COMM 209: Communication and Media Economics

Summer 2018
Section #20403, Session 050
TuTh 2:00-6:10pm, Room ANN209
(May 16 – June 26, 6 weeks)

Instructor: Nahoi Koo
Contact Info: nahoikoo@usc.edu
Office: ASC G4
Office hours: TuTh 6:10-7:10pm

I. Course Description

This course provides an introduction to economic and political economic principles to analyze contemporary issues in communication and media industries.

The course begins with introductory lectures on economic principles and political economy for communication and media, and then applies these principles to the following industries: (1) Broadcasting (2) Newspaper & Print Media (3) Internet (4) Film (5) Recording (6) Video Games (7) Advertising and Public Relations

II. Learning Objectives

The purpose of this course is to teach communication students about some of the most important issues across the core media industries 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 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 communication and media.

The following questions guide students to grapple with deeper levels of critical thinking:

1. How many firms (companies) are in a market, and who owns them?
2. What is the political and regulatory environment of a particular market?
3. What economic, social and political interests are involved in the market, and through what means, and using what resources, do they try to act on their interests?
4. How did the market evolve over its history? All markets are subject to big changes, and can move from monopoly, oligopoly and competitive through time.
5. Who wins and who loses from the way the market is structured and works?
III. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Textbooks:


There will be additional short readings distributed in class, or posted on Blackboard, on current evolutions of the industries analyzed.

IV. Assignments, Assessment and Grading Breakdown

Course Requirements:

1. **Class participation.** Students are expected to make active and informed contributions to class and online activities, coming to class having completed all assigned readings.

2. **Leading discussion.** Each student will lead a discussion on one of the course readings. Students will prepare a short presentation summarizing the key concepts of the assigned reading and posing questions for discussion.

3. **Midterm exam.** There will be a closed book midterm exam.

4. **Course project** Students will conduct research in groups on a topic related to this course. The final presentations will take place in the last weeks of classes, and they must include a presentation and a short paper (5 to 7 pages).

5. **Final exam.** There will be a closed book noncumulative final exam

Grading:

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<th>Points</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading Discussion</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Project</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Letter Grade:

The course measures an “A” as 94% or higher
“A-“ as 90 – 93%
“B+” as 87 – 89%
“B” as 84 – 86%
“B-“ as 80 – 83%
“C+” as 77 – 79%
“C” as 74 – 76%
“C-“ as 70 – 73% and so on

Participation Criteria:

<table>
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<th>Assessing Participation</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>You frequently make original and thoughtful contributions that spark</td>
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<td>discussion and demonstrate insight. You offer analytical comments based on</td>
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<td>knowledge of the readings and relevant topics. You engage with other</td>
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<td>students and always come prepared.</td>
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<td>You make useful contributions and participate voluntarily, based upon some</td>
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<td>reflection and familiarity with required readings.</td>
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<td>You sometimes make comments voluntarily or give limited comments when asked, but rarely</td>
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<td>participate in conversations. Your comments only reference the most basic points of</td>
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<td>readings or topics.</td>
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<td>You make tangential or irrelevant comments only when asked and show little</td>
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<td>in-class engagement with the readings and topics.</td>
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<td>You make no contributions to discussion, come to class unprepared, and are</td>
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<td>not actively engaged in class or rarely attend.</td>
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V. Course Policies

Respect. I expect that all students will treat everyone in class with civility and respect. To maintain an environment where everyone feels comfortable participating in class, it is extremely important to display respect for each other at all times. Offensive, derogatory, or simply inconsiderate behavior will NOT be tolerated.

Phones. Cell phones are NOT permitted in class. I expect that you will either silence or turn off your cell phone prior to coming to class. Texting in class will negatively affect your participation grade.

Recording. Audio or video recording of the lectures is not allowed without my approval in advance.

Missed class material. You are responsible for class material. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate for notes. Please do not email me to ask for notes. If you have questions about the material you missed after reviewing the notes, you are welcome to come to office hours. For your absence to be excused, you will have need to inform me in advance with proof (doctor’s note, job interview letter, etc.) or provide the documents later in case of emergency.
Late Papers/Assignments. For each day (including weekend days) that your paper is late, your grade will be lowered by roughly one grade step, for example from A to A-.

Electronic submissions. All assignments will be turned in via Blackboard AND in hard copy. You are responsible for making sure that the correct file has been uploaded. Blank or corrupted files and files in unreadable formats will be treated as if they had not been turned in. You will be required to resubmit the file and will be penalized for any lateness, as described above.

Extensions. Only students who can produce medical documentation from a licensed health professional will be granted an extension on exams, papers, and other assignments. Extensions for other sudden and unexpected circumstances will be considered if students can produce a letter of support from campus student services.

Email. I will use Blackboard and email to send important announcements. You are responsible for any information sent out via email. You may also send us your questions over email, but please keep in mind that I need up to 24 hours to respond (longer on weekends or holidays).

VI. COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1. Introduction to Course & Microeconomic-Macroeconomic Principles and Political Economy for Communication

Media Today - Chapter 3 The Business of Media (pp. 57-89)

Understanding Media Economics – Chapter 1 Introduction (pp. 1-18), Chapter 3 Corporate Growth and Concentration Strategies (pp. 34-52), and Chapter 6 Economics of content supply (pp. 100 -120)

Week 2. Broadcasting – History, Current Issues, Economics, and Public Policy

Media Today – Chapter 5 Controls on Media Content: Government regulation, Self-Regulation, and Ethics (pp. 123 – 155) and Chapter 13 The Television Industry (pp. 364 – 395).

Understanding Media Economics – Chapter 4 Networks (53-74), Chapter 5 Demand: Push and Pull (pp.76-96), and Chapter 9 Media Economics and Public Policy (pp. 165-191)

Week 3. The Newspaper & Print Media Industry and the Internet – History, Current Issues and the Political Economy

Media Today – Chapter 6 The Internet Industry, Chapter 8 The Newspaper Industry (pp. 219-245), Chapter 9 The Magazine Industry (pp. 246-270).
**MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 4. The Motion Picture Industry and the Recording Industry

Media Today - Chapter 12 The movie industry (pp. 335-363)
Media Today – Chapter 10 The recording industry (pp. 271-300)


Week 6. Video Game Industry and the Advertising and Public Relations Industry

Media Today – Chapter 4 Financing and shaping the media: Advertising, Public Relations, and Marketing Communications (pp.90-122) and Chapter 14 The Video Game Industry (pp. 396-419)

Understanding Media Economics – Chapter 8 Media and Advertising (pp. 141-164)


**COURSE PROJECT DUE**

**FINAL EXAM**

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. 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.

Support Systems:
Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.
engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
**Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)** – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

**Sexual Assault Resource Center**
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

**Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance** – (213) 740-5086
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

**Bias Assessment Response and Support**
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

**The Office of Disability Services and Programs**
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

**Student Support and Advocacy** – (213) 821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

**Diversity at USC**
Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

**USC Emergency Information**
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

**USC Department of Public Safety**  
UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu