videogames, and learning about current events. But few people understand the complex institutions, policy and governance structures, and psychological processes that shape what we read, watch, see, listen to and play.

The study of media has moved from its early roots in the interdisciplinary examination of the arts, culture and current events towards more disciplinary and professional study of

media forms (including book and magazine publishing, journalism and news media, advertising and public relations, narrative and non-narrative film, popular music, videogames, the Internet and social media). Critical examination of media institutions, representations and ideologies has advanced an understanding of power relationships in relation to economic, political and cultural issues. The study of media has been driven by a focus on media effects, as scholars first examined the impact of propaganda on the public and then developed ideas about media's influence on health, behavior and attitudes. Media studies scholars also examined the form, content and structure of media messages, with a particular focus on the design of advertising, news and entertainment. Later, scholars came to examine how people interpret media representations, discovering the diversity of interpretations that result from the meaning-making process. Media studies scholars are now trying to conceptualize the rapidly changing media environment, which has undergone dramatic shifts since the rise of social media only ten years ago. The field of media studies is too large to examine in a single course, but here, we aim to explore key theoretical and methodological dimension of the field through a focused examination of propaganda and social media.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

These learning outcomes are expected for every participant. You will:

Gain Knowledge

1. Learn about the key theoretical concepts from several disciplines in the arts and social sciences that have contributed to the disciplinary tradition of media studies;
2. Examine the historical development of mass communication and explore the changing influence of media on individuals and society;
3. Appreciate the technology, political economy and governance of media institutions and organizations, with a particular focus on the Internet and social media;
4. Understand how media researchers advance knowledge through inquiry.

Develop Research and Communication Competencies

5. Advance research skills by participating as an apprentice and team member in a project that aims to create new knowledge;
6. Strengthen information access and curation skills involving gathering, accessing and evaluating information using print and online materials, including reference books, professional and scholarly publications, reports, and web content;
7. Strengthen writing skills by creating and developing ideas
8. Develop production, performance and self-expression competencies through creating media in a variety of written, oral, digital and multimedia productions.
9. Strengthen collaboration, creativity and critical thinking skills through activities that require the synthesis of divergent ideas, information, and concepts;
10. Deepen reflective awareness of the role of technology in your own personal life as you consume and create media for leisure, social life, learning, and career development.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Bernays, Edward. 2005/1928. *Propaganda.* IG Publishing: New York.

Hobbs, Renee. 2016. *Exploring the Roots of Digital and Media Literacy through Personal Narrative.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Van Dijck, Jose. 2013. *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Additional required and recommended readings are listed on the syllabus.

COURSE DESIGN

Educational Philosophy

This course is based on the assumption that (1) learners are engaged and self-directed, able to make strategic choices in order to maximize all available learning opportunities. Another key assumption of this class is that (2) people learn best by making and doing things. A final assumption of this course is that (3) reflection is an essential component of learning that can be activated through social interaction in a challenging and supportive community where there are high levels of respect and trust. For the best learning environment possible, we will depend on every student to respect and apply these fundamental design principles.

Seminar + Open Network Learning Environment (ONLE)

All learning is social learning. The design for this course builds upon the seminar model combined with an open network learning environment. A seminar is a form of discussion-based learning where inquiry is used to explore a set of readings and other course materials. An open-network learning environment is opposed to keeping learning behind the walled garden of a learning management system like Sakai. In this course, learners participate in creative and collaborative endeavors, using social networking to select, organize and evaluate content, develop ideas and creative projects, and connect to people, resources and tools in an open and transparent way. You will be expected to post and share your work online at your own blog or website and to participate in online dialogues on Twitter. Course evaluation feedback will be provided individually to students through email.

Format of the Course

There will be a weekly 2.5-hour class each week, which is scheduled each Wednesday beginning at 6 p.m. EST. Occasionally, the class will be held online using Zoom.Us video conferencing. In addition to participating in class each week, you are expected to complete a variety of hands-on activities in addition to completing assigned reading and viewing for this course. You are expected to use inquiry and search practices to find information as an independent learner.

Technology Competencies For Academic Work
Learning new technology tools is a part of the practice of digital and media literacy education. But we all don't begin with the same kinds or levels of skill. Please consult the Emory University Productivity Tools for Graduate Students to discover how digital media tools and technologies can support your academic work. You can learn from others and teach others by supporting your peers by being a helper, coach, mentor, colleague, collaborator, and critic. Each of these roles promotes learning.

