

SOCIOLOGY 3214: Mass Communication and Media



Course Description

This course examines the social implications of developments in communications and media technologies. Course material focuses on Canadian mass communications and media in an increasingly globalized context. Topics of study include the construction of social reality through communications and media, theoretical perspectives on production and reception, critical analyses of communication industry policy and ownership, news media and journalism, globalization and mass media culture, media representations of war and conflict, and political activism in new media. (NOTE: Not all topics listed here may be covered.)

Course Logistics

- Instructor: Bill Kirkpatrick, billkirkp@gmail.com (preferred) or b.kirkpatrick@uwinnipeg.ca. Please do **not** use Nexus to email me—I can only keep up with so many inboxes!
- Drop-In Hours: Tuesdays, 5:00-6:00 p.m. (Zoom), Wednesdays, 1:00-2:00 p.m. (*usually* on campus), Thursdays 11:30-12:30 (on campus), or by appointment;
- Schedule: The class meets Mondays and Wednesdays; the first class is Sep. 8, 2021 and the last is Dec. 6, 2021. The last day to drop the course for a full refund is Sep. 20, 2021. The final date to withdraw without academic penalty is Nov. 16, 2021.
- Format: The class is foreseen to meet in person. Should health restrictions require it, the class will move to a synchronous-online format.

Learning Goals

By the end of this class, you should:

- Understand and be able to explain the social construction of reality through communications and media.
- Be conversant with key sociological perspectives on media production, circulation, and reception.
- Be able to think critically about the relationships between the economic systems of media production and the media content produced under those systems, including news and journalism.
- Grasp key perspectives in the sociological study of mass media, including media technology and globalization.
- Understand key social, economic, and political issues in Canadian media and their significance for Canadian society.
- Improve your ability to read, comprehend, and apply challenging theoretical texts.
- Be able to research, analyze, and evaluate an issue that is both of interest to you and relevant to the themes and concerns discussed in class using appropriate theories and methodologies.

Required Materials

- This course will not use a textbook; all readings will be available online.
- Students may need to secure short-term access to Netflix and/or other streaming services in order to view the required media texts.

Assignments

All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Late assignments will be penalized ½-grade per day (e.g. B+ to B).

Reading Notes (rolling due dates)	25%
Midterm Exam (due Oct. 22)	25%
Final Paper (due Dec. 16)	30%
Homework & Exercises (rolling due dates will be announced in advance)	10%
Class Participation/Engagement	10%

Policies and Expectations

Your Attendance: Attendance is highly encouraged and will greatly enhance your own and others' class experience; it is also a major component of your "class engagement" grade. Furthermore, in-class exercises will not be possible to make up if you are absent.

My Attendance: When it is necessary for me to cancel a class due to exceptional circumstances, I will make every effort to inform students via Nexus and email as soon as possible.

Participation/Engagement: The main responsibilities of creating a productive and enjoyable class rest with you, and that is why class engagement is part of your final course grade (10%). Your active contributions affect not only what you get out of the course but also what your classmates get out of the course.

Assessment Criteria For Participation/Engagement: Merely showing up class and taking notes is not enough for your success in this class: I'll be looking for evidence of preparedness (e.g. referencing the readings), ability to make connections to other readings/discussions, effort to listen to and build on your classmates' comments, and willingness

to engage in critical thinking and dialog. You can also demonstrate class engagement outside of class (e.g. sending me your thoughts via email; coming to office hours to talk about ideas; sending me relevant links and items of interest; etc.). A rubric for class participation is on Nexus and will give you additional information about expectations and criteria. I am happy to discuss your participation grade in drop-in hours as we progress through the course so that you can make adjustments as necessary.

Preparation: Please have the day's readings ready to consult during class. The course outline will always state clearly what you should read prior to each class, which assignments you should hand in, and what else you must do for a given day. Late assignments will be penalized by a half-grade for each 24 hours of lateness (e.g. from B+ to B). If you see that you will have difficulty completing an assignment on time, let me know *before* the deadline and I will work with you to the extent possible.

