



McMaster University  
Department of Sociology  
SOCIOLOGY 2L03: Media Institutions  
Summer 2020

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**Calendar description:** *An examination of the institutional structure and production processes of the press, television, and radio. Topics include news gathering, television and radio program production and the relationship between media production and management. Lectures and discussion (three hours); one term.*

This course provides a survey of the study of different media institutions, industries, and organizations, in an age of mass and networked communication, propaganda and promotional culture, unregulated capitalism and globalization. Engaging with some of the more influential accounts of mass media, popular culture, public broadcasting and commercial entertainment within sociology, we will consider the ways in which mass communications media reproduce - but can also be used to challenge and contest - relations of social inequality and power, and how such relations shape students' own daily experiences and practices.

Above all, students will be encouraged to consider the role and place of various examples of media industries, technologies, and practices - film, television, music, video games, newspapers and journalism, radio and public broadcasting, social networks and smartphones, and so on - in their own lives. Considering these examples from their everyday experience, students will interrogate their underlying assumptions about how the social world - and their places within it - are constituted, in order to better understand the media environments and ecologies they inhabit.

### Course objectives

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Upon completion of the course, students will

- specify the tensions, as well as traffic, between popular/non-academic and scholarly/academic conceptions of media institutions, and think

- critically about some of the outstanding issues and problems currently dominating the disciplines of sociology and media studies;
- be able to critique specific cultural products and practices from our own lives - music and fashion trends, television programs and films, sporting events and spectacles, and so on - as well as the particular identifications, desires, anathemas, and intimacies they at once solicit and mobilize;
  - understand the complex and contradictory role that power, political economy, and identity play in the production, distribution, and consumption of media in modern society.

### **Required readings**

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All readings will be made available through Avenue to Learn. There are no textbooks required for purchase.

### **Provisional schedule of lectures and required readings**

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#### **June 22. Introduction to Media Institutions**

1. Douglas Kellner, "Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Culture," in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Critical Reader*, eds. Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA; London: Sage Publications, 2015), 7-19
2. Tanner Mirrlees, "Capitalizing on Global Entertainment Media," in *Global Entertainment Media: Between Cultural Imperialism and Cultural Globalization* (London; New York: Routledge, 2013), 59-81

#### **June 24. Mass Media or Popular Culture?: Theories of Media**

1. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas," in *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*, eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas Kellner (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 9-12
2. Theodor W. Adorno, "The Culture Industry Reconsidered," in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 98-106
3. Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular," in *Popular Culture: A Reader*, eds. Raiford Guins and Omayra Zaragoza Cruz (Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage Publications, 2005), 64-71

## June 29. Film and Political Economy

1. Marco Cucco, "The Promise Is Great: The Blockbuster and the Hollywood Economy," *Media, Culture & Society* 31, no. 2 (2009), 215-230
2. Bart Beatty, "Superhero Fan Service: Audience Strategies in the Contemporary Interlinked Hollywood Blockbuster," *The Information Society* 32, no. 5 (2016), 318-325

## July 1. Television and Technology

1. Mareike Jenner, "Is This TVIV?: On Netflix, TVIII, and Binge-Watching," *New Media & Society* 18, no. 2 (2016), 257-273
2. Benjamin Burroughs, "House of Netflix: Streaming Media and Digital Lore," *Popular Communication* 17, no. 1 (2019), 1-17, DOI: 10.1080/15405702.2017.1343948

## July 6. Animation and Globalization

1. Jonathan Matusitz and Lauren Palermo, "The Disneyfication of the World: A Globalisation Perspective," *Journal of Organisational Transformation and Social Change* 11, no. 2 (2014), 91-107
2. Rayna Denison, "Transcultural Creativity in Anime: Hybrid Identities in the Production, Distribution, Texts and Fandom of Japanese Anime," *Creative Industries Journal* 3, no. 3 (2011), 221-235

## July 8. Advertising and Consumerism

1. Raymond Williams, "Advertising: The Magic System," in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon Duhring (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 410-411, 421-423
2. John Fiske, "Shopping for Pleasure," in *Reading the Popular*, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 13-39

## July 13. Music, Subcultures, and Fandoms

1. Dick Hebdige, "Subculture: The Meaning of Style," in *The Subcultures Reader*, eds. Ken Gelder and Sarah Thornton (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 130-142
2. John Fiske, "The Cultural Economy of Fandom," in *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, ed. Lisa A. Lewis (New York: Routledge, 1992), 30-49

### July 15. Music Videos and Difference

1. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*, eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas Kellner (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 344-352
2. Rosalind Gill, "Empowerment/Sexism: Figuring Female Sexual Agency in Contemporary Advertising," *Feminism & Psychology* 18, no. 1 (2008), 35-55
3. Cassandra Jackson, "Fantasies of Wounding: Black Male Bodies in Hip-Hop," in *Violence, Visual Culture, and the Black Male Body* (London; New York: Routledge, 2011), 42-61

### July 20. Facebook and Journalism

1. Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article," in *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*, eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas Kellner (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 102-107
2. Phillip M. Napoli, "The First Amendment, Fake News, and Filter Bubbles," in *Social Media and the Public Interest: Media Regulation in the Disinformation Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 80-106
3. Emily Bell, "Facebook Is Eating the World," *Columbia Journalism Review*, 7 March 2016, [https://www.cjr.org/analysis/facebook\\_and\\_media.php](https://www.cjr.org/analysis/facebook_and_media.php)