ASSIGNMENTS

Course Requirements
The instructor will provide a specific description of the assignments with expectations and criteria for evaluation. Assignment materials will be available under "Assignments" on the course website. NOTE: PhD students complete additional readings and assignments customized to meet their professional needs.

Class Participation (100 points)
Quality of class preparation, engagement and leadership are evaluated at the end of the semester. Each week, students will be responsible for completing some digital media activities designed to promote active learning.

Leap Papers (400 points)
Complete four short papers or multimedia projects to advance your knowledge and skills, posting your work online on your own blog or website.

> **Leap 1: Introduce a Key Scholar**. Deepen your knowledge of a key scholar or theory by curating information resources and multimedia for a website. Create a 2-minute screencast presentation that synthesizes information you have learned.
>
> **Leap 2: Make a News Media Connection.** Find a news story from the recent past that enables you to examine a set of ideas through analysis of a current event or issue.
>
> **Leap 3: Compose a Précis.** Find a scholarly research article that significantly connects to the course readings and annotate it using PDF annotation tools. Then capture the article's key ideas without offering opinion, commentary or analysis by writing a précis. Then identify 3 – 5 questions that could guide your further inquiry and explain why these questions are meaningful or important to you.
>
> **Leap 4: Reflective Essay.** Consider how ideas from the readings, your life experiences and your media experiences all fit together in a reflective essay.

Research Apprenticeship (200 points)
Working with a partner or in a small collaborative group, you select from the research projects below and gain experience as a Research Assistant. You participate in research tasks that may include coding, data analysis, the preparation of tables and charts,

statistical analysis and report writing. You write a brief summary of your contribution to the project and reflect on the apprenticeship process, considering how collaboration supports the development of new knowledge in the field of media studies. Topics include:

Mind Over Media: Analyzing Contemporary Propaganda. Examine the patterns in various examples of propaganda that lead to widely differing and polysemic interpretations. Interview educators about their perceptions of the value and risks of discussing controversial propaganda in the classroom.

Children, Media and Celebrity Culture. Examine some patterns in children's attitudes about celebrities in music, movies and online using an online dataset of children aged 8 – 15.

How Do People Analyze Advertising about the Internet? Examine screencasts created by teachers who critically analyzed an ATT commercial to discover their underlying attitudes and beliefs about advertising, the Internet and family relationships.

Final Project (300 pts)
Work individually or with a partner on independent work designed to advance your expertise. You may choose to compose a **research paper**, where you examine the scholarly and professional literature on a topic and write a 15 – 25 page paper, suitable for presentation at an academic conference. Or you may develop a **creative multimedia project**, exploring a topic relevant to the themes of the course, a specific target audience and your goals or purpose. Or you may develop a **community outreach project**, where you develop, implement and assess a civic or educational initiative related to the themes of the course. All students compose an IGNITE screencast video to summarize and promote their work.

COURSE POLICIES

Class Participation
Active participation is expected as a sign of your intellectual curiosity and commitment to the learning process. Students are expected to fully participate in all interactive learning experiences and to demonstrate critical thinking and synthesis skills in small group discussion.

Accommodation for Disabilities and Special Needs
Any students who have a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation. Contact Disability Services to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities at 330 Memorial Union, 401-874-2098, http://www.uri.edu/disability/dss/

Remix and Fair Use
A course in media studies is dependent upon a robust interpretation of copyright

and fair use. Students are expected to make legal use of copyrighted materials for learning, which may include the use of written content, images, multimedia and other materials appropriate to the learning context. To make a fair use determination about the use of copyrighted materials in your own creative work, consider the context and situation of the original work and your own purpose and goals for using it. Learn more here: http://mediaeducationlab.com/copyright

Plagiarism
Students are expected to produce original writing and creative work for this course, and it is expected that you will be the author of all the work you submit. Students should use the American Psychological Association (APA) citation format for identifying all materials used for reference and information gathering. Please consult the instructor(s) if you have questions on how to identify the information sources that you use in preparing your work. Penalties for plagiarism may range from a reduced grade on an assignment to failing the course.

