

Communication 1-B
Media, Culture and Society
Winter, 2021
Lectures: Tu/Th 10:30-11:50, Recorded Live
Sections: TBA

Professor Fred Turner
Office: Building 120, Room 438
Zoom Office Hours: TBA
E-mail: fturner@stanford.edu
Teaching Assistants: Daniel Akselrad & Reagan Ross

Goals:

Few social forces are more powerful or more ubiquitous than the American media. From movie theaters to the cell phones in our hands, across the airwaves and the Internet, images and sounds swarm our everyday lives and clamor for our attention. Recently, thanks to digital technologies, ordinary citizens have joined advertisers, politicians and other story-telling professionals in making materials for mass distribution. More than at any other time in American history, we live immersed in media.

This course aims to map that immersion and to equip you with the analytical tools to inhabit it critically. We will take up three topics: media as institutions, media as texts, and media as technologies. We will examine the structure and regulation of the mass media industries, the roles of producers and consumers in the American media system, and the ways that digitalization and globalization are transforming both. By the end of the course, you should have a solid command of core issues in contemporary media studies and a sharp analytical scalpel with which to dissect the claims of contemporary media makers.

Readings: All readings will be available on Canvas and the Web.

Assignments & Grading:

Analytical Projects = 50%

- 1 January 26: 15%
- 2 March 2: 15%
- 3 March 18: 20%

Midterm Exam (February 11, in class): 20%

Final Exam (Date & Time TBA): 20%

Participation: 10%

Expectations:

Participation:

While formally a lecture course, our class meetings will in fact be quite interactive – even on Zoom! The course lectures will be synchronous but also recorded, so if you're in another time zone, no problem. If you're there in real time, I'll look for you to come with the reading done and with the ability to participate in a class discussion.

To participate effectively, you should aim to speak in a way that moves a discussion forward and increases the learning for the whole group. Contributions can include questions, insights, and responses to other comments. They can also include provocative mistakes. Being “wrong” but intellectually adventurous can often help jump-start everyone's thinking!

I will also call on students by name (e.g., “cold call”). Please be assured this is NOT meant to embarrass you or put you on the spot! Rather, it's a way for me to make sure we get lots of voices in the class discussion. That's especially important in a field like media studies, since so many of us have different experiences with media.

One other thing: Please ask questions! Just raise your hand or use the “Raise Hand” function in Zoom. There is no such thing as a bad question. I guarantee that if you have a question, at least three of your fellow students do too!

Projects:

I understand that everyone is working under challenging conditions and that very occasionally you may need some flexibility on deadlines. Even so, I ask that you turn your projects in on time and do your best work at every level. As ever, the Honor Code applies to all your work. Violations of the Honor Code hurt everyone; as a result, they'll be dealt with severely.

About These Strange Times We're Living In:

As we all know, these are strange and difficult times. We're not only working online together, but we're working with the many repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. All of us on the course team want to acknowledge the challenges you're facing and want to help you learn. We'll need your feedback as we go to help make that happen. Please feel free to reach out to me about how the class is going at any time via email. Or stop by my virtual office hours. And given the stresses we're all under, I want to be sure you know that Stanford offers support through Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), available 24 hours a day at 650-723-3785.

Course Schedule:

(Note: This schedule is subject to change.)

Week 1: Introductions

Tuesday, January 12: *Introductions and planning*

No readings

Thursday, January 14: *How do media matter?*

Lippmann, Walter. "The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads" from Lippmann, Walter, *Public Opinion* (1921) pp. 3-20.

James W. Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication" from *Communication as Culture*, pp. 13-36

Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article" (1964), *New German Critique* No.3 (Autumn, 1974) pp. 49-55.

PART 1: MEDIA AS INSTITUTIONS

Week 2: The American Media Industry

Tuesday, January 19: *American Media Industries*

Croteau & Hoynes, *Media/Society*, Ch. 3 "The Economics of the Media Industry"

Eric Klinenberg (2007). "Introduction: The Empty Studio." *Fighting for Air: The Battle to Control America's Media*. Metropolitan Books, 1-16.

Thursday, January 21: *Advertising and American Culture*

Henry Jenkins, "Transmedia Storytelling," *MIT Technology Review*, January 15, 2003.

Nicole S. Cohen (2008). The Valorization of Surveillance: Towards a Political Economy of Facebook, *Democratic Communiqué* 22, No. 1, Spring.

Alice Marwick, "Instafame: Luxury Selfies in the Attention Economy," Alice Marwick, *Public Culture* (2015) 27 (1 (75)): 137-160.

Week 3: Media and the State

Tuesday, January 26: *The Media and Democracy*
Due: Analytical Project #1

Richard Adler, "A Brief History of Communications Regulation," in Adler, Richard. *Rethinking Communications Regulation*, The Aspen Institute, 2013, pp. 47-52.

Timothy Cook, "Public Policy Toward the Press: What Government Does for the News Media," in Overholser and Jamieson, *The Press*, pp. 248-262.

Thursday, January 28: *What do journalists do?*

Kovach, Bill, and Tom Rosenstiel. *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2001, Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 (pp. 9-49)

Pew Research Center, "How Social Media is Reshaping News,"

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/09/24/how-social-media-is-reshaping-news/>

Major General Tony Cucolo, "The Military and the Media: Shotgun Wedding, Rocky Marriage, Committed Relationship," *Media, War & Conflict*, 2008.

