

## COMM 340E Communication and Media in the Digital Age

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Office Hours: Appointment by email preferred

**Course Information:**  
Spring 2023  
Tuesday-Thursday  
16:00pm- 17:20pm  
17:30pm – 18:50pm

### 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. Topics include an overview of core concepts in the disciplines of Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, focusing on the connections between elements of the circuit of media. Structure, agency, power, technology, industry, content, and users interact in a global digital context. Understanding these elements is crucial for tackling enduring questions about the media in the digital age, and their overall impact on democracy, ethics and culture.

### Course Goals and Methodology

The main goal of this course is to investigate the complex relationship between media, communication and culture in a network society. From a social and 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.

### 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
- 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, class 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.

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

- Bennett, T., Grossberg, L., Morris, M., & Williams, R. (2005). *New keywords: A revised vocabulary of culture and society*. Blackwell Pub.
- Berger, P & Luckmann, T.(2006) *The social construction of reality*. Penguin.Social sciences.
- Bourdieu, P (1999) *Craft of sociology*. De gruyter inc.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998) *Masculine domination*. Stanford university press.
- Durham, M. G., & Kellner, D. (2006). *Media and cultural studies: Keywords*. Blackwell.
- Croteau, D., & Hoynes, W. (2019). *Media/society: technology, industries, content, and users (Sixth edition)*. SAGE.
- Curran, J., & Hesmondhalgh, D. (Eds.). (2019). *Media and society (6th edition)*. Bloomsbury.
- Hall, S. (Ed.). (1997). *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*. Sage & the Open University.
- Hartley, J. (2002). *Communication, Cultural and Media Studies: The Key Concepts*. Routledge
- Kelly, K. (2017). *The Inevitable. Understanding the 12 technological forces that will shape our future*. Viking
- Kellner, D. (2020). *Media culture cultural studies identity and politics in the contemporary moment*. Routledge
- McQuail, D. (2010). *Mass Communication Theory*. SAGE
- Morozov, E. (2012). *The net delusion: How not to liberate the world*. Penguin.
- Nagle, A. (2017). *Kill all normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the alt-right*. Zero Books.
- O'Neil, C. (2016). *Weapons of Math Destruction*. Penguin
- O'Sullivan, T., & Jewkes, Y. (Eds.). (1997). *The media studies reader*. St. Martin's Press.
- Peirano, M. (2019). *El enemigo conoce el sistema. Manipulación de ideas, personas e influencias después de la economía de la atención*. Debate.
- Perse, E. M., & Lambe, J. L. (2017). *Media effects and society*. Routledge.
- Rayner, P., Wall, P., & Kruger, S. (2004). *Media studies: the essential resource*. Routledge.
- Rojas, F. (2017) *Theory for the working sociologist*. Columbia university Press.
- Taylor, A. (2014). *The People's Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture in the Digital Age*. Metropolitan Books.
- Turow, J. (2017). *Media today: Mass communication in a converging world (6th ed.)*. Routledge.
- Tufekçi, Z. (2017). *Twitter and tear gas: The power and fragility of networked protest*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Williams, K. (2003). *Understanding media theory*. Oxford University Press.

### Course Requirements and Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Participation (20%)
- Oral examination (20%)
- Portfolio evaluations (20%)
- Paper reviews (20%)
- Practical cases (20%)

### *Participation*

In-class participation 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 ≠ 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 classmates, questioning information presented and discussed.

Students are also expected to actively participate in in-class exercises and to do some homework.

### Rubric

Participation points will be assigned based on the following criteria: (1) frequency of participation in class, (2) quality of comments, and (3) listening skills.

### *Oral examination*

Students are required to prepare 7-minute presentations on practical questions assigned by the instructor.

### Rubric (see rubric doc)

### *Paper reviews and practical cases*

Students will be asked to prepare in groups scientific paper reviews and practical cases about the topics seen in class

### Rubric (see rubric doc)

### *Portfolio evaluations*

Two examinations will be given (midterm and final) over the portfolio the student must work in class and at home. More instructions and rubric will be given separately.

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 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, you will automatically fail the course

## **COVID-19**

If an absence is related to COVID-19 the procedure to follow will be in accordance with the current legislation in the region of Andalucía, Spain.

## **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. The International Center may also report this to your home university. 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, or have any other medical condition you deem may affect your class performance, you must stop by the International Center to speak to Marta Carrillo ([mcaroro@acu.upo.es](mailto:mcaroro@acu.upo.es)) to either turn in your documentation or to confirm that our office has received it. The deadline is February 6th.

## **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. Media, Communication and Society
2. The media industry
3. Sociology of mass media
4. Digital inequalities
5. How political and social communication works
6. Global world and digital culture

## **Class schedule**

**Session 1** – Introduction: presentation of the course and review of syllabus

**Sessions 1-4** – Media, Communication and Society

**Sessions 5-8** – The media industry

**Sessions 9-12** – Sociology of mass media

**Sessions 13-16** – Digital inequalities

**Session 14** – Midterm portfolio evaluation

**Sessions 17-20** – How political and social communication works

**Sessions 21-24** - Global world and digital culture. Also final portfolio evaluation

**Final Exam** . Oral examination

### **Holidays**

Tuesday, February 28th – Día de Andalucía

April 2<sup>nd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> – Semana Santa

April 23<sup>rd</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> – Feria de Sevilla

May 1<sup>st</sup> - Día del trabajo