

COMM 340E Communication and Media in the Digital Age

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Office Hours: Monday 3:00pm-4:00pm (appointment preferred)

Course Information:
Spring 2020
Section a: M/W 4:00-5:20
Section b: M/W 5:30-6:50

Course Description

This course is intended to provide an introduction to the major social, political and cultural debates affecting communication and the new media landscapes in Spain and the US. Topics include an overview of the historical development and main theories of mass communication, and examine critical issues of the digital age such as the rise of citizen journalism, the emergence of social media, the growing role of grassroots movements, copyright and free expression issues, media representation issues, and their overall impact on democracy, ethics and culture. Conducted in English.

Course Goals and Methodology

The main goal of this course is to investigate the complex relationship between media and culture in a network society. Classes will consist of lectures, screenings, and class discussions. Students are encouraged to use a Blackboard site, where the professor will post slides, lecture notes, journal articles, assignment instructions, announcements and additional resources such as films and other audiovisual material. From a cultural approach to communication and through the critical study of a number of recent issues and cases, students will gain a clearer understanding of the debates and trends in communication and media in the digital age. Ultimately, the goal of this course is to help students become acquainted with the new media literacies as well as become more insightful prosumers, more informed digital citizens, and more critical individuals.

Learning Objectives

Through this course, students will:

- Look at the central role of culture in media and communication studies
- Trace and discuss the evolution and theories of mass communication and media
- Examine the crucial role of news and media in democratic societies
- Consider the growth of digital media activism and the power of social media
- Demonstrate an understanding of the complex process of transformation of media in the digital context, and its impact on politics, democracy and culture
- Review free expression debates in the digital age, focusing on copyright issues, privacy and security issues
- Address ethical issues in media representation in a more and more visually oriented culture, focusing on gender and race
- Gain analytical, critical, and new media skills

Required Texts

There is no textbook required for this course. Therefore, students are not expected to purchase any material. The instructor will post the class material (Google Slides, case studies handouts, in-class worksheets, announcements, links, and any additional reading) on Blackboard, which is accessible both on campus and off campus. To log in, you need to sign in on <https://campusvirtual.upo.es> using the username and password you received in your orientation folder.

However, the contents of the course are mainly but not only based on the following texts:

- Benkler, Y., Farris, R., & Roberts, H. (2018). *Network Propaganda*. New York, US: Oxford University Press.
- Castells, M. (2005). *The network society: A cross-cultural perspective*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Durham, M. G., & Kellner, D. (2006). *Media and cultural studies: Keywords*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Hartley, J. (2002). *Communication, Cultural and Media Studies: The Key Concepts*. London: Routledge
- Kelly, K. (2017). *The Inevitable. Understanding the 12 technological forces that will shape our future*. New York: Viking
- McQuail, D. (2010). *Mass Communication Theory*. London: SAGE
- Morozov, E. (2012). *The net delusion: How not to liberate the world*. London: Penguin.
- Nagle, A. (2017). *Kill all normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the alt-right*. Winchester: Zero Books.
- O'Neil, C. (2016). *Weapons of Math Destruction*. London: Penguin Books
- Peirano, M. (2019). *El enemigo conoce el sistema. Manipulación de ideas, personas e influencias después de la economía de la atención*. Madrid: Debate.
- Perse, E. M., & Lambe, J. L. (2017). *Media effects and society*. New York: Routledge.
- Taylor, A. (2014). *The People's Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture in the Digital Age*. Metropolitan Books, , USA.
- Tüfekçi, Z. (2017). *Twitter and tear gas: The power and fragility of networked protest*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press.

