

Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism
Professor Manuel Castells
COMM 670
Culture and Economy
Spring 2025, Section 20955

Manuel Castells: University Professor
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Class Schedule & Room: Tuesdays, 2:00-4:50 PM, ASC 228
Office Hours & Suite: Wednesdays 2:00-5:00 PM. By appointment only.
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Course Description

This is an advanced graduate seminar that aims to explore and analyze the interaction between culture and economy by observing different types of economic practices in a diversity of contexts. The purpose of the seminar will be the generation of new knowledge in this field. Students will be expected to develop research and original thinking and to produce a research paper of publishable quality. Students are welcome to use the seminar as a testing ground in theory and methodology for work related to their theses and dissertations. Papers are due the last week of classes.

The seminar is organized around four components:

- 1) A series of presentations by the instructor on specific topics followed by an open discussion with the participants in the seminar.
- 2) Reading and discussing three required books (see page 2, books by Castells, Zelizer, and Swartz).
- 3) Recommended readings for every topic treated in the seminar, as indicated in the syllabus. These are helpful but not required.
- 4) Empirical studies conducted by each student, leading to a research paper at the end of the semester. Research topics will be selected in agreement with the instructor within the thematic area of the seminar. Students must present their work in progress in one session of the seminar during the semester in order to receive comments and suggestions from the whole class. Active participation by all students in each session is required.

Pre-Requisites

- 1) Graduate standing, no exceptions. Social science background is necessary.
- 2) Annenberg students have priority but the seminar is open to students from other departments with consent of the instructor. Enrolment is limited to 12 students.

Course Requirements And Grading

Active participation in seminar. Engagement in a research project related to the themes of the seminar. Presentation of the project in the seminar. Writing of a research paper.

Final paper accounts for 60% of the grade. Research work for 25%. Participation in the seminar for 15%.

Required Readings (for the whole seminar)

Castells, Manuel et al. *Another Economy is Possible*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017.

Zelizer, Viviana. *Economic Lives: How Culture Shapes the Economy*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2013.

Swartz, Lana, *New Money How Payment Became Social Media*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020.

TOPICS PRESENTED BY THE INSTRUCTOR

Week 1, Jan. 14: Economy is Culture: the Theoretical Debate

Recommended Readings

Castells, Manuel, and Pekka Himanen (eds.). *Reconceptualizing Development in the Global Information Age*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014.

Brook, Timothy and Lung, Hy (eds) "*The Shaping of Capitalism in Eastern Asia*", Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1999.

Sarah Banet-Weiser, *Authentic TM. The Politics of Ambivalence in a Brand Culture*, New York: New York University Press, 2012.

Agarwal, Bina. "Bargaining and Gender Relations: Within and Beyond the Household." from *Feminist Economics* (2011).

Ostrom, Elinor. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions of Collective Action*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Roscoe, Philip. *I Spend Therefore I am: The True Cost of Economics*. London, Viking, 2014.

Week 2, Jan. 21: Global Informational Financial Capitalism: A New Model of Capitalism

Recommended Readings

Hutton, Will, and Anthony Giddens (eds.). *On the Edge: Living in Global Capitalism*. New York, The Free Press, 2000.

Castells, Manuel; Caraca, Joao, Cardoso, Gustavo "The Cultures of the Economic Crisis" in Castells, Manuel et al. (editors) *Aftermath. The Cultures of the Economic Crisis*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, pages 1-15.

Mason, Paul. *Postcapitalism: A Guide to Our Future*. New York, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2015.

Nolan, Peter. *Crossroads: The End of Wild Capitalism and the Future of Humanity*. London, Marshall Cavendish, 2009.

Shiller, Robert J. *Irrational Exuberance*. 2nd Edition, New York, Broadway Books, 2005 (1st edition Princeton University Press, 2000).

Ross, Andrew, *Creditocracy*, New York and London, OR Books, 2013.

