Emory University

SOCIODEGY OF MASS MEDIA

SOC 562; Fall 2016

Wednesdays, 5:30 – 8:30 pm, 206 Tarbutton Hall

Dr. Timothy J. Dowd
231 Tarbutton, Office Phone: 727-6259
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:00 – 3:00
email: tdowd@emory.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The 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 (e.g., radio, TV, record, motion picture, print) are organized and how such organization is sometimes transformed by regulation, competition, and/or technology. (b) We focus on media content and investigate factors that promote stability, change, and diversity. (c) We address the consumers of mass media products and inspect how they utilize and are affected by media 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. 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.

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 30% of your final grade.

C) Weekly Memos

You will prepare a 3-page memo for each week's readings (typed and double-spaced). You should regard these memos as ideas in progress rather than as finished products. Use them to digest each week's readings and to respond with questions, criticisms, and new ideas. Please bring your memo to class and submit it at the end of the evening. The weekly memos comprise 35% of your final grade.

D) Final Paper

You will complete a 15-page paper (typed and double-spaced). The paper should deal with some aspect of media sociology, 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 an empirical project. I ask that you discuss your topic with me by September 21 and submit an outline by November 2. The final paper is due on December 7 and comprises 35% of your final grade.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

As the semester progresses, class materials will be posted on the Blackboard site for SOC 562 (see http://classes.emory.edu/). Each week, for example, I will post a “Questions to Ponder” document that addresses the current readings.

The assigned readings are drawn from many sources, so there is no textbook. Instead, the required readings are available at both our Blackboard site and at Woodruff electronic reserves (see https://ereserves.library.emory.edu/index.php). Note that the readings for this class augment—but do not duplicate—those found in my Bureaucratic Organizations (SOC 514), Sociology of Culture (SOC 560) and Sociology of the Arts (SOC 561) graduate seminars. As a result, you may wish to peruse the SOC 541, SOC 560 and SOC 561 syllabi for additional media readings.

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 Office of Disability Services website; see http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/index.html).

COURSE SCHEDULE

*(Subject to Revision)*

**SECTION ONE: MEDIA AND PRODUCTION**

*August 24: Introductions*
**August 31:**  The Construction of Media Markets


**September 7:**  Gatekeeping, Selection and Uncertainty


**September 14:**  Concentration, Commercialization and Their Impact in Media Markets


**September 21  Media Work and Careers**


**PAPER TOPIC DUE**

**SECTION TWO: MEDIA AND CONTENT**

**September 28:  Linking Production and Content: Representation & Innovation**


*October 5:*  
**NO CLASS**

*October 12:  Framing and the News*


*October 19:  Content and Its Classification*


Athena Elafros. 2013. “Greek Hip Hop: Local and Translocal Authentication in the Restricted Field of Production.” *Poetics* 41: 75-95.


**October 26: Consecration and Media Content**


**SECTION THREE: MEDIA AND AUDIENCES**

**November 2: Broad Patterns of Media Consumption**


**PAPER OUTLINE DUE**
**November 9:**  **Media Audiences in Action**


**November 16:**  **Media Audiences and (Collective) Interpretation**


**November 23:**  **NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)**

**November 30:**  **Access, Information & Prosumption (Examples from Internet Usage)**


*December 7: FINAL PAPER DUE*