
COMMUNICATION & THE GLOBAL PUBLIC SPHERE in Fall 2020 (PO5025)

Course Code	PO5025	Professor(s)	Charles Talcott
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-402
Class Schedule	M: 10:50-12:25 in Q-704 R: 16:20-17:55 in Q-704	Office Hours	By appointment(on campus or online)
Credits	4	Email	ctalcott@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2020	Office Tel. Ext.	575

Course Description

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course focuses on the/a "Public" -the "Public" as a vital social, political and cultural 'body' but also a critical conceptual matrix, a form of social and individual consciousness and a lived socio-political material and discursive, "space." The concepts of the "Public" and the "Public Sphere" form an integral part of our understanding of human community, civil society and collective governance, especially our sense of a working democracy and of the emergence of post-national/transnational forms of identity and communication. This course looks at the idea of the public and the public sphere from, first, a theoretical and historical angle, and, second, a practical angle with regard to contemporary issues in national, regional and global politics. By setting up a careful theoretical and historically-informed framework for the concept of the public sphere, the course is organized to provide important conceptual tools from which empirical and critical inquiry into the contemporary dilemmas of the 'public' can be undertaken. Over the course of the semester, we will trace the emergence of an Enlightened, rational and considered "public consciousness" and how various institutions and agents, from coffee houses to media and political actors have contributed both materially and rhetorically to the constitution of what comes to be known as "the public". We will consider how socio-cultural, media and governmental agencies come to constitute "public spaces" (both material and virtual) in and through which "public discourse" emerges and takes shape. We will consider how institutional and technological forces come to "set agendas" and constitute "public opinion" while striving to articulate, advance and influence "the public interest." We will consider how the political economy of media and social practices facilitate or stifle, repress, silence discursive spaces, political actors, and publics. The course will also compare contemporary manifestations of public-making with special attention paid to Jürgen Habermas's theory of the "Public Sphere," which he argued was an area of social life that was absolutely vital to a legitimate democracy. In the second half of the semester, we will explore departures and mutations of the possibly over-idealized public into "masses," "crowds," "markets," "demographics," "statistical sets," and "data mines." We will explore how we live in and through "mediated sociality" due to

the ever-ubiquitous communication technologies, digitization and "datafication" and examine how digital platforms impact the viability and future of an ever-emergent global public sphere. The course will investigate these topics through "case studies" which illustrate the acceleration of the processes of media globalization and flows of media content, and the uses of new media for transnational and globalized political communication. We will seek a descriptive knowledge of how these processes are empirically functioning and a critical theoretical analysis of how they maintain, change or undermine visions of social change, global governance and democratic life. This course serves as an introduction to and preparation for more substantive study of "publics," of contemporary transnational social movements, their strategies of advocacy, and their bases in grassroots and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Course Learning Outcomes

Understand the various conjugations of the concept of "the public"

Understand and be able to articulate the history and theory of the "public" and the "public sphere"

Identify and analyze operative definitions of the "public" within policy-making practices

Relate public sphere discourse to theories of democracy and civil society

Relate theory to practical analysis of social consciousness and human identities

Relate theory to practical analysis of media & global communication practices

General Education

GRADUATE PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:

MAGC LO(2). Be aware of key issues in debates about globalization and their relationship to forms of global media and culture.

MAGC LO(3). Develop critical perspectives on major concepts and theories in media studies, communications, cultural studies.

Key Questions

The course pursues multiple key questions, to which, students should be able to answer by the end of the semester:

- What is a public, the public, public consciousness, a counter-public, a public sphere, public

spheres?

- What is the relationship between ideas and practices of democracy and the public sphere?
- What role does communication play within the public sphere and democracy?
- What is/would be a global public sphere or a transnational public sphere?
- Is there a need for a global public sphere? What are the dangers of its absence?
- Is the very concept of a "global public sphere"ethnocentric (Western)? Masculinist? Hetero-white normative?Is there a 'human' commons?•How do "marginalized/disenfranchised/minoritarian" voices fit into concepts of counter-publics/publics, and especially the diversification and consequent fragmentation ofnew mediaplatforms?
- What is the proper relationship between business, markets, democracy and the public sphere? What is the relationship between media businesses, democratic citizenship and the public sphere?
- How has theinternet and new technology impacted how one 'imagines' thepublic sphere?
- What is the relationship of contemporary public relations, branding, and spin to democratic citizenship?
- What ethical problems are raised for public relations, marketing, and branding in contemporary public spheres?
- What should be the proper relationship between all of these actors and concepts in a healthy democracy and world community (typified by the UN and other transnational organizations whose actions affect people in transnational ways)?

