

**Emory University**

**SOCIOLOGY OF MASS MEDIA**

**SOC 562; Spring 2024**

**Thursdays, 4:00 – 6:45 pm, 206 Tarbutton Hall**

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231 Tarbutton Hall

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course (1) provides students with grounding in media sociology and (2) prepares students for doing their own media research.

To facilitate the first objective, we survey the media literature that spans a number of disciplines, which includes (but is not limited to) sociology, communications, and history. In pursuing this survey, we touch upon the following themes: (a) We examine how various media industries are organized and how such organization is sometimes transformed by regulation, competition, and/or technology. This examination includes both “old” (e.g., film) and “new” media (e.g., social media, streaming video on demand). (b) We focus on the careers of workers within media industries, connecting the constraints of their work environments to the type of content they produce. (c) We inspect media content and investigate factors that promote stability, change, and diversity – including online content. (d) We address the consumers of mass media products and inspect how they utilize and are shaped by media content, as well as how they are also sometimes the shapers, if not, producers of content.

To facilitate the second objective (i.e., doing research), we give special attention to methods and designs employed in current research, and we heed how theoretical ideas are translated into empirical projects. This second objective is especially crucial in an age where “big data” techniques have expanded greatly sociological research on mass media. Thus, by the end of the semester, each student will have a grasp of the field and an understanding of how to do media sociology.

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**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course is organized as a seminar, which entails the combination of a fair amount of reading, class discussion, and written assignments. Given this organization, you are expected to attend each class and to participate.

### **A) Attendance**

If you must miss a class, please inform me ahead of time so that we can make arrangements. Note that unexcused absences will negatively affect your final grade.

### **B) Class Participation and Discussion**

Active participation requires adequate preparation. You therefore must read the assigned material before class and develop your own assessment of this material. Such careful preparation will improve the quality of class discussion. Of course, class discussion should be both informed and respectful; moreover, it should be a forum wherein all can raise questions, explore ideas, and express misgivings. Class participation comprises half of your final grade.

### **C) Electronic Device Policy**

Electronic devices, such as laptops and tablets, can be very useful in terms of taking notes. However, when students use them in class to do other things (e.g., surf the Internet, order from online stores, check social media posts) that proves detrimental both to student participation and discussion. Note that using devices in a non-curricular way will, most definitely, affect your final grade in a negative fashion.

### **D) Final Paper**

You will complete a 15-page paper (typed and double-spaced). The paper should deal with some aspect of media scholarship, yet it should also relate to your own research interests. Consequently, this paper may take a variety of forms. For example, it can be a review of the literature, a research proposal, or the beginnings of an empirical project. I ask that you discuss your topic with me by *February 15* and submit an outline by *March 28*. The final paper will be briefly presented in our last class, and is due on *May 9*. It comprises 50% of your final grade.

### **E) Final Grade**

My starting assumption is that you will earn an “A” in this seminar. If you do the work and contribute to the class, then all is fine. If you fall below expectations, I will let you know, so that you can adjust accordingly. Of course, if you are having difficulties, please contact me.

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## **COURSE RESOURCES**

Throughout the semester, course readings and explanatory slides will be posted on the Canvas site for SOC 562 (see <http://canvas.emory.edu>). I encourage you to make much use of that site.

If you have any special needs, please contact me at the beginning of the semester, and we will discuss the necessary arrangements (for additional information, visit Emory Department of Accessibility Services' website; see <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/index.html>).

Note that the readings for this class augment – but do not duplicate – those found in my other graduate seminars – such as Sociology of Culture (SOC 560) and Sociology of the Arts (SOC 561). As a result, you may wish to peruse my syllabi for additional readings, syllabi that are on my faculty page (<https://sociology.emory.edu/people/bios/Dowd-Timothy%20J..html>).

