

EMORY UNIVERSITY

Sociology 343

MASS MEDIA AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES

Fall 2023
Tuesday / Thursday
2:30 – 3:45
112 White Hall

Dr. Timothy J. Dowd
231 Tarbutton Hall
tdowd@emory.edu
Office Hrs: 1:00-3:00 (W) or appt.

Graduate Assistants:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we examine the nature and impact of mass media in three broad sections – with each section devoted, respectively, to media *producers*, to the *content* that these producers provide, and to the *audiences* who interact with that content (and sometimes make their own content in the process). In the first section, we begin by considering the social implications of new forms of media, heeding the roles that competition, technology and regulation played in the historical spread of such forms. This historical perspective, in turn, allows us to make sense of such contemporary media as Netflix and Spotify. We then examine how current media industries are organized, and the implications that this holds for the careers of media workers. In the second section, we focus on the content of media products and investigate factors that promote or inhibit the range of content and representations, as well as the role that media content plays in terms of celebration and commemoration of the past. In the third and final section, we consider the audience that actively engages mass media products. We particularly pay attention to how they use this content to build identity and community, as well as use it to deal with broader social divides.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A) Attendance

You are strongly encouraged to attend class, especially because we will use class time to integrate the assigned readings and to present additional information not found in the readings.

As part of that encouragement, we will take attendance at each class so as to document who is (and who is not) regularly present for lectures.

Yes, I do understand that students should not attend class when ill. Thus, do not put yourself at risk for fear of missing a class. That said, I also do not want to see students miss an excessive number of classes, particularly when other students are “waitlisting” for seats in this class

B) Office Hours and Appointments

I will be holding office hours in 231 Tarbuton Hall on Wednesdays from 1:00 – 3:00 pm. Those hours are “open door” in that you can drop by without an appointment.

I am also available for appointments outside of those office hours. Email me to arrange those appointments.

C) Written Assignments

You are required to complete a final paper – one that you will write in stages across the semester.

For each “stage” I will distribute a question to which you will provide a 3- to 4-page answer that draws upon the class materials.

The final paper will emerge as you combine the stages together (incorporating the feedback that you receive along the way) and, at the end, provide an introduction and conclusion to the paper.

The dates for the staged assignments, as well as the final paper, are listed below. Each staged assignment is worth 25% of your grade, with the final paper itself also worth 25%.

Please note: my expectation is that everyone will earn an “A.” Each stage will be graded as “satisfactory/unsatisfactory” given the emphasis, not on a perfect submission, but on a submission that will be revised. Doing the work (which includes responding to the comments for revision) is what I seek in the final version of the paper. Indeed, in past semesters, most students did indeed earn an “A” for their excellent work.

D) Honor Code

The Emory University honor code applies fully to this course. When you sign an exam or submit your assignments, you are pledging to the honor code. For reference, please consult: <https://emory.ellucid.com/documents/view/19651?security=c8554f380ea59f01798570311c5732b4b791b82e>.

COURSE RESOURCES

As the semester progresses, class materials (e.g., syllabus, slides) will be posted on the Canvas site for SOC 343 (see <http://classes.emory.edu/>).

The assigned readings are drawn from many sources, so there is no textbook. Instead, the required readings will be available at our Canvas 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 the Emory Department of Accessibility Services website (see <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/index.html>).

THREE POINTS ABOUT THE COURSE READINGS

Please keep in mind three points regarding the readings below. (1) We will frequently be attending to the historical context of mass media – and that will be evident in the readings. This is not to say that we will be memorizing all sorts of dates and names. But, instead, we will heed historical patterns because they frequently have a bearing on what occurs today in the realm of mass media. (2) The readings below provide a mixture of modern “classics” and brand-new article (with the rest falling chronologically between those two). The classics matter because they put forward important arguments and provide an important comparison with contemporary situations. Meanwhile, the newest articles help us keep apprised of the latest developments. (3) Some of these articles are written for specialists. Consequently, they sometimes make use of jargon and sophisticated techniques of analysis. But, have no fear! My job will be to translate those articles for you and, in the process, show you the usefulness of those articles for making sense of mass media and their social implications.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(subject to revision)

August 24: Introductions

SECTION ONE: MASS MEDIA PRODUCERS

Constructing Media Industries: Competition, Regulation, Technology, & Globalization

August 29:

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

August 31:

- Rachel Skaggs. 2023. “How 360° Deals Homogenized Country Music.” Pages 41-54 in *Whose Country Music? Genre, Identity, and Belonging in Twenty-First-Century Country Music*, edited by Paula J. Bishop and Jada E. Watson. New York: Cambridge University Press.

