New Media and Social Change  
SYO4461

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*Email myself or your mentor to schedule an appointment

Course Description: This distance learning course surveys some of the research outlining the influence of mass media on individuals, institutions, and culture. We will pay attention to both “old” media (e.g., Television and newspapers) and “new” media (e.g., websites and social media) and broadly explore how technological changes effect social institutions and society. The course is comprised of three segments. We begin by examining the political economy of mass media. Specifically, this segment highlights how factors such as ownership and the emphasis on profit-making as well as professional norms shape information, how it flows across the media landscape, and what this means for deliberative democratic processes. In the second segment of the class, we explore the effects of new media on social institutions such as education, religion, work, the law, and politics. We conclude the class by surveying some of the research on mass media and race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability.

Course Objectives: After completing this seminar, you should be able to 1) summarize how mass media work and influence individuals, institutions, and culture, 2) explain the influence of new media on social institutions and the ways we interact with and in them, 3) apply the concepts from the course to contemporary debates involving American media.

Required Books:

** Additional readings will be available via Canvas as a PDF.

Course Requirements:
Your grade for the course will be based on the total number of points you earn out of 300 possible points. The assignments are as follows:

Four open-book quizzes, each worth 20 points (80 points)  
These quizzes will be posted on Wednesday at three to four week intervals throughout the semester. You will be able to find the answers to these quizzes in the assigned readings, online material, and films. Quizzes are available for one day. You will have one hour to complete the quiz. Note: While the quizzes are open book, they will be challenging. You need to be prepared before you take it.

Two online group discussions (60 points total)  
At two points in the semester, you will participate in an online discussion around a topic related to the course. The discussion will open on Wednesday and close the following Monday. Each
student will be expected to post at least a 300-word initial response to the discussion topic as well as two original 200-word replies to other students’ responses. You will be given a specific prompt, which will require you to read a short article, listen to audio, or watch a video related to the course. Your discussion will be scored according to the quality of your contribution (e.g., whether it is well reasoned and draws on course or scholarly materials) and the originality of your post (e.g., it is not similar to another student’s post). Based on the quality of your posts, you can earn a possible 30 points for your contribution to each group discussion. No credit will be given for late postings on the discussion board or for “flaming” and other inappropriate responses. Please note that I do not expect you to agree with your classmates all the time. I only require that you engage in a civil conversation around course topics. Take these discussions seriously as they are important for our critical thinking and intellectual growth. Be advised that you will not receive full credit for simply posting the appropriate number of words.

New Media Research Paper (160 points total)
For this paper you will analyze the role of new media in a social institution of interest to you (such as health care, religion, politics, and education). This paper has three parts:

- A preliminary topic and seven scholarly sources on the topic (20 points)
- A completed annotated bibliography (30 points)
- A paper outline (30 points)
- A complete 7 to 9-page paper (80 points)

These assignments are designed to help you do well on the paper, which is your final for the class. Therefore, it is critical that you put time into each assignment so that we can give you the most helpful feedback at each step.

A preliminary topic and seven scholarly (Due Week 5). The purpose of this assignment is to get you started on your final paper, and to ensure that there is scholarly research on your topic of interest. This is important. If there aren’t any scholarly sources on your topic, you will need to shift it a bit so that you can draw on the existing research. If you are not sure what scholarly sources are, see the Resources for the Research Project module. If you still are not clear, send the citation and the link to your mentor for feedback or email me for additional suggestions on how to get started. The specific requirements regarding the assignment are on Canvas.

An annotated bibliography (Due Week 9): A complete annotated bibliography is due on week 9. The goal of this assignment is to help you think about how you will use the sources in the paper. You want to really think about what two or three arguments you will be able to make you’re your existing sources. For this assignment, you need at least 12 sources – and at least 7 of these sources need to be scholarly. You may only use 2 scholarly sources from class. The remaining sources can come from the popular press. The specific requirements regarding the assignment are on Canvas. This is a great time to look at the final paper guidelines again to make sure that you are on track to a successful paper.

An outline of your paper (Due Week 12): You will turn in an outline of your paper for feedback (see the assignment on Canvas for the requirements). The purpose of this assignment is to start constructing your paper and to show us how you will use the sources in your paper. Think of this as a very rough draft of your paper, where you will outline your main points and show how the
sources help you make these points. Please be sure to spend time on the outline and take advantage of this assignment. The better your outline, the more we can help you before you put together your paper.

**Complete paper (Tuesday of Finals Week).** Your paper is due **before 8pm** on the Tuesday of finals week (December 8th). Your paper is subject to the terms of the use agreement posted on the Turnitin website. **BE SURE THAT YOUR SOFTWARE IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE Turnitin PROGRAM PRIOR TO THE DUE DATE.**

**Note:** You will have several opportunities to earn extra credit points throughout the semester (5 points each). You may earn a maximum of 20 extra credit points. These opportunities will be announced through Canvas throughout the semester.

**Work Policy:** Students must take quizzes (and complete other assignments) during the times indicated on the syllabus. Make up quizzes are permitted only if students have an excused absence and with the appropriate documentation. See the university policy below. If you are experiencing trauma or a major life disruption or extreme stress, please reach out to the Department of Student Support and Transitions at [https://dsst.fsu.edu/contact-us](https://dsst.fsu.edu/contact-us). It is an excellent office full of folks who are ready to help you. Late work may be handed in but will be penalized 25% each day it is late. Note: papers handed in after 8:00pm are considered late. There is no grace period.