Week 3, Jan. 28: The Culture of Financial Capitalism: From the Ideology of Risk to the Practice of Greed

Recommended Readings

Admati, Anat, and Martin Hellwig. *The Bankers' New Clothes*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013

Ferguson, Niall. *The Great Degeneration: How Institutions Decay and Economies Die*. London, Penguin Books, 2013.

Santoro, Michael A., and Ronald J. Strauss. *Wall Street Values: Business Ethics and the Global Financial Crisis*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Sennett, Richard. *The Culture of the New Capitalism*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006.

Zaloom, Caitlin. *Out of the Pits: Traders and Technology from Chicago to London*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Week 4, Feb. 4: Entrepreneurialism, Innovation and Oligopoly: The Culture of Silicon Valley from Steve Jobs to Elon Musk.

Recommended Readings

English-Lueck, J.A. *Cultures @Silicon Valley*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002.

Himanen, Pekka. *The Hacker Ethic and the Spirit of Informationalism*. New York, Random House, 2002.

Himanen, Pekka. "A comparison between the Models of Innovation of Finland and Silicon Valley" in Manuel Castells (ed.). *The Network Society: A Global Perspective*, Edward Elgar, North Hampton, MA: 2005.

Markoff, John. *What the Dormhouse Said: How the Sixties Counterculture Shaped the Personal Computer Industry*. New York, Viking 2005.

Neff, Gina. *Venture Labor: Work and the Burden of Risk in Innovative Industries*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012.

Saxenian, Anna Lee. *The New Argonauts*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Saxenian, Anna Lee. "The Silicon Valley Model: Economic Dynamism, Social Exclusion" in Manuel Castells and Pekka Himanen (eds.). *Reconceptualizing Development in the Global Information Age*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014.

Taplin, Jonathan, *The End of Reality. How 4 Billionaires Are Selling a Fantasy Future of the Metaverse, Mars, and Crypto*, New York: Public Affairs, 2023.

Week 5, Feb. 11: Digital Technology, Culture, and New Financial Practices: Cryptocurrencies

Recommended Readings

Castells, Manuel, *Advanced Introduction to Digital Society*, Northampton, MA, 2024, Chapter 4 "The Digitalization of Financial Markets".

Wolfgang K. Hardle, Campbell R. Harvey, Raphael C.G Reule, "Understanding Cryptocurrencies", *Journal of Financial Econometrics*, 13/12/2020, pages 181-2008.

Jeong, Sarah. "The Bitcoin Protocol as Law, and the Politics of a Stateless Currency" Harvard Law School, Social Science Research Council, 2013.
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2294124

Birch, David, *Identity is the New Money*, London Publishing Partnership, 2014.

Week 6, Feb. 18: The Cultures of Inequality

Recommended Readings

Bradley, Harriet. *Fractured Identities: Changing Patterns of Inequality*. 2nd Edition, United Kingdom, Polity Press, 2016.

Crouch, Colin. *The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 2011.

Thomas Piketty, Thomas, and Arthur Goldhammer. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Belknap Press, 2014.

Vance, J.D. *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*. New York, HarperCollins, 2016.

Williams, Joan C. *White Working Class: Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2017.

Lewis, Oscar *Five Families: Mexican case studies in the culture of poverty*, Mentor Books, 1959.

Hsing, You-tien *The Great Urban Transformation: The Politics of Land and Property in China*, Oxford University Press, 2010

Week 7, Feb. 25: Alternative Economic Practices in Times of Crisis: Towards a New Paradigm

Recommended Readings

Castells, Manuel, et al. *Another Economy is Possible*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 2017.

Conill, Joana, et al. "Beyond the Crisis: The Emergence of alternative Economic Practices" in Manuel Castells et al (eds.). *Aftermath: The Cultures of the Economic Crisis*. op.cit.,2012: 210-250.

Schor, Juliet. *Plenitude: The New Economics of True Wealth*. Penguin Press, 2010.

Turner, Fred. *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism*. The University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Documentary Films from VPRO (Public Dutch Television) by Film Maker Bregtje Van der Haak, "Aftermath. Alternative Economic Cultures", accessible on line at Backlight, VPRO. 2012.

