

## **POLS 341 – The Politics of Media (Online)**

**Summer 2016**

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*“Whoever controls the media controls the culture.”*

*Allen Ginsberg, Poet*

### **1. Course Description**

This course has a Writing (W) Focus designation. Throughout the class, students will

- develop strategies for effective writing.
- learn to use and value writing as a tool for learning.
- learn to write in the primary genres of their chosen fields, following appropriate conventions.

The course designed to provide students with an essential understanding of the functioning of media in politics and the major ethical frameworks that influence the role of media in terms of social and political phenomena. We will focus on the influences and effects of media on politics, setting public agendas, interpreting events, manipulating the political process, political learning through popular culture as the major topics of discussion throughout the course.

By the end of the course, the students will have acquired an understanding of:

- functioning of the media within contemporary ethical frameworks and related political controversies
- the role of media within networks of governance
- the ways through which media fulfills that role
- individual-media relations considering the political responsibility of the citizen (if there is such thing)

We will also ask the questions whether the media functions in favor of particular political groups/camps and what the potential political or other outcomes of such functioning might be. Then we will turn to the internet and social media to discuss the difference those make in news conduction and interpretation, considering today we are all agents of media with our Facebook, Twitter, and blogger accounts accessible almost anytime, anywhere.

### **2. Course Structure**

The course will be delivered through Laulima. I will post the lectures at the beginning of every week and you will be responsible for reflecting your take on the material by posting

weekly assignments (reaction paragraphs) on Laulima. Written interaction is the backbone of this class, so you are also expected to comment on/critique other students' reactions.

You will use your Laulima account to login to the course from <https://laulima.hawaii.edu>. You will use Laulima also for accessing additional course readings (such as journal articles or videos that support that week's lecture topic) and posting your assignments in addition to engaging in class discussion under each week's assigned topic.

### 3. Course Material and Requirements

As an online course, you are required to participate in the course discussions electronically. In order to do this, you must have a reliable connection to the internet (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable), access to Laulima, and have basic competency using web browsers and email.

Basic course readings:

- Alec Charles. 2012. *Interactivity: New media, politics, and society*. Peter Lang AG [Available online in eBrary through UHM Library].
- Ziauddin Sardar. 2010. *Introducing Media Studies: A Graphic Guide*. Icon Books.
- We will also watch the documentary *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger [Online].

Please read the weekly assigned part of the basic material above in addition to the additional readings (if any) before engaging in that week's discussion. I will send all material through Laulima.

#### Weekly Reactions and Participation

Online participation in this course is very important. After each week's class, you will be required to post a 500 word reaction to the review question I posted on Laulima. You are also expected to comment on at least one other student's reaction for us to be able to make this class into an interactive discussion platform. Reactions during the second half of the class will focus on the ethical aspects of the readings, which means that the students will be expected to justify their ethical stance when answering weekly assignment questions.

#### Midterm Writing Assignment

There will be one mid-term writing assignment, 5 pages double-spaced and with full citations (see below), in which you will answer a question I will ask related to the class discussion. This writing assignment should be emailed to the instructor before the deadline (TBA). The paper will be graded according to how well it is structured, how clearly and precisely it is written, and how rigorously it is argued. You can develop this midterm paper into a broader final project after receiving feedback from me on your proposed project.

#### Final Project

10 pages (*double spaced, Times New Roman 12*) research paper in which you will answer a question you have developed about the politics of media. You are expected to use a minimum of 10 resources (and at least five of those must be resources other than the class readings - books, films, videos, journal articles, newspaper articles). You will send a draft/outline 3 weeks prior to the submission deadline and receive feedback from me.

Please have a look at this citation guide and contact me if you have any questions about providing references: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>.

#### 4. Grading

Overall 100 points to be broken down as follows:

Weekly Reactions: 5 points (per reaction) = a total of 10 reactions or 50 points

Writing Assignment (Mid-term): 20 points

Final Project: 30 points

At the end of the course, I will add your points and assign a letter grade as shown below. Your letter grade will be converted to a four-point scale as listed on the UH Manoa *Credit and Grades* section of the course catalog found here: <http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/undergrad-ed/creditsGrades.htm>:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
100	95	90	87	83	80	77	73	70	67	63	60	0

#### 5. Course Schedule

The first half of the course focuses on theoretical aspects whereas the second half deals with ethical considerations regarding the politics of media.

