COMM 573: *Networked Publics: Theories & Encounters*
[4 units]

Spring 2025 – Thursdays – 9:30am-12:20pm
Section: 20851D
Location: ANN-408

Instructor: Prof Mike Ananny
Office Hours (ANN-310B / Zoom): By appointment, email and we'll find a time
Contact Info: ananny@usc.edu

> **This course—its topics, readings, expectations—is designed for PhD students in any discipline. If you are not a PhD student, please contact me ASAP to discuss your preparedness for the course.**

Course Description

This course introduces students to historical and contemporary debates about publics: how they are conceptualized, idealized, made, resisted, and deployed. It traces the idea of the public across philosophical traditions, political commitments, communication institutions, and digital infrastructures, focusing on the role that networked information technologies play in envisioning and building public life.

Primarily intended for PhD students in Communication, but open to PhD students in any field, students will closely read and critique foundational accounts of publicness (e.g., Dewey, Habermas, Young, Fraser, Benhabib, Taylor), use these theories and critiques thereof to build interdisciplinary concepts of "public," examine newer work on networked publics in light of historical debates, and build theoretically informed critiques of contemporary sociotechnical systems that claims to serve public functions, or that are relevant to the idea of publicness.

The readings address weekly "thought questions" that guide students' reflections as they examine different theories of the public and practice applying those theories to example systems of their choice.

Essentially, the course helps students answer three questions: what are networked publics, where have they come from, and why do they matter?

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to talk about publics from different theoretical and normative perspectives, appreciate the tensions and tradeoffs among them, critique contemporary, networked publics, and connect ideals of publicness to designs and experiences of communication infrastructures, institutions, and sociotechnical systems.

Course Expectations/Policies

Students are expected to be present and focused in each meeting; a course like this works best when students engage with the readings and each other thoughtfully, professionally, and attentively. See this as a space to practice developing your ideas and those of your fellow students. Please use laptops for note taking only, silence phones before each meeting begins, and refrain from having back-channel or side conversations. Your participation is crucial. In a small seminar it's completely obvious when someone has checked out and is no longer present; please don't do that.

Please speak up, take risks, and experiment with taking new perspectives you wouldn't normally adopt. And please be generous, gentle, and generative with yourself and everyone in the seminar. The best learning involves being vulnerable and learning to take care of others' vulnerabilities.

It is also critically important that you <u>do each week's readings and that you meet the deadlines for the weekly memos</u>. This is non-negotiable and I will ask people to leave the class if they're not prepared. In a course like this you can't afford to fall behind on the readings.

I also understand that students are often under a great deal of stress, and that such stress can take different forms and appear at different times in the semester. Please don't disappear, and don't think that you're alone in experiencing stress or anxiety. To the extent that you feel comfortable, let me know how I can help. There are often simple ways of accommodating and adjusting that can help everyone have a successful semester.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials
All materials are available through Blackboard. Except where noted, there are no texts to purchase.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Weekly Memos with Question (20%): ==**Post to Blackboard every week by 7pm Wednesday**==
Each week, you will write a short, approximately 350-word memo that engages with <u>at least two</u> of the week's readings. You have considerable freedom to pose questions you had as you read; contrast readings; connect themes you saw emerging among texts; critique authors' arguments; situate texts in relation to networked technologies. The goal is to reflect upon the readings and share reflections with your classmates so you arrive to class ready to participate. Memos will not be graded but I'll give you periodic indications (especially at the beginning) about whether the memos are meeting expectations.

Please distribute each week's memo to the *entire class*, through Blackboard, by **7pm of the Wednesday night before the Thursday class**. This gives me time to read your memos, identify any common themes, and tailor class discussion if needed. You are encouraged but not required to read your classmates' memos.