### July 22. YouTube and Convergence

1. Henry Jenkins, "Quentin Tarantino's Star Wars?: Digital Cinema, Media Convergence, and Participatory Culture," in *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*, eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas Kellner (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 549-574
2. Andrew Ross, "In Search of the Lost Paycheck," in *Digital Labor: The Internet as Playground and Factory*, ed. Trebor Sholz (London; New York: Routledge), 33-57

### July 27. Google and Privacy

1. Ganaele Langlois and Andrea Slane, "Economies of Reputation: The Case of Revenge Porn," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 14, no. 2 (2017), 120-138
2. Siva Vaidyanathan, "Render unto Caesar: How Google Came to Rule the Web," in *The Googlization of Everything (And Why We Should Worry)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 13-39

## July 29. Twitter and Politics

1. Manuel Castells, "Occupy Wall Street: Harvesting the Salt of the Earth," in *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 156-198
2. Evgeny Morozov, "Why Kierkegaard Hates Slacktivism," in *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 179-204

## August 3. TBA

## August 5. Conclusion

***Modification of course outlines: McMaster University reserves the right to change or revise information contained in course outlines in extreme circumstances. If a modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with an explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of students to check regularly their primary email account via their @mcmaster.ca alias and course websites.***

### Course evaluation

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Discussions - biweekly	10%
1st quiz - July 6	15%
1st reading response - July 12	10%
2nd quiz - July 20	15%
3rd quiz - July 29	15%
2nd reading response - August 2	10%
Paper - August 7	25%

### **Discussions (10%) - biweekly**

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Students will participate in online discussions at least twice a week to address themes, examples, or ideas from the lectures or readings for that week. Students will be expected to either pose a question in relation to the lecture or reading, respond to one of their peers' questions about the lecture or reading, or comment critically upon the lecture or reading. Students' contributions will be evaluated for their frequency and substance.

Discussions will be completed through Avenue to Learn (in the "Discussions" section, under the "Communication" tab).

### **Reading responses x 2 (10% + 10%) - July 12, August 2**

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Students will write two short reading responses (approx. 250-500 words each). Each response will be addressed to one theme from the course as raised by one of the assigned readings; students will relate and narrate their own experiences, practices, and relationships with media. Further instructions will be provided in the first week of the course.

Responses will be submitted through Avenue to Learn (to the corresponding submission boxes, titled "1st Reading Response" and "2nd Reading Response," in the "Assignments" section, under the "Assessments" tab).

### **Quizzes x 3 (15% + 15% + 15%) - July 6, July 20, July 29**

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Students will write three open-book, online, timed quizzes (approx. 60 minutes each) during the semester, comprised of a combination of multiple-choice and long answer questions (both randomly selected from an expansive pool of potential questions), that will evaluate their engagement with, and command of, course content (both lectures and readings).

Quizzes will be completed on Avenue to Learn (in the "Quizzes" section, under the "Assessments" tab).

### **Paper (25%) - August 7**

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Students will write a paper (approx. 1250-1750 words), drawing upon a range of course assigned materials as well as secondary sources, on a topic preapproved by the instructor. Further instructions and a list of preapproved topics/questions will be provided in the first week of the course.

Papers will be submitted through Avenue to Learn (to the corresponding submission box, titled "Paper," in the "Assignments" section, under the "Assessments" tab).

### **E-mails to the instructor**

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It is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff,

must originate from each student's own McMaster University email account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at their discretion.

### **Late assignments**

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Assignments must be submitted by the exact date and time specified. Late submissions will be penalized 2% for each day - including Saturdays and Sundays - that they are overdue. Submissions that are more than seven days late will not be accepted and will instead receive a 0% grade. Students are responsible for retaining a back-up copy of their work; computer hardware or software malfunctions, network outages, data loss or corruption, and other common problems of a technical nature are not in and of themselves sufficient grounds for having the penalties for late submissions waived.

Requests for extensions by reason of extenuating circumstances will be considered by the instructor on a case-by-case basis, and only with the provision of supporting documentation (i.e., a completed McMaster Student Absence form). Extensions will only be offered in exceptional cases; students should not assume their provision.

### **Academic integrity**

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You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity). The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained; improper collaboration in group work; copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Turnitin.com**

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In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn plagiarism detection (a service

supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work through Avenue to Learn and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or Avenue to Learn. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

### **Online elements in this course**

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In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Note: this course will be delivered remotely through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous means. As such, assignments will include online discussions, but the lectures themselves will not require teleconferencing (e.g., using Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, or some other teleconferencing platform). A combination of PowerPoint presentations and videos (comprised of screencasts of the PowerPoint presentations with voiceover narration from the instructor) will be made available each class on Avenue to Learn for students to consume at their leisure, in order to suit different learning styles and competencies with and access to technology, as well as accommodate busy schedules, at a time of widespread uncertainty and persistent disruption to everyone's normal routines. Teleconferencing software may be employed in the course for online discussions, group work, and virtual office hours, so that students with limited or unreliable Internet access will not be disadvantaged.

The aim is to maximize each student's participation in the course as much as is possible for them at this time, by providing different and multiple opportunities, and a variety of mediums (video, audio, text, online discussions), for entry into and engagement with the course content.

### **Accommodations for students with disabilities**

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Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

## **Academic accommodation for religious, indigenous or spiritual observances (RISO)**

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Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.