

## Mass Communication in Modern Society

920:205:H6

Summer 2021

July 12<sup>th</sup> – August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### Course Overview

#### Instructor

Instructor: Nil Uzun

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(When communicating by email, please put 'SOC205' in the subject line)

Virtual office hours: by appointment

#### Course Delivery

This is an asynchronous online course. To access the course, please visit

<https://canvas.rutgers.edu/>. For more information about course access or support, contact the Canvas Help Desk via email at [help@oit.rutgers.edu](mailto:help@oit.rutgers.edu) or call 833-648-4357.

#### Course Description

Mass media and society mutually shape and reshape each other. Most of our knowledge about the world around us is communicated through mass media outlets with the help of images, messages, codes, symbols, and representations. The production and circulation of these images, ideas, and messages are produced within the mass media industry. This course introduces a sociological perspective to understand the processes of mass communication and mass media. It provides a critical perspective on how information is produced and communicated in modern societies and how it shapes social relations, political power dynamics, and cultural norms.

With human interactions, economic transactions, and political contentions becoming more and more digitalized, a theoretical and practical understanding of mass media becomes even more critical than before. This course pays particular attention to a broad range of debates around digital media and communication, from the expansion of digital governance technologies to the changing meanings and practices of political participation. Some of the questions we will explore are: Do Instagram followers count as friends? Where do different generations get their news

from? How do search engines and online platforms reproduce social inequalities? Is the internet biased? What happens to all the data collected by Facebook? What is the political power of an online petition? Can the revolution be digitalized?

## Course Learning Objectives

The sociological study of mass media and communication is a very broad field. This introductory course aims to help develop an overall understanding of this field and some of its key topics.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Develop a sociological understanding of global mass communication processes,
- Form a critical information literacy,
- Examine media technologies and the political, economic, and social relations they are embedded in.

## Course Materials

All class content is published on Canvas. Specifically, all texts and reading assignments are made available through the Modules. Lectures and recorded materials complement the readings. **This class does not require a textbook.**

Class announcements and assignments are also posted directly to Canvas. I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus.

## Technology Requirements

### Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Canvas
- Live web conferencing using zoom

### Required Equipment

- Computer: current Mac or PC with high-speed internet connection
- Webcam: built-in or external webcam
- Microphone: built-in laptop or tablet microphone or external microphone

### Required Software

- Pdf reader
- Microsoft PowerPoint

# Assessment

## Assignment Overview

Below are the different types of assignments expected to be completed for this course and each assignment's weight on the final score. Please refer to the course calendar on Canvas and/or the course schedule (below) for the specific due dates.

Assignment	Points
Daily discussions	20
Weekly quizzes	20
Midterm exam	30
Final exam	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

## Assignment Details

### Daily Discussions (20%)

- The daily discussions can be found under the 'Discussion: *Title*' tab on Canvas Modules. The discussion topics can be found in the description of each day's thread. This grade is based on your participation in **daily discussions** on Canvas and engaging in conversations with one another by posting at least one original post and one response to the others. Each discussion section opens at the same time the week's lecture is posted on Mondays and **closes by the end of the week on Sundays**.
- Posts should address the discussion topic and open up space for continued conversation. Although there are no hard-minimum requirements for the length of your posts, your daily contribution shouldn't be less than a paragraph which is around 100 words.

### Weekly Quizzes (20%)

- There are four quizzes in total. The main goal with the quizzes is to make sure that you have a good command of the materials discussed in the lectures and the readings. Quizzes will be timed and available to take any time **until the end of each assigned week on Sundays**.

- Quizzes are not cumulative; the questions will be about only that week's material. They consist of short answers, fill in the blanks, true/false statements and short essay questions.

### Midterm Exam (30%)

- The mid-term exam will be available to take at the end of Week 3. Midterm will be similar to the quizzes only with some additional questions. Midterm is cumulative, it covers all the materials from the first three weeks.

### Final Exam (30%)

- The final exam will be available to take at the end of the course. Similar to the midterm, the final exam will be cumulative covering all the course material.

## Grading Scale

(Source: Rutgers standard undergraduate grade scale)

Grade	Range
A	90 – 100
B+	85 – 89
B	80 – 84
C+	75 – 79
C	70 – 74
D	60 – 69
F	Below 60

## Student Participation Expectations

Because this is an online course, your attendance is measured based on your online activity and participation. The following is a summary of everyone's expected participation:

- **Logging in:** Be sure you are logging in to the course in Canvas every day, including days with holidays and days with minimal online course activity. (During most days you will probably log in many times.) If you have a situation that might cause you to miss anything, discuss it with me *as soon as possible*.

- **Time Commitment:** To be successful in this course, you should plan to dedicate approximately 2-3 hours a day, 4 days a week.
- **Office hours and live sessions:** All live, scheduled events for the course, including my office hours, are optional. If you are required to discuss an assignment with me, please get in touch with me at the beginning of the week, so we can schedule an online meeting.

