

SYLLABUS

COMM 400: Public Policy of Communications

Fall 2013

Professor: Mark Lloyd

Tuesday, 3:30-6:20

Classroom: ASC G34

Cell Phone: (202) 255-2122

Email:

OFFICE HOURS

Please email me or call my cell phone if you have questions or want to set up an appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The goal of the course is to examine the public policies, specifically the legal and political structures, which currently determine how the communications industries operate and how the public acquires and contributes to information vital to democratic participation in the U.S. Rather than looking at media or telecommunications as a consumer product, a means of entertainment or as a business, this course will focus on the political relationship between citizens and media and telecommunications (including internet) companies. The course is divided into two parts. The first part of the course will establish a historical and conceptual understanding of communications policy in the U.S., relying upon readings to explore the constitutional and regulatory structures that arose historically in the U.S. to determine the character of the political relationship between the communications industry and the public. The second part of the course will focus on local communications policy issues of particular interest to the students.

COURSE READING:

Mark Lloyd, Prologue to a Farce: Communication and Democracy in America (University of Illinois Press: 2007)

Robert W. McChesney, Digital Disconnect: How Capitalism is Turning the Internet Against Democracy (The New Press: 2013)

All additional course readings will be found on Blackboard.

Aug. 27 **How does public policy determine communication in the U.S.? Why is communication important to citizens?**

Reading: Lloyd, Prologue to a Farce – Introduction and Chapters 1-2
Course Reader, Section 1/Blackboard: Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution/Preamble//Article1/Amendment 1

Assignment: What information is most important to you and where do you get it? What is your relationship with media? What are your goals for this course?

Sept. 3 The First Amendment and Beyond

Readings: Lloyd, Prologue to a Farce – Chapters 3-5.
Course Reader, Section 2/Blackboard: Red Lion, U.S. v. Associated Press selections.
Extra: Kreimer, Seth. "Censorship by proxy: the first amendment, Internet intermediaries, and the problem of the weakest link." *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 155.11 (2006): 06-45 at
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=948226

Assignment Due

Sept. 10 The Marketplace and Other Problems

Readings: Lloyd, Prologue to a Farce – Chapters 6-8.
McChesney, Digital Disconnect – Chapters 1-3
Course Reader, Section 3/Blackboard

Sept. 17 The Daily Me and Through the Looking Glass

Readings: Lloyd, Prologue to a Farce – Chapters 9-10.
McChesney, Digital Disconnect – Chapters 4-5
Course Reader, Section 4/Blackboard: Extra: C. Sunstein, “the daily me”:
<http://www.pupress.princeton.edu/chapters/s7014.html>
Y. Benkler, “Through the Looking Glass: Alice and the Constitutional Foundations of the Public Domain”:
<http://www.law.duke.edu/journals/lcp/articles/lcp66dWinterSpring2003p173.htm>

Sept. 24 Technology, Pandora and Pangloss

Readings: **Course Reader, Section 5/Blackboard:** Evgeny Morozov, The Net Delusion, selections: <http://evgenymorozov.com/writings.html>
Lee Siegel, Twitter Can’t Save You,
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/06/books/review/Siegel-t.html>
Paul Starr, The Manichean World of Tim Wu,
<http://prospect.org/article/manichean-world-tim-wu>
Bruce Gottlieb, Net Neutrality and the Academics who Love It,
<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2010/12/net-neutrality-and-the-academics-who-love-it/67764/>

Oct. 1 **Public Media**

Readings: **Course Reader, Section 6/Blackboard:** PBS & the BBC and its Discontents
The James MacTaggart Memorial Lectures: James Murdoch and Mark Thompson
<http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Media/documents/2009/08/28/JamesMurdochMacTaggartLecture.pdf>
http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/speeches/stories/thompson_mactaggart.shtml
Willard D. (“Wick”) Rowland Jr., Adrift, mute and helpless,
<http://www.current.org/federal/fed1018policy-rowland.shtml>
Goodman, Ellen P., and Anne H. Chen. "Modeling policy for new public service media networks." *Harv. JL & Tech.* 24 (2010): 111. at
http://heinonlinebackup.com/hol-cgi-bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/hjlt24§ion=6

Oct. 8 **The Matrix**

Readings: Lloyd, Chapters 10-12
McChesney, Chapters 6-7

Assignment: 5-7 pg paper. Pick two of the listed movies below. Describe fully the communications environment. What are any of these movies trying to tell us? Situate the movies historically (the period they describe, when they were made). Describe the underlying policy ideas in each movie you select. Compare and contrast with each other. Discuss the movies in light of the readings and class discussions.