Reading Openings (20%): ==**Due at several points in the semester through class sign-up**==
At several points during the semester (exact number to be determined by the class size), you will individually 'open' a reading. I'll say more in class about what this means, but the ideal opening: stays close to the text (no divergences until we have a shared, grounded understanding of the author's argument); situates the text in relation to other readings and the course themes; and moves conversation forward, generating new research questions that critique and extend the text. You can make a hand-out or slides if you like, but <u>neither is required</u>. *Even if you are not opening a reading, you are expected to have read it and come to class prepared to discuss.*

System-Event Openings (15%): ==**Due at several points in the semester through class sign-up**==
Approximately (3x) during the semester (exact number to be determined by the class size), you will lead a discussion on a sociotechnical system / event that you think is relevant to the course's public sphere themes. These may be systems / events that you discussed in your weekly memo or systems that you would like to think through as a group in the context of the week's readings. Please be ready to discuss, for example: why you think it is an instance of a public sphere, who participates in it, what norms are embedded in its design, where its content comes from, how it is regulated (broadly construed), how you might study it, what research questions you would like to ask through it, what its history is, who is responsible for maintaining it, how it relates to this week's readings. (If you learned about the system from a news or trade press article, please feel free to email those articles beforehand through Blackboard.)

***Project proposal (5%)* ::** ==**Due Thursday, April 17**==
In preparation for your final project (see below), you will submit a proposal that describes what you're going to do, what theories or questions you'll be working with, what literature you're using or analyzing, what research methods you'll be using, what your timeline is, and any resources you require. This is meant to be a check-in so that you and I can understand what your final project will be and what you need to make it successful. In addition to this written proposal, I'm happy to meet with you 1-1 to discuss your plans.

Peer Feedback on Proposal (5%) :: ==**Due Thursday, April 24**==
I ask you to review two of your peer's project proposal, submitting to me and your peers a short (few paragraphs) reflection on the strengths and opportunities for improvement in your peer's work. Additionally, you'll submit a single short reflection to me on the feedback that you heard from both of your peer reviewers (a couple of paragraphs on what you heard and how you'll address it going forward).

***Final project (40%)* ::** ==**Presentation in class Thursday, May 1; paper due Thursday, May 12 [no extensions]**==
You have considerable freedom to decide the topic of your final project, but I ask you to choose one of the following formats:

1.   a traditional <u>"deep analysis"</u> paper (5,000-6,000 words) in which you identify, analyze, and synthesize among a body of literature on some aspect of public spheres (this may take the form of a survey / comparative book review paper that you submit for publication);

2.   a <u>system/event/case evaluation</u> paper (5,000-6,000 words) that is essentially a more in-depth public sphere case study (it must be a different example) in which you engage more deeply with theory and analyze gaps in theoretical literature and/or system design;

3.   a <u>system design</u> in which you prototype a new example public sphere (we can discuss different design approaches and prototyping materials) *and* write a description (3,000 words) of how your prototype connects to the theoretical literature and course concepts. For this system design option, you are encouraged to work in a group to *prototype* the system, but each group member must submit his/her own description paper.

For all formats and papers, you are encouraged to use the readings we've discussed in class, consult the "recommended/supplemental" reading list at the end of the syllabus, and find sources of your own. I will say more about this project in class.

In the final class, you will give a 10-15 minute presentation on the state of your final project, getting feedback from the class that should feed into your final paper submission (due during the exam period).

Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Due	Points	% of Grade
Weekly Memos	Weekly Blackboard posts by 7pm Wednesday	20	20%
Reading Openings	Various dates, to be scheduled in-class	20	20%
System/Event Openings	Various dates, to be scheduled in-class	15	15%
Project Proposal	**Thursday, April 17, 11:59pm** (send PDF via email)	10	10%
Peer Feedback on Proposal	**Thursday, April 24, 11:59pm** (send PDF via email)	5	5%
Final Project	**Thursday, May 12, 11:59pm** (send PDF via email)	30	30%
	TOTAL	100	**100%**

Grading Scale

94 to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 93%: 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

Grading Standards

Letter Grade	Description
A	Excellent; demonstrates extraordinarily high achievement; comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; all expectations met and exceeded.
B	Good; moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates good, if not thorough understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings.
C	Satisfactory/Fair; reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; most expectations are met; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding.
D	Marginal; minimal knowledge and understanding of subject matter; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding.
F	Failing; unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding.

Grading Timeline

All submitted materials will be evaluated approximately one week from submissions.

Assignment Submission Policy

Final project proposal & Final Papers [email to me as PDFs]:
Please submit *all* papers on time. Failure to submit a paper by the specified deadline—without talking to me first—will automatically trigger a late penalty of one partial letter grade every 24 hours. E.g., if a paper would have earned an A but is submitted 24 hours late, its maximum possible grade is A-minus.