Course Requirements and Grading

Participation

In-class discussions will be encouraged at all sessions. Class participation will therefore be graded according to the students' previous work and reflections about the provided material. Active participation means not only attendance (being there \neq participation) but discussion with relevant basis (text-based and not just random personal experience and background), asking and answering questions in class, engaging in class discussions and conversations with class mates, questioning information presented and discussed. Students are also expected to actively participate in in-class exercises and to do some homework. Participation points will be assigned based on the following criteria:

	Exemplary (9-10)	Proficient (8-9)	Developing (7-8)	Unacceptable (0-7)
Frequency of participation in class	Student initiates contributions more than once in each class.	Student initiates contribution once in each class.	Student initiates contribution at least in half of the classes.	Student does not initiate contribution & needs instructor to solicit input
Quality of comments	Comments always insightful & constructive; uses appropriate terminology. Comments balanced between general impressions, opinions & specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions.	Comments mostly insightful & constructive; mostly uses appropriate terminology. Occasionally comments are too general or not relevant to the discussion.	Comments are sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight. Student does not use appropriate terminology; comments not always relevant to the discussion.	Comments are uninformative, lacking in appropriate terminology. Heavy reliance on opinion & personal taste, e.g., "I love it", "I hate it", "It's bad" etc.
Listening Skills	Student listens attentively when others present materials, perspectives, as indicated by comments that build on others' remarks, i.e., student hears what others say & contributes to the dialogue.	Student is mostly attentive when others present ideas, materials, as indicated by comments that reflect & build on others' remarks. Occasionally needs encouragement or reminder from T.A of focus of comment.	Student is often inattentive and needs reminder of focus of class. Occasionally makes disruptive comments while others are speaking.	Does not listen to others; regularly talks while others speak or does not pay attention while others speak; detracts from discussion; sleeps, etc.

Source: Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence. Carnegie Mellon University

Exams

Two examinations will be given (midterm and final), which will cover the concepts in the course and test conceptual and critical-thinking skills. Both exams will consist of multiple-choice, short answer, essay and/or case analysis/reflection questions.

Debates

There will be five debate activities during the semester. Prior to the debate sessions, students will be asked to carry some independent research on the documentaries the debates will be based on to engage actively in group discussion. In preparation for the debates, the instructor will provide specific guidelines.

Oral Presentation

Students are required to prepare a 20-minute oral presentation (in pairs or small groups) on a reading (which will be assigned by the instructor as soon as the add/drop period ends). This presentation will be graded on evidence of preparation (organized presentation, presentation/discussion flows well, no awkward pauses or confusion, evidence you did your own research), content (accurate & relevant information, appeared knowledgeable about the case study and the topic discussed, offered strategies for dealing with the problems identified in the case study), delivery (clear and logical organization, effective introduction and conclusion, creativity, relevant transitions between the different

parts of the presentation, oral communication skills—eye contact, well-designed presentation slides, use attractive, relevant and illustrative images), and discussion (presenter initiates and maintains class discussion concerning the reading, use of visual aides, good use of time, involves classmates).

On your day to present, please arrive on time (or early, if possible) and prepared with your presentation (Google Slides preferred, so that you can access it from the classroom computer). All members of the group should be involved, both in preparing and in delivering the presentation. Students will be graded individually. Following each presentation we will spend 5-10 minutes discussing the main ideas of the case presented. All students are expected to participate in the discussion, but some students will be designated discussants. These students should make sure that they have read the case study material before coming to class and note potential questions and points while listening to the presentation.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Participation (10%)
- Debates (25%)
- Oral presentation (15%)
- Mid-term Exam (25%)
- Final Exam (25%)

Final Grade Expectations: The instructor will use the Spanish 10-point grading scale. The grades that will appear on your final transcript are also Spanish grades.

- Grade A/A- (9-10) — Outstanding performance showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics of the course. The best possible grade.
- Grade B+/B (8-9) — Remarkable performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics. Next highest.
- Grade B/B- (7-8) — Good performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics. Indicates high average performance.
- Grade C+/C (6-7) — Fairly good performance showing an understanding of the course on a basic level. Indicates low average performance.
- Grade C/C- (5-6) — Passable performance showing a general and superficial understanding of the course's topics. Lowest passing grade
- Grade F (0-5) — Unsatisfactory performance in all assessed criteria. Failing grade.

Please be aware that anything below a 5 (i.e. a C- on the U.S. scale) is a failing grade. There is no pass/fail option at UPO. If you do not officially withdraw from a class by the withdrawal deadline, a failing grade will appear next to the course name. Check out the Student Handbook for the grade conversion table (some universities may use a slightly different scale).

