

Public Intellectuals: Theory and Practice

COMM 620

Tuesdays, 6:30-9:20

ASC 331

Instructor: Professor Henry Jenkins

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For an appointment with Prof. Jenkins, please contact his assistant, Amanda Ford, at amandafo@usc.edu.

This class is designed to help promote the professional development of graduate students pursuing research in the fields of media and communications. The class was inspired by three primary concerns:

1. USC faculty engage in a broad range of public-facing professional practices which are expected and rewarded through promotion and merit raise practices, yet—for the most part—graduate students are trained with a primary focus on producing academic monographs and essays for peer-reviewed journals and without deep focus on this public-facing role.
2. The digital era has created a much broader range of opportunities for actively engaging as intellectuals in important political and cultural conversations outside of academia, yet there are still relatively few academics who are participating in these dialogues or reacting to arguments that are shaping other realms of professional activity (policy, law, business, education, etc.)
3. There is a growing range of different professions and industries seeking expertise in media and communication at a moment of profound technological and cultural change, yet, for the most part, graduate students are encouraged to think of these other opportunities as afterthoughts as they are being prepared almost entirely for careers as academics.

My goals in this class are to expose you to the diversity of contemporary scholarly and intellectual practices, to encourage you to look closely at outstanding exemplars of work in these arenas, to create conversations with faculty members about their professional experiences, to help students think more deeply about their intellectual profile, and to offer some core advice and practical experiences. We will be exploring a broad range of theories of media and communication across the class, but the primary focus is going to be applied and practical, as students cultivate the skills and understanding required to make meaningful interventions as public intellectuals. For this reason, the class is

structured around smaller, more focused assignments than would be typical for a more research-oriented PhD Seminar.

Required Books:

- Jason Haas and Eric Klopfer, *The More You Know* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013).
- Brenda Laurel, *Utopian Entrepreneur* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

All other readings will be via Blackboard.

Assignments (Description of each assignment embedded in class schedule below):

Short Personal Profile 10% (Due Sept. 3)

Blog Post 10% (Due Sept. 24)

Op-Ed Piece 10% (Due Oct. 1)

Written Interview 10% (Due Oct. 15)

Podcast Interview 20% (Due Oct. 29)

Scalar Pages 20% (Due Nov. 19)

Personal Reflection 20% (Due Dec. 3)

Academic Accommodation/Disability Services and Programs

Any students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me when classes begin. DSP is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m. The office is located in the Student Union room 301 and their phone number is (213) 740-0776.

USC Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located at <http://scampus.usc.edu/university-governance>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The review process can be found at <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS>.

Stress and Angst

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

Tuesday, August 27

Introduction

- Course mechanics
- The historic mission of the intellectual and how it is changing in the digital era
- Developing your intellectual profile

Readings:

- Philip Marchand, “‘Canada’s Intellectual Comet,’ 1964-1967,” in *Marshall McLuhan: The Medium and the Messenger* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 181-203.
- Alan Lightman and Stephen Pinker, “Some Remarks on Becoming a ‘Public Intellectual’,” MIT, December 2, 1999, <http://www.mit.edu/~saleem/ivory/epil.htm>.
- Joe Sartelle, “Public Intellectuals,” *Bad Subjects*, November 1992, <http://bad.eserver.org/issues/1992/03/sartelle.html>.

Assignment: Draft a 1-2 page description of your profile as an intellectual that includes your core background, your primary and secondary intellectual interests, your current online activities, the core conversations to which you wish to contribute, and the primary networks/communities within which you participate. Finally, try your hand at writing an author’s blurb for who you want to be, circa 2020. (Due at the start of class on September 3.)

Tuesday, September 3

The Intellectual in the Public Sphere

- Ernest Wilson on W.E.B. Du Bois and the tradition of the black public intellectual (6:30-7:45 p.m.)
- Henry Jenkins and Karen Steinheimer on their experiences testifying before various governmental bodies about research into youth and media violence (8:00-9:30 p.m.)