Memos [submit via Blackboard]:
No memos will be accepted after the weekly 7pm Wednesday deadline. Everyone gets **one "free" week when a memo is not required to be submitted**. You pick the week you want to skip submitting a memo with no penalty.

System & Reading Openings:
Since they are integral to particular class meetings, these cannot be made up. If, without talking to me first, you miss one of these commitments, I may either assign a zero for that missed opening, or ask you to prepare a make-up assignment. If you're ill, have an emergency, please let me know and we'll figure something out that does not penalize you.

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, events, and/or guest speaker availability. Students should consult the University Registration Calendar for dates associated with add/drop deadlines, fees, and grading options.*

WK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
1	16-Jan	**Introduction**	Introductions, review the syllabus, course themes and expectations. Discuss contemporary examples of networked public spheres and how they relate to course themes, read some short texts together, share early final project topics / ideas. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: What are your definitions of "public" and "public sphere"? What publics and public spheres do you participate in? What do you expect of public spheres, how do you know when one is 'working'? What do you think the norms and values of a public sphere should be, why, and how do you see these instantiated in networked infrastructure design?
2	23-Jan	**Publics as Social & Scholarly Constructs & Contestations**	1. Calhoun, C. (2012). The Public Sphere in the Field of Power. In The roots of radicalism: Tradition, the public sphere, and early nineteenth-century social movements (pp. 121-151). Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press. 2. Dewey, J. (1954). Search for the public. The public and its problems (pp. 3-36). New York: Swallow Press. 3. Sandel, M. (1984). The procedural republic and the unencumbered self. Political Theory, 12, 81-96. 4. Splichal, S. (2021). The public sphere in the twilight zone of publicness. European Journal of Communication, doi:10.1177/02673231211061490 5. Ojala, M., & Ripatti-Torniainen, L. (2024). Where is the public of 'networked publics'? A critical analysis of the theoretical limitations of online publics research. European Journal of Communication, 39(2), 145-160. https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231231210207
3	30-Jan	**Deliberation & its Critics & Extensions**	1. Calhoun, C. (1992). Introduction: Habermas and the public sphere. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), Habermas and the Public Sphere (pp. 1-48). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. 2. Fraser, Nancy. (1990). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. Social Text, 25/26, 56-80. 3. Landes, Joan B. (1995). The Public and the Private Sphere: A Feminist Reconsideration. In Johanna Meehan (Ed.), Feminists read Habermas: Gendering the subject of discourse (pp. 91-116). London, UK: Routledge. 4. Warner, Michael. (2002). Publics and counterpublics. Public Culture, 14(1), 49-90. 5. Habermas, J. (2022). Reflections and Hypotheses on a Further Structural Transformation of the Political Public Sphere. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *39*(4), 145-171. https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764221112341 *Skim if time:* • Pooley, J., & Schwarzenegger, C. (2017). Faulty Reception: The Institutional Roots of U.S. Communication Research's Neglect of Public Sphere Scholarship. In S. Averbeck-Lietz (Ed.), Kommunikationswissenschaft im internationalen Vergleich (pp. 317-345). Springer. • Willems, W. (2022). The reproduction of canonical silences: re-reading Habermas in the context of slavery and the slave trade. Communication, Culture and Critique. https://doi.org/10.1093/ccc/tcac047

| 4 | 6-Feb | **Problematizing Public Participation** | 1. Christians, C.G., Glasser, T.L., McQuail, D., Nordenstreng, K., & White, R.A. (2009). The principles and practice of democracy. Normative theories of the media (pp. 91-113). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
2. Dobson, A. (2012). Listening: The new democratic deficit. Political Studies, 60(4), 843-859.
3. Kelty, Christopher M. (2017). Too much democracy in all the wrong places: Toward a grammar of participation. Current Anthropology, 58(S15). doi:doi:10.1086/688705
4. Breuer, S., & Penkler, M. (2024). Between Open Deliberation and the Capturing of Public Opinion: Producing Opinions in Public Engagement. Science, Technology, & Human Values, 49(6), 1281-1308. https://doi.org/10.1177/01622439241251525
5. Solverson, E. (2024). Active spectating in the digital public sphere: A qualitative exploration. Nordicom Review, 45(2), 170-194. https://doi.org/10.2478/nor-2024-0018

