

COMM 207*
Economic Thinking for Communication and Journalism
Fall 2013

Section: 20400R 2 units, W 3:30-4:50 pm, ASC G26

Instructor: Paolo Sigismondi, MBA, PhD

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Office: ASC 102A Office Hours: 9:00-10:00am M, 2:30 – 3:30pm W, and by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

Office: PhD Offices, ASC G6

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces microeconomic and macroeconomic principles analyzing contemporary issues in media, communication and journalism industries from an economic perspective. The course begins with two introductory lectures on economic principles and political economy for communication and journalism, and then applies these principles to three core industries/platforms: broadcasting, the newspaper industry, and the Internet. Each industry will be analyzed in a series of lectures focusing on its history, political economy, recent evolutions and current issues. Political economy is the discipline that explores and explains how markets intersect with government, and how in media and communication industries stakeholders attempt to translate their commercial power into political influence and vice versa.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to teach communication and journalism students about some of the most important issues across the core media industries – commercial broadcasting, public service media, newspapers and the Internet – by examining critical political and economic factors that shape them. The course will increase the economic literacy of the participants and provide a consistent set of core questions and concepts – a tool kit – to help analyze, innovate, lead, and be successful in these and other industries. The students will leave the class equipped to understand the political and economic dynamics that are shaping the evolution of journalism, communications and media.

REQUIRED TEXT

Turow, J. (2011). *Media today: An introduction to mass communication (3rd or 4th edition)*. New York: Routledge.

The rest of the readings are on reserve at the USC Leavey library, or are available on line. There will be additional short readings distributed in class, or posted on Blackboard, on current evolutions of the industries analyzed.

ADA COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for

approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to your instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's Academic Integrity code as detailed in the Scampus guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violations or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Class participation.** Students are expected to make informed contributions to class discussions and online activities, coming to class having completed all assigned readings.
2. **Midterm exam.** There will be a closed book midterm exam on October 9.
3. **Course project.** Students will conduct research in groups on a topic related to this course, and they will turn in a short paper (5-7 pages suggested).
4. **Final exam.** The final exam will take place on Monday December 16, 2-4 pm.

GRADING

Requirements will be weighed as follows:

Class participation	10% - 50 points
Midterm exam	35% - 175 points
Course project	20% - 100 points
Final exam	35% - 175 points
Total	100% - 500 points

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1. Introduction to Course (Aug. 28)

Week 2. Microeconomic - Macroeconomic Principles and Political Economy for Communication and Journalism (Sep.4)

Week 3. Broadcasting - History (Sep. 11)

Week 4. Broadcasting - Current Issues: Markets and Players (Sep. 18)

Week 5. The Political Economy of Broadcasting (Sep. 25)

Week 6. Public Broadcasting (Oct.2)

Week 7. MIDTERM EXAM (Oct. 9)

Week 8. The Newspaper Industry – History (Oct. 16)

Week 9. The Newspaper Industry and the Print Media- Current Issues: Markets and Players (Oct. 23)

Week 10. The Political Economy of Newspapers (Oct. 30)

Week 11. The Internet – History and Current Issues: Markets and Players (Nov. 6)

Week 12. The Political Economy of the Internet (Nov. 13)

Week 13. Telecommunications (Telephone, Broadband, and Wireless) (Nov. 20)

Week 14. No class - Thanksgiving recess (Nov. 27)

Week 15. Lessons Learned & Course Wrap-up (Dec. 4)

FINAL EXAM: December 14, 2:00-4:00PM.

***Preliminary syllabus to be updated by August 2013**