##### **Week 1 (June 6) Introduction: Why should we study media within politics?**

Sardar, p. 1-15

Charles, Chapter 1: Strange New World

Watch: What is media studies? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AoH9FV4hoE>

Watch: Media Literacy Awareness  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7HXmawarM0w>

Watch: Clip from the movie Detachment (2011)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AD3XqEGDIg>

##### **Week 2 (June 13) Media as “political” industry**

Sardar, p.16-20

Charles, Chapter 2: Electronic Government

Watch: The Myth of the Liberal Media by Sut Jhally with Edward S. Herman, Noam Chomsky, Justin Lewis (1998)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8oHl3ooeZo>

Watch: Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism by Robert Greenwald (2004) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P74oHhU5MDk>

**Week 3 (June 20) Media, videogames, and war**

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Chapter 2 “The Origins of National Consciousness”

Charles, Chapter 3: War Games

Jeffrey Goldstein, “Immortal Combat: War Toys and Violent Video Games” in Goldstein, Jeffrey, ed. *Why We Watch: The Attractions of Violent Entertainment*. Cary, NC, USA: Oxford University Press, 1998. ProQuest ebrary.

**Week 4 (June 27) Media and “the people”: Does public response really matter?**

Sardar, p. 21-38

Charles, Chapter 5: Social Networks

Marichal, José. *Facebook Democracy: The Architecture of Disclosure and the Threat to Public Life*. Abingdon, Oxon, GBR: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2012. Chapters 2 & 3 (on Laulima)

**Week 5 (July 4) Semiotics: Decoding material**

Sardar, p. 39-70

Charles, Chapter 4: Reality Television

Deery, June. *Reality TV*. 2015. Chapter 7: Politics (on Laulima)

**July 10 - Writing Assignment due -**

**Week 6 (July 11) Is it the material or audience that defines media content?**

Sardar, p. 71-81

Charles, Chapter 6: Public Knowledge

Watch: Ways of Seeing Episode 1  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pDE4VX\\_9Kk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pDE4VX_9Kk)

**Week 7 (July 18) Gender politics of media: Representation of sexual images**

Media Studies p. 82-88

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978. Parts 1 & 2 (on Laulima)

Gauntlett, David. *Media, Gender, and Identity*. London: Routledge, 2008 (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Chapter 2: Some Background Debates, pp. 22-45 (on Laulima)

Watch: Ways of Seeing Episode 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1GI8mNU5Sg>

Watch: Miss Representation - Explores the under-representation of women in positions of power and influence in America, and challenges the media's limited portrayal of what it means to be a powerful woman - <http://documentarylovers.com/film/miss-representation/>

**Week 8 (July 25) Desire in production: Politics of advertising**

Media Studies p. 107-122

Kellner, Douglas. Media Culture. London: Routledge, 1994; pp. 247-255 (on Laulima)

Watch: Ways of Seeing Episodes 3&4

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7wi8jd7aC4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jTUebm73IY>

Watch: Starsuckers: Celebrity obsessed media

<https://vimeo.com/49021336>

**Week 9 (August 1) Media censorship as political power**

Barney Warf, "Geographies of Global Internet Censorship", *GeoJournal*, 2011

Alec Charles (2014), Chapters 7 & 8: The Twitterati & Revolutions

Heuvel and Cohen, Edward Snowden: A 'Nation' Interview, Oct 28, 2014 <http://www.thenation.com/article/snowden-exile-exclusive-interview/>

**Week 10 (August 8) Social media & movements: Impact of Facebook, Twitter and the like**

Jeffrey S. Juris, Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social media, public space, and emerging logics of aggregation, *American Ethnologist*, May 2012

Charles (2014), Chapters 7 & 8\*: The Twitterati & Revolutions

\*These chapters are in the second edition of the book and will be available on Laulima

**August 11 - Final Projects due -**

## 6. Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Students are required to follow the UH Manoa campus policies as listed in the course catalog or found here: <http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/about-uh/campus-policies1.htm>. Students are required to be respectful of their classmates and refrain from disruptive behavior in the classroom and on campus. If you engage in cheating or plagiarism, you will receive an F (0.0) grade for the course and I will be forced to report you for academic dishonesty.

**Plagiarism** includes, but is not limited to, submitting, to satisfy an academic requirement, any document that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without identifying that individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation a documented idea that has not been assimilated into the student's language and style; paraphrasing a passage so closely that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved. If you have questions regarding what does and does not constitute plagiarism, please ask me.

## 7. Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities, including reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please let me know and contact the KOKUA Program in *Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services* or call them at (808)956-7511.

Please Note: As the instructor, I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus. I will inform you about such changes via email.