

ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE MEDIA

LAS 4935 - LAS 6938 - ANT4930 - ANG6930

Spring 2015



Thursday 9-11 period (4:05-7:05pm)
Rinker Hall 230

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This course takes an anthropological approach to examine social and cultural practices of media production, circulation, and consumption. It draws upon concepts and questions of cultural mediation that were fundamental to critical thinkers of the past century (cultural industry, ideology, propaganda, public sphere) to explore news-making in the global age of the social media (Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, etc.).

Comparing and juxtaposing past and present, theory and practice, and using a variety of multimedia formats, we will analyze the role of the press in the government's propaganda machinery; probe the construction of dominant discourses and strategies of representation; discuss the consequences of news messages traveling across uneven political, cultural, and economic terrain on the national and global scales; and examine how citizens engage with new social media to challenge the official ideologies and state regimes. The course also invites to reconsider how the media achieves effects of truth in its depiction of reality. We will thus pay close attention to the materiality and the performativity of different media forms and examine genres of truth-telling, including parody and fiction.

Throughout the semester students will not only learn about, but they will also actively engage with a variety of multimedia (photo, video, audio) and social media platforms (including, but not limited to YouTube, Twitter, Storify, and others) to creatively examine the themes of the course. While it is not designed to provide training in any given media production skill, the course aims to provoke students to experiment with media practices and stretch their existing skill sets.

Required books:

Chavez, Leo R.

2001 *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation*. Stanford University Press.

Debord, Guy

1967 *Society of The Spectacle*. Black & Red. Available online at:
<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/debord/society.htm>

The books are available for 2-hour loan from the Reserve Desk at UF Library West. All remaining class readings can be downloaded from the course's Canvas site.

Assignments and Grading:

Student grades will be based on 100 points divided as follows: preparation for and active participation in class discussions (30 points); midterm exam (20 points); and a research project with a social media/multimedia component (50 points).

Attendance: Absence for reasons of illness, religious holiday or official university business is excused. Please inform me as early as possible and provide appropriate documentation. You are responsible to contact a classmate to obtain notes on the materials covered. For each unexcused absence your final grade will be reduced a full letter (A to B, A- to B-, etc). *Students with four or more unexcused absences will automatically fail the course.*

Active Participation (30 points)

This is a discussion-based class. Careful preparation for each of the seminars and informed contribution is expected. Always bring an electronic or hard copy of that day's readings to class, and come to the seminar with questions and ideas. By noon on the day of the seminar you should post a paragraph with your comments and questions about the assigned readings on Canvas. You are encouraged to actively engage with different media platforms and networks throughout the semester and share news related to the issues of interest to the class by posting them on Twitter (use hashtag #UFanthromedia). To receive full credit, your comments during the seminar should not be speculative and must demonstrate that you have done the assigned readings.

Midterm Exam (20 points)

The midterm will be a take-home exam. You will be given three questions and you will answer two. The questions will be explicitly tied to course readings, lectures and films from the first part of the course (through February 26). The exam will be due on Canvas by the end of the day on March 12.

Graduate students, instead of taking the midterm exam, can opt for an alternative assignment. With the instructor's approval, you can prepare to give a 30-min lecture on one of the course's themes.

Research Project (50 points)

During the first weeks of the course you will choose a research question, which will guide your individual work throughout the semester. Your research question must be directly related to the themes addressed in the course. While thinking about possible topics, you are highly encouraged to meet with the instructor early on in the semester to share your ideas. All students will write a 1-2-page research proposal (10 points) of their chosen research topic. Specific instructions for preparing the proposal will be announced on the first day of class and posted on Canvas. The research project must have a social media and/or a multimedia component, which will vary from student to student based

on the context of your project and your pre-existing skill set. Examples of possible media projects include: using Storify or a similar digital platform to build an interactive story; shooting and editing a photo-essay; producing an audio podcast; creating a website or writing a blog; coordinating a social media campaign on Twitter; mashing up a Youtube video montage; installing a public art display; or creating a short documentary (10 points). All students will give presentations of their project (10 points) during the last two class meetings. 7-10-page research paper (20 points), due by the start of class on April 16, should critically examine your research question. Your theorization of the issue should draw upon existing scholarly literatures while your analysis should reflect on your experience of working on the social media/multimedia component of the project.