September 5:

- Giseline 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.

September 7:

- Amanda D. Lotz, Oliver Eklund, and Stuart Soroka. 2022. “Netflix, Library Analysis, and Globalization: Rethinking Mass Media Flows.” *Journal of Communications* 72: 511-521.

Constructing Media Careers: Precariousness, Discrimination, and Digitalization

September 12:

- Patrick Reilly. 2018. “No Laughter among Thieves: Authenticity and the Enforcement of Community Norms in Stand-Up Comedy.” *American Sociological Review* 83: 933-958.

September 14:

- Maryann Erigha. 2019. *The Hollywood Jim Crow: The Racial Politics of the Movie Industry*. New York: New York University Press. Introduction, Chapter 2, and Conclusion.
- **First Staged Assignment Distributed**

September 19:

- Angèle Christin and Yingdan Lu. 2019. “The Influencer Pay Gap: Platform Labor Meets Racial Capitalism.” *New Media & Society* 46: 149-175. Forthcoming.

September 21:

- Tamas Tofalvy and Júlia Koltai. 2023. ““Splendid Isolation”: The Reproduction of Music Industry Inequalities in Spotify’s Recommendation System.” *New Media & Society* 25: 1580-1604.

September 26:

- Video Viewing: *Being George Clooney* (2016)
- **First Staged Assignment Due**

SECTION TWO: MASS MEDIA PRODUCTS AND CONTENT

Representation & Genre: The Ebb and Flow of Media Content

September 28:

- Bernice A. Pescosolido, Elizabeth Grauerholz, and Melissa A. Milkie. 1997. "Culture and Conflict: The Portrayal of Blacks in U.S. Children's Picture Books Through the Mid- and Late Twentieth Century." *American Sociological Review* 62: 443-464.

October 3:

- Nancy Wang Yuen. 2017. *Reel Inequality: Hollywood Actors and Racism*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. Chapters 1 through 3.

October 5:

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

October 10: **FALL BREAK (No Class)**

October 12:

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

Evaluation and Consecration: Media Content and the Classification Process

October 17:

- Shyon Bauman. 2001. "Intellectualization and Art World Development: Film in the United States." *American Sociological Review* 66: 404-426.

October 19:

- Alex van Venrooij, Candace Miller, and Vaughn Schmutz. 2022. "Race and Genre Ambiguity in the Critical Reception of Popular Music." *Sociological Inquiry* 92: 568-596.
- **Second Staged Assignment Distributed**

October 24:

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

October 26:

- Barry Schwartz. 2009. "Collective Forgetting and the Symbolic Power of Oneness: The Strange Apotheosis of Rosa Parks." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 72: 123-142.

October 31:

- Video Viewing: *Searching for Sugar Man* (2012)
- **Second Staged Assignment Due**

SECTION THREE: MEDIA AUDIENCES

The Active Audience: Negotiating Boundaries and Bridges

November 2:

- Pranathi Diwakar. 2023. "Placing Caste: Spatialization, Urban Segregation, and Musical Boundary Making." *Social Forces* 101: 18343-1855.

November 7:

- Jordanna Matlon. 2011. "Il est garçon: Marginal Abidjanais Masculinity and the Politics of Representation." *Poetics* 39: 380-406.

November 9:

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

November 14:

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

The Active Audience: Digitizing Boundaries and Bridges Online

November 16:

- Matthew A. Rafalow. 2018. "Disciplining Play: Digital Youth Culture as Capital at School." *American Journal of Sociology* 123: 1416-1452

November 21 & 23: **THANKSGIVING BREAK (No Classes)**

November 28:

- 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.
- **Third Staged Assignment Due**

November 30:

- 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.

December 5:

- Aidan Combs, Graham Tierney, Brian Guay, Friedolin Merhout, Christopher A. Bail, D. Sunshine Hillygus, and Alexander Volfovsky." *Nature Human Behavior*
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-023-01655-0>.

December 14: **FINAL PAPER DUE**