This course addresses selected traditional and “frontier” issues confronting media theorists and researchers. This is a period of massive transformation that effects change in the very definition of “media.” For our purposes, “media” refer to both traditional mass media production forms -- television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, etc. -- Internet-based forms and social media. Also included are the myriad of specialized-audience media or media targeted to particular ethnic, national origin, lifestyle, taste, community, etc. groups. To one degree or another, course thematic issues reflect contemporary struggles to understand how media, society, and audience are changing and what difference it makes for communication theory and research. They all bear, in one way or another, upon issues of community and civil society.

A number of chapters are assigned from:


All readings will be available in pdf form/Blackboard

**Conduct of Class Sessions**

Given that this course is a doctoral seminar, students play an active role in shaping class discussion. To that end, students master the reading assignments associated with each weekly topic and come to class prepared with questions, criticisms, and comments. For each assigned reading, one student will be asked to lead off our discussion by providing a written synopsis for distribution to the class and a 3-minute critical review to begin the discussion.

**Components of Course Evaluation**

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<thead>
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<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Course Paper</td>
<td>30</td>
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Both the midterm and the final will be take-home exams (each 15-page maximum) where the student selects questions to answer from a larger list that I prepare. For the course paper, each student works with me to work out a paper topic that relates to course subject matter. The course paper will take the student into literatures beyond the assigned course readings. Course readings afford good bibliographies for many topics. Please give me both hard and electronic copies of your exams and papers.
Seminar Topics and Readings

Week One

Introduction

Week Two

I. Challenges to Iconic Theory and Research Foci

1. What Is A Media Effect?

2. From Two-Step to One-Step Flow? A Debate

3. Critical Or Administrative?

4. From Exposure To Communication Ecology: Measurement Challenge

Week Three

5. Which Media? Putting Ethnic and Immigrant Media on the Research Agenda


**II. Theoretical Approaches**

1. Traditional Cognitive/Information Processing Approaches

• A. Bandura, Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication, Chapter 6 in Bryant and Oliver (2009).


**Week Four**

2. Priming and Third-Person Effect


• Perloff, R. M., Mass Media, Social Perception, and the Third Person Effect, Chapter 12 in Bryant and Oliver (2009)


**Week Five**

3. Parasocial Interaction and Entertainment-Education


**Week Six**

4. Uses and Gratifications, Media System Dependency


6. Agenda Setting


**Week Seven**


6. Cultivation and Constructing Social Reality


**Week Eight**

7. Framing


8. Re-Evaluating Cultivation, Uses and Gratifications, Agenda Setting and Framing In the Contemporary Media Environment


Week Nine

III. Media Audiences


Week Ten

IV. Selected Effects Issues

1. Knowledge Gap


2. Approaches to Health Communication


**Week Eleven**


3. Violence? And Videogames


**Week Twelve**

4. Social Capital and Civic Engagement

  Thinking about social change in America (Ch. 1, pp. 15-28).
  What killed civic engagement? (Ch. 15, pp.277-284).


**Week Thirteen**

5. Access Issues


V. Hyperlocal and Social Media


Week Fourteen


• Howard, Philip N., Aiden Duffy, Deen Freelon, Muzammil M. Hussain, Will Mari, and Marwa Mazaid. "Opening closed regimes: what was the role of social media during the Arab Spring?." *Available at SSRN 2595096* (2011).

Note: I am leaving Week Fifteen open for catch-up and/or overview
**Academic Conduct**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* [https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/](https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, [http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/).

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* [http://equity.usc.edu/](http://equity.usc.edu/) or to the *Department of Public Safety* [http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us/](http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us/). This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/) provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage gi [sarc@usc.edu](mailto:sarc@usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

**Support Systems**

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* [http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali](http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali), which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* [http://emergency.usc.edu/](http://emergency.usc.edu/) will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.