
soc32501

SOC 325: The Sociology of the Internet and New Media

- **Time:** Tues. 4:10pm – 5:25pm
- **Professor:** Mike Owen Benediktsson
 - mbenedik@hunter.cuny.edu
 - 917.749.2410 (for emergencies only please)
 - Office Hours: Thursday, 2:30pm – 3:30pm, Room W1603

This class will examine the social consequences of new media. The central question in the course is how new communications technologies and forms (e.g. the internet, the mobile phone, social media) are changing the shape of social relations and interactions. This is an important question. Media is all around us. By definition, it *mediates* our understanding of ourselves, of others, and of reality itself. The effects of media are at the heart of all of the industries and institutions that seek to teach people or to convince them of things: advertising, politics, public education, etc. For this reason, studying, analyzing, and understanding how people use media are increasingly valuable skills in a wide range of occupations and professions.

In order to understand *new* media (e.g. podcasts) we'll also have to understand *old* media (e.g. talk radio). The course is organized thematically – one week we'll be talking about race and gender, the next we'll be talking about politics and ideology. But within our readings and discussions of these topics, we'll be constantly switching back and forth between “old” and “new” media, and we'll learn quite a bit about old media along the way.

What do we mean by old and new media? In this course, we will define *old media* as communications media that offer a **more-or-less one-way flow of information** from a producer to a reader or viewer. Books, audio cds, newspapers, and even cable television programs are “old” by this definition. New media, by contrast, can be understood as **more interactive**, permitting media consumers to become producers in their own right. Mp3s, blogs, Wikipedia entries and twitter feeds are “new”: they involve a *less distinct boundary* between the *producers* and the *recipients* of information.

As we will see, the transition toward new, more interactive forms of media has enormous implications for the way that society is organized. The way that we relate to each other and, more generally, the way that we produce and consume meaning has changed rapidly in recent years. In this class, we assess these changes, surveying a wide range of cutting edge research and commentary on the social consequences of new media. The majority of the material we will read was published in the last decade. As it turns out, old theories don't always cut it when it comes to new media.

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Assignments and Grading

This class will be participatory and interactive – more like YouTube and less like HBO. We will spend most of our time in class discussing the readings, relating the ideas at stake to our own fields of experience with new media. This means that staying up to date on the reading, making contributions to class discussions, and posting on our class website are all vital. The required textbook for the course is:

- Croteau and Hoynes, Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences SAGE Publications. 5th Edition.

It is available in the Hunter College bookstore and at Amazon.com, where you can buy a cheap used copy, rent a copy, or buy or rent a Kindle edition. Apart from the readings in this book, the class has five graded requirements.

1. PARTICIPATION and QUIZZES (15%)

Attendance is mandatory and so is participation in class discussions. Sitting quietly in the back of class and taking notes is **not an option** if you'd like to do well in this class. Set aside time to do the readings, write your weekly responses (see below) and generally prepare yourself to contribute in class. Throughout the semester, I will give 8-10 quizzes, graded on a Pass/Fail basis, that will test whether you have done the textbook reading. If you have done the reading at all, you will probably pass. At the end of the semester, I'll drop your worst two grades on these quizzes, which means if you happen to be absent on the day of a quiz for reasons beyond your control, you won't be unfairly penalized.

2. BLOG POSTS and COMMENTS (20%)

Every couple of weeks, you will be expected to write up a very short (300-600 word) blog post on our website in the “Discussions” section for that week. Deadlines for these posts are on the course schedule. These posts will be graded at the end of the semester, but not harshly: the important thing is for you to write something each week or two. The only requirement for these posts is that you mention *at least two* of the readings on the syllabus. Beyond that, the format is up to you. Here are some examples of what you might do with your posts:

- Offer an example or two of cases that you’ve seen (websites, blogs, comment boards, etc.) that support or contradict an author’s claims about the internet and social interaction.
- Simply react, in a free-form way, to aspects of the readings that you found puzzling or interesting or irritating – say what they are and why you responded the way you did.
- One of the best options: Write a comment responding to another student’s post. Feel free to agree, or disagree, or elaborate on what they’ve said. The only thing I ask is that you don’t be mean or snarky – I won’t approve comments that seem intended to make another student feel badly about what they’ve written.