Week 8, Mar. 04: Contesting the Values of Financial Capitalism: Social Movements against the Management of the Financial Crises.

Recommended Readings

Castells, Manuel. *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 2nd Edition, 2015.

Van Gelder, Sarah (ed.). *This Changes Everything: Occupy Wall Street and the 99% Movement*. San Francisco, Berret-Koehler, 2011.

Week 9, Mar. 11: Student presentations of their research projects and discussion in class.

Spring Recess – No class on March 18

Week 10, Mar. 25: Student presentations of their research projects and discussion in class.

Week 11, Apr. 1: Student presentations of their research projects and discussion in class.

Week 12, Apr. 8: Student presentations of their research projects and discussion in class.

Week 13, Apr. 15: Student presentations of their research projects and discussion in class.

Week 14, Apr. 22: Student presentations of their research projects and discussion in class.

Week 15, Apr. 29: Student presentations of their research projects and discussion in class.

Additional Recommended Readings

Amman, John, et al (eds.). *Surviving the New Economy*. Paradigm Publishers, 2007.

Clark, Gordon L., et al (eds). *Managing Financial Risks: from Global to Local*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Gorton, Gary B. *Misunderstanding Financial Crises: Why We Don't See Them Coming*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012.

Saxenian, Anna Lee. *Regional Advantage: The Cultures of Silicon Valley and Route 128*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Schaffer, Armin, and Wolfgang Streeck (eds.). *Politics in the Age of Austerity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.

Stearns, David L. *Electronic Value Exchange: Origins of the VISA Electronic Payment System*. Springer-Verlag London Limited, 2011.

Riles, Annelise. *Collateral Knowledge: Legal Reasoning in the Global Financial Markets*. University of Chicago Press, 2011.

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.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

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](#)

The School of Communication maintains a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School of Communication. There are no exceptions to the school's policy.

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.

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 is prohibited 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. 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 is also prohibited. 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 relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

AI Policy for the course

In this course, I encourage you to use artificial intelligence (AI)-powered programs to help you with assignments that indicate the permitted use of AI. You should also be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; thus, they are not yet prepared to produce text that meets the standards of this course. To adhere to our university values, you must cite any AI-generated material (e.g., text, images, etc.) included or referenced in your work and provide the prompts used to generate the content. Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Please review the instructions in each assignment for more details on how and when to use AI Generators for your submissions.

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

Collaboration. In this class, you are expected to submit work that demonstrates your individual mastery of the course concepts.

Group work. Unless specifically designated as a “group project,” all assignments are to be expected to be completed individually.

Computer programs. Plagiarism includes the submission of code written by, or otherwise obtained from someone else.

If found responsible for an academic violation, students may be assigned university outcomes, such as suspension or expulsion from the university, and grade penalties, such as an “F” grade on the assignment, exam, and/or in the course.

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.

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 is comprised 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) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

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.

TrojansAlert

TrojansAlert is an alert system that allows university officials to contact you during an emergency. It is your connection to real-time updates, instructions on where to go, what to do, or what not to do, who to contact and other important information. Visit the website to sign up.

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 Brightspace, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university's site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

ITS Customer Support Center (CSC): (213) 740-5555

The ITS Customer Support Center (CSC) provides support to the USC community for connecting to the USC Network and using supported applications. For help with network connectivity and software, contact CSC. Walk-in support is available in Leavey Library's Information Commons.

Violence-Free Campus

Visit the website to read more about prohibited behaviors, reporting responsibilities and where to report.

Student-Athlete Travel Excuse Letters

Prior to a university-sponsored away competition, Student-Athletes are responsible for providing their Instructor with a Competition Excuse Letter (provided by their academic counselor) for the classes missed while on the road (i.e., excused absence). It is the responsibility of the Student-Athlete to provide the letter prior to leaving on their trip and to make arrangements for a make-up of any missed assignments or exams. Please refer to the SAAS site where they detail travel and travel excuse letters.