You are expected to ensure that your computer and internet connection are functioning properly prior to quizzes or other online exercises. If necessary, please seek technical assistance from FSU ITS, Canvas Support Group, or other online resources listed on the Bulletin Board under “Help with FSU Procedures and Technology.” If you are experiencing ongoing connection issues, please reach out to your mentor or myself.

**Reminder:** *Missing work is not sufficient reason for a grade of Incomplete (I).* An incomplete will not be given except under extreme circumstances at the instructor’s discretion. Note that College of Social Sciences and Public Policy guidelines require that students seeking an “I” must be passing the course.

**University Attendance Policy:**
Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

**Academic Honor Policy:**
The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at
Florida State University. (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at [http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy](http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy))

**Cheating and Plagiarism.** The Provost and legal counsel of Florida State University warn us that any uses of others' copyrighted materials without proper acknowledgement is unlawful and may lead to criminal prosecution. To this end, please be scrupulous in using the work of others by giving full and appropriate credit to the sources and materials that you use. Please use care when taking words and phrases from others. If you use a string of three or more exact words from another source, you must place the words in quotes and cite the author, year and page number. Be a stickler about citing; cite more rather than less; cite early rather than late. Do NOT appropriate the concepts, phrases, or ideas of other people without giving them credit. If you do so, you risk losing your good name and getting into legal trouble. Any form of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will result in a "zero" for that particular assignment or possibly an "F" for the course and may be reported to the University Judicial Office. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated.

**Your paper would be considered as plagiarized in part or entirely if you do any of the following:**

- Submit a paper that was written by someone other than you.
- Submit a paper in which you use the ideas, metaphors or reasoning style of another, but do not cite that source and/or place that source in your list of references.
- Submit a paper in which you "cut and paste" or use the exact words of a source and you do not put the words within quotation marks, use footnotes or in-text citations, and place the source in your list of references.
- You commit patchwork plagiarism by overuse of quotations – 25% or more of your paper
- If you use paraphrasing software.

**Disabilities.** Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center  
874 Traditions Way  
108 Student Services Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
(850) 644-9566 (voice)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu  
[http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/](http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/)
Syllabus Change Policy: Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. If I make changes, I will send you an email and note them in red.

Grading Scale:

- 93% to 100% = A
- 77% to 79% = C+
- 90% to 92% = A-
- 74% to 76% = C
- 87% to 89% = B+
- 70% to 73% = C-
- 84% to 86% = B
- 67% to 69% = D+
- 80% to 83% = B-
- 64% to 66% = D

COURSE SCHEDULE

**** The below refers to the week of instruction. DON’T FORGET All times and deadlines are EST. *****

Week 1. Introduction: Media Economics an Introduction

Week 2. Media Economics and New Media

Week 3. New Media and Deliberative Processes – Bots, Fake News, and FIBs
- Quiz 1 is open on Wednesday September 9th from 6am to 8pm. It covers material from Weeks 1 & 2. You will have 60 minutes to take the quiz.

Week 4. Don’t Feed the Trolls
- Assignment – Discussion 1 opens Wednesday September 15th at 6am and closes Monday September 21st at 8pm.
  *** Suggested viewing: Watch “The Waldo Moment” which is Season 2, episode 3 of Black Mirror (available on Netflix).

Week 5. New Media, Social Institutions, and Reality
- Assignment – Preliminary topic and scholarly sources are due by Friday September 25th before 8pm. Be sure to read the guidelines before you submit your assignment.
  *** Suggested viewing: Watch “Nosedive” which is Season 3, episode 1 of Black Mirror (available on Netflix).

Week 6. New Media and Education

Week 7. New Media and Religion
- Quiz 2 is open on Wednesday October 7th from 6am to 8pm. It covers material from Weeks 3 through Weeks 6. You will have 60 minutes to take the quiz.

Week 8. New Media, Legal Institutions, and Corporations

Week 9. New Media and Work
- Assignment – Completed annotated bibliography is due by Friday October 23rd before 8pm. Be sure to read the guidelines before you submit your assignment.
Week 10. New Media and Political Institutions

Week 11. New Media and Political Institutions: Celebrity Edition
  • Test – Quiz 3 is open on Wednesday November 4th from 6am to 8pm. It covers material from Weeks 7 through Weeks 10. You will have 60 minutes to take the quiz.

Week 12. Research Paper Work Week
  • Assignment – Discussion 2 opens Wednesday November 16th at 6am and closes Monday November 16th at 8pm.
  • Assignment – Paper outline is due Friday November 13th before 8pm.

Week 13. Race in the Digital Age

Week 14. Sexuality and Dating in the Digital Age

Week 15. Disability and New Media
  • Test – Quiz 4 is open on Wednesday December 2nd from 6am to 8pm. It covers material from Weeks 11 through Weeks 15. You will have 60 minutes to take the quiz.

Week 16. Finals Week
  • Assignment – Final paper is due on Tuesday December 8th before 8pm.