Viewings: *Good Night and Good Luck*, George Clooney
Insider, Michael Mann, Eric Roth
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, Frank Capra
Network, Sidney Lumet, Paddy Chayefski

Oct. 15 **Lessons Learned**

Readings: **Course Reader, Section 7/Blackboard:** Critical Information Needs of the American Public http://www.fcc.gov/ocbo/Executive_Summary.pdf

Assignment Mid-Term Papers Due
Finalize plan for class/team project(s).

Oct. 22 We Decide

Oct. 29 We Decide

Nov. 5 We Decide

Nov. 12	We Decide
Nov. 19	CLASS PRESENTATIONS DUE
Nov. 26	CLASS PRESENTATIONS DUE
Dec. 3	COURSE WRAP UP
Dec. 17	FINAL TAKE HOME EXAMINATION

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ATTENDANCE:

Students are required to do all of the reading, attend all classes, complete all assignments, and participate fully in class discussion. Attendance is mandatory and will be taken each class meeting. Attendance grade may be affected by your promptness and level of attention during class lecture. You are allowed two absences without explanation, after which there is a deduction off the final grade for each unexcused absence.

Personal computers and wireless Internet are a key part of today's technological culture, but they also can distract you from the class discussion and dampen participation. I expect you to use computers for note-taking purposes only, and to avoid using other mobile devices during class time. Any deviation will result in laptops being banned from the classroom and participation grades being impacted.

You will receive details about each assignment/exam separately. All assignments must be completed and handed in on time to avoid a grade reduction. If you are unable to turn in an assignment due to illness or a personal emergency, you must provide written documentation that will allow you to be excused, or discuss your situation with me in a timely manner. Do not wait until the end of the semester to sort things out. Remember: this is YOUR responsibility.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

You are responsible for the material covered in class and in the reading. You will be evaluated on the following:

The level of your engagement with the class materials (as demonstrated in your written work and class participation)

- 1) your capacity to explain your ideas and analysis in articulate and well-written forms
- 2) your ability to creatively explore the theories and materials presented in the class

All of your work will be graded on two primary evaluative scales:

- 1) how well it demonstrates an understanding of the readings and lectures of the class
- 2) how well it articulates and structures its argument

The final course grade will be based on the following distribution:

Class participation	10%
Oral Presentation	10%
Take Home Midterm (5-7 pages)	20%
Paper (15-20 pages)	30%
Take Home Final Examination (5-7 pages)	20%

You must complete ALL of these assignments in order to pass the class. Failure to complete ONE OR MORE of them will result in an F in the class.

COURSE GRADING POLICY:

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A+/A	outstanding, insightful work and analysis, showing an understanding beyond the basic course material
A-/B+	above average work, demonstrates effort and understanding
B/B-	average work, needs improvement on ideas and argument
C+/C	shows little effort, lacks clarity and/or argument
C- and below	meets the bare minimum, shows little understanding of material

Each assignment will be worth 100 points and will be converted to a percentage score depending upon the weight assigned to each. Your percentage scores on the assignments will be totaled and translated to a letter grade as per the scale shown below:

A+	= 97-100	B+	= 89-87	C+	= 79-77	D+	= 69-67
A	= 96-94	B	= 86-84	C	= 76-74	D	= 66-64
A-	= 93-90	B-	= 83-80	C-	= 73-70	D-	= 63-60

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must first wait 24 hours (cooling off period) before appealing it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate. All concerns should be addressed within 10 days of receiving the graded assignment. After that, no appeals will be accepted for review and the grade will be considered final.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

When taking this class, you enter into a contract that states that all the work you are turning in is your own and no one else's, and that you have not turned in any work for which you have received credit in another class. Do not take this policy lightly!

The School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. It endorses and acts on the SCampus policies and procedures detailed in the section titled "University Sanction Guidelines." These policies, procedures and guidelines will be enforced. It is important that you be aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade in the course, and be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. If you have any doubts about any of these practices, you must confer with the professor.

DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS:

Any student requesting academic accommodations 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 me 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.

ESL STUDENT ACCOMODATIONS:

Please inform me as soon as possible if you require special accommodations based on your understanding of the English language.

Instructor notes:

I would like this to be a true seminar. I would like to engage you in a course where you learn from each other. I will give brief talks at the beginning of class, at least in the first few weeks, drawing on both your readings and other material. I will not repeat the readings in my talks. I want to know what you think about what you've read. I do not agree with all the perspectives in the readings, and I will not pretend to be objective, nor will I pretend to think that all perspectives are equally valid, but I appreciate and learn from well-thought-out ideas that are contrary to my own. I would consider the course a failure if you did not develop your own strong perspective regarding our communications environment. I will work with you to structure a class/team project that looks at the real world. And in the latter part of the class, I will seek speakers or lectures appropriate to *your* interests.