Course Rules:

Written work: Please follow these style guidelines:

- Use 12-point Times New Roman or similar font;
- Your documents should be double-spaced, with 1 inch margins;
- Include your last name and page number in the header/footer of each page;
- Cite all sources consistently, using the style of your choice.

Late Work and Extensions: If you know you will not be able to turn in the assignment on time, please notify me as early as possible. Extensions must be arranged in advance. Assignments will be marked down for each day they are late.

Grading Scale:

A = 94 and above; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 79-82; C+ = 76-78; C = 72-75; C- = 69-71; D+ = 66-68; D = 62-65; D- = 59-61; E = 58 and below.

Passing Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-
Grade Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	.67

For further information, please consult UF grading policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Grades on Canvas: You will be able to see your score for each assignment and your tentative grade for the course on Canvas. Be aware that Canvas will not show your final grade for the course. Your final grade will be submitted to the Office of the University Registrar and will be available at the end of the semester.

Grade Appeals: Grades will not be discussed via e-mail. If you have a question or a complaint about your grade, please contact me within 48 hours of posting to arrange a meeting time.

Academic Honesty: All work submitted by a student for a grade must be completed by that student and free from unauthorized assistance or deliberate misrepresentations. The penalty for plagiarism or cheating is a grade of zero points on the assignment in question; in such cases an incident form will also be sent to the Office of the Dean. If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please consult the UF Honor Code as well as the UF Policies on Academic Honesty, Student Rights and Responsibilities. These are available online at: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/secr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.

Accommodations for Disabilities: Students who need classroom accommodation or other reasonable modifications to complete assignments successfully and satisfy course criteria are encouraged to meet with the instructor as early in the course as possible. You will be asked to supply a letter from the Disability Resource Center to assist in planning accommodations. Contact the Disability Resource Center at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>.

Health and Counseling:

Health and counseling services are available for students in the event personal problems threaten to hinder academic performance. You can contact UF Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>; 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Course Evaluations:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Please note: The Instructor may make minor adjustments to class readings or assignments during the course of the semester. Any modifications will be announced ahead of time.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 8

Course and Class Introductions

Ginsburg, Faye D., Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin

2002 Introduction. In *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*. F.D. Ginsburg, L. Abu-Lughod, and B. Larkin, eds. Pp. 1-36. Berkeley: University of California Press.

In-Class Documentary: *Stranger with a Camera* (2000)

Week 2: January 15

The Propaganda Industry

Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer

1944 The Culture Industry: Enlightenment As Mass Deception. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. E. Jephcott, trans. Pp. 94-136. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Althusser, Louis

1972 Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. In *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*. Pp. 85-126. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Herman, Edward, and Noam Chomsky

1988 *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. Pp. 1-35. New York: Pantheon Books.

In-Class Documentary: *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media* (1992)

Week 3: January 22

Producing Threats

Chavez, Leo R.

- 2001 *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation*. Stanford University Press.

Week 4: January 29

Spectacular Power

Debord, Guy

- 1967 *Society of The Spectacle*. Black & Red. Available online at:
<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/debord/society.htm>

Agamben, Giorgio

- 2011 "Language, Media and Politics." 6th lecture at the European Graduate School.
Watch online at:
<http://www.egs.edu/faculty/giorgio-agamben/videos/language-media-and-politics/>

Week 5: February 5

Labor of Coding

Hall, Stuart

- 1980 Encoding/decoding. In *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*. Pp. 128-138. University of Birmingham: Hutchinson.

Briggs, Charles L.

- 2007 Mediating Infanticide: Theorizing Relations between Narrative and Violence. *Cultural Anthropology* 22(3):315-356.

Torres, Gabriela M.

- 2014 Art and Labor in the Framing of Guatemala's Dead. *Anthropology of Work Review* 35(1):14-24.

Samet, Robert

- 2013 The Photographer's Body: Populism, Polarization, and the Uses of Victimhood in Venezuela. *American Ethnologist* 40(3):525-539.

Research Proposals Due

*** Gainesville Justice Week: Roundtable on Media Coverage of Sex Trafficking**

Week 6: February 12

The Public Sphere

Habermas, Jürgen

- 1989 *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Pp. 1-56. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Fraser, Nancy

- 1990 Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. *Social Text* (25/26):56-80.