3. MIDTERM PAPER (1st Case Study) (20%)

Throughout the semester, you will work on an independent research project related to the topics discussed in the course. In the first half of the semester, you will do a case study of an example of the media we’re discussing (for example, a website, a social media platform, a handheld device, an online show, etc.), and **write a midterm paper on it**. The paper should be 5-7 pages, double-spaced, in 11 or 12 font (New Times Roman). There are a few general options for how to do the research for this case study:

1. *User Interviews*. Track down some users (say between 5 and 10) of a website, a platform, a device, a type of web-based content, etc. These could be friends, relatives, or classmates. Interview them about how and why they use it. What social needs or gratifications does it serve?
2. *Content Analysis*. Examine a website, online show, etc., closely, and analyze it. What is its social agenda: to entertain, to convince, to promote? What kinds of messages is it sending? What kinds of social or political meanings are being conveyed and how?
3. *Participant Observation*. Observe how users actually use the thing in question. For example, watch how your friends use their mobile phones and take notes, or analyze your friends’ Instagram photos and the comments they post. What does their behavior tell you about the social meaning of the website, etc.?
4. *Archival Research*. Find data on the ownership of a website, or how it is managed or run. Find articles discussing its founding, its history, its professional culture, or its organization.
5. *Some Combination of the Above*

4. SECOND CASE STUDY (20%)

- In the second half, you will do a second case study, similar to the first, but on a different website, platform, etc., or a different group of users.

5. JOINT PAPER (15%)

- Finally, you will compare your case studies with those of another student in the class and write a short (3-5 page) comparative discussion of your findings. This paper will be reflective and will not require further research. Instead, it will mean meeting (preferably more than once) with a partner in the class who studied a similar topic and discussing your results, then writing up a short reflection paper comparing and contrasting your results and drawing broader conclusions and lessons about the general topic you studied, putting your case studies in the context of the class.

6. PRESENTATION (10%)

- At some point in the semester, you will do short (~15 minutes, plus Q&A) presentation on the topic for that week. The idea in these presentations is to explore some case studies (websites, twitter feeds, blogs, news articles, etc.) that illustrate or cast doubt upon the claims in the readings for that week. Ideally, you should use the presentation to develop the research for your final research project. You'll be able to use the in-class computer and projector, so visual illustration will be possible (and usually desirable). Here are some examples of what you might do:
 - In a class on gender and the body, analyze how women and men represent themselves through Facebook profile photos.
 - In a class on corporate control of the media, discuss how advertisements are incorporated into the content and the formats of media sites.
 - In a class on political and civic engagement online, analyze the comment board on a news site as a form of political discourse.