Written Work: All written work must be typed in twelve-point font, with one-inch margins on all sides, and double-spaced. Your name and the date of completion must be given at the top unless otherwise specified.

Marks: All written assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade. The calculation of your grade will be based on a 1,000-point scale, and the weight of each assignment is listed above. If you are concerned about your grade, please come talk to me as early as possible. I will use the following scale:

A+	97-100%	EXCEPTIONAL. Demonstrated exceptional mastery of course material, together with exceptional skill and/or great originality in using knowledge and concepts from the course.
A	93-96.9%	EXCELLENT. Demonstrated thorough understanding of course material, together with very high degree of skill and/or considerable originality in using knowledge and concepts from the course.
A-	90-92.9%	OUTSTANDING. Demonstrated very high level of understanding of course material, together with high degree of skill and/or originality in using knowledge and concepts from the course.
B+	87-89.9%	VERY GOOD. Demonstrated high level of understanding of course material, together with reasonably high degree of skill and/or originality in using knowledge and concepts from the course.
B	80-86.9%	GOOD. Demonstrated above-average level of facility with course material, together with reasonable skill and/or originality in using knowledge and concepts from the course.
C+	77-79.9%	COMPETENT. Demonstrated acceptable level of facility with course material, together with fair skill and/or originality in using knowledge and concepts from the course.
C	70-76.9%	FAIRLY COMPETENT. Demonstrated acceptable familiarity with course material, together with adequate skill and/or originality in using knowledge and concepts from the course.
D	60-69.9%	PASSING. Demonstrated minimal grasp of course material, together with minimal skill and/or originality in using knowledge and concepts from the course.
F	0-59.9%	FAILING. Demonstrated insufficient knowledge of course material, together with inadequate skill and/or originality in using knowledge and concepts from the course.

Communication Policy: I will regularly use email and/or Nexus to send out announcements, changes in the schedule, reminders about due dates, etc. It is your responsibility to check your email regularly to keep up-to-date with these announcements. Except in rare cases of personal or family emergency, I promise to answer all email from students within 24 hours (36 hours on weekends) and will hold you responsible for any announcements made via email within 24 hours of the announced change (36 hours on weekends). Please keep in mind that more involved questions should be asked in drop-in hours, not over email. I prefer billkirkp@gmail.com but b.kirkpatrick@uwinnipeg.ca will work too.

Exams and Papers: The course has one open-book, untimed, take-home exam, which will consist of two essay questions (total length of both answers: 2000 words). The final paper will be an original scholarly research project (14-16 pages) on a media case study of your choice.

Absences for Religious Observance: Students may choose not to attend classes or write examinations on holy days of their religion, but they must notify me at least two weeks in advance to arrange an alternate due dates if necessary. A list of university-recognized religious holidays can be found at <http://uwinnipeg.ca/academics/calendar/docs/important-notes.pdf>.

Accessibility and Special Accommodations: I am striving to make the class and my teaching materials as accessible as possible. Access needs will be addressed pre-emptively through the following strategies:

- Captions for in-class videos, and transcripts of audio material, will be provided whenever possible.
- Class discussions may be recorded with advanced notice given to the instructor and the consent of the other students.
- The exams are take-home, open-book exams with at least a one-week completion window.
- Flexible deadlines are possible with advance notice.
- Class engagement will be evaluated through a variety of modalities: in-class discussion, contributing to Nexus, coming to student drop-in hours, etc.

