

EMORY UNIVERSITY

“Mass Media and Social Influences” (SOC 343); Fall 2020

Tuesdays / Thursdays, 1:00 – 2:15 & 4:20 – 5:35
PAIS 290 and Remote via Zoom

Dr. Timothy J. Dowd

tdowd@emory.edu

Office Hours: 1:30 – 3:30 Mondays (or by Appointment)

Graduate Assistants:

Mickey Fitzpatrick

michaella.elisabeth.fitzpatrick@emory.edu

Jiaxuan Yu

jiaxuan.yu@emory.edu

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

- **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.

Of course, given the current pandemic, some students might become sick or will need to go into isolation or quarantine. If you feel ill or fear that you are sick, please understand that **I will be flexible about attendance**. Thus, do not put yourself at risk for fear of missing a class. Each lecture will be recorded and posted on the Canvas site and available for you.

For those students attending the class in-person, I expect that we all will follow the safety protocols for our classroom – which includes the need for social distancing and masks.

As we navigate this semester together, let us also stay in touch.

- **Office Hours and Appointment**

I will be holding “virtual” office hours via Zoom on Mondays from 1:30 to 3:30 pm (Atlanta time – Eastern Standard Time). The Zoom link for office hours is:

<https://emory.zoom.us/j/94647323595>

Please use my Calendly link to sign up for a specific time: <https://calendly.com/tdowd-1-office-hours>

I will have other meetings times as needed, please email to arrange those as well:
tdowd@emory.edu

- **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%.

- **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, 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 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 20: Introductions

SECTION ONE: MASS MEDIA PRODUCERS

Constructing Media Industries: Competition, Regulation & Technology

August 25:

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

August 27:

- Amanda D. Lotz. 2019. “Tearing Apart Television Industry Disruption: Consequences of Meso-Level Financing Practices before and after the US Multiplatform Era.” *Media, Culture & Society* 41: 923-938.

September 1:

- Michael D. Smith and Rahul Telang. 2016. *Streaming, Sharing, Stealing: Big Data and the Future of Entertainment*. Cambridge: MIT Press. Chapters 6 through 8.

September 3:

- 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.

Constructing Media Careers: Discrimination, Precariousness, and Digitalization

September 8:

- 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.

September 10:

- 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 15:

- Rachel Skaggs. 2019. "Socializing Rejection and Failure in Artistic Occupational Communities." *Work and Occupations* 46: 149-175.

- **First Staged Assignment Distributed**

September 17:

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

September 22:

- 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 across Time

September 24:

- 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.

September 29:

- Adia Harvey Wingfield and Joe Feagin. 2012. "The Racial Dialectic: President Barak Obama and the White Racial Frame." *Qualitative Sociology* 35: 143-162.

October 1:

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

October 6:

- 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.

Consecration and Commemoration: Media Content and Remembering

October 8:

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

October 13:

- Ashlee Bledsoe. 2020. "Walk the (Gendered and Racialized) Line: Retrospective Consecration and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame." *American Behavioral Scientist* forthcoming.

October 15:

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

- **Second Staged Assignment Distributed**

October 20:

- Bin Xu. 2018. "Commemorating a Difficult Disaster: Naturalizing and Denaturalizing the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake in China." *Memory Studies* 11: 483-497.

October 22:

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

SECTION THREE: MEDIA AUDIENCES

The Active Audience: The Formation of Tastes, Authenticity, and Community

October 27:

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

October 29:

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

November 3:

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

November 5:

- Rebecca Chiyoko King-O'Rian. 2020. "'They Were Having So Much Fun, So Genuinely...': K-Pop Fan Online Affect and Corroborated Authenticity." *New Media & Society* forthcoming.

The Active Audience, Digital Boundaries and Bridges

November 10:

- 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.

November 12:

- Jelani Ince, Fabio Rojas, and Clayton 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.

November 17:

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

November 19:

- Mark Wong. 2020. "Hidden Youth? A New Perspective on the Sociality of Young People in the Bedroom in the Digital Age." *New Media & Society* 22: 1227-1244.

November 24:

- Video Viewing: *Tom Felton Meets the Superfans* (2015)
- **Third Staged Assignment Due**

December 8:

- **Final Paper Due**