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Class Schedule

1. INTRODUCTION

- **Thursday, August 27:**
 - Introduction to the class

2. HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- **Tuesday, September 1: The Rise of the Internet**
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 1-18, p. 305-309
 - Read: [Affordance](https://soc32501.wordpress.com/affordance/) (<https://soc32501.wordpress.com/affordance/>)
 - Read: [The Medium is the Message](https://soc32501.wordpress.com/the-medium-is-the-message/) (<https://soc32501.wordpress.com/the-medium-is-the-message/>)
 - Check Out: [Americans Internet Access, 2000-2015](https://href.li/?http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/06/26/americans-internet-access-2000-2015/) (<https://href.li/?http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/06/26/americans-internet-access-2000-2015/>)
- **Thursday, September 3: The Rise of the Internet, part II**
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 294-300
 - Check Out: [Social Construction of Technology](https://soc32501.wordpress.com/social-construction-of-technology-2/) (<https://soc32501.wordpress.com/social-construction-of-technology-2/>)
 - Check Out: [Technological Determinism](https://soc32501.wordpress.com/social-construction-of-technology/) (<https://soc32501.wordpress.com/social-construction-of-technology/>)
- **Tuesday, September 8: New vs. Old**
 - Questions:
 - *Isn't a positive attitude about new technology a good thing?*
 - *Is it possible to be too positive?*
 - *Are there websites that seem to justify a bit of utopianism?*
 - *Are there others that send you into a moral panic?*
 - Read: Zuckerman, "[Cyberutopianism is not a dirty word](https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/state-cyberutopianism-not-a-dirty-word.pdf)" (<https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/state-cyberutopianism-not-a-dirty-word.pdf>)
 - Check Out: [Moral Panic](https://soc32501.wordpress.com/moral-panic/) (<https://soc32501.wordpress.com/moral-panic/>)
 - Check Out: [Cyber-Utopianism](https://soc32501.wordpress.com/cyber-utopianism/) (<https://soc32501.wordpress.com/cyber-utopianism/>)
- Thursday, September 10: First Blog Post Due by Midnight

3. PRODUCTION AND REGULATION OF NEW MEDIA

- **Thursday, September 10: NO CLASS**
- **Tuesday, September 15: NO CLASS**
- **Thursday, September 17: Media Conglomerates, Walled Gardens, and The Long Tail**
 - Questions:
 - *Does it matter who owns the media? When might it matter? Why might it matter?*
 - *Does the Internet make more kinds of things available for our consumption, as the Long Tail theory predicts?*
 - *Or does it guide us into the same "filter bubbles", decreasing the amount of information we have access to?*
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 31-54
 - Read: [The Long Tail](https://href.li/?http://www.longtail.com/about.html) (<https://href.li/?http://www.longtail.com/about.html>)
 - Read: [Walled Gardens](https://href.li/?http://www.fastcompany.com/3015418/from-inside-walled-gardens-social-networks-are-suffocating-the-internet-as-we-know-it) (<https://href.li/?http://www.fastcompany.com/3015418/from-inside-walled-gardens-social-networks-are-suffocating-the-internet-as-we-know-it>)
 - Watch: Pariser's [TED Talk](https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8ofWFx525s) (<https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8ofWFx525s>) or Read his chapter, [Introduction to "The Filter Bubble"](https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/pariser-the-filter-bubble-introduction.pdf) (<https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/pariser-the-filter-bubble-introduction.pdf>)
 - Watch: Duck-Duck-Go's [Google Takedown](https://href.li/?https://vimeo.com/51181384) (<https://href.li/?https://vimeo.com/51181384>)
 - Sunday, September 22: Blog Post Due By 10pm
- **Tuesday, September 22: NO CLASS**