Course Outline

Part 1: Defining Public(s)

Week 1

Introduction to the course

Course schedule, course setting, course logistics

Towards a collective emergence of a "public" What is a "public"

Week 2

Imagining Communities, Collectives, Publics & Political 'Bodies' Conceptualizing and defining a "public.

Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. (Benedict Richard O'Gorman), and Benedict R. O'G Anderson. Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. Rev. ed., Verso, 2006. Chapter 1 and Chapter 3

https://aup.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/33AUP_INST/1n1ctv/alma991990011806026

Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp Chapter 2 "The Social World as Communicative Construction" and Chapter 9 "Collectivities" from Couldry, Nick, and Andreas Hepp. (2017) The Mediated Construction of Reality Society, Culture, Mediatization. Polity, 2017.

https://aup.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/33AUP_INST/1n1ctv/alma991847533406026

Kant, Immanuel: 'An Answer to the Question: What is the Enlightenment?' (1784) in The Idea of the Public Sphere (IPS), pp. 3-9.

<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.aup.fr/lib/aup/detail.action?docID=634249>

G.W.F Hegel: Excerpt from the Philosophy of Right (1821) on the arbitrary will in IPS, pp. 9-14

RECOMMENDED

J. Bentham: 'Of Publicity' (1799). Available in course site.

Assignment Due: 'Thought Paper' | 12 noon, Thursday, October 1 via TEAMS Assignment

Week 3

'The Public Sphere': The Conceptual & Theoretical Underpinnings From Sensibility & Space to Social Consciousness & Practice 'The Public Sphere': Jürgen Habermas

J. Habermas: 'The Public Sphere: An Encyclopaedia Article' (1964) in IPS, pp. 114-20.

J. Habermas: The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere ([1962], Polity Press, 1992)(excerpts)

Week 4

Diversifying conceptions of 'the' public and 'counter-publics

Elizabeth Breese, "Mapping the variety of public spheres." *Communication Theory*, 21(2), 130-149(2011).

N. Fraser: 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy' (1992) in IPS, pp. 127-45

H. Arendt: Excerpt from *The Human Condition* on public space, IPS, pp. 93-113

Recommended:

Public Reason J. Rawls: 'The Idea of Public Reason Revisited' (1997), in IPS, pp. 205-34 (originally published in *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 64: pp. 765–807).

Assignment Due: 'Thought Paper' | 12 noon, Thursday, October 15 via TEAMS Assignment

Part 2: 'Doing' Publics: Defining Public Capacities

Week 5

Consumer Publics | Rise of Public Relations within Modern Democracies 'Unruly Masses': From Fear of the Crowds to "Citizenships of Control"

Please watch *Century of the Self* documentary series Parts 1 (view outside of class)

Assignment Due: Video Response on the "Century of the Self" 12 noon, Thursday October 22 via the FlipGrid app within TEAMS

Edward Bernays, *Propaganda*, (Ig Publishing) Sue Jansen "The Spectacular Growth of Global Public Relations" in *Stealth Communications*, chapter 3, (2017)

"Making the World Safe for Democracy" Public Relations Goes Global: Exporting the Engineering of Consent Discussion: Documentary: Rachel Boynton "Our Brand is Crisis" (class screening outside of class) Recommended: Joseph Schumpeter: Excerpt from *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1942) in IPS, 54-71

Week 6

Public Capacities | 'Forming Opinions' within 'Mass' Democracies: Classic Debates Publics, Audiences, Crowds

What is "public opinion"? J.S. Mill: Excerpt from *On Liberty* (1859) on freedom of opinion in IPS,

pp. 15-22.

