



COMM 340E Communication and Media in the Digital Age

Professor: Rubén Díaz

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Office Hours: By appointment (please allow at least 48 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails)

Course Information:

Spring 2019

Section a: M/W 12:00-1:20

Section b: T/Th 12:00-1:20

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 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 (e.g. the net neutrality issue, the *indignados* movement in Spain, the Edward Snowden case, Wikileaks, the remix culture, etc.), 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.
- Kelly, K. (2017). *The Inevitable. Understanding the 12 technological forces that will shape our future*. New York: Viking
- Hartley, J. (2002). *Communication, Cultural and Media Studies: The Key Concepts*. London: Routledge
- McQuail, D. (2010). *Mass Communication Theory*. London: SAGE
- Morozov, E. (2012). *The net delusion: How not to liberate the world*. London: Penguin.
- O'Neil, C. (2016). *Weapons of Math Destruction*. London: Penguin Books
- 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 | Comments mostly insightful & constructive; mostly uses appropriate terminology. Occasionally comments are too | Comments are sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight. Student does not use appropriate | Comments are uninformative, lacking in appropriate terminology. Heavy reliance on opinion & personal taste, |

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|-------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| | general impressions, opinions & specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions. | general or not relevant to the discussion. | terminology; comments not always relevant to the discussion. | 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.

Papers

During the semester, students will be composing two papers:

- Mid-term paper: A two-page review of an academic article on media that will be provided by the instructor. Students are expected to understand and summarize the main points and arguments of the article, discuss the positive aspects, and identify contradictions, gaps, and inconsistencies in the text. Students are expected to come up with a title that reflect the focus of their reviews, cite the article (APA Style), identify the article (by referring to the title and author of the article, the title of the journal, and the year of publication in the first paragraph), write an introduction (mentioning the central themes of the article and the arguments and claims of the author), summarize the article (capture the main points of each section, do not cover specific examples; express the main points, arguments, and findings of the article in your own words; use direct quotes from the author sparingly), write a critique (express your opinion about whether the article was a clear, thorough, and useful explanation of the subject. This is the core of your article review; decide if you agree with the writer, then provide sufficient support as to why or why not; end by suggesting which audiences would benefit from reading the article), and conclude the article review in a paragraph (about 10% of your overall essay).
- Final paper: A five-page reflection on a communication and media topic that will be provided by the instructor.

These 2 papers are to be typed, double-spaced, using black 11-point Arial font. Please abide by the deadline set by your professor. If you submit your paper after the due date, then you should expect to be penalized (5% for every working day that your paper is late). Your papers should be clear and concise using proper concepts, correct spelling, and

appropriate attribution for all sources. All writing is to follow the American Psychological Association (APA) Style for citations.

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 (25%)
- Mid-term Exam (15%)
- Mid-term Paper (15%)
- Oral Presentation (15%)
- Final Paper (15%)
- Final Exam (15%)

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 Rubén (the Faculty coordinator) to either turn in your documentation or to confirm that our office has received it. The deadline is February 22nd. Rubén 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

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

Class Schedule (section a / meeting on Mon-Wed)

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Topic</u> |
|-------------|--|
| 1/30 | Course presentation. |
| 2/4 | Communication and Media Studies: Understanding the Core Concepts |
| 2/6 | Communication and Media Studies: Understanding the Core Concepts |
| 2/11 | Communication and Media Studies: Understanding the Core Concepts |
| 2/13 | A Brief History of Communication and Mass Media |
| 2/18 | A Brief History of Communication and Mass Media |
| 2/20 | A Brief History of Communication and Mass Media |
| 2/25 | Theories of Mass Communication |
| 2/27 | Theories of Mass Communication |
| 3/4 | Theories of Mass Communication |
| 3/6 | Theories of Mass Communication |
| 3/11 | MID-TERM EXAM |
| 3/13 | The Media Industry's Transformation |
| 3/18 | The Media Industry's Transformation |
| 3/20 | Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture? |
| 3/25 | Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture? |
| 3/27 | Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture? |
| 4/1 | Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture? |
| 4/3 | On Transparency and Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age |
| 4/8 | On Transparency and Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age |
| 4/10 | On Transparency and Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age |

- - Semana Santa (Holy Week) - Sunday, April 14 – Sunday, April 21 - -

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| 4/22 | On Transparency and Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age |
| 4/24 | The "Copyright Wars" and the Remix Culture |
| 4/29 | The "Copyright Wars" and the Remix Culture |
| 5/1 | Labor Day (NO CLASS) |

- - Feria de Abril (Seville's April Fair) - Saturday, May 4 - Saturday, May 11 - -

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| 5/13 | The "Copyright Wars" and the Remix Culture |
| 5/15 | Final Exam review (FINAL PAPER DUE) |

- - Monday, May 20 – Thursday, May 23 – Final Exams (4 days total) - -

Class Schedule (section b / meeting on Tue-Thu)

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Topic</u> |
|-------------|--|
| 1/31 | Course presentation. |
| 2/5 | Communication and Media Studies: Understanding the Core Concepts |
| 2/7 | Communication and Media Studies: Understanding the Core Concepts |
| 2/12 | Communication and Media Studies: Understanding the Core Concepts |
| 2/14 | A Brief History of Communication and Mass Media |
| 2/19 | A Brief History of Communication and Mass Media |
| 2/21 | A Brief History of Communication and Mass Media |
| 2/26 | Theories of Mass Communication |
| 2/28 | Día de Andalucía (NO CLASS) |
| 3/5 | Theories of Mass Communication |
| 3/7 | Theories of Mass Communication |
| 3/12 | Theories of Mass Communication |
| 3/14 | MID-TERM EXAM |
| 3/19 | The Media Industry's Transformation |
| 3/21 | The Media Industry's Transformation |
| 3/26 | Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture? |
| 3/28 | Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture? |
| 4/2 | Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture? |
| 4/4 | Social Media and a (New) Public Sphere: A Participatory Culture? |
| 4/9 | On Transparency and Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age |
| 4/11 | On Transparency and Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age |

- - Semana Santa (Holy Week) - Sunday, April 14 – Sunday, April 21 - -

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| 4/23 | On Transparency and Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age |
| 4/25 | On Transparency and Freedom of Speech in the Digital Age |
| 4/30 | The "Copyright Wars" and the Remix Culture |
| 5/2 | The "Copyright Wars" and the Remix Culture |

- - Feria de Abril (Seville's April Fair) - Saturday, May 4 - Saturday, May 11 - -

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| 5/14 | The "Copyright Wars" and the Remix Culture |
| 5/16 | Final Exam review (FINAL PAPER DUE) |

- - Monday, May 20 – Thursday, May 23 – Final Exams (4 days total) - -