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## NOTES ABOUT THE COURSE READINGS

Media sociology faces a particular challenge: elements that were once prominent in the media landscape can suddenly fade if not disappear completely (e.g., *Blockbuster Video* and practices surrounding it) while new elements quickly take their place in terms of prominence (e.g., *YouTube* and its attendant practices). However, the media landscape of the present is shaped by what came before in terms of business practices, law and regulation, etc.—with the past still having relevance and impact (e.g., copyright for filmic content).

I have chosen the readings that help us navigate this balance between past and present media elements—while also keeping us as current as possible. Hence, while most of the readings listed below are recent publications, we still will have some core readings from a decade (or decades) ago for important historical grounding.

The course readings empirically address the media landscape from production to content to consumption and presumption—doing so from a variety of methodological approaches and theoretical vantages. During class meetings, I will discuss in detail various theories and methodologies that are particularly useful for media sociologists.

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

*(Subject to Revision)*

### **SECTION ONE: MEDIA AND PRODUCTION**

***January 18: Introductions***

***January 25: The Rise of Early Media Industries: Foundational Developments***

Timothy J. Dowd. 2003. “Structural Power and the Construction of Markets: The Case of Rhythm and Blues.” *Comparative Social Research* 21: 147-201.

Heather A. Haveman. 2004. "Antebellum Literary Culture and the Evolution of American Magazines." *Poetics* 32: 5-28.

Giselinde Kuipers. 2015. "How National Institutions Mediate the Global: Screen Translation, Institutional Interdependencies, and the Production of National Difference in Four European Countries." *American Sociological Review* 80: 985-1013.

Stephen J. Mezias and Elizabeth Boyle. 2002. "Blind Trust: Market Control, Legal Environments, and the Dynamics of Competitive Intensity in the American Film Industry, 1893-1920." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 50: 1-34.

**February 1:            *The Rise of Digital Media Industries: Contemporary Developments***

Anilesh Kumar and Daya Thussu. 2023. "Media Digital Sovereignty and Geopolitics: The Case of the TikTok Ban in India." *Media, Culture & Society* 45: 1583-1599,

Amanda D. Lotz and Oliver Eklund. 2024. "Beyond Netflix: Ownership and Content Strategies among Non-US-Based Video Streaming Services." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 2: 119-140.

Ke Nie. 2023. "Bowing to Five Pecks of Rice: How Online Monetization Programs Shape Artistic Novelty." *Chinese Sociological Review* 55: 66-95.

Fernando N. van der Vlist, Anne Helmond, Michael Dieter, and Esther Weltevrede. 2023. "Super-Appification: Conglomeration in the Global Digital Economy." *New Media & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448231223419>

**February 8:            *Media Work Amidst Connections and Precarity***

Timothy J. Dowd and Ju Hyun Park. 2023. "She *Still* Works Hard for the Money: Composers, Precarious Work, and the Gender Pay Gap." *Work and Occupations*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/073088842311650>.

Frédéric Godart and Ashley Mears. 2023. "Transitory Ties: A Network Ecology Perspective on Job Opportunities in Fashion Modeling." *Social Networks*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2022.02.003>.

Léonie Hénaut, Jennifer C. Lena, and Fabien Accominotti. 2023. "Polyoccupationalism: Expertise Stretch and Status Stretch in the Post Industrial Era." *American Sociological Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224231190942>.

Patrick Reilly. 2018. "No Laughter among Thieves: Authenticity and the Enforcement of Community Norms in Stand-Up Comedy." *American Sociological Review* 89: 933-958.

**February 15:           *Media Work Amidst Algorithms & Digitization***

Angèle Christen and Yingdan Lu. 2023. "The Influencer Pay Gap: Platform Labor Meets Racial Capitalism." *New Media & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448231164995>.

Winnie Yun Jiang and Amy Wrzesniewski. 2023. "Perceiving Fixed or Flexible Meaning: Toward a Model of Meaning Fixedness and Navigating Occupational Destabilization." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 68: 1008-1065.