Week 4: Media and the State

Tuesday, February 2: *The Market for News*

James T. Hamilton, "Economic Theories of News," from Hamilton, *All the News That's Fit to Sell*, 7-36.

Guest lecture by Prof. Hamilton.

Thursday, February 4: *Propaganda and Censorship*

Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E Roberts. 2013. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review*, 107, 2 (May), Pp. 1-18

Edward Bernays, *Propaganda*, Chapters 1-4

Week 5: Platforms and Propaganda

Tuesday, February 9: *Platforms and Propaganda*

Joan Donovan, "Drafted into the Meme Wars," *MIT Technology Review*, Vol.122, Issue 6, Nov/Dec 2019, 48-51.

DiResta, Renee. "Computational Propaganda: If You Make It Trend, You Make It True." *Yale Review* 106.4 (2018): 12-29.

DiResta, Renee. "The Digital Maginot Line"

<https://www.ribbonfarm.com/2018/11/28/the-digital-maginot-line/>

Thursday, February 11: *In-class Midterm Exam*

PART 2: MEDIA AS TEXTS

Week 6: Ideology, Texts and Audiences

Tuesday, February 16: *How do mass media texts shape our views? What textual dynamics are at work?*

Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” *Screen*, Volume 16, Issue 3, October 1975, pp. 6–18.

Fred Turner, “This is for fighting, this is for fun,” in Dines, ed., *Gender, Race and Class in Media*, pp. 642-650 Available at <http://fredturner.stanford.edu> (download from “Papers”)

Thursday, February 18: *Polysemy and Active Audiences*

Hall, Stuart. “Encoding/Decoding,” in During, Simon, ed., *The Cultural Studies Reader*, pp. 507-517.

Newcomb, Horace, and Paul M. Hirsch, “Television as Cultural Forum,” in Newcomb, ed., *Television: The Critical View*, pp. 561-573.

Week 7: Audiences as Users

Tuesday, February 23: *The Human Screenome*

Prof. Reeves Guest Lecture on “The Human Screenome”

Readings TBD.

Thursday, February 25: *Audiences as Laborers*

Mark Andrejevic (2008). Watching Television Without Pity: The Productivity of Online Fans. *Television & New Media*, 9(1), 24-46.

Duffy, Brooke Erin (2016). The romance of work: Gender and aspirational labour in the digital culture industries. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 19(4), 441–457.

Week 8: Media and Inequality

Tuesday, March 2: *Mediating Racial Inequality*
Due: Analytical Project #2

Travis L. Dixon, “Teaching You to Love Fear: Television News and Racial Stereotypes in a Punishing Democracy,” in Hartnett, Stephen John. *Challenging the Prison-Industrial Complex: Activism, Arts, and Educational Alternatives* (Champagne-Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 2011, 106-123.

Keesha M. Middlemass, "A Felony Conviction as a Roboprocess," in Besteman, Catherine Lowe, and Hugh Gusterson. *Life by Algorithms: How Roboprocesses Are Remaking Our World*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019, pp. 77-87.

Thursday, March 4: *Can the Media Undermine Inequality?*

Grisold, Andrea, and Hendrik Theine. "How Come We Know? The Media Coverage of Economic Inequality." *International Journal of Communication* 11 (2017): 4265-84.

Joshua Gamson, "The Monster with Two Heads," in Gamson, *Freaks Talk Back* (pp.28-65)

PART 3: Media as Technologies

Week 9: Media and Space

Tuesday, March 9: *Media Technologies and Local Experience*

Beniger, James R. "Personalization of Mass Media and the Growth of Pseudo-Community." *Communication Research* 14.3 (1987): 352-71.

Ito, Mizuko, "Mobile Phones, Japanese Youth, and the Re-Placement of Social Contact," in Ito, Mizuko, Daisuke Okabe, and Misa Matsuda. *Personal, Portable, Pedestrian: Mobile Phones in Japanese Life*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005, pp. 131-148.

Emily Singer, "The Measured Life," *MIT Technology Review*, June 21, 2011. Available online here: <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/424390/the-measured-life/>

Thursday, March 11: *Media Technologies and Globalization*

Androutsopoulos, Jannis, and Arno Scholz. "Spaghetti Funk: Appropriations of Hip-Hop Culture and Rap Music in Europe." *Popular Music and Society* 26.4 (2003): 463-79.

Lisa Parks, "Vertical Mediation," in Parks, Lisa, and Caren Kaplan. *Life in the Age of Drone Warfare*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017, pp. 134-157.

"Bhutan, The Last Place" PBS documentary:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZPKjLtVT04>

Week 10: The Future

Tuesday, March 16: *Media Technologies and the Natural World*

Carruth, Allison. "The Digital Cloud and the Micropolitics of Energy." *Public Culture* 26.2 (2014): 339-64.

Jackson, Steven J. "Rethinking Repair." *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society*. Eds. Gillespie, Tarleton, Pablo J. Boczkowski and Kirsten A. Foot. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2013.

Thursday, March 18: *Where to Next?*

No reading – In-class review for final exam

Due: Analytical Project #3