- **Thursday, September 24: NO CLASS**
- **Tuesday, September 29: The Wisdom of the Crowd**
 - Questions:
 - *What are some examples of the wisdom of crowds?*
 - *If everybody in the US contributed to or edited the Wikipedia page on the United States of America, what would it look like?*
 - *Do you contribute to "crowd-sourced" online resources (e.g. Wikipedia, Yelp, product reviews on a given site, etc.?)*
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 305-307, 316-330
 - Read first paragraph or two of Wikipedia entries on "[The Wisdom of the Crowd](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisdom_of_the_crowd) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisdom_of_the_crowd)" and "[Crowd-Sourcing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crowdsourcing) (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crowdsourcing>)"
 - Read: Shirky, "Here Comes Everybody" (<https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/shirky-here-comes-everybody.pdf>) or watch his TED talk, "[Institutions vs. Collaboration](https://www.ted.com/talks/clay_shirky_on_institutions_versus_collaboration?language=en#t-319968) (https://www.ted.com/talks/clay_shirky_on_institutions_versus_collaboration?language=en#t-319968)"
 - Watch: [Heavy Metal Umlaut](http://jonudell.net/udell/gems/umlaut/umlaut.html) ([https://jonudell.net/udell/gems/umlaut/umlaut.html](http://jonudell.net/udell/gems/umlaut/umlaut.html))
 - In Class: Mechanical Turk
- **Thursday, October 1: The Insanity of the Crowd**
 - Questions:
 - *When are crowds irrational or cruel? Can you think of examples of online behavior that illustrates this potential?*
 - Read: Jaron Lanier, excerpt from "You Are Not a Gadget", "[The Truth About Crowds](https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/jaron-lanier-the-truth-about-crowds.pdf)" (<https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/jaron-lanier-the-truth-about-crowds.pdf>)"
 - Read: Daniel Bayn, "[On the Wisdom of the Crowds](http://danielbayn.com/on-the-wisdom-of-crowds/)" ([https://danielbayn.com/on-the-wisdom-of-crowds/](http://danielbayn.com/on-the-wisdom-of-crowds/))"
 - Read: Marshall Poe, "[A Closer Look at the Neutral Point of View \(NPOV\)](https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/marshall-poe-a-closer-look-at-the-neutral-point-of-view-npov-the-atlantic.pdf)" (<https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/marshall-poe-a-closer-look-at-the-neutral-point-of-view-npov-the-atlantic.pdf>)"
 - Sunday, October 4: Blog Post Due By 10pm
- **Tuesday, October 6: Advertising and Media Content**
 - Questions:
 - *Is there any problem with advertising affecting news content? What about media content generally (for example, product placement in fictional television shows or movies)? Can you think of examples of advertisements that a) you like, or that b) you object to?*
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 55-70
 - Read: [Know Your Meme, Brief History of "Viral Advertising"](http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/viral-marketing) ([https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/viral-marketing](http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/viral-marketing))
 - Read: Kernel, "[That Facebook Post you just Clicked is an Ad, and You Didn't Even Realize It](http://kernelmag.dailydot.com/issue-sections/features-issue-sections/14194/facebook-sponsored-social-ftc/)" ([https://kernelmag.dailydot.com/issue-sections/features-issue-sections/14194/facebook-sponsored-social-ftc/](http://kernelmag.dailydot.com/issue-sections/features-issue-sections/14194/facebook-sponsored-social-ftc/))"