General Course Policies

Each student is expected to be familiar with the course syllabus. Students are expected to focus their full attention on the class, arrive on time, and stay until class ends. Leaving the classroom on repeated occasions is disturbing to both your professor and your classmates and may adversely affect your participation grade. Please make use of the 10-minute breaks in between classes to fill up your water bottle, use the restroom, etc.

Students are expected to listen and respect other points of view. Phone calls, social media, email, or Internet browsing at any time during class are not acceptable during class except for specific class-related activity expressly approved by your instructor. You are responsible for any and all course material covered in class, announcements, and/or handouts if you are not present for any reason. Students will be held responsible to be up to date by attending to class regularly and checking both email and the Blackboard site of the course frequently (monitor your email and Blackboard announcements at least once every 24 hours).

Communicating with instructor: Please allow at least 48 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails. The weekend is not included in this timeframe. If you have an urgent request or question for your professor, be sure to send it during the week.

Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance is mandatory at all classes. As we understand that you might fall ill or be unable to come to class (e.g. due to a religious holiday, a flight delay, a family wedding/reunion, a graduation, a job interview, etc.) at some point during the semester, you are allowed up to 4 absences. You will be responsible for the material covered and any work missed. You will not need to justify your absences (up to 4) in any way **unless** you miss an exam, a presentation, a quiz, etc. In this case, you **must** present a doctor's note (signed, stamped and dated) to be able to reschedule the exam, etc. It will still count as an absence but you will be allowed to retake the exam, etc. We don't encourage you to use all 4 days unless you really need them as your participation grade may suffer if you are not in class. If used unwisely and you get sick late in the semester, the following penalties will apply:

- On your 5th absence, 1 point will be taken off of your final Spanish grade
- On your 6th absence, 3 points will be taken off of your final Spanish grade
- On your 7th absence, 5 points will be taken off of your final Spanish grade

Punctuality is required. Arriving late to class is disruptive to both the professor and your classmates. Please be punctual, as your professor may count your late arrival as a full absence.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Pablo de Olavide University. Cheating on exams and plagiarism (which includes copying from the Internet) are clear violations of academic honesty. A student is guilty of plagiarism when he or she presents another person's intellectual property as his or her own. The penalty for plagiarism and cheating is a failing grade for the assignment/exam and a failing grade for the course. Avoid plagiarism by citing sources properly, using footnotes and a bibliography, and not cutting and pasting information from various websites when writing assignments.

Learning Accommodations

If you require special accommodations, you must stop by the International Center to speak to Carmen G. Hernández (the Faculty coordinator) to either turn in your documentation or to confirm that our office has received it. The deadline is February 21st. The coordinator will explain the options available to you.

Behavior Policy

Students are expected to show integrity and act in a professional and respectful manner at all times. A student's attitude in class may influence his/her participation grade. The professor has a right to ask a student to leave the classroom if the student is unruly or appears intoxicated. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, that day will count as an absence regardless of how long the student has been in class.

Course Contents

1. Communication and Media Studies: Understanding the Core Concepts
2. A History of Communication and Mass Media
3. Theories of Mass Communication
4. The Media Industry's Transformation
5. Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture?
6. Privacy and Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age