Skim if time:
• Lacey, K. (2011). Listening overlooked: An audit of listening as a category in the public sphere. *Javnost - The Public*, *18*(4), 5-20.
• Birkbak, A., & Papazu, I. (Eds.). (2022). *Democratic Situations*. Mattering Press.
• Marwick, A. E. (2018). Why Do People Share Fake News? Georgetown Law Technology Review, 2(2), 474-512. |
| 5 | 13-Feb | **Difference, Alterity, Universality, (Anti-) Colonialism** | 1. Jackson, S. J., & Kreiss, D. (2023). Recentering power: conceptualizing counterpublics and defensive publics. Communication Theory, 33(2-3), 102-111. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtad004
2. Mowatt, M., Wildcat, M., & Starblanket, G. (2024). Indigenous Sovereignty and Political Science: Building an Indigenous Politics Subfield. Annual Review of Political Science, 27(Volume 27, 2024), 301-316. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041322-050512
3. Henriksen, F. M. (2024). Anti-Systemic Counterpublics: Rethinking the Counterpublic Sphere. Javnost - The Public, 31(2), 213-230. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2024.2342219
4. Squires, C. R. (2002). Rethinking the Black Public Sphere: An Alternative Vocabulary for Multiple Public Spheres. Communication Theory, 12(4), 446-468. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2885.2002.tb00278.x
5. Young, Iris Marion. (1996). Communication and the other: Beyond deliberative democracy. In Seyla Benhabib (Ed.), Democracy and difference: Contesting the boundaries of the political (pp. 120-135). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Skim if time:
• Bennett, W. L., & Kneuer, M. (2024). Communication and democratic erosion: The rise of illiberal public spheres. European Journal of Communication, 39(2), 177-196. https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231231217378
• George, C. (2024). Performative censorship: Why some free speech conflicts should be taken seriously but not literally. Media, Culture & Society, 46(3), 607-623. https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437231203881
• Tully, J. (2000). The Struggles of Indigenous Peoples for and of Freedom. In D. Ivison, P. Patton, & W. Sanders (Eds.), Political Theory and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (pp. 36-59). Cambridge University Press.
• Young, I. M. (2000). Hybrid democracy: Iroquois federalism and the postcolonial project. In D. Ivison, P. Patton, & W. Sanders (Eds.), Political Theory and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (pp. 237-258). Cambridge University Press. |

| 6 | 20-Feb | **Institutional Forms of Public Media** | 1. Freedman, D. (2024). Neither private property nor public service: Critical reflections on the conceptual framework of public service media. European Journal of Communication, 39(5), 472-485. https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231241267245
2. Ananny, M. (2020). Advocating for what? The nonprofit press and models of the public. In W. W. Powell & P. Bromley (Eds.), The nonprofit sector (3rd ed., pp. 521-538). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
3. Baker, C.E. (2002). Different democracies and their media. Media, markets, and democracy (pp. 129-153). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
4. Pickard, Victor. (2018). The Strange Life and Death of the Fairness Doctrine: Tracing the Decline of Positive Freedoms in American Policy Discourse. International Journal of Communication, 12, 3434–3453.
5. Fuchs, C. (2024). A new framework for the analysis of media systems and media organisations. Communication and the Public. https://doi.org/10.1177/20570473241259195

Skim if time:
• Peruse keyword articles in this collection and come ready to concisely share you thoughts: Burrell, J., Singh, R., & Davison, P. (Eds.). (2024). Keywords of the Datafied State. Data & Society. https://datasociety.net/library/keywords-of-the-datafied-state/
• Benson, R., Neff, T., & Hessérus, M. (2018). Media Ownership and Public Service News: How Strong Are Institutional Logics? *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *23*(3), 275-298. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161218782740
• Kreiss, D., & McGregor, S. C. (2017). Technology Firms Shape Political Communication: The Work of Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter, and Google With Campaigns During the 2016 U.S. Presidential Cycle. *Political Communication*, 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1364814 |