Wirth, Louis. "Consensus and Mass Communication." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 13, no. 1, 1948, pp. 1–15. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2086750.

J. Bryce 'The Nature of Public Opinion' (1888). Available online.

RECOMMENDED

C. Schmitt: Excerpt from *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*(1923) in IPS,73-89J.

Habermas: 'Public Deliberation for democratic decision-making' (1996) excerpt in

IPS,184-204Niklas Luhmann: 'Societal complexity and public opinion' (1981) in IPS,173-83

The debate over public capacities

W. Lippmann: Excerpt from *The Phantom Public*(1925) in IPS,pp. 25-42.

J. Dewey: Excerpt from *The Public and its Problems*(1927) in IPS,43-53.

Classic Reference –Recommended

Lang, Kurt, and Gladys Engel Lang. "The Unique Perspective of Television and Its Effect: A Pilot Study." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1953, pp. 3–12. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2087842

Week 7

(Un)Reasonable Publics: Setting the Agenda and The Rise of Affect Populism and the (re-)emergence of "Affect Publics"

Case study:J. Berry and S. Sobieraj: Excerpts from *The Outrage Industry* (2014)

Classic Reference –Recommended

McCombs, Maxwell E., and Donald L. Shaw. "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 2, 1972, pp. 176–187. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2747787.

"Belief Publics": Religion, Belief & the Global Public Sphere

Judith Butler, et. al. "The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere". Columbia University Press

Radha S. Hegde, "Eyeing New Public: Veiling and the Performance of Civic Visibility." In Daniel C. Brouwer, *Public Modalities: Rhetoric, Culture, Media and the Shape of Public Life*(pp. 154-172). Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press (2010).

Week 8

Belief Publics | Fundamental Differences: 'Are We 'All' Charlie'?

Case study: Charlie Hebdo/Jyllands-Posten controversy Differing conceptions of free speech & public solidarity

Payne, Robert. "'Je Suis Charlie': Viral Circulation and the Ambivalence of Affective Citizenship." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3, SAGE Publications, May 2018, pp. 277–92,

https://aup.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/33AUP_INST/12f2gg6/sage_s10_1177_1367877916675193

University Holiday -no class on Thursday November 12

Held, D. "Principles of cosmopolitan order" chapter 2 in Brock, G., & Brighouse, H. (2005). *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*. Cambridge University Press.

http://proxy.aup.fr/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xww&AN=138987&site=ehost-live&scope=site&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_10

Part 3 Real World Publics: Materialities, Pluralities& Our Global 'Cosmopolitan' Commons

Week 9

'Public' Health, Public Opinion: Public Spheres, Pandemics, Vaccines

Heid J. Larson, *Stuck: How Vaccine Rumors Start and Why They Don't Go Away* (2020)

Assignment Due: Video Response#2| 10am, Monday November 23

Intersectionality & Publics: Bodies, Genders, Sex

Michael Warner, *Publics & Counterpublics* (M.I.T. Press), excerpts

Oscar Negt and Alexander Kluge, Excerpt from *Public Sphere and Experience*, in *IPS*, 121-126

Vardeman-Winter, J., Tindall, N., & Jiang, H. (2013). Intersectionality and publics: How exploring publics' multiple identities questions basic public relations concepts. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 2(3), 279–304.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/2046147X13491564>

Documentary: Paris is Burning by Jennie Livingstone (media ethnography exercise)

Week 10

A Proliferation of Publics, Counter-publics and Diversity Public Diversities: The Black Public Sphere Challenging predominant 'publics'

Catherine R. Squires, Rethinking the Black Public Sphere: An Alternative Vocabulary for Multiple Public Spheres, Communication Theory, Volume 12, Issue 4, 1 November 2002,

Pages 446–468, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2002.tb00278.x>

bell hooks "Theory as Liberatory Practice" and "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness"

Deva Woodly, Black Lives Matter and the Democratic Necessity of Social Movements

Recommended

The Black Public Sphere : a Public Culture Book . University of Chicago Press, 1995. Nathan Rambukkana, ed. #HashtagPublics: The Power and Politics of Discursive Networks.