## Discussion and Communication Guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style:** Remember to use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Informality (including the occasional emoticon) is fine for non-academic topics. Please also refrain from using all CAPITAL LETTERS, as this is often interpreted as shouting.
- **Citing your sources:** When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up your arguments. (For books or other course materials, list at least the title and page numbers. For online sources, include a link.)
- **Backing up your work:** Consider composing your academic posts in a word processor with a spelling and grammar check function, where you can save your work, and then copying into the Canvas discussion for submission. This will help you identify typos, repetitions, and grammatical errors more easily. Also, it will prevent you from losing your work in case of a technical problem.
- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning environment where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across online. Treat your instructor and fellow students with respect at all times, and in all communications. A constructive critical discussion focuses on ideas, not individuals. There are no right and wrongs in discussing ideas, however I don't tolerate discrimination, hate speech and harassment. Please reach out to me if you notice such acts or any other disruptive and harmful behaviors. For further information please refer to [Rutgers policy against discrimination and harassment](#).

# Support and Policies

## Late Work and Make-up Exams

There will be no make-up exams.

## Faculty Feedback and Response Time

I will reply to e-mails within **24 hours on weekdays**. Please include the course number SOC205 in the subject line. (Remember that you can contact the Canvas Help Desk via email at [help@oit.rutgers.edu](mailto:help@oit.rutgers.edu) or call 833-648-4357 if you have a technical problem.)

The quizzes and the exams on Canvas are graded automatically. If you identify a problem with the questions or the answers, please let me know as soon as possible.

## Academic Integrity

The consequences of scholastic dishonesty are very serious. Please review the [Rutgers' academic integrity policy](#).

Academic integrity means, among other things:

- Develop and write your own assignments.
- Show in detail where the materials you use in your papers come from. Create citations whether you are paraphrasing authors or quoting them directly. Be sure to always show source and page number within the assignment and to include a bibliography.
- Do not fabricate information or citations in your work.
- Do not facilitate academic dishonesty by allowing your own work to be submitted by others.

If you are in doubt about any issue related to plagiarism or scholastic dishonesty, please discuss it with me as early as possible.

Other sources of information to which you can refer include:

- [Rutgers' Academic Integrity website](#)
- [Code of Student Conduct](#)
- [Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity](#)

## Academic Support Services

- Rutgers has a variety of resources for academic support including writing and learning, advising, and careers. For more information, check the [Student Support website](#).
- Rutgers has Learning Centers on each campus where any student can obtain tutoring and other help. For information, check the [Learning Center website](#).
- Rutgers also has a Writing Center where students can obtain help with writing skills and assignments. Learn more at the [Writing Center website](#).
- Many library resources are available online. Assistance is available through phone, email, and chat. For information, check the [Rutgers Libraries website](#).

## Rutgers Health Services

In case you need It accomplishes this through a staff of qualified clinicians and support staff and delivers services at a number of locations throughout the New Brunswick-Piscataway area. For more information, check the [Rutgers Health Services website](#).

## Counseling, ADAP, and Psychiatric Services

Like many people, undergraduate and graduate students experience a great many stresses in their lives - sorting out one's identity, establishing and maintaining important relationships, coping with anxiety and depression, dealing with losses, handling new academic demands, and navigating a world with discrimination, injustice, political turmoil and now a global pandemic! To help with these tasks, [Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#) provides a variety of psychological counseling services for all students of Rutgers University in New Brunswick/Piscataway, undergraduate and graduate. Services are free, and confidentiality is guaranteed within legal and ethical guidelines.

## Accommodations for Accessibility

### Requesting accommodations

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation. More information can be found in the [Documentation Guidelines](#) section of the [Office for Disability Services](#) website. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the [Registration Form](#) on the [Office for Disability Services](#) website.

# Course Schedule

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
<b>1.1</b>	<b>July 12</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>July 13</b>	<b>What is mass communication?</b>
<b>1.3</b>	<b>July 14</b>	<b>Media and Communication Today</b>
<b>1.4</b>	<b>July 15</b>	<b>Popular culture</b>

<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>STUDYING MEDIA: THEORY and METHODS</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>July 19</b>	<b>Mass Communication Theories I</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>July 20</b>	<b>Mass Communication Theories II</b>
<b>2.3</b>	<b>July 21</b>	<b>Methods I: Researching Text</b>
<b>2.4</b>	<b>July 22</b>	<b>Methods II: Visual Analysis</b>

<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>MEDIA INDUSTRIES</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>July 26</b>	<b>Media Economy</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>July 27</b>	<b>Marketing and Advertising</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>July 28</b>	<b>Internet Industry</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>July 29</b>	<b>MIDTERM</b>

<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>MEDIA and REPRESENTATION</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>August 2</b>	<b>Cultural Representation</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>August 3</b>	<b>Race</b>

<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>MEDIA and REPRESENTATION</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>August 4</b>	<b>Class</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>August 5</b>	<b>Gender and Sexuality</b>

<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>DIGITALIZATION, MEDIA and POLITICS</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>August 9</b>	<b>Political Campaigns</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>August 10</b>	<b>Social Movements</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>August 11</b>	<b>Digital Inequalities</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b>August 12</b>	<b>Data Capitalism</b>

<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>MEDIA and TECHNOLOGY</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>August 16</b>	<b>Cyborgs, Robots and the Future</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>August 17</b>	<b>Big Data and Algorithms</b>
<b>6.3</b>	<b>August 18</b>	<b>Closing Remarks</b>
<b>6.4</b>	<b>August 19</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>