Yeh, Rihan

- 2012 Two Publics in A Mexican Border City. *Cultural Anthropology* 27(4):713-735.
 Peterson, Mark Allen
 2007 Making Global News: "Freedom of Speech" and "Muslim Rage" in U.S. Journalism.
Contemporary Islam 1(3):247-264.

Week 7: February 19

Performativity, Statecraft, Legitimacy

- Ginsburg, Faye
 1994 Embedded Aesthetics: Creating a Discursive Space for Indigenous Media. *Cultural Anthropology* 9(3):365-382.
 Goldstein, Daniel M. and Fatima Williams Castro
 2006 Creative Violence: How Marginal People Make News in Bolivia. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 11(2):380-407.
 Jaffe, Rivke
 2012 The Popular Culture of Illegality: Crime and the Politics of Aesthetics in Urban Jamaica. *Anthropological Quarterly* 85(1):79-102.
 Bishara, Amahl
 2008 Watching U.S. Television From the Palestinian Street: The Media, the State, and Representational Interventions. *Cultural Anthropology* 23(3):488-530.

Week 8: February 26

Politics of Parody

- Ferry, Elizabeth
 2011 'If the miners had been Mexican...' The Chilean Mine Rescue as Mexican 'Politics Machine'. *Anthropology Today* 27(4):15-18.
 Molé, Noelle J.
 2013 Trusted Puppets, Tarnished Politicians: Humor and Cynicism in Berlusconi's Italy. *American Ethnologist* 40(2):288-299.
 Ashley, Jennifer
 2014 Prime-time Politics: News, Parody, and Fictional Credibility in Chile. *American Ethnologist* 41(4):757-770.
 Boyer, Dominic and Alexei Yurchak
 2010 AMERICAN STIOB: Or, What Late-Socialist Aesthetics of Parody Reveal about Contemporary Political Culture in the West. *Cultural Anthropology* 25(2):179-221.

Week 9: March 5

No Class (Spring Break)

Week 10: March 12

No Class (American Ethnological Society Meeting in San Diego, CA)

Midterm Exam

Week 11: March 19

Technologies of Defiance

- Fanon, Frantz
1967 This is the Voice of Algeria. In *A Dying Colonialism*. Pp. 69-98. New York: Grove Press.
- Turner, Terence
1992 Defiant Images: The Kayapo Appropriation of Video. *Anthropology Today* 8(6):5-16.
- Larkin, Brian
2004 Degraded Images, Distorted Sounds: Nigerian Video and the Infrastructure of Piracy. *Public Culture* 16(2):289-314.
- Fattal, Alex
2014 Hostile remixes on YouTube: A new constraint on pro-FARC counterpublics in Colombia. *American Ethnologist* 41(2):320-335.

In-Class Documentary: *Burma VJ: Reporting from a Closed Country* (2008)

Week 12: March 26

Leaking Secrets

- Deger, Jennifer
2007 Seeing the Invisible: Yolngu Video as Revelatory Ritual. *Visual Anthropology* 20(2):103-121.
- van de Port, Mattijs
2006 Visualizing the Sacred: Video Technology, "Televisual" Style, and the Religious Imagination in Bahian Candomblé. *American Ethnologist* 33(3):444-461.
- Masco, Joseph
2010 "Sensitive but Unclassified": Secrecy and the Counterterrorist State. *Public Culture* 22(3):433-463.
- Coleman Gabriella
2013 Anonymous and the politics of leaking. In *Beyond WikiLeaks: Implications for the Future of Communications, Journalism and Society*. B Brevini, A Hintz, P McCurdy, eds. Pp. 209-228. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Week 13: April 2

New Social Media

- Juris, Jeffrey
2012 Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social Media, Public Space, and Emerging Logics of Aggregation. *American Ethnologist* 39(2):259-279.
- Postill, John
2014 Democracy in an Age of Viral Reality: A Media Epidemiography of Spain's Indignados Movement. *Ethnography* 15(1):51-69.
- Gershon, Ilana
2014 Selling Your Self in the United States. *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 37(2):281-295.

Week 14: April 9

Research Presentations

Week 15: April 16

Research Presentations

Research Papers Due