Readings:

- Cornel West, “The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual,” in *The Cornel West Reader* (New York: Basic, 2000), pp. 302-315.
- bell hooks, “Black Women Intellectuals,” in Cornel West and bell hooks, *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life* (Boston: South End Press, 1991), pp.147-164.
- Cornel West, “Why I Left Harvard University,” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 47 (Spring 2005), pp. 64-68.
- Ernest J. Wilson, “Communication Scholars Need to Communicate,” *Inside Higher Education*, July 29 2013, <http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2013/07/29/essay-state-communications-scholarship>.
- Henry Jenkins, “Professor Jenkins Goes to Washington,” in *Fans, Bloggers and Gamers: Understanding Participatory Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), pp. 187-197.
- Karen Steinheimer, “From Screen to Crime Scene: Media Violence and Real Violence,” in *Connecting Social Problems and Popular Culture: Why Media Is Not the Answer* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2013), pp. 101-138.

Tuesday, September 10

The Policy White Paper

- Mimi Ito on the drafting of white papers for the MacArthur Foundation’s Connected Learning Initiative (6:45-7:45 p.m.)
- Michael Levine, Meryl Alper, and Becky Herr-Stephenson on the drafting and reception of “T is For Transmedia” (8:00-9:30 p.m.)

Readings:

- Mizuko Ito, et al., *Connected Learning: An Agenda for Research and Design* (MacArthur Foundation white paper), January 2013, http://dmlhub.net/sites/default/files/ConnectedLearning_report.pdf.
- Meryl Alper and Becky Herr-Stephenson, *T is For Transmedia* (Annenberg Innovation Lab and Joan Ganz Cooney Center), March 2013, <http://henryjenkins.org/2013/03/t-is-for-transmedia.html>.

Tuesday, September 17

The Blogosphere and the Performance of Self

- Elizabeth Losh on her project to write a graphic novel about political communication (6:30-7:45 p.m.)
- The Aca-Fandom Debate: The Academic Blogosphere at Work (8:00-9:30 p.m.)

Readings:

- Elizabeth Losh, Jonathon Alexander, Kevin Cannon, and Zander Cannon, “Spaces for Writing” and “Why Rhetoric?,” in *Understanding Rhetoric* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 2013), pp. 1-65.
- Elizabeth Losh and Jonathon Alexander, “‘A YouTube of One’s Own’: ‘Coming Out’ Videos as Rhetorical Action,” in Christopher Pullen and Margaret Cooper (eds.), *LGBT Identity and Online New Media* (Routledge, 2010), pp. 23-36.
- Maria Konnikova, “Why Grad Schools Should Require Blogging,” *Scientific American*, April 12, 2013, <http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/literally-psyched/2013/04/12/why-grad-schools-should-require-students-to-blog/>.
- Jason Mittell, “On Disliking *Mad Men*,” *Just TV*, July 29, 2010, <http://justtv.wordpress.com/2010/07/29/on-disliking-mad-men/>.
- Ian Bogost, “Against Aca-Fans,” *Ian Bogost Blog*, July 29, 2010, http://www.bogost.com/blog/against_aca-fandom.shtml.
- Henry Jenkins, “On *Mad Men*, Aca-Fandom, and the Goals of Criticism,” *Confession of an Aca-Fan*, August 11, 2010, http://henryjenkins.org/2010/08/on_mad_men_aca-fan_and_the_nat.html.
- Anne Kustritz, Louisa Stein, and Sam Ford, “Aca-Fandom and Beyond,” Part One and Two, *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*, June 13-15, 2011, http://henryjenkins.org/2011/06/acafandom_and_beyond_week_one.html
http://henryjenkins.org/2011/06/acafandom_and_beyond_week_one_1.html.

- Henry Jenkins, Erica Rand, and Karen Helleckson, “Aca-Fandom and Beyond,” Part One and Two, *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*, June 20-23, 2011, http://henryjenkins.org/2011/06/acafandom_and_beyond_week_two.html
http://henryjenkins.org/2011/06/acafandom_and_beyond_week_two_1.html.
- John Edward Campbell, C. Lee Harrington, and Catherine Tosenberger, “Aca-Fandom and Beyond,” Part One and Two, *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*, July 28-29, 2011, http://henryjenkins.org/2011/07/aca-fandom_and_beyond_harringt.html
http://henryjenkins.org/2011/07/aca-fandom_and_beyond_harringt_1.html.