| 7 | 27-Feb | **The Press, Journalism, & Publics** | 1. Helberger, N., van Drunen, M., Moeller, J., Vrijenhoek, S., & Eskens, S. (2022). Towards a Normative Perspective on Journalistic AI: Embracing the Messy Reality of Normative Ideals. *Digital Journalism*, *10*(10), 1605-1626. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2152195
2. Varma, A. (2023). Moral solidarity as a news value: Rendering marginalized communities and enduring social injustice newsworthy. *Journalism*, *24*(9), 1880-1898. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849221094669
3. Møller, L. A., Skovsgaard, M., & de Vreese, C. (2024). Reinforce, readjust, reclaim: How artificial intelligence impacts journalism's professional claim. Journalism. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849241269300
4. Nelson, J. L. (2021). Imagined Audiences: How Journalists Perceive and Pursue the Public. Oxford University Press. → read the Introduction and read/skim *at least* one other chapter of your choice.
5. Kristensen, L. M., & Hartley, J. M. (2023). The Infrastructure of News: Negotiating Infrastructural Capture and Autonomy in Data-Driven News Distribution. *Media and Communication*, *11*(2). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6388

Skim if time:
• Karlsson, M., Ferrer Conill, R., & Örnebring, H. (2023). Recoding Journalism: Establishing Normative Dimensions for a Twenty-First Century News Media. *Journalism Studies*, *24*(5), 553-572. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2022.2161929
• Pickard, V. (2023). Another Media System is Possible: Ripping Open the Overton Window, from Platforms to Public Broadcasting. *Javnost - The Public*, *30*(2), 284-297. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2023.2201804
• Carroll, E. C. (2022). A Free Press Without Democracy. *U.C. Davis Law Review*, *56*, 289-345.
• Møller, L. A. (2022). Between Personal and Public Interest: How Algorithmic News Recommendation Reconciles with Journalism as an Ideology. *Digital Journalism*, 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2032782 |

| 8 | 6-Mar | **Scaling, Sovereignty, & Covenants** | *Several of these are shorter / can be read quickly, so there are 7 readings this week instead of the usual 5.*

1. Pfotenhauer, S., Laurent, B., Papageorgiou, K., & Stilgoe, J. (2021). The politics of scaling. *Social Studies of Science*, *52*(1), 3-34. https://doi.org/10.1177/03063127211048945
2. Dahl, R. A., & Tufte, E. R. (1973). Size and democracy in political thought. In Size and democracy (pp. 4-16). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
3. Couture, S., & Toupin, S. (2019). What does the notion of "sovereignty" mean when referring to the digital? *New Media & Society*, *21*(10), 2305-2322. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819865984
4. Peters, John Durham. (2001). "The only proper scale of representation": The politics of statistics and stories. Political Communication, 18, 433-449.
5. Kwok, C., & Keung Chan, N. (2024). Human-automated collectives: Automating communication for social movement mobilization. *New Media & Society*, *26*(9), 4992-5012. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241251794
6. Gehl, R. W., & Zulli, D. (2023). The digital covenant: non-centralized platform governance on the mastodon social network. Information, Communication & Society, 26(16), 3275-3291.
7. Badiou, A. (2016). Twenty-four notes on the uses of the word "people". In A. Badiou, P. Bourdieu, J. Butler, G. Didi-Huberman, S. Khiari, & J. Rancière (Eds.), *What Is a People?* (pp. 21-31). Columbia University Press.

Skim if time:
• Struett, T., Sinnreich, A., Aufderheide, P., & Gehl, R. W. (2024). Can This Platform Survive? Governance Challenges for the Fediverse. International Journal of Communication, 18, 5607-5628. https://doi.org/1932–8036/20240005
• Griffin, R. (2023). Rethinking rights in social media governance: human rights, ideology and inequality. *European Law Open*, *2*(1), 30-56. https://doi.org/10.1017/elo.2023.7
• Bellier, I., & Hays, J. (Eds.). (2020). *Scales of Governance and Indigenous Peoples' Rights*. Routledge.
• Blakey, J. (2021). The politics of scale through Rancière. *Progress in Human Geography*, *45*(4), 623-640. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132520944487
• Barry, A. (2002). In the middle of the network. In J. Law & A. Mol (Eds.), Complexities: Social studies of knowledge practices. Duke University Press. |
| 9 | 13-Mar | **Data Publics**

Guest: Prof Jannie Møller Hartley (Roskilde University, Denmark) | 1. Hartley, J. M., Bengtsson, M., Schjøtt Hansen, A., & Sivertsen, M. F. (2023). Researching publics in datafied societies: Insights from four approaches to the concept of 'publics' and a (hybrid) research agenda. *New Media & Society*, *25*(7), 1668-1686. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211021045
2. Hartley, J. M., Sørensen, J. K., & Mathieu, D. (Eds.). (2023). *DataPublics: The Construction of Publics in Datafied Democracies*. Bristol University Press. → Read the Introduction, Chapter 5, and *at least two* other chapters.