 - Check Out: [Memejacking: The Complete Guide to Creating Memes for Marketing](http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/33363/Memejacking-The-Complete-Guide-to-Creating-Memes-for-Marketing.aspx) ([https://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/33363/Memejacking-The-Complete-Guide-to-Creating-Memes-for-Marketing.aspx](http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/33363/Memejacking-The-Complete-Guide-to-Creating-Memes-for-Marketing.aspx))
 - Check Out: [Straight Outta Somewhere Meme Generator](http://www.campaignlive.com/article/straight-outta-compton-rides-wave-user-content/1360498) ([https://www.campaignlive.com/article/straight-outta-compton-rides-wave-user-content/1360498](http://www.campaignlive.com/article/straight-outta-compton-rides-wave-user-content/1360498))
- **Thursday, October 8: The New News Media**
 - Questions:
 - *The newspaper and the broadcast news are giving way to the "blogosphere" and the "Twitter-verse". Who should we trust in this new environment to inform us about current events? Why should we trust them? Who do you trust?*
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 122 – 137
 - Read: Madrigal, "[The Year the Stream Ended](https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/madrigal-the-year-the-stream-ended.pdf)" (<https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/madrigal-the-year-the-stream-ended.pdf>)"
 - Listen: [Russian Trolls Spread False Information](http://www.npr.org/2015/06/04/412046928/russian-trolls-spread-false-information-on-the-internet) ([https://www.npr.org/2015/06/04/412046928/russian-trolls-spread-false-information-on-the-internet](http://www.npr.org/2015/06/04/412046928/russian-trolls-spread-false-information-on-the-internet))
 - Check Out: [Emergent](http://www.emergent.info) ([https://www.emergent.info](http://www.emergent.info))
 - Check Out: [Key Characteristics of Bogus-Ness](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fm0LwscDYHs) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fm0LwscDYHs>)
 - Check Out: The Daily Show, "[Life Cycle of a Gaffe](http://thedailyshow.cc.com/videos/6hvr77/democalypse-2012--the-science-of-gaffe)" ([https://thedailyshow.cc.com/videos/6hvr77/democalypse-2012--the-science-of-gaffe](http://thedailyshow.cc.com/videos/6hvr77/democalypse-2012--the-science-of-gaffe))"
 - Sunday, October 11: Blog Post Due by 10pm
- **Tuesday, October 13: Freedom and Piracy**
 - Questions:
 - *What should we, as internet users, be able to do with copyrighted content (e.g. songs, images, clips)? Should we be able to share it? With whom? Modify it? How? Where is the line between protecting intellectual property and suppressing free expression or free use?*
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 78-91
 - Read: Lessig, "[In Defense of Piracy](https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/lessig-in-defense-of-piracy-wsj.pdf)" (<https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/lessig-in-defense-of-piracy-wsj.pdf>)
 - Read: [YouTube vs. Kevin B. Lee](https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/youtube-vs-kevin-b-lee.pdf) (<https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/youtube-vs-kevin-b-lee.pdf>)
- **Thursday, October 15: Surveillance vs. the Dark Internet**
 - Questions:
 - *Did Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning and Julian Assange do society a solid? Or did they compromise the government's ability to act in our shared interest?*
 - *What should the government have access to, in terms of our online activity and information?*

- Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 104-108
- Read: “[In Defense of Wikileaks](https://href.li/?http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2010/11/overseeing_state_secretcy) (https://href.li/?http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2010/11/overseeing_state_secretcy)”
- Extra (totally optional, but awesome): Read [The Untold Story of Silk Road](https://href.li/?http://www.wired.com/2015/04/silk-road-1/) (<https://href.li/?http://www.wired.com/2015/04/silk-road-1/>), Parts I and II
- Sunday, October 18: Blog Post Due By 10pm

4. IDEOLOGY, PERSUASION and RECEPTION

- **Tuesday, October 20: Hegemony.com**
 - Questions:
 - *What are the major ideological messages in your favorite television series or movie?*
 - *Should the military or other branches of the government have an influence over the messages of Hollywood films? Is this kind of thing a problem (why)? Is it not a problem (why not)?*
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 151 – 169
 - Read: [The Pentagon’s Strengthening Grip on Hollywood](https://href.li/?http://www.salon.com/2011/08/29/sirota_military_movies/) (https://href.li/?http://www.salon.com/2011/08/29/sirota_military_movies/)
 - Check Out: [X-Men: First Class Army Advertisement](https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-OvnGgfwQc) (<https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-OvnGgfwQc>)
 - Check Out: [America’s Army](https://href.li/?http://store.steampowered.com/app/203290) (<https://href.li/?http://store.steampowered.com/app/203290>): Military Recruitment Video Game
- **Thursday, October 22: The Ability to Persuade**
 - Questions:
 - *The textbook for this week has a helpful discussion of “minimal effects”, “agenda-setting”, and “priming”... all theories about how the old media affect the way we think. What about the new media? Do you see examples of any of these “media effects” at work in your own consumption of digital content? In that of your friends or relatives?*
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 224 – 241
 - Choose one of the following cases to learn about:
 - Obama and social media:
 - Watch [Yes We Can](https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjXyqcx-mYY) (<https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjXyqcx-mYY>), then read: Wikipedia, “[Yes We Can](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yes_We_Can_(will.i.am_song)) ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yes_We_Can_\(will.i.am_song\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yes_We_Can_(will.i.am_song)))”, and “[Who Sent Yes We Can Viral?](https://techpresident.com/blog-entry/who-sent-yes-we-can-video-viral) (<https://techpresident.com/blog-entry/who-sent-yes-we-can-video-viral>)” or better yet, skim [the study on which it is based](https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/wallsten-analysis-yes-we-can-viral-video.pdf) (<https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/wallsten-analysis-yes-we-can-viral-video.pdf>).
 - Watch [Obama on Between Two Ferns](https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnW3xkHxIEQ) (<https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnW3xkHxIEQ>) and Read: Hollywood Reporter, “[Obamacare Traffic Spikes after Funny or Die](https://href.li/?http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/obamacare-website-traffic-spikes-presidents-687724) (<https://href.li/?http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/obamacare-website-traffic-spikes-presidents-687724>)”
 - Isis and social media:
 - Read: The Guardian, “[Polish College Student’s Website Becomes ISIS Propaganda Tool](https://href.li/?http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/15/-sp-polish-man-website-isis-propaganda-tool) (<https://href.li/?http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/15/-sp-polish-man-website-isis-propaganda-tool>)”
 - Read: [ISIS Winning War with Fancy Memes](https://href.li/?http://gawker.com/cory-booker-isis-is-winning-the-internet-war-with-fan-1702946942) (<https://href.li/?http://gawker.com/cory-booker-isis-is-winning-the-internet-war-with-fan-1702946942>), and watch [Cory Booker](https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sd7kMvn3Vhw) (<https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sd7kMvn3Vhw>) in Senate hearing
 - Sunday, October 25: Blog Post Due By 10pm
- **Tuesday, October 27: Encoding and Decoding**
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 259 – 278
 - Read: Cultural codes and polysemic messages
- **Thursday, October 29: The Active Audience**
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 278 – 293
 - Check Out [Poniverse.net](https://href.li/?https://poniverse.net) (<https://href.li/?https://poniverse.net>), Watch part of [The Brony Chronicles](https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2EOfhvURY) (<https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2EOfhvURY>) and read “[Bronies Are Redefining Fandom](https://href.li/?http://www.wired.com/2014/03/bronies-online-fandom/) (<https://href.li/?http://www.wired.com/2014/03/bronies-online-fandom/>)”
 - Check Out: Daily Mail, [#McFail!](https://href.li/?http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2090862/McDstories-McDonalds-Twitter-promotion-backfires-users-share-fast-food-horror-stories.html) (<https://href.li/?http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2090862/McDstories-McDonalds-Twitter-promotion-backfires-users-share-fast-food-horror-stories.html>) and [Obamacare Holding Sign Meme](https://href.li/?http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/president-obamacare-photo-viral-article-1.1546738) (<https://href.li/?http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/president-obamacare-photo-viral-article-1.1546738>)
 - Watch: [Red vs. Blue](https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9N8lpxO6rKs) (<https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9N8lpxO6rKs>)

5. OLD INEQUALITIES IN THE NEW MEDIA

- **Tuesday, November 3: Old Racism in the New Media**
 - Questions:
 - *We often read older media content as overtly racist. Where is racism located in newer forms of media? What form does it take?*
 - *What can be done to combat biased racial messages in the media?*
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 185 – 205
 - Read: “[How Reddit Became a Black Hole of Racism](https://href.li/?http://gawker.com/how-reddit-became-a-worse-black-hole-of-violent-racism-1690505395) (<https://href.li/?http://gawker.com/how-reddit-became-a-worse-black-hole-of-violent-racism-1690505395>)” or “[Cyber Racism on College Campuses](https://href.li/?http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jessie-daniels/cyber-racism-on-college-c_b_562752.html) (https://href.li/?http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jessie-daniels/cyber-racism-on-college-c_b_562752.html)”
 - Check Out: “[The Reimagining of African-American Stereotypes in Internet Culture](https://href.li/?http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jessie-daniels/cyber-racism-on-college-c_b_562752.html) (https://href.li/?http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jessie-daniels/cyber-racism-on-college-c_b_562752.html)”

<http://chicagomonitor.com/2013/07/the-re-imagining-of-african-american-stereotypes-in-internet-culture/>”

