

USC Annenberg

ASCJ 210: Contours of Change in Media and Communication

Fall 2019 – Section #21920 – 4 units

Tuesday & Thursday 3:30-4:50pm

Location: ANN L105A

Instructor: Robert Scheer

Contact Info: rscheer@usc.edu

Course Description:

A central theme and topic of discussion in many Annenberg classes is that of “change” as has always been the case with schools centering on communication and journalism. Those fields are both drivers of change in comprehending and framing the discourse for the larger society and in turn are buffeted and defined by shifts in those larger societal forces. Consider for example the continuing national struggle over race from slavery and segregation through the civil rights movement and the election of Barack Obama as the first President of color. Or the rise of the women’s movement from the suffragette from voting rights through issues of reproductive choice, employment and equal harassment, or the conduct of wars, revolutionary, civil and foreign from the nation’s founding to the war on terror after the 9/11 attack. Throughout the media in its varied forms set the stage for public debate and was itself transformed by the public’s reaction to those seminal struggles. Throughout this nation’s history and that of the larger world the practical issues of media delivery and ownership evolved alongside a changing nation but never so profoundly and rapidly then in the past few generations that witnessed the rise of the internet. Whole this course will pay due regard to the history of that changing media landscape over the long history of human communication this course will focus much of its attention on what has been lost and gained as a consequence of the sweeping revolution that be got the modern wired world in which Annenberg students will be expected to effectively operate.

Learning Objectives:

The central goal of this class is to improve the knowledge base and thinking skills required to engage critically with the interaction of the two rapidly changing variables of media and society. That skill set will be honed by examining a series of case studies relying for currency on the expertise of guest lecturers, the professor’s podcasts and weekly readings. The ark for the evolution of the interaction of medial and society will be provided by the professor’s book on the dominance of an increasingly wired communications world fraught with dangers and possibilities growing out of historic issues and contemporary possibilities.

Class Readings: *They Know Everything About You*, by Robert Scheer

Class Assignments:

Readings from assigned book, listening or reading assigned podcasts.

Assignment Submission Policy:

All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F.

Breakdown of Grade:

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Attendance and Participation	15	15
Weekly assignment	25	25
Mid-term exam	30	30
Final exam	30	30
TOTAL	100	100%

Course Grading Policy:

You will receive details about each assignment/exam separately. **All assignments need to 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.**

In order to pass this class you will need to complete ALL of the assignments. Failure to complete one or more of them will result in an F in the class.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

- A/A- outstanding, thoughtful and enthusiastic work
- B+/B above average work, demonstrating good insight into assignment
- B-/C+ needs improvement on ideas, argument and follow through
- C and below fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the 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 won the assignments will be totaled and translated to a letter grade per the scale shown below:

A	= 100-94	C	= 76-74
A-	= 94-90	C-	= 73-70
B+	= 89-87	D+	= 69-67
B	= 86-84	D	= 66-64
B-	= 83-80	D-	= 63-60
C+	= 79-77	F	= 59-0

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must appeal it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate, within one week of receiving the graded assignment. No late appeals will be accepted for review.

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/26/19 – 12/6/19) (optional)

Friday, September 13: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, September 13: Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Tuesday, September 17: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, October 11: Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the week three equivalent for short sessions) to avoid tuition charges.]

Friday, November 15: Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change based on the progress of the class, current events, and/or guest speaker availability.

Week 1, Aug 27 & 29 - The prewired world from Gutenberg to cable and Satellite TV. The changing technology and power of the communication industry and the evolution of its prime business model. Inventing LA; The Chandlers and their Times. The loss of local print and the significance of the free press and privacy in the US Constitution.

Week 2, Sept 3 & 5 - broadcast radio and TV the power of sound and image. The evolution from three networks to cable and satellite and the influence and ownership of Fox, CNN, MSNBC, Media concentration and the passage of the telecommunications act.

Week 3, Sept 10 & 12 - The coming of the internet and its assault on the traditional communications business model. The exploitation of privacy as the prime business model, net neutrality and the celebration and perversion of the classical capitalist ideal of consumer sovereignty: From Adam Smith to Mark Zuckerberg,

Week 4, 5, 6, 7, Sept 17 through Oct 10

The winners and their contradictions. Google, Facebook, Apple, Disney,

Week 8, Oct 15

The Chinese challenge Trump and the tarring war, Hue Wei, Allibaba, Tencent, Baidu. The US China trade war, the battle for economic hegemony and the contradiction of multinational capitalism and the nation state.

Week 9, Oct 22

The brave new world, issues of privacy, the surveillance state, 9/11 and national security from Gerge W Bush to Donald Trump.

MIDTERM EXAM Oct 24

Week 11, Oct 29 & 30

Whistle blowers and accountability. The US Constitution and the necessity of checks and balances.

Week 12, Nov 5 & 7

Orwell, Huxley, and freedom beyond consumer sovereignty.

Week 13, Nov 12 & 14

PR vs News, Fake and Real news, the Trump Presidency and the crisis in American journalism.

Week 14, Nov 19 & 26

Is America great? Does it matter? Globalization and the relevance of the Nation State.

Week 15, Dec 3 & 5

The relevance of race, sex, ethnicity in a wired world. Is patriotism parochial?

FINAL EXAM – TBD during finals week

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, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421

studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost’s Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.