Assignment: Write a blog post appropriate for sharing via *Confessions of an Aca-Fan* or another academic blog. The post should present some aspect of your research in a format that would be engaging to a non-specialist audience. Try to take advantage of the unique features of the web, such as the ability to embed videos or to link to other materials. (Due at the start of class on September 24.)

Tuesday, September 24

The Intellectual in the Court of Public Opinion

- Workshop student blog posts (6:30-7:45 p.m.)
- Jeff Brazil on advice for translating academic insights into op-ed pieces (8:00-9:30 p.m.)

Readings:

- selected op-ed pieces (TBD)
- Mary C. Francis (ed.), “In Focus: Scholarly Publishing,” *Cinema Journal*, Winter 2013, pp. 114-136.

Assignment: Students will write an op-ed piece about some aspect of their research targeted for a specific publication; the op-ed piece should follow basic formulas we were given in class. I am going to be working with the Annenberg news office to try to place as many of these op-eds as possible. (Due at the start of class on October 1.)

Tuesday, October 1

Translating Ideas for Media

- Jeremy Kagan and Alex Rotaru on translating your ideas into film production (6:30-7:45 p.m.)
- Workshop student op-ed pieces (8:00-9:30 p.m.)

Reading: Students will spend time examining the Media Education Foundation's Website (<http://www.mediaed.org/>). Be sure to watch some of the trailers or clips offered for their films.

Tuesday, October 8

The Interview

- Gordon Stables on the differences between formal debates and media crossfire programs (6:30-7:45 p.m.)
- Pacifica Radio's Terrence McNally on interviewing academics (8:00-9:30 p.m.)

Readings:

- Henry Jenkins, "Coming Up Next! Ambushed on *Donahue*," in *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Understanding Participatory Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), pp. 198-207.
- Read at least three interviews from the Figure/Ground Communications Series <http://figureground.ca/>
- Listen to at least one episode of Aca-Media, <http://www.cmstudies.org/blogpost/923771/Cinema-Journal-Presents-Aca-Media>.
- Terrence McNally, "Q&A: Jane McGonigal," *Stories of a World that Just Might Work*, January 24, 2012, podcast, <http://aworldthatjustmightwork.com/2012/01/qa-jane-mcgonigal-reality-broken-how-games-make-better-how-they-can-change-world/>. (Please allow time to listen to the podcast.)

Also recommended:

- Terrence McNally, "Q&A: Sherry Turkle," *Stories of a World that Just Might Work*, February 15, 2011, <http://aworldthatjustmightwork.com/2011/02/qa-sherry-turkle-author/> and Terrence McNally, "Q&A: Cornel West," *Stories of a World that Just Might Work*, October 15, 2009, <http://aworldthatjustmightwork.com/2009/10/qa-cornel-west-author-educator-and-philosopher/>.

Assignment: Students will complete the interview questions from the Figure/Ground Communications Series. (Due at the start of class on October 15.)

Tuesday, October 15

Scholarship and Curation

- Joshua Kun on curation and publishing as extensions of his scholarship (6:30-7:45 p.m.)
- Workshop interviews (8:00-9:30 p.m.)

Readings:

Joshua Kun has asked us to explore some of the following links that illustrate different dimensions of his current projects:

- Popular Music Project overview:
 - <http://usc.edu/PMP>
- Songs in the Key of Los Angeles (collaboration with Library Foundation, Los Angeles and LA Public Library, KCET Artbound, & BedrockLA)
 - <http://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/visual-collections/collection-page/songs-key-la>
 - <http://www.kcet.org/arts/artbound/counties/los-angeles/songs-in-the-key-of-la.html>
 - <http://www.kcet.org/arts/artbound/counties/los-angeles/songs-in-the-key-of-la-aloe-blacc.html>
 - <http://www.kcet.org/arts/artbound/counties/los-angeles/songs-in-the-key-of-los-angeles-julia-holter.html>
 - <http://www.kcet.org/arts/artbound/counties/los-angeles/songs-in-the-key-of-los-angeles-petrojvic-blasting-company.html>
 - <http://www.latimes.com/news/columnone/la-et-ms-los-angeles-sheet-music-20130529-dto,0,4682948.html>
- Phillips Music Company (collaboration with Grand Performances)
 - <http://phillipsmusiccompany.tumblr.com>
- Trouble in Paradise (Getty Foundation/Grammy Museum)
 - <http://annenbergl.usc.edu/News%20and%20Events/News/110502Kun.aspx>
 - <http://www.boomcalifornia.com/2013/03/sonic-turbulence/>
- Crossfader (ongoing live collaborations with J. Period & Toy Selectah)
 - <http://www.scpr.org/programs/take-two/2012/10/17/28887/josh-kun-presents-the-art-of-the-crossfade/>
 - <http://rapgenius.com/Josh-kun-the-art-of-the-crossfade-excerpt-lyrics>
- At the Edge of Urban Identity (ongoing collaboration with Ozomatli)
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxqIROnk7WY>
- Writing examples- journalism
 - <http://www.laweekly.com/2006-02-16/news/the-island-of-jorge-hank-rhon/full/>
 - <http://prospect.org/article/death-rattle>
 - <http://goo.gl/5Abz8q>

Assignment: Students will pair off to produce a podcast of at least ten minutes' length; the goal should be to discuss/debate points of intersection between your research. (Due at the start of class on October 29.)

Tuesday, October 22

Students should work on their podcasts. I am trying to line up someone who might be able to conduct a workshop with you on the technical side of producing these.

Tuesday, October 29

Digital Scholarship

- Steve Anderson on electronic publishing and Critical Digital Archives (6:30-8:30 p.m.)
- Workshop interviews (8:30-9:30 p.m.)

Readings:

- Kathleen Fitzpatrick, "Peer Review" and "Texts," in *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), pp. 15-50, 89-120.
- Tara McPherson (ed.) "In Focus: Digital Scholarship and Pedagogy," *Cinema Journal*, Winter 2009, pp. 119-159.
- Tara McPherson, "Scaling Vectors: Thoughts on the Future of Scholarly Communication," *Journal of Electronic Publishing*, Fall 2010, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jep/3336451.0013.208>.
- Steve Anderson and Tara McPherson, "Digital Scholarship: Thoughts on Evaluating Multimedia Scholarship," *Profession*, 2011, pp. 136-151.
- Check out Critical Commons, <http://www.criticalcommons.org>.

Assignment: Students will write three pages in Scalar discussing a core concept from their research and using as many of the multimedia capabilities as makes sense in relation to their project. (Due at the start of class on November 19.)

Tuesday, November 5

Beyond the Academy: The Chief Culture Officer

- Sam Ford on Chief Culture Officers (6:30-7:45 p.m.)
- Brian David Johnson on doing scholarship embedded within a company (8:00-9:30 p.m.)

Readings:

- Grant McCracken, "How to Be a Self-Supporting Anthropologist," in Riall Nolan (ed.), *A Handbook of Practicing Anthropology* (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 104-113.
- Sam Ford, "Listening and Empathizing: Advocating for New Management Logics in Marketing and Corporate Communications," in Derek Kompare, Avi Santo, and Derek Johnson (eds.), *Intermediaries: Management of Culture and Cultures of Management* (New York: NYU Press, 2014).
- Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green, "How to Read This Book," in *Spreadable Media: Creating Meaning and Value in a Networked Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), pp. ix-xv.
- Brian David Johnson, "Do Digital Homes Dream of Electric Families?: Consumer Experience Architecture as a Framework for Design," in Wolfgang Minker, Michael Weber, Hani Hagras, Victor Callagan, and Achilles D. Kameas (eds.), *Advanced Intelligent Environments* (New York: Springer, 2009), pp. 27-39.
- James H. Carrott and Brian David Johnson, "A Futurist and a Cultural Historian Walks into a Bar," "A Note from the Futurist," "We Want to Remember a Time When Our Lives Were Not Made of Plastic," and "What's Next?," in *Vintage Tomorrows: A Historian and a Futurist Journey Through Steampunk into the Future of Technology* (New York: Make, 2013), pp. 1-14, 283-284, 359-376.