It is important that the course be accessible to all students. Students with documented disabilities, temporary or chronic medical conditions, requiring academic accommodations for tests/exams (e.g., private space) or during lectures/laboratories (e.g., note-takers) are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services (AS) at 204-786-9771 or accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca to discuss appropriate options. All information about a student's disability or medical condition remains confidential <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/accessibility>. If you need any alternative accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or evaluation procedures in order for you to be able to participate fully in the course, or if there are any external issues that may affect your work in this course, please contact me privately as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty and Non-Academic Misconduct: Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the regulations and policies found in the University of Winnipeg's Academic Calendar [here](#). Particular attention should be given to subsections 8 (Student Discipline), 9 (Senate Appeals), and 10 (Grade Appeals). Please note, in particular, the subsection of Student Discipline pertaining to plagiarism and other forms of cheating. Detailed information can be found at the following:

Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures: <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/institutional-analysis/docs/policies/academic-misconduct-policy.pdf> and <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/institutional-analysis/docs/policies/academic-misconduct-procedures.pdf>

Non-Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures: <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/institutional-analysis/docs/student-non-academic-misconduct-policy.pdf> and <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/institutional-analysis/docs/student-non-academic-misconduct-procedures.pdf>

I also encourage you to view the University of Winnipeg library video tutorial "[Avoiding Plagiarism.](#)"

Misuse of Filesharing Sites: Uploading essays and other assignments to essay vendor or trader sites (filesharing sites that are known providers of essays for use by others who submit them to instructors as their own work) is highly problematic, and students who do this can be charged with Academic Misconduct. I'm happy to have a conversation with you about the ethics of participating on such sites.

Respectful Learning Environment: Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner on campus and in the learning environment irrespective of platform being used. Behaviour, communication, or acts that are inconsistent with a number of UW policies (e.g. [Respectful Working and Learning Environment Policy](#), [Acceptable Use of Information Technology Policy](#)) could be considered "non-academic" misconduct. More detailed information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Research Ethics: Students conducting research interviews, focus groups, surveys, or any other method of collecting data from any person, including a family member, must obtain research ethics approval before commencing data collection. Exceptions are research activities done in class as a learning exercise. For submission requirements and deadlines, see [here](#).

Privacy: You have rights in relation to the collecting of your personal data by the University; see [here](#). We will not have in-class testing/proctoring in this course, but you should also be aware of [policies in that regard](#).

Copyright: The University of Winnipeg requires me to including the following: "Course materials are owned by the instructor who developed them. Examples of such materials are course outlines, assignment descriptions, lecture notes, test questions, and presentation slides. Students who upload these materials to filesharing sites, or in any other way share these materials with others outside the class without prior permission of the instructor/presenter, are in violation of copyright law and University policy. Students must also seek prior permission of the instructor/presenter before photographing or recording slides, presentations, lectures, and notes on the board."

However, it should be noted that, unfortunately, this UW-provided statement is not an entirely accurate invocation of Canadian copyright law. For example, in claiming that prior permission must *always* be sought, the statement fails to acknowledge "fair dealing" exceptions when no prior permission is required. I wish that the University's statement would emphasize fair dealing as strongly as it asserts the supposed extent and sanctity of copyright. In any case, in keeping with the University's mission as an educational institution, I encourage you to freely and broadly share my course materials, your class notes, etc.

Daily Schedule

Readings should be completed by that day's class, and you should come prepared to discuss them.

"Prep" just means "be ready to discuss" — you won't be asked to hand in formal work for that assignment (although you may need to hand in copies of your notes or other materials).

* indicates a reading for which you may hand in reading notes for credit.

Please don't work too far ahead: I reserve the right to make changes to this course outline; therefore, we may not get to all the topics listed on this course outline. However, I will never change due dates on assignments to be earlier than was stated on the first day of class.

Abbreviations:

A = The reading will be on ARES (Reserve Readings)

N = A link to the item will be in NEXUS

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION

Sep. 8 Studying Mass Media as
Sociological Phenomena

Sep. 13 Practicing a Sociological Approach	<u>Watch:</u> <i>Schitt's Creek</i> , S1E1: "Our Cup Runneth Over"	
	<u>Read:</u> *Patrick, "Without a Paddle"	N

UNIT 2: CRITICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF MEDIA

Sep. 15 Marx and Althusser	<u>Read:</u> Marx & Engels, excerpt from "The German Ideology"	A
	*Althusser, "Ideology"	A