Skim the "Data Publics" site: https://ruc.dk/en/research-project/datapublics-transforming-journalism-and-audiences-age-datafication |

10	20-Mar	SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS	
11	27-Mar	**The Public Politics of Counting & Aggregating**	*Yes, yes, I know that I'm again asking you to read more than 5 articles, but these are all great and represent different parts of this week's theme. Do your best!* 1. Rose, N. (1991). Governing by numbers: Figuring out democracy. Accounting, Organizations and Society, 16(7), 673-692. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0361-3682(91)90019-B 2. Igo, S. (2007). Introduction: America in aggregate. The averaged American: Surveys, citizens, and the making of a mass public (pp. 1-22). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 3. Martin, Aryn, & Lynch, Michael. (2014). Counting Things and People: The Practices and Politics of Counting. Social Problems, 56(2), 243-266. doi:10.1525/sp.2009.56.2.243 4. McGregor, S. C. (2020). "Taking the Temperature of the Room": How Political Campaigns Use Social Media to Understand and Represent Public Opinion. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *84*(S1), 236-256. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfaa012 5. Salmon, C.T., & Glasser, T.L. (1995). The politics of polling and the limits of consent. In T. L. Glasser & C. T. Salmon (Eds.), Public opinion and the communication of consent (pp. 437-458). New York: The Guilford Press. 6. Splichal, S. (2022). In data we (don't) trust: The public adrift in data-driven public opinion models. Big Data & Society, 9(1), 20539517221097319. https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517221097319 *Skim if time:* • Bourdieu, P. (1979). Public opinion does not exist. In A. Mattelart & S. Siegelaub (Eds.), Communication and class struggle : an anthology in 2 volumes (Vol. 1, pp. 124-130). International General. • Liu, J., & Liu, C. (2024). The Politics of Governance by Quantification Infrastructure. Critical Sociology. https://doi.org/10.1177/08969205241298291 • Splichal, S. (2022). *Datafication of Public Opinion and the Public Sphere*. Anthem Press.

| 12 | 3-Apr | **Public Affect, Aesthetics, Agonisms, & Intimacies**

[no class meeting, memo still required] | 1. Sax, M. (2022). Algorithmic News Diversity and Democratic Theory: Adding Agonism to the Mix. Digital Journalism, 10(10), 1650-1670. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2114919
2. Sonnevend, J. (2024). Charm: A keyword of contemporary global politics. In Charm: How Magnetic Personalities Shape Global Politics (pp. 11-41). Princeton University Press.
3. Hahn, K. (2024). Intimacy and the Transformation of the Public Sphere. Theory, Culture & Society. https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764241299390
4. Kavada, A., & Poell, T. (2020). From Counterpublics to Contentious Publicness: Tracing the Temporal, Spatial, and Material Articulations of Popular Protest Through Social Media. Communication Theory, 31(2), 190-208. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtaa025
5. McLuskie, E. (2023). The Public Engagement Industry: Distancing Publics Through Managed Engagement and Ideologised Transparency. Javnost - The Public, 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2023.2201761

Skim if time:
• Mouffe, C. (1993). *The return of the political*. Verso.
• Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the political*. Routledge.
• Sonnevend, J. (2024). *Charm: How Magnetic Personalities Shape Global Politics*. Princeton University Press.
• Berlant, L., & Warner, M. (1998). Sex in Public. Critical Inquiry, 24(2), 547-566. https://doi.org/10.1086/448884 |
| 13 | 10-Apr | **Materiality & Public Infrastructure** | *A couple of these are on the short side / can be skimmed, so 6 pieces this week!*

1. Bloch, Sam. (2019). Shade. Places. Retrieved from https://placesjournal.org/article/shade-an-urban-design-mandate/
2. Edwards, P. (2003). Infrastructure and modernity: Force, time, and social organization in the history of sociotechnical systems. In T. J. Misa, P. Brey, & A. Feenberg (Eds.), *Modernity and technology* (pp. 185-225). The MIT Press.
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14	17-Apr	**Digital Publics in/through AI, Platforms, Data, & Algorithms**	*A couple of these are on the short side / can be skimmed, so 6 pieces this week!*

A couple of these are on the short side / can be skimmed, so 6 pieces this week!