Week 11

Digital Publics -Digital Advocacy: The Data-fication of Crowds From #Hashtag Publics to Platform Publics.

Publics, Digital masses | 'Swarm theory

'Byung-Chul Han, In the Swarm: Digital Prospects, ebook

The Metrics of 'Attention Publics' Bot Publics | A.I. Publics

Excerpts from Nick Srnicek Platform Capitalism (2017)

James Bohman, "Expanding Dialogue: The Internet, the Public Sphere, and Prospects for Transnational Democracy" in IPS, 247-269

Jodi Dean, "Why the Net is not a Public Sphere." Constellations 10(1) 95-112 (2003).

Recommended:

Carty, Victoria (2010). "New information communication technologies and grassroots mobilization." Information, Communication & Society, 13(2), pp.155-173

Assignment Due: 'Thought Paper' | 12 noon, Thursday, November 26 via TEAM

Week 12

Publics and our Material Commons

Capital Publics & "StratCom" Leveraging Publics in neo-liberal market economies

Mark Fisher Capital Realism. Is there no alternative? sections (Zero Books) PDF

Kubitschko, S (2012) "Critical media studies in times of communicative capitalism: an interview with Jodi Dean." Platform: Journal of Communication and Media4(1) June (pp. 39-44).

Robert Asen, "The Ownership Society, or Bourgeois Publicity Revisited." In Daniel C. Brouwer, Public Modalities: Rhetoric, Culture, Media and the Shape of Public Life(pp.109-130). Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press (2010).

Recommended

Dan Hind, Chapter 5: "Neoliberal Publics "(pp. 77-93) in The return of the public. London, UK: Verso (2010).

Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, Preface and section 3.3 (Democracy of the Multitude) In Multitude: War and democracy in the age of empire. New York, NY: Penguin Press.(2004).

Recommended:

Documentary "Requiem for the American Dream" featuring Noam Chomsky

"Our Common Climate" Public and Public Ignorance/Denial/Disavowal

Case study: Climate Change

Naomi Oreskes & Erik M. Conway, Merchants of Doubt(Bloomsbury Press, 2010) excerpts

Chantal Mouffe, "Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?" in IPS, 270-278

Extra for Reading Week

Restoring the Public Imagination | Towards a Global Public Imaginary

Seyla Benhabib, Excerpt from The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era, in IPS, 279-28

Manuel Castells "The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance" (2008)

Bruno Latour, "From realpolitik to dingpolitik or how to make things public." In Latour & Weibel (Eds.), *Making things public: Atmospheres of democracy* (pp. 14-41). Cambridge MASS: Centre for Art and Media Karlsruhe/MIT Press. (2005)

Jürgen Habermas, "Further reflections on the public sphere." In C. J. Calhoun (Ed.), *Habermas and the public sphere* (pp. 425-429). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (1992).

Final Exam Week -Class Conference

Please note: Extra readings may be recommended over the course of the semester as we deepen our investigations and research. The syllabus is subject to modification and change in light of the progress we make and the emergent focus of our inquiries

"Publics, Counterpublics, Post-(human)-publics"

December 21, 2020 8:00PM

Presentation of Final Seminar Papers in conference format

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

AUP ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Covid-19 temporary amendments:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are still expected to attend ALL scheduled classes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will have the option of attending classes remotely when special circumstances apply. For example, when students are placed under quarantine by the French authorities or by their doctor, or when students present symptoms of Covid-19 and are directed, by their doctor or the AUP Health Office, to remain home. It is still the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that their professor might have set in the course syllabus. In particular, Students attending remotely from distant Time Zones should check with their professors about the specific attendance policy for remote learners.

Attendance at all exams and exam periods is mandatory

Student Affairs will recommend that a professor excuse an absence for the following reason only:

Involuntary absences due to illness or personal emergencies, upon presentation of documentary proof of

illness or emergency.

Religious and National Holidays:

Due to the large number of nationalities and faiths represented at the University, religious and national holidays (other than those on the academic schedule) will not be excused by Student Affairs.

Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Student Affairs will recommend that a professor excuse an absence for the following reason only: Involuntary absences due to illness or personal emergencies, upon presentation of documentary proof of illness or emergency. Religious and National Holidays: Due to the large number of nationalities and faiths represented at the University, religious and national holidays (other than those on the academic schedule) will not be excused by Student Affairs. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Lateness to course meetings: If a student arrives at course meetings more than 10 minutes late without documentation for one of the above scenarios, it will be considered an unexcused

absence.

All documentation must be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs within ONE WEEK following the first day of the absence.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence (excused or unexcused) is accepted or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive excused and unexcused absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend the withdrawal of a student whose absences from any course, excused or not, have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level. The professor may consult with Student Affairs for additional information. Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the **Drop/Add and Exam Periods**.

Grading Policy

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Active, informed participation in class sessions. This includes being prepared to present a text and lead a class or group discussion. We will also be using a collective reading annotation platform Perusall for some of our readings. Please create a Perusall account at

<https://app.perusall.com/home> using the course code TALCOTT-GU3YB

2. Two 3-minute video/audio recordings summarizing/discussing course material within FlipGrid

3. Three short (400-600 word) **"Thought Papers"** regarding aspects, themes, or concepts discussed within the readings and/or one of our case studies. These will be submitted online within the TEAMS platform.

4. **Seminar research paper** (18 pages) -Due Monday December 7

5. **Final presentation** of research in a conference format (in person & online) **December 21 8pm**

Assignment Due Dates (also included in the schedule below) Note: all assignments can be submitted within the TEAMS assignment window.

'Thought Paper' #1 | 12 noon, Thursday, October 1

'Thought Paper' #2 | 12 noon, Thursday, October 15

Video Response #1 on public relations and the "Century of the Self" 12 noon, Thursday October 22

Video Response #2 | "counter-publics" 12 noon, Monday, November 16

'Thought Paper' #3 | 12 noon, Thursday, November 26

Seminar research paper (18 pages) -Due Monday December 7

GRADING:

Class Participation, Engagement, Attendance, Annotations	20%
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Three "Thought Papers" (400-600 words):	30%
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Two Video responses	20%
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Seminar Research Paper (18 pages + bibliography)	30%
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+Final Conference Presentation of Research (included with the Research Paper)

The following qualitative guidelines will be used to evaluate your work and performance.

[A] Exceptional; Work and participation exceed the course requirements and learning objectives. The student demonstrates creative mastery of the course concepts, themes and topics. Work

evinces an exceptional level of analysis and interpretation, great planning, extensive development, originality, rigorous research and implementation, unique ideas and excellent written and oral expression.

[A-] Excellent;The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of the course material and the course's learning goals. Work fulfils all the assigned requirements and then some. Work demonstrates: careful planning and organization; sharp implementation; and a solid grasp of course concepts and material. Written and oral work is clear, cogent and correctly constructed.

[B+] Very good;Work submitted satisfies all the basic requirements for the course and reflects a solid understanding of all the course fundamentals. Written work covers all the necessary requirements in terms of content and form and shows good command of argumentation, organization, style and grammar.

[B] Good; Work satisfies all the basic minimum requirements for the course. Work reflects a practical understanding of all the course fundamentals. Written work covers all the necessary requirements in terms of content and form and shows reasonable command of argumentation, organization, style and grammar.

[B-and below] Unsatisfactory;Work is missing or does not satisfy the basic minimum requirements for the course. Work submitted and participation do not reflect a serious engagement with the course's learning goals. Work submitted does not reflect a minimal understanding of course fundamentals. Written work is incomplete and does not contain the minimal necessary requirements in terms of content and form. Written work does not demonstrate an adequate command of argumentation, organization, style and grammar.

Classroom Digital Etiquette Policy

Please restrict and focus your mobile devices and cell phones to the course applications and platforms used within the class session. Our full attention and concentration need to be on the course materials and the questions and topics at hand. Laptop computers and tablets can, of course, be used for note-taking and reading of digital texts, but please, for your sake and your colleagues', do not multi-task in class, i.e., checking email, social media, etc. Let's collectively avoid the "shallows" of hyper-mediated environments during class time and work to cultivate a space of intellectual development and rich conversation

Other