Ashley Mears. 2023. "Bringing Bourdieu to a Content Farm: Social Media Production Fields and the Cultural Economy of Attention." *Social Media + Society* July-September: 1-12.

Kari Spjedaes and Faltin Karlsen. 2023. "Attention, Ambivalence and Algorithms: Publishers in the Era of Ubiquitous Connectivity and Expanding Platforms." *Media, Culture & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437231191361>.

## **PAPER TOPIC DUE**

### **SECTION TWO: MEDIA AND CONTENT**

#### **February 22:            *Linking Production and Content: Representation***

Andrei Boutyline, Alina Arseniev-Koehler, and Devin J. Connell. 2023. "School, Studying, and Smarts: Gender Stereotypes and Education across 80 Years of American Print Media, 1930-2009." *Social Forces* 102: 263-286.

Gillian Gualtieri. 2022. "Discriminating Palates: Evaluation and Ethnoracial Inequality in American Fine Dining." *Social Problems* 69: 903-927.

Wendy M. Laybourn. 2017. "The Cost of Being 'Real': Black Authenticity, Colourism, and Billboard Rap Chart Rankings." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41: 2085-2103.

Aruna Ranganathan and Aayan Das. 2023. "Marching to Her Own Beat: Asynchronous Teamwork and Gender Differences in Performance on Creative Projects." *American Sociological Review* 88: 901-937.

#### **February 29:            *Linking Production and Content: Journalism***

Angèle Christin. 2018. "Counting Clicks: Quantification and Variation in Web Journalism in the United States and France." *American Journal of Sociology* 123: 1382-1415.

Barry Schwartz. 2009. "Collective Forgetting and the Symbolic Power of Oneness: The Strange Apotheosis of Rosa Parks." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 123-142.

Toni G.L.A. van der Meer, Anne C. Kroon, and Rens Vligenthart. 2022. "Do News Media Kill? How a Biased News Reality Can Overshadow Real Societal Risks, The Case of Aviation and Road Traffic Accidents." *Social Forces* 10: 506-530.

Rachel Wetts. 2023. "Money and Meaning in the Climate Change Debate: Organizational Power, Cultural Resonance, and the Shaping of American Media Discourse." *American Journal of Sociology* 129: 384-438.

**March 7:                    *Linking Production and Content: Innovation and Novelty***

Hille C. Bruns and Elizabeth Long Lingo. 2023. "Tedious Work: Developing Novel Outcomes with Digitization in the Arts and Sciences." *Administrative Science Quarterly*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00018392231208190>.

Wendy Griswold. 1981. "American Character and the American Novel: An Expansion of Reflection Theory in the Sociology of Literature." *American Journal of Sociology* 86: 740-765.

Erez Aharon Marantz and Gino Cattani. 2024. "Changing of the Guards: Status Dynamics and Innovation in American TV Shows, 1956-2010." *Poetics* 102: 101859.

Daniel Silver, Clayton Childress, Adam Slez, Monica Lee, and Fabio Dias. 2022. "Balancing Conventionality in Music." *American Journal of Sociology* 128: 224-286

**March 14:                    NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)**

**March 21:                    *Linking Content and Evaluation: Consecration***

Clayton Childress, Craig M. Rawlings, and Brian Moeran. 2017. "Publishers, Authors, and Texts: The Process of Cultural Consecration in Prize Evaluation." *Poetics* 60: 48-61.

Timothy J. Dowd, Trent Ryan, Vaughn Schmutz, Dionne Parris, Ashlee Bledsoe, and Daniel Semenza. 2021. "Retrospective Consecration Beyond the Mainstream: The Creation of a Progressive Rock Canon." *American Behavioral Scientist* 65(1): 116-139.

Wendy Griswold and Hannah Wohl. 2015. "Evangelists of Culture: One Book Programs and the Agents Who Define Literature, Shape Tastes, and Reproduce Regionalism." *Poetics* 50: 96-109

Michael Patrick Vaughn. 2019. "Supermodel of the World: The Influence of Legitimacy on Genre and Creativity in Drag Music Videos." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 82: 431-452.