Class Schedule

Day	Date	Topic	Readings, Assignments, Screenings, Debates
Wed	Jan, 29	Course presentation. Introduction and syllabus review.	Please have your syllabus printed out or with you on a laptop or other device.
Mon	Feb, 3	Communication and Media Studies: Understanding the Core Concepts	<u>Reading:</u> <i>Encoding/Decoding</i> (Stuart Hall)
Wed	Feb, 5	Communication and Media Studies: Understanding the Core Concepts	<u>Readings:</u> <i>The forms of capital</i> (Pierre Bourdieu): "Guy Debord predicted our distracted society" (John Harris)
Mon	Feb, 10	Communication and Media Studies: Understanding the Core Concepts	<u>Reading:</u> "Explainer: what does the 'male gaze' mean, and what about a female gaze?" <u>Screening:</u> <i>Miss Representation</i> (part 1)
Wed	Feb, 12	Communication and Media Studies: Understanding the Core Concepts	<u>Screening:</u> <i>Miss Representation</i> (part 2) <u>Debate 1</u> (<i>Miss Representation</i>) — check out guidelines on Blackboard.
Mon	Feb, 17	A History of Communication and Mass Media	<u>Reading:</u> "Our Predictions About the Internet Are Probably Wrong" <u>Oral presentation 1:</u> "Take the Long View" In Naughton, J. (2015). <i>From Gutenberg to Zuckerberg: Disruptive innovation in the age of the Internet</i>
Wed	Feb, 19	A History of Communication and Mass Media	<u>Reading:</u> Fifty years of the internet <u>Screening:</u> <i>Lo and Behold, Reveries of the Connected World</i> (part 1)
Mon	Feb, 24	A History of Communication and Mass Media	<u>Screening:</u> <i>Lo and Behold, Reveries of the Connected World</i> (part 2) + Debate 2 (<i>Lo and Behold...</i>) — check out guidelines on Blackboard.
Wed	Feb, 26	Theories of Mass Communication	<u>Reading:</u> <i>The influence and effect of mass media</i> (Dennis McQuail)
Mon	Mar, 2	NO CLASS WILL BE HELD	
Wed	Mar, 4	Theories of Mass Communication	<u>Oral presentation 2:</u> "The user is the content" In <i>The filter bubble</i> (Eli Pariser)
Mon	Mar, 9	Theories of Mass Communication	<u>Reading:</u> "How Trump Consultants Exploited the Facebook Data of Millions" (The NYT) <u>Screening:</u> <i>The Great Hack</i> (part 1)

Wed	Mar, 11	Theories of Mass Communication	<u>Reading</u> : "Revealed: 50 million Facebook profiles harvested for Cambridge Analytica in major data breach" (The Guardian) <u>Screening</u> : <i>The Great Hack</i> (part 2)
Mon	Mar, 16	Theories of Mass Communication	<u>Debate 3</u> (<i>The Great Hack</i>) — check out guidelines on Blackboard Mid-term exam review
Wed	Mar, 18	MID-TERM EXAM	
Mon	Mar, 23	The Media Industry's Transformation	<u>Reading</u> : The media has a big problem, Reuters Institute says: Who will pay for the news? <u>Oral presentation 3</u> : "What we want" In Taylor, A. (2014). <i>The People's Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture in the Digital Age</i>
Wed	Mar, 25	Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture?	<u>Oral presentation 4</u> : "Unequal Uptake" In Taylor, A. (2014). <i>The People's Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture in the Digital Age</i>
Mon	Mar, 30	Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture?	<u>Oral presentation 5</u> : "Why Kierkegaard hates slacktivism" In Morozov (2010). <i>The net delusion: How not to liberate the world</i>
Wed	Apr, 1	Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture?	<u>Oral presentation 6</u> : "A Networked Public" In Tufekci, Zeynep. (2017). <i>Twitter and Tear Gas. The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest</i>
Semana Santa (Holy Week) break			
Mon	Apr, 13	Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture?	<u>Readings</u> : "What is Occupy Wall Street? The history of leaderless movements" "Social Media Made the Arab Spring, But Couldn't Save It" "15M's social and political effects in Spain" <u>Screening</u> : <i>The Square</i> part 1
Wed	Apr, 15	Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture?	<u>Reading</u> : "How social media took us from Tahrir Square to Donald Trump" <u>Screening</u> : <i>The Square</i> part 2
Mon	Apr, 20	Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture?	<u>Debate 4</u> (<i>The Square</i>) — check out guidelines on Blackboard.
Wed	Apr, 22	On Transparency and Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age	<u>Reading</u> : "On internet privacy, be very afraid" (The Harvard Gazette)

Feria de Abril (Seville's April Fair) break			
Mon	May, 4	On Transparency and Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age	<u>Reading</u> : Interview with Snowden (The Guardian, 2019) <u>Screening</u> : <i>Citizenfour</i> part 1
Wed	May, 6	On Transparency and Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age	<u>Screening</u> : <i>Citizenfour</i> part 2
Mon	May, 11	On Transparency and Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age	<u>Debate 5</u> (<i>Citizenfour</i>) — check out guidelines on Blackboard.
Wed	May, 13	Last day of class	Final exam review
Monday, May 18 – Thursday, May 21 – Final Exams (4 days total)			