

EMORY UNIVERSITY

Sociology 343

MASS MEDIA AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES

Fall 2018
Tuesday / Thursday
4:00 – 5:15
218 Tarbutton Hall

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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 we likewise consider the implications of those industries being dominated by a few large firms. In the second section, we focus on the content of media products and investigate factors that promote or inhibit both the diversity of content and its consecration by critics and others. In the third and final section, we consider the audience for mass media products and inspect how they are affected by and actively use media content. We pay particular attention here to the audience and their engagement with social media.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A) Attendance

You are strongly encouraged to attend class, especially because we use class time to integrate the assigned readings and to present additional information not found in the readings. Regular attendance, moreover, will raise your final grade. If you miss only one class during the semester, I will add two points to your final grade. If you miss only two classes, I will add one point.

B) Written Assignments

You are required to complete four short assignments (i.e., “memos”). In these 3- to 4-page memos, you will synthesize the readings and the issues that emerge as the class progresses. The due dates for the memos, as well as the dates for when I distribute memo questions, are

listed below. Note that I will distribute a total of four memo assignments, but you are required to **complete only three**. The memos comprise 30% of your final grade (10% per each of the three memos).

C) Examinations

You are also required to take two examinations – a midterm and a non-cumulative final. Both exams consist of short-answer and essay questions. One week prior to each exam, I will distribute a handout that will help you prepare for the test. Each exam will be worth 35% of your final grade (for a combined total of 70%). The midterm examination occurs on *October 18* during class time. The final examination occurs on *December 18* from 11:30 am – 2:00 pm. That final exam time is set for us by the Registrar’s Office.

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: <http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>.

COURSE RESOURCES

As the semester progresses, class materials (e.g., syllabus, overheads) 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 both our Canvas site and at the Woodruff electronic reserves (see <https://ereserves.library.emory.edu/index.php>).

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 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 30: Introductions

SECTION ONE: MASS MEDIA PRODUCERS

Construction of Media Industries: Competition, Regulation & Technology at Play

September 4: Heather A. Haveman. 2004. "Antebellum Literary Culture and the Evolution of American Magazines." *Poetics* 32: 5-28.

September 6: Stephen J. Mezas and Elizabeth Boyle. 2005. "Blind Trust: Market Control, Legal Environments, and the Dynamics of Competitive Intensity in the Early Film Industry, 1893-1920." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 50: 1-34.

September 6: ***MEMO QUESTION #1 DISTRIBUTED***

September 11: Michael L. Wayne. 2018. "Netflix, Amazon, and Branded Television Content in Subscription Video On-Demand Portals." *Media, Culture & Society* 40: 725-741.

Organization of Media Industries: Consolidation and "Bigness"

September 13: Daya Kishan Thussu. 2007. "The 'Murdochization' of News? The Case of Star TV in India." *Media, Culture & Society* 29: 593-611.

September 13: ***MEMO #1 DUE***

September 18: Gabriel Rossman. 2004. "Elites, Masses, and Media Blacklists: The Dixie Chicks Controversy." *Social Forces* 83: 61-79.

September 20: Lee Marshall. 2013. "The 360 Deal and the 'New' Music Industry." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 16: 77-99.

Organization of Media Industries: Place and Globalization

September 25: Thomas Franssen and Giseline Kuipers. 2013. "Coping with Uncertainty, Abundance and Strife: Decision-Making Processes of Dutch Acquisition Editors in the Global Market for Translations." *Poetics* 41: 48-74.

September 27: 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 27: **MEMO QUESTION #2 DISTRIBUTED**

SECTION TWO: MASS MEDIA PRODUCTS AND CONTENT

Creative Workers and the (Constrained) Making of Content

October 2: Patrick Reilly. 2018. "No Laughter among Thieves: Authenticity and the Enforcement of Community Norms in Stand-Up Comedy." *American Sociological Review* forthcoming.

October 4: Video Viewing: *Being George Clooney* (2016)

October 4: **MEMO #2 DUE**

October 9: **FALL BREAK (No Class)**

October 11: Kim de Laat. 2015. "'Write a Word, Get a Third': Managing Conflict and Rewards in Professional Songwriting Teams." *Work & Occupations* 42: 225-256.

October 11: **TEST PREPARATION SHEET DISTRIBUTED**

October 16: Angèle Christin. 2018. "Counting Clicks: Quantification and Variation in Web Journalism in the United States and France." *American Journal of Sociology* 123: 1382-1415.

October 18: **MID-TERM EXAMINATION**

The Ebb and Flow of Media Content across Time: Large-Scale Patterns

October 23: 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 25: Yeawon Yoo, Yonghan Ju, and So Young Sohn. 2017. "Quantitative Analysis of a Half-Century of K-Pop Songs: Association Rule Analysis of

Lyrics and Social Network Analysis of Singers and Composers.” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 29 (3).

October 30: Jelani Ince, Fabio Rojas and Clayton A. Davis. 2017. “The Social Media Response to Black Lives Matter: How Twitter Users Interact with Black Lives Matter Through Hashtag Use.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40: 1814-1830.

The Consecration of Media Content

November 1: Shyon Bauman. 2001. “Intellectualization and Art World Development: Film in the United States.” *American Sociological Review* 66: 404-426.

November 1: **MEMO QUESTION #3 DISTRIBUTED**

November 6: Vaughn Schmutz and Alex van Venrooij. 2018. “Harmonizing Forms of Legitimacy in the Consecration of Popular Music.” *American Behavioral Scientist* forthcoming.

SECTION THREE: MEDIA AUDIENCES

The Active Audience: The Formation of Tastes and Opinions

November 8: Lakshmi Srinivasi. 2002. “The Active Audience: Spectatorship, Social Relations and the Experience of Cinema in India.” *Media, Culture & Society* 24: 155-173.

November 8: **MEMO #3 DUE**

November 13: Yang Gao. 2016. “Inventing the ‘Authentic’ Self: American Television and Chinese Audiences in Global Beijing.” *Media, Culture & Society* 38: 1201-1217.

November 15: Sam Friedman. 2012. “Cultural Omnivores or *Culturally Homeless*? Exploring the Shifting Cultural Identities of the Upwardly Mobile.” *Poetics* 40: 467-489.

November 20: Video Viewing: *Thunder Soul* (2010)

November 22: **THANKSGIVING (No Class)**

The Active Audience, Digital Divides, and Prosumption

November 27: Paul DiMaggio and Bart Bonikowski. 2008. "Make Money Surfing the Web? The Impact of Internet Use on the Earnings of U.S. Workers." *American Sociological Review* 73: 227-225.

November 27: **MEMO QUESTION #4 DISTRIBUTED**

November 29: Matthew A. Rafalow. 2018. "Disciplining Play: Digital Youth Culture as Capital at School." *American Journal of Sociology* 123: 1416-1452.

December 4: Jen Schradie. 2011. "The Digital Production Gap: The Digital Divide and Web 2.0 Collide." *Poetics* 39: 145-168.

December 4: **MEMO #4 DUE**

The Active Audience and the Political Environment

December 6: Ruth Milkman. 2017. "A New Political Generation: Millennials and the Post-2008 Wave of Protest." *American Sociological Review* 82: 1-31.

December 11: 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 11: **TEST PREPARATION SHEET DISTRIBUTED**

December 18: **FINAL EXAMINATION: 11:30 am to 2:00 pm**