**SECTION THREE: MEDIA AND AUDIENCES**

**March 28:                    *Broad Patterns of Media Consumption***

Craig M. Rawlings and Clayton Childress. 2023. "The Polarization of Popular Culture: Tracing the Size, Shape, and Depth of the 'Oil Spill.'" *Social Forces*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soad150>.

Yang Gao and Giseline Kuipers. 2023. "Cultural Capital in China? Television Tastes and Cultural and Cosmopolitan Distinctions among Beijing Youth." *Sociological Research Online*.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780422114979>.

Hervé Glevarec and Philippe Cibois. 2020. "Structure and Historicity of Cultural Tastes. Uses of Multiple Correspondence Analysis and Sociological Theory on Age: The Case of Music and Movies." *Cultural Sociology* 15: 271-291.

Jeffrey Swindle. 2023. "Pathways of Global Cultural Diffusion: Mass Media and People's Moral Declarations about Men's Violence against Women." *American Sociological Review* 88: 742-779.

## **PAPER OUTLINE DUE**

### ***April 4: Media Audiences in Action***

Yang Gao. 2016. "Inventing the 'Authentic' Self: American Television and Chinese Audiences in Global Beijing." *Media, Culture & Society* 38: 1201-1217.

Rebecca Chiyoko King-O'Riain. 2021. "'They Were Having So Much Fun, So Genuinely...' K-Pop Fan Online Affect and Corroborated Authenticity." *New Media & Society* 23: 2820-2838.

Daniel Meyerend. 2023. "The Algorithm Knows I'm Black: From Users to Subjects." *Media, Culture & Society* 45: 629-645.

Lakshmi Srinivasi. 2002. "The Active Audience: Spectatorship, Social Relations and the Experience of Cinema in India." *Media, Culture & Society* 24: 155-173.

### ***April 11: Media Audiences and Music Scenes in Action***

Álvaro Leonel de Oliveira Castro and Danielle Carvalho de Rezende. 2023. "Music Consumption and Taste Internalisation Practices among Educated Brazilian Metal Listeners and Members of Musical Scenes." *Poetics* 99: 101803.

Pranathi Diwakar. 2023. "Placing Caste: Spatialization, Urban Segregation, and Musical Boundary-Making." *Social Forces* 101: 1834-1855.

Jabari M. Evans. 2022. "Exploring Social Media Contexts for Cultivating Connected Learning with Black Youth in Urban Communities: The Case of Dreamer Studio." *Qualitative Sociology* 45: 393-411.

Jeffrey London. 2017. "Portland, Oregon, Music Scenes, and Change: A Cultural Approach to Collective Strategies of Empowerment." *City & Community* 16: 47-65.

### ***April 18: Media "Audiences" in an Online World***

René D. Flores. 2017. "Do Anti-Immigrant Laws Shape Public Sentiment? A Study of Arizona's SB 1070 Using Twitter Data." *American Journal of Sociology* 123: 333-384.

Heinrich R. Greve, Hayagreeva Rao, Paul Vicinanza, and Echo Yan Zhou. 2022. "Online Conspiracy Groups: Micro-Bloggers, Bots, and Coronavirus Conspiracy Talk on Twitter." *American Sociological Review* 87: 919-949. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312242211259>.

Stephanie M. Ortiz. 2023. "Call-In, Call-Out, Care, and Cool Rationality: How Young Adults Respond to Racism and Sexism Online." *Social Problems* 70: 665-681.

Fan Xiao. 2024. "Moderating for a Friend of Mine: Content Moderation as Affective Reproduction in Chinese Live-Streaming." *Media, Culture & Society* 46: 60-77.

***April 25:***                      ***Wrap-Up***

***May 9:***                         **FINAL PAPER DUE**