- Check Out: Know Your Meme, “Level: Asian (<https://href.li/?http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/level-asian>)”
- Check Out: Stereotype Busters (https://href.li/?http://manaa.org/?page_id=543)
- **Thursday, November 5: Stay Classy, Media**
 - Questions:
 - *Some have argued that the internet and new media will reduce social inequality and destroy hierarchies. How and why might new media reproduce social class boundaries or increase inequality?*
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 209-217
 - Read: The Atlantic, “The Internet is the Greatest Legal Facilitator of Inequality in Human History (<https://soc32501.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/atlantic-the-internet-is-the-greatest-legal-facilitator-of-inequality-in-human-history-the-atlantic.pdf>)”
 - Check Out: 7 Myths of the Digital Divide (<https://href.li/?http://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2013/04/26/7-myths-of-the-digital-divide/>)
 - Watch: Buckwild (<https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekzrzZXdprE>) Trailer, Best of Here Comes Honey Boo Boo (<https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzt7oCFN3ek>)
 - Listen: On Hicksploitation (<https://href.li/?http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/05/10/178791792>)
 - Sunday, November 8: Blog Post Due By 10pm
- **Tuesday, November 10: CLASS CANCELLED**
- **Thursday, November 12: The Gendered Internet**
 - Questions:
 - *As compared to old or traditional media, how are new media changing the way gender roles are applied and enforced?*
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 205 – 209, 178-185
 - Check Out: Feminist Frequency, “The Smurfette Principle (https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opM3T2_IZA)” and “The Evil Demon Seductress (<https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeCjm1UO4M>)”
 - Check Out: Feminist Frequency, “One Week of Harassment on Twitter (<https://href.li/?http://feministfrequency.com/2015/01/27/one-week-of-harassment-on-twitter/>)”
 - Listen: #GamerGate Controversy Fuels Debate on Women and Video Games (<https://href.li/?http://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2014/09/24/349835297>)
 - Check Out: Being a Woman Online: Taking Control of Online Dating (<https://href.li/?http://www.thetakeaway.org/story/being-woman-online-dating-app-women-women/>)
 - Sunday, November 14: Blog Post Due By 10pm

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, FIRST CASE STUDY DUE BY 10PM! DETAILS [HERE \(https://soc32501.wordpress.com/assignments-and-grading/\)](https://soc32501.wordpress.com/assignments-and-grading/).

- **Tuesday, November 17: Sex and Sexuality in Cyberspace**
 - Questions:
 - *On one hand, the internet (and media in general) can be sexually liberating, by providing positive role models, changing the public definition of acceptable behavior, or by encouraging experimentation with sexual identity. On the other hand, old media suppressed positive role models for decades, and the interactive affordances of new media can be used to bully, intimidate, or violate privacy. What’s an example of a show or a site that in your mind, has an especially positive or negative impact?*
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 217-221
 - Check Out: “Why do men pretend to be women online (https://href.li/?http://www.salon.com/2013/05/22/why_do_men_pretend_to_be_women_online/)?”
 - Check Out: World of Warcraft Gender-Switching (https://href.li/?http://www.slate.com/blogs/future_tense/2014/05/13/world_of_warcraft_gender_switching_why_men_choose_female_avatars.html) or just watch [this video \(https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8A8ViuB8X0\)](https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8A8ViuB8X0).
 - Check Out: Prezi (https://href.li/?https://prezi.com/99es0vzw_ldj/gender-swapping/) on gender-switching.
 - Watch: U-Toronto PSA on cyberbullying (<https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZLhWBXWPzs>)
 - Watch: CBS News, “Social Media Spotlighted in Rutgers Suicide Case (<https://href.li/?http://www.cbsnews.com/news/social-media-spotlighted-in-rutgers-suicide-case/>)”
 - Sunday, November 15: Blog Post Due at 10pm
- **Thursday, November 19: Will the Revolution Be Tweeted?**
 - Questions:
 - *A very high profile and clearly important debate has been waged in recent years over whether social media genuinely promote drastic social and political change or ‘slacktivism’ – a mode of political engagement that costs us little and achieves even less. Where do you stand in this debate? Are social media a ‘net positive’ or a ‘net negative’ (puns intended) for political awareness and social causes that seek to question or overthrow the dominant order in some area of society?*
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 241 – 248
 - Read: Malcolm Gladwell, “Small Change (<https://href.li/?http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/04/small-change-malcolm-gladwell>)” and/or Carr, “How Social Media is Ruining Politics (<https://href.li/?http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/09/2016-election-social-media-ruining-politics-213104?paginate=false>)”
 - Read: Branstetter, “The Death of Slacktivism (<https://href.li/?http://www.dailydot.com/opinion/slacktivism-college-campus-online-protests/>)” and/or Kristoff, “Payday for Ice Bucket Challenge’s Mocked Slacktivists (<https://href.li/?>)”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/03/opinion/nicholas-kristof-payday-for-ice-bucket-challenges-mocked-slacktivists.html>”