Sep. 20 The Frankfurt School	<u>Read:</u> Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"	A
	*Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered"	A

Sep. 22 Gramsci: Ideology as Hegemony	<u>Read:</u> *Stoddart, "Ideology, Hegemony, Discourse," pp. 191-206	N
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Sep. 27 Media and Social Conflict	<u>Read:</u> Becker, "Ideology," pp. 11-16 (plus chart on p. 17)	A
	<u>Read:</u> *Hall, "Encoding, Decoding"	A

Sep. 29 Representation	<u>Read:</u> Mediatexthack, "Semiotics"	N
	Beltrán, "Representation," pp. 97-103	A

Oct. 4 Media and Society: Symbolic Interactionism	<u>Read:</u> *Denzin, "Symbolic Interactionism and the Media," pp. 74-81	N
	<u>Watch:</u> Frozen Justice, The Case of the Urban Imaginary in Canadian Crime Films"	N

Oct. 6	Media and Society: Public Sphere Theory	<u>Read:</u> *Fortner et al. "Media, Civil Society, and the Public Sphere"	N
		Note: Midterm exam (take-home) handed out, due Friday, Oct. 22, at 5:00 p.m.	

— READING PERIOD: OCT. 11-15 —

UNIT 3: MEDIA IN CANADA: AN OVERVIEW

Oct. 18	The Canadian Media Landscape I	<u>Read:</u> *Prang, "The Origins of Public Broadcasting in Canada"	N
Oct. 20	The Canadian Media Landscape II	<u>Read:</u> *Cormack & Cosgrave, "Contesting Canada at the CBC" <u>Listen:</u> <i>Canadaland</i> , "Why Is The CBC So Schitty?" Turn In: Midterm by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 22	A N
Oct. 25	The Canadian Media Landscape III	<u>Watch:</u> Frozen Justice, "The Case of the Indigenous Canadian Crime Film" <u>Read:</u> *Roth, "First Peoples' Television in Canada"	N N

UNIT 4: MEDIA AND SOCIAL DIFFERENCE

Oct. 27	The Social Construction of Race	<u>Read:</u> *Omi & Winant, "Racial Formation" <u>Watch:</u> <i>Kim's Convenience</i> , S1E1	A
Nov. 1	Race, Orientalism, and Multiculturalism in Canada	<u>Watch:</u> <i>Little Mosque on the Prairie</i> , S1E4 <u>Read:</u> *Conway, "Little Mosque, Small Screen" Costello, "Kim's Convenience and Canadian Television's Diversity Problem"	A N
Nov. 3	NO CLASS	Turn In: Paper proposal by 5:00 p.m.	
Nov. 8	Social Stratification and Media Consumption	<u>Watch:</u> "Social Stratification" Dion, "My Heart Will Go On" (2017) <u>Read:</u> *Wilson, "Let's Talk About Bad Taste"	N N A
Nov. 10	Gender	<u>Watch:</u> <i>Hockey Night in Canada</i> , Oct. 27, 2014 (excerpts; see Nexus) <u>Read:</u> Steiner, "Feminist Media Theory" <u>Read:</u> *Langley, "Gender, Talk, TV, Hockey, & 'Canadian Identity'"	N N
Nov. 15	No Class	<u>Know:</u> Nov. 16 is the final day to withdraw without academic penalty	
Nov. 17	Disability	<u>Read:</u> *Ellcessor et al., "Toward a Disability Media Studies"	A
Nov. 22	Hegemony workshop	<u>Read:</u> *Hebdige, "From Culture to Hegemony"	N
Nov. 24	Queer and Queered Texts	<u>Watch:</u> <i>Schitt's Creek</i> , S3E1 <u>Read:</u> *Lipton, "Queer Readings of Popular Culture" Kannen, "Loving and Loathing on <i>Schitt's Creek</i> "	A A
Nov. 29	Globalization	<u>Read:</u> *van Elteren, "Reconceptualizing 'Cultural Imperialism'"	N

