

COMM 209: Communication and Media Economics

[Summer 2020] Tues & Thurs, 9:30AM-1:40PM (PDT)

Section: 20402R

Location: USC Zoom Meeting via Blackboard

Units: 4.0 units

Instructor: Sophia (Jeeyun) Baik

Office: N/A

Office Hours: Tues 2-3PM (PDT)

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I. Course Description

This course provides an introduction to political-economic principles to analyze contemporary issues in communication and media industries. The course begins with introductory lectures on economic principles and political economy of communication and media, and then applies these principles to the following industries: (1) Broadcasting (2) Newspaper & Print Media (3) Internet (4) Film (5) Music (6) Video Games (7) Advertising and Public Relations, and (8) Radio.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

In this course, students will learn about some of the most important issues across the core media industries, critically examining key political and economic factors that shape them. The course will enhance the economic literacy of the students and provide a consistent set of core questions and concepts to help analyze, innovate, lead, and be successful in these industries. The students will leave the class equipped to understand the political and economic dynamics that are shaping the evolution of communication and media.

After taking this course, students will be able to explain and analyze each industry, answering the following questions:

1. How many 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 including big changes, types of monopoly or oligopoly, and market competitiveness?
5. Who wins and who loses from the way the market is structured and works?

III. Course Notes

The course will be taught **ONLINE**, using USC Zoom via Blackboard. There will be recordings available after each class according to USC policy. Exams and assignments will be administered on and submitted to Blackboard.

IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments

- 1. Class participation.** Students are expected to make active and informed contributions to class activities, coming to class having completed all assigned readings. In every class, students will be asked to provide thoughtful responses to several discussion questions, speaking up or using a Zoom chatroom feature. Students will get one point after each class if their responses are critical and well thought-out. NOTE: You can miss **one class** without **any need for excuse**. There will be **no penalty**.
- 2. Leading discussion.** Two students will lead a discussion of one class session, starting from May28. Students will prepare a short presentation together (15-20 minutes long), identifying and analyzing two or three recent news articles related to the class topic of the assigned date. Students need to apply the key concepts of the required reading(s) of the assigned date and posing thought-provoking questions for discussion, when introducing the news articles of their choice.
- 3. Midterm exam.** There will be a midterm exam that will be administered on Blackboard.
- 4. Group project.** Students will conduct research in groups of three or four on a topic related to this course. More details will be provided at the beginning of the course. The final presentations will take place in the last date of class (June 30). The evaluation will be based on effective delivery, quality of the presentation material, and in-group peer evaluation. There is NO paper required for the group project.
- 5. Individual final paper.** Students will write and submit a final paper (7-10 pages long) on a topic related to this course, applying the course concepts to a real-case example.

V. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Class Participation	10	10
Leading Discussion	15	15
Midterm Exam	100	25
Group Project	100	25
Individual Final Paper	100	25
TOTAL	325	100%

b. Grading Scale

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards

Grades will be assigned as follows:

- A+/A outstanding, insightful work and analysis, showing a critical 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

d. Grading Timeline

Your grade of each exam/assignment will become available after a week of your submission, except your individual final paper (the final paper grade will be returned within two weeks).

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, clearly and carefully stating the reasons why you think the grade is inaccurate. All concerns should be addressed within 7 days of receiving the grade. After that, no appeals will be accepted for review and the grade will be considered final.

VI. Assignment Submission Policy

Assigned papers, exercises and exams must be completed on time; they will be marked down if submitted after the due date (5% of the total points available for each assignment will be deducted per day).

Make-up exam accommodations are not permitted.

Papers must be typewritten with a Times New Roman Font, 12pt size, double-spaced. Papers should include proper citations and bibliographies in APA format.

VII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Textbooks

1. Turow, J. (2017). Media today: An introduction to mass communication (6th edition). New York: Routledge.
2. Doyle, G. (2013). Understanding media economics (2nd edition). London: Sage Publications.

The rest of the readings will be available on Blackboard.

VIII. Laptop Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the [Annenberg Digital Lounge](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

IX. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

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

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable
Week 1 May21 (Thu)	- Intro to Course - Economics principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Today - Chapter 3 The Business of Media (pp. 57-67; 74-82) • Understanding Media Economics – Ch. 1 Introduction 	Discussion lead assignment
Week 2 May26 (Tue)	- Political Economy for Communication - Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Media Economics – Ch. 3 Corporate Growth and Concentration Strategies & Ch. 9 Media Economics and Public Policy 	Group assignment
Week 2 May28 (Thu)	Newspaper and the Public Sphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Today – Ch.8 The Newspaper Industry • Socolow (2010). A Profitable Public Sphere. 	
Week 3 June2 (Tue)	Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Today – Ch. 6 The Internet Industry • Zuboff (2015). Surveillance Capitalism. 	
Week 3 June4 (Thu)	Advertising/PR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Today – Ch. 4 Financing and Shaping the Media: Advertising, PR, and Marketing Communications 	
Week 4 June9 (Tue)	Midterm Exam	N/A	
Week 4 June11 (Thu)	Broadcasting/TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Today – Ch. 13 The Television Industry • Adalian, J. (2018, June 10). <i>Inside Netflix's TV-Swallowing, Market-Dominating Binge Factory</i>. Vulture. https://www.vulture.com/2018/06/how-netflix-swallowed-tv-industry.html 	
Week 5 June16 (Tue)	Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Today – Ch. 12 The Movie Industry 	
Week 5 June18 (Thu)	Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Today – Ch. 10 The Recording Industry • Shah, N. (2018, June 6). Spotify Uproar Points to the Power of the Playlist. <i>Wall Street Journal</i>. https://www.wsj.com/articles/spotify-disputes-point-to-the-power-of-the-playlist-1528307004 	

Week 6 June 23 (Tue)	Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Today – Ch. 11 The Radio Industry • Rosenblatt. (2020, March 29). <i>New Podcast Listeners Are Coming From Radio, Not Music.</i> https://www.forbes.com/sites/billrosenblatt/2020/03/29/new-podcast-listeners-are-coming-from-radio-not-music/#5dd088e46790 	
Week 6 June 25 (Thu)	Video game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Today – Ch. 14 The Video Game Industry 	
Week 7 Date: June 30 (Tue)	Group Project Presentation	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submit group presentation material <u>before</u> class - Submit your individual final paper by 6PM (PDT)

X. Policies and Procedures

Communication

I go by Sophia. I would expect you to have an appropriate subject line that starts with [COMM209] for any course-related questions and submissions of your assignments. This prevents your email from getting lost in my mailbox. Also, I would expect some level of courtesy from you when communicating online.

I will make all types of announcements through Blackboard and/or USC emails. All students will be expected to keep up to date on developments and will be responsible for all assignments notified via email/Blackboard.

I will generally reply to your emails within 24 hours on weekdays. Please wait for at least 48 hours before sending me a second email, unless it is a different/urgent request.

To chat with me during my weekly office hour, please send an email to me. Due to the nature of online communication, meetings need to be arranged in advance. If your schedule is in conflict with my office hour, please send a note to make an appointment at other times.

Last but not least, I will not reply to an email that asks about things obviously addressed in the syllabus or explicitly explained in class. A question raised due to your inattention will not be answered. You can surely ask me clarification questions.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

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.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism’s policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

“Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an ‘F’ on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators.”

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

b. Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.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 and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

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

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by 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. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, 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

uscsa.usc.edu

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.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenbergsuccessfund.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.