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| 15 | 24-Apr | **Making Public Problems & Controversies** | 1. Elish, M. C. (2019). Moral Crumple Zones: Cautionary Tales in Human-Robot Interaction. Engaging Science, Technology, and Society, 5, 21. doi:10.17351/ests2019.260
2. Gusfield, J. R. (1989). Constructing the ownership of social problems: Fun and profit in the welfare state. Social Problems, 36(5), 431-441.
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4. Barassi, V. (2024). Toward a Theory of AI Errors: Making Sense of Hallucinations, Catastrophic Failures, and the Fallacy of Generative AI. Harvard Data Science Review, Special Issue 5. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1162/99608f92.ad8ebbd4
5. Sætra, H. S., & Selinger, E. (2024). Technological Remedies for Social Problems: Defining and Demarcating Techno-Fixes and Techno-Solutionism. *Science and Engineering Ethics*, *30*(6), 60. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-024-00524-x

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• Marres, N. (2007). The issues deserve more credit: Pragmatist contributions to the study of public involvement in controversy. Social Studies of Science, 37(5), 759-780.
• Blumer, H. (1971). Social problems as collective behavior. Social Problems, 18(3), 298-306.
• Ananny, M. (2024). Making Generative Artificial Intelligence a Public Problem. Seeing Publics and Sociotechnical Problem-Making in Three Scenes of AI Failure. Javnost - The Public, 31(1), 89-105. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2024.2319000
• Ananny, M. (2023). Making Mistakes: Constructing Algorithmic Errors to Understand Sociotechnical Power. Osiris, 38, 223-241. |
| 16 | 1-May | **Final Project Presentations** | |

Supplemental Readings

Creating a course like this involves leaving *many* readings out of the weekly 'required' and 'recommended' lists. There are things that I'd love for you to read and talk with you about, but the confines of the limited class time and number of weeks means that I can't include them all.

So, to let you in on some of the things that I considered assigning but wasn't able to, I've created a large, unwieldy, somewhat idiosyncratic, and not thematically organized list of readings that I think are relevant to the course, but that didn't make the official cut. Peruse them for keywords, phrases, authors, and sources that might help you appreciate the large scope of this topic and that might help you with your final projects. In many cases, authors have updated versions of these pieces, or book/article length versions of the arguments so please take this list as a starting point, not an exhaustive capture of all these ideas or scholars.

Almost all of these are available through the library system. If you can't find something, I'd recommend contacting the author(s) directly and asking them to send you a PDF – it's a nice way to connect with a scholar and let them know that you're interested in their work.

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- Adut, A. (2018). Reign of Appearances: The Misery and Splendor of the Public Sphere. Cambridge University Press.
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- Baibarac-Duignan, C., & de Lange, M. (2021). Controversing the datafied smart city: Conceptualising a 'making-controversial' approach to civic engagement. Big Data & Society, 8(2), 20539517211025557. https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517211025557
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Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity
The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic

misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the USC Student Handbook. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

AI Generators Policy
This course aims to develop creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated text, code, or other content is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies
USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation, is prohibited. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relation to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. Distributing course material without the instructor's permission will be presumed to be an

intentional act to facilitate or enable academic dishonestly and is strictly prohibited. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Statement on University Academic and Support Systems

Students and Disability Accommodations:
USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](#). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](#).

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:
To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate](#)- and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems:
[Annenberg Student Success Fund](#)
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.

[Annenberg Student Emergency Aid Fund](#)
Awards are distributed to students experiencing unforeseen circumstances and emergencies impacting their ability to pay tuition or cover everyday living expenses. These awards are not intended to cover full-tuition expenses, but rather serve as bridge funding to guarantee students' continued enrollment at USC until other resources, such as scholarships or loans, become available. Students are encouraged to provide as much information in their application, as well as contact their academic advisor directly with questions about additional resources available to them.

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - *(213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - *988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call*
The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)](#) - *(213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX)](#) - *(213) 740-5086*
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.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - *(213) 740-2500*

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776
OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 740-0411
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101
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
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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu
Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.