UNIT 4: NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Dec. 1	Social Media	<u>Listen:</u> <i>Build for Tomorrow</i> (podcast), "You Are Not 'Addicted' to Technology"	N
		<u>Read:</u> *Cummings and Gottshall, "Citizenship and Consumption: Media Theory in the Age of Twitter"	N
		<u>Prep:</u> Media consumption diary (HW)	
Dec. 6	Algorithms plus Summary	<u>Read:</u> *Burrell & Fourcade, "The Society of Algorithms"	N

Dec. 16: Final paper due by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 16

Bibliographic Information for Readings

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- Althusser, Louis. 2008. "Ideology." In *Cultural Studies: An Anthology*, edited by Michael Ryan, 304–10. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Becker, Ron. 2018. "Ideology." In *The Craft of Criticism: Critical Media Studies in Practice*, edited by Michael Kackman and Mary Celeste Kearney, 11–22. London and New York: Routledge.
- Beltrán, Mary. 2018. "Representation." In *The Craft of Criticism: Critical Media Studies in Practice*, edited by Michael Kackman and Mary Celeste Kearney, 97–108. London and New York: Routledge.
- Benjamin, Walter. 2003. "Extracts from 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.'" In *The Photography Reader*, edited by Liz Wells, 42–52. London and New York: Routledge.
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- Conway, Kyle. 2013. "Little Mosque, Small Screen: Multicultural Broadcasting Policy and Muslims on Television." *Television & New Media* 15 (7): 648–63.
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- Cummings, Kevin, and Cynthia Gottshall. 2014. "Citizenship and Consumption: Media Theory in the Age of Twitter." In *The Handbook of Media and Mass Communication Theory*, edited by Robert S. Fortner and P. Mark Fackler, 612–28. Somerset, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Denzin, Norman K. 2014. "Symbolic Interactionism and the Media." In *The Handbook of Media and Mass Communication Theory*, edited by Robert S. Fortner and P. Mark Fackler, 74–94. Somerset, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
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- Elteren, Mel van. 2014. "Reconceptualizing 'Cultural Imperialism' in the Current Era of Globalization." In *The Handbook of Media and Mass Communication Theory*, edited by Robert S. Fortner and P. Mark Fackler, 400–419. Somerset, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Fortner, Robert S., Ann Snesareva, and Ksenia Tsitovich. 2014. "Media, Civil Society, and the Public Sphere: History and Current Thinking." In *The Handbook of Media and Mass Communication Theory*, edited by Robert S. Fortner and P. Mark Fackler, 314–32. Somerset, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
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- Kannen, Victoria. 2019. "Loving and Loathing on *Schitt's Creek*: How Representations of Emotion, Identities, and Nation Matter." In *The Spaces and Places of Canadian Popular Culture*, edited by Victoria Kannen and Neil Shyminsky, 56–66. Canadian Scholars.
- Langley, Sandra. 2003. "Gender, Talk, TV, Hockey, and 'Canadian Identity': Feminist Takes on 'Television Rejection.'" *Canadian Journal of Communication* 28 (4). <https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2003v28n4a1390>.
- Lipton, Mark. 2008. "Queer Readings of Popular Culture: Searching [To] Out the Subtext." In *Queer Youth Cultures*, edited by Susan Driver, 163–79. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Martin, Bronwen. 2014. "Semiotics and the Media." In *The Handbook of Media and Mass Communication Theory*, edited by Robert S. Fortner and P. Mark Fackler, 56–73. Somerset, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

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- Prang, Margaret. 1965. "The Origins of Public Broadcasting in Canada." *The Canadian Historical Review* 46 (1): 1–31.
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- Stoddart, Mark C. J. 2007. "Ideology, Hegemony, Discourse: A Critical Review of Theories of Knowledge and Power." *Social Thought & Research* 28: 191–225.
- Wilson, Carl. 2007. *Celine Dion's Let's Talk About Love: A Journey to the End of Taste*. 33-1/3. New York and London: Continuum.