SCHEDULE

COM 520: Media Studies
Professor Renee Hobbs
Fall 2016
Course Schedule

The schedule is subject to modification with fair notice.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Sept 7	**Introduction to the Course**
2	Sept 14	**Historical & Methodological Perspectives** *How has mass media been studied by academic scholars?* Select any 3: READ: Streeter, Thomas. 1995. "For the Study of Communication and Against the Discipline of Communication." *Communication Theory* 5(2), 117 – 129. READ: Hall, Stuart. 1997. "Representation and the Media." Transcript. Northampton: Media Education Foundation. READ: DeFleur, Melvin. 1998. "Where Have All the Milestones Gone? The Decline of Significant Research on the Processes and Effects of Mass Communication." *Mass Communication and Society* 1(2), 85 – 98. READ: Johan Fornäs, 2008. "Bridging Gaps: Ten Crosscurrents in Media Studies." *Media, Culture and Society* 30(6), 895-905, 2008. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0163443708096811. READ: McPherson, Tara. 2009. "Media Studies and the Digital Humanities." *Cinema Journal* 48(2), 119 – 123. READ: Livingstone, Sonia (2012) "Exciting Moments in Audience Research – Past, Present and Future." In Helen Bilandzic, Patriarche, Geoffroy and Traudt , Paul, (Eds.) *The Social Use of Media: Cultural and Social Scientific Perspectives on Audience Research* (pp. 257-274). ECREA Book Series. Intellect Ltd, Brighton, UK.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
3	Sept 21	**Media Studies, Media Education & Media Literacy** *How have humanistic and social science paradigms shaped the field of media studies?* READ: Hobbs, Renee 2016. *Exploring the Roots of Digital and Media Literacy through Personal Narrative.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press. DUE: Leap 1: Introduce a Key Scholar
4	Sept 28	**Propaganda Then and Now** *How has the concept of propaganda influenced the study of news and journalism, advertising and public relations?* READ: Bernays, Edward. 1928. *Propaganda.* New York: IG Publishing.
5	Oct 1	**Analyzing Contemporary Propaganda** *How do virality, sponsored content and big data affect the distribution and nature of propaganda in a global world?* READ: Auerbach, Jonathan & Russ Castronovo. 2013. Introduction. "Thirteen Propositions about Propaganda." In *The Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies* (pp. 1 – 12). New York: Oxford University Press. READ: Hobbs, Renee. 2015. Mind Over Media: Analyzing Contemporary Propaganda. Providence: Media Education Lab. READ: Einstein, Brandon. 2015. "Reading Between the Lines: The Rise of Native Advertising and the FTC's Inability to Regulate It." *Brooklyn Journal of Corporate Finance & Commercial Law,* 10(7), 225 – 248. READ: Robinson, Piers. 2016, August 2. "Russian News May be Biased, But So is Much Western News." *The Guardian*. READ: Andrew, Liam. 2014, October 29. "Controlled Chaos: As Journalism and Documentary Film Converge in Digital, What Lessons Can They Share?" *Neiman Lab at Harvard.*

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
6	Oct 5	**Research Apprenticeship** *How do people collaborate to create new knowledge in the field of media studies?* DUE: Leap 2: Make a News Media Connection
7	Oct 12	**Critical Analysis of Social Media I** *How does political economy shape people's use of social media platforms?* READ: Van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity*, Chapters 1 – 4 (pps 1 – 88)
8	Oct 19	**Methods of Research in Media Studies** *What are the affordances and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods in media studies?* READ: Brennen, Bonnie. 2013. Chapter 1. *Qualitative Research Methods for Media Studies*. New York: Routledge. READ: Gunter, Barrie. Chapter 10. "The Quantitative Research Process." *Handbook of Media and Communication Research.* New York: Routledge. DUE: Leap 3: Compose a Precis
9	Oct 26	**YouTube Culture and the Attention Economy** *How do people use YouTube and how has it affected the industries of television and film?* READ: Van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity* Chapter 6 (pps 110 – 131)
10	Nov 2	**Wikipedia and Scholarly Communication in Media Studies** *How is the Internet changing the nature of knowledge?* READ: Van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity* Chapter 7 (pps 132 – 153) READ: Weinberger, David. 2008. Chapter 10. *Everything is Miscellaneous.* New York: Macmillan. DUE: Research Apprenticeship

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
11	Nov 9	**Empowerment and Protection** *Why do people alternate between optimistic and pessimistic perspectives on media?* READ: Van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity* Chapter 8 (pps 154 - 199)
12	Nov 16	**The Future of Media Studies** DUE: Leap 4
		NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK
13	Dec 7	**Synthesis** DUE: IGNITE presentations
	Dec 15	DUE: Final Paper/Project