- Check Out: #BlackLivesMatter (<https://twitter.com/BlackLivesMatter>?lang=en)
- Sunday, November 22: Blog Post Due at 10pm

6. NEW MEDIA AND SOCIAL INTERACTION:

- **Tuesday, November 24: Shallower and Lonelier**
 - Watch Turkle, “*Connected, But Alone* (https://href.li/?http://www.ted.com/talks/sherry_turkle_alone_together?language=en)?”
 - Watch: Carr, “*What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (<https://href.li/?http://www.ideacityonline.com/video/nicholas-carr-what-the-internet-is-doing-to-our-brains/>)”
- **Thursday, November 26: GOBBLE GOBBLE**
- **Tuesday, December 1: Nomophobia**
 - Read: Wikipedia entry on *Nomophobia* (<https://href.li/?https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nomophobia>)
 - Read: Turkle, *Alone Together*, Chap. 9 “Tethered”, available here (you’ll need Hunter login) (https://href.li/?https://libsearch-cuny-edu.proxy.wexler.hunter.cuny.edu/F/PSGTYQHICNNEABHLXBXTA5FYTDML1KQMTJ4HD7P1HESTT2X2P-14308?func=full-set-set&set_number=011037&set_entry=000001&format=999)
 - Read: Networked Individualism
 - Read: Benediktsson et. al., Hybrid Strategies
- **Thursday, December 3: (A)Social Media?**
 - Read: Scientific American, “*Emotions Can be Contagious on Online Social Networks* (<https://href.li/?http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/facebook-emotions-are-contagious/>)”
 - Read: New York Magazine, “*You Should Freak Out More About Your Profile Picture* (<https://href.li/?http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2014/06/you-should-worry-more-about-your-profile-picture.html#>)”
 - Read: *The Million Follower Fallacy* (https://href.li/?http://readwrite.com/2010/03/19/the_million_follower_fallacy_audience_size_doesnt_prove_influence_on_twitter)
 - Sunday, December 6: Blog Post Due By 10pm
- **Tuesday, December 8: Regulating the Morality of Social Media**
 - Questions:
 - *What kind of content should the government regulate? What kind should it monitor? What kind should it leave alone?*
 - Read: Croteau & Hoynes, p. 94-102
 - Read: Lessig, “*Code is Law* (<https://href.li/?http://harvardmagazine.com/2000/01/code-is-law.html>)”
 - Watch: John Oliver segment on Revenge Porn (<https://href.li/?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUNlwYsz7PI>)
 - Read: “*Yik Yak is Unethical* (<https://href.li/?http://ethicsalarms.com/2015/03/12/unethical-app-yik-yak/>)”
- **Thursday, December 10:**
 - Read: TBA

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, SECOND CASE STUDY DUE BY 10PM! DETAILS [HERE](https://soc32501.wordpress.com/assignments-and-grading/) (<https://soc32501.wordpress.com/assignments-and-grading/>).

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, GROUP PAPER DUE BY 10PM! DETAILS [HERE](https://soc32501.wordpress.com/assignments-and-grading/) (<https://soc32501.wordpress.com/assignments-and-grading/>).