Assignment: Students should write a short five-page reflection sharing their current understanding of the concept of the public intellectual and discussing which models from the class they might choose to pursue in their own career. Be as specific as possible about how these ideas might apply to the intellectual interests you identified in the opening audit. (Due at the start of class on December 3.)

Tuesday, November 12

Risks and Rewards of Industry-Academia Relations

- Eric Klopfer, Alex Chisholm, and Jason Haas on the NBC IQue Project (6:30-7:45 p.m.)
- Sandra de Castro Buffington on Hollywood, Health and Society as an intervention into entertainment education (8:00-9:30 p.m.)

Readings:

- Jason Haas and Eric Klopfer, *The More You Know* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013).

- Shiela T. Murphy, Heather J. Hether, Laurel J. Felt, and Sandra de Castro Buffington, “Public Diplomacy in Prime Time: Exploring Potential of Entertainment Education in International Public Diplomacy,” *American Journal of Media Psychology* 5(1-4), 2012, pp. 5-32.
- Sandra de Castro Buffington, “Entertaining Health: Inspiring Writers and Producers to Create Storylines that Change Knowledge and Behavior,” *Sustain*, Spring-Summer 2013, pp. 16-21.
- Charlotte Lapsansky, Janel S. Schuh, Lauren Movius, Paula D. Woodley, and Sandra de Castro Buffington, “Evaluating the ‘Baby Jack’ Storyline on *The Bold and the Beautiful*: Making a Case for Bone Marrow Donations,” *Cases in Public Health Communication and Marketing* 4, 2010, pp. 8-27.
- Janet Okamoto, Sandra de Castro Buffington, Heather M. Cloum, Brett M. Mendenhall, Michael Toboni, and Thomas W. Valente. “The Influence of Health Knowledge in Shaping Political Priorities: Examining HIV/AIDS Knowledge and Public Opinion about Global Health and Domestic Policies,” *Global Public Health* 6(8), 2011, pp. 830-842.

Tuesday, November 19

Innovation and Change

- Jonathan Taplin on the role of centers, labs, and think tanks in fostering innovation (6:30-7:45 p.m.)
- (tent.) Manuel Castells on the global scholarly community

Readings: TBD

Tuesday, November 26

Theory, Arts, and Politics

- Marsha Kinder on scholarly and artistic collaboration on the Labyrinth Project (6:30-7:45 p.m.)
- Debating feminist porn

Readings:

- Marsha Kinder, “Designing a Database Cinema,” in Jeffrey Shaw and Peter Weibel (eds.), *Future Cinema: The Cinematic Imaginary After Film* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), pp. 342-360.
- Marsha Kinder will also make some of her digital projects available for access in advance of her session.

- Editors, “The Politics of Producing Pleasure;” Constance Penley, “A Feminist Teaching Pornography?: That’s Like Scopes Teaching Evolution,” and Tristan Taormino, “Calling the Shots: Feminist Porn in Theory and Practice,” in Tristan Taormino, Celine Parrenas Shimizu, Constance Penley, and Mireille Miller-Young (eds.), *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure* (New York: The Feminist Press, 2013), pp. 9-22, 179-200, 255-265.
- Carole Cadwalladr, “Porn Wars: The Debate That’s Dividing Academia,” *The London Observer*, June 15, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2013/jun/16/internet-violent-porn-crime-studies>.

Tuesday, December 3

Final Reflections

- The girls game movement as utopian entrepreneurship
- Students on their personal goals growing out of the class

Readings:

- Brenda Laurel, *Utopian Entrepreneur* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).
- Justine Cassell and Henry Jenkins, “Chess for Girls?: Feminism and Computer Games,” in Justine Cassell and Henry Jenkins (eds.), *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), pp. 2-45.