
TOPICS: CIVIC MEDIA/ TACTICAL MEDIA in Fall 2020 (CM4091)

Course Code	CM4091	Professor(s)	Noémie Zofia Oxley
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	305
Class Schedule	M: 14:30-16:05 in Q-709 R: 09:00-10:35 in Q-709	Office Hours	By appointment
Credits	4	Email	noxley@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2020	Office Tel. Ext.	

Course Description

What is the revolutionary potential of media? Can people provoke, influence, and guide social, political or economic transformations through media? This course addresses the use of communication technologies in mediating public discourse, organizing democratic protests or denouncing state violence, ultimately interrogating the media's capacity to enact social change.

From early agitprop and propaganda to hacktivists and political satire on television, alternative voices have subverted from within the "operating system" of existing mass media to convey their messages. Militants in the Arab spring uprisings, protesters from Occupy Wall Street, Maidan Square or The Gilet Jaunes Square deployed new tactics to report on their struggles and inspire others to join them, often against official representations of their movements. With the help of social media, feminist and civil rights activists have provoked civic movements defending women's and Afro-American's against discrimination and violence, environmental activists and simple witnesses of natural disasters have raised awareness on climate change brought it to the forefront of international news. Simple citizens filming with their cell phones police violence against African Americans in the United States or against protesters in France have unveiled the crude and enacted state violence, overlooked and often undocumented by traditional news media.

These diverse movements contribute to the production of "civic media", inasmuch as civic media designs a "possibility space, a way of imagining a future of technology that [is] pro-social and for public benefit" (Gordon and Mihailidis, 2016: 5). Throughout this course, we will thus try to explore the power of civic media, look at a series of case studies and focusing particularly on contemporary social movements across the globe and their emergence on social media platforms. We will question these cases through a range of theories and discourses to explore the potential and the limits of the digital revolution in producing new and alternative public spheres, helping populations to gain awareness of issues marginalized by authorities and to act upon them.

Course Learning Outcomes

General Education

- **CCI LO1:** Local and Global Perspectives: Students will enhance their intercultural understanding of languages, cultures, and histories of local societies and the global issues to which these relate.
- **CCI LO2:** Aesthetic Inquiry and Creative Expression: Students will engage with artistic or creative objects (e.g., visual art, theatrical works, film) in different media and from a range of cultural traditions.
- **CCI LO3:** Exploring and Engaging Difference: Students will think critically about cultural and social difference; they will identify and understand power structures that determine hierarchies and inequalities that can relate to race, ethnicity, gender, nationhood, religion, or class.
- **CCI LO4:** Civic and Ethical Engagement: Students will demonstrate awareness of ethical considerations relating to specific societal problems, values, or practices (historical or contemporary; global or local) and learn to articulate possible solutions to prominent challenges facing societies and institutions today so as to become engaged actors at various levels in our interconnected world.

Course Outline

CLASS SCHEDULE:

September

- **Tactic, Strategy, and visuality: theories**

Week 1 – 23rd – 25th

Thursday 24th – Session I

Topics: *Introduction to the course; what makes a good class*

Week II – 28th – 2nd

Monday 28th – Session I

Topics: Tactics vs Strategy

Reading: Michel de Certeau, “The Practice of Everyday Life”
excerpts:

<http://vogmae.net.au/integratedmedia/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Chapter3deCerteau.pdf>

Thursday 1st – Session II

Topics: Visuality/countervisuality

Reading: Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*. “Introduction”

September 30th – last day to drop/add courses online

October

Week III – 5th – 9th

Monday 5th – Session I

Topics: Visuality, Counter-visibility and Climate Change

Reading: Nicholas Mirzoeff, “The Clash of Visualizations: Counterinsurgency and Climate Change”.

Thursday 8th – Session II

Topics: Counter-visual Narratives: Media activism, BLM, and the filming of police violence

Reading: Ryan Watson, “In the Wakes of Rodney King: Militant Evidence and Media Activism in the Age of Viral Black Death”.

February

Week IV –12th – 16th

Monday 12th – Session I:

Topics: The View from nowhere, media frames and the communication of climate change.

Reading: Thomas Nagel, *The View from nowhere*, excerpts. Bolsen and Matthew A. Shapiro, “The US News Media, Polarization on Climate Change, and Pathways to Effective Communication”.

Thursday 15th – Session II

Topics: Fox News, critical discourse and the construction of racism.

Reading: Colleen E. Mills, "Framing Ferguson: Fox News and the Construction of US racism".

Also read: <http://www.politicseastasia.com/studying/how-to-do-a-discourse-analysis/>.

Recommended: Chris Wallace's interview of Jon

Stewart:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYbtUztVctI&list=PLB7Vs4VeamfnfLGuq9pXLJ6Qxws5DYhWR&index=77&t=0s>

- MEDIA DISRUPTIONS

Week V –19th – 23rd

Monday 19th – Session I

Topics: Culture Jamming: The Yes Men

Reading: Nick W. Robinson & Gina Castle Bell. "Effectiveness of Culture Jamming in Agenda building: an Analysis of the Yes Men's Bhopal Disaster

Prank", <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1041794X.2013.815267>

Thursday 22th – Session II

Topics: Citizen Camera-witnessing

Reading: Karen Andén-Papadopoulos, "Citizen camera-witnessing: Embodied political dissent in the age of 'mediated mass self-communication'"

Week VI – 26th – 30th

Monday 26th – Session I

Topics: Syria, Life behind the scene: Filmmaker collective Abounaddara

Reading: Elena R. Popan, “Building New Platforms for Civil Society: The Right to Image in Syrian Abounaddara Collective’s Cinema of Emergency”, <https://spectrajournal.org/SPECTRA/article/view/379>

Thursday 29th – Session II

Topics: Group presentation: Visuality and Counter-visibility Presentations.

October 28th, Mid-semester

November

Week VII – 2nd – 6th

Monday 2nd – Session I

TOPICS: HACKING: TACTICS 2.0.

READING: Gabriella Coleman,
“Hacker

”
<http://gabriellacoleman.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Coleman-Hacker-John-Hopkins-2013-Final.pdf>; Watch Simona Levi: “Tactic 2.0: Learn in the Net, Act everywhere”, <https://vimeo.com/64715432>

Thursday 5th – Session II

TOPICS: Trolling as tactical media practice

READING: Whitney Phillips, “LOLing at Tragedy: Facebook Trolls, Memorial Pages, and the business of Mass-Mediated Disaster Narratives. (Library website).

Week VIII - 9th – 13th

Monday 9th – Session II

Midterm exam

November 11th to 13th, fall break (no classes)

- **A guide through civic media: power and limits**

Week IX – 16th – 20th

Monday 16th – Session I

Topics: Digital ethnography workshop

Reading: John Postill & Sarah Pink, “Social Media Ethnography: The Digital Researcher in a messy web”; Kaitlyn Ugoretz, “A Guide to Unobstrusive Methods in Digital Ethnography”.
associations against police brutality on Twitter.

Thursday 19th – Session II

Topics: The public sphere and, civic media and social media

Reading: Lazaro M. Bacallao-Pino, “Challenging Mainstream Media Systems through social Media”; Paul Mihailidis, “Democracy in the digital age” Case study: **#AlloPlaceBeauveau: reporting police violence on Twitter**

November 16th, Mid-semester grades due

Week X – 23rd – 27th

Monday 23rd – Session I

Topics: The Public Sphere, social media companies and participation

Reading: Paul Mhailidis, “Civic Media: Voice, agency and disruption”.

Case study: Analysing #blacktuesday on Instagram.

Thursday 26th – Session II

Topics: The Public Sphere, social media companies and participation

Reading: Bridgette Wessels, “The design and use of social media in forms of participation” in *Communicative Civic-ness. Social Media and Political Culture* (ebook available).

Case study: Analysing #blacktuesday on Instagram.

November 27th, last day to withdraw from a course

Last day to choose credit/no credit option

Week XI – 30th – 4th

Monday 30th – Session I

Topics: Participatory Culture and Youth Engagement

Reading: Ganaele Langlois, “Participatory Culture and the New Governance of Communication”; Civic engagement in the Social Media Age, “Pew Research Center, “Activism in the Social Media Age”.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/07/11/activism-in-the-social-media-age/>

Thursday 3rd – Session II

Topics: Civic Media and “connectedness”

Reading: Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg, “The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics” in Gordon and Mihailidi, *Civic Media: Technology, Design, Practice* (ebook available on the library website). Additional recommended reading: “Examining the Connectedness of Connective Action: The participant-Initiated Facebook Pages in Hong Kong’s Umbrella Movement”

Week XII– 7th – 11th

Monday 7th – Session I

Topics: Conclusion to the course: Social Media, Civic Media and engagement: slacktivism?

Reading: Philip N. Howard and al., “Slacktivism hypothesis: Lessons from Mexico’s “El Bronco””

Thursday 10th – Session II

Topics: Group presentations: Case study Civic Media

December 11th, last day of classes

December 12th – 15th, reading days

December 16th – 22nd, Final Exam

January 4th, all grades due

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

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. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. 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 is mandatory.

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 is excused 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 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 also recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and *especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods*.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STATEMENT: As an Anglophone university, The American University of Paris is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the undergraduate level. Most courses require scholarly research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end, professors include English proficiency among the criteria in student evaluation, often referring students to the university Writing Lab where they may obtain help on specific academic assignments. Proficiency in English is monitored at various points throughout the student's academic career, most notably during the admissions and advising processes, while the student is completing general education requirements, and during the accomplishment of degree program courses and senior theses.

Grading Policy

- **In-class or online participation through chat conversation:** You are expected to engage class discussion frequently and constructively. This requires not only keeping up with assigned readings, but also thinking critically about the ideas and examples at hand. You will need to contribute to every class through comments or questions, whether orally or through the chat conversation on Teams' platform. **10%**
- **In-class weekly quizzes on visual or reading material; homework:** Once a week class will begin with a 5 minutes quiz available on Teams, involving 2 or three short questions on the material given beforehand; Once a week students will respond to one or two questions posted on Teams' collaborative space. **20%**
- **A-synchronous and in-class/online presentations:** 2 group presentations will be organized throughout the semester, focusing on specific case studies (films, books, videos, photographs on war). The first one will take place live and the other one will be recorded through teams or other video-devices by students. **20%**
- **Mid-term exam. 20%**
- **Final Project: 30%.** Choose between these three types of assignments:
 - Digital ethnography of a civic movement online
 - Analysis of a media of your choice
 - Video/Photo series on a topic of your choice.

Other
