



## CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

<b>Course Title:</b>	Media Sociology from the European Perspective
<b>Course Code:</b>	SOCI 4001 PRAG
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	CES/CNMJ
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	English
<b>U.S. Semester Credits:</b>	3
<b>Contact Hours:</b>	45
<b>Term:</b>	Spring 2020

### **Course Description**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century brought dramatic transformations of the media landscape and communication systems through processes such as digitalization and hybridization. Traditionally, media research has been fragmented alongside the disciplines of communication, journalism, political science and regional studies. Media sociology aims to bridge these perspectives through an interdisciplinary study of media as social institutions while assessing their impact on the society as a whole. This theoretical framework is particularly paramount in comprehending such diverse phenomena as social networks, alternative media, fake news, whistleblowing and echo chambers and the links between media, democracy, identity and populism.

The course equips students with concrete tools and provides opportunities to apply theoretical concepts in individual case studies in the media sphere, while carefully examining the challenges faced by the media researchers of today. Particular attention is paid to the local contextualization of media developments, discussions of leading media issues in present-day Europe and analyzing political communication strategies used by European political and media actors.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- articulate and define the central challenges media sociology faces in its research of communication, journalism, politics and social media, both globally and within the European context;
- analyze and contrast leading theoretical perspectives in different areas of media sociology, including a critical discussion of key buzzwords: "populism," "fake news," "whistleblowing," "echo chambers," "filter bubbles," "hybrid warfare," "alternative media" and "oligarchization;"
- critique and evaluate the transformation of the media system in the past two decades, with a particular emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe, choosing one European country as a case study for the research paper;



- analyze the impact of new media on one's identity, communication, participation, representation and social polarization with a specific focus on the European context through a Socratic Seminar activity;
- transfer ideas through efficient communication and reflect on their intercultural learning experience through individual and team assignments, interactive class activities and diverse forms of debates.

### **Course Prerequisites**

This course requires previous experience: at least one 2000-level and one 3000-level course in the sociology of media, journalism, and communications. Background in political science is an advantage.

### **Methods of Instruction**

This course uses student-centered learning, while lecture-based teaching forms only a minor part of the course – aligning the learning objectives with learning opportunities. For this reason, students are expected to read and critically evaluate the course literature before the class. The course literature serves as an essential background to the class debates, activities and majority of the assignments. The recommended readings and class activities are designed to provide multilevel learning opportunities to reflect the diversity of student backgrounds. Furthermore, students engage with a diverse range of media experts (joining the course as guest lecturers) and apply their knowledge while participating in a field trip to a Czech-based news media outlet.

The student assessment is evenly spread out throughout the semester to reflect their development over the semester, to minimize unnecessary stress and to provide students with continuous feedback to support their learning achievements. The assignments reflect the gradual development of skills in analytical reading, debating, reflecting on the acquired knowledge, presenting and academic writing needed to reach the aims of the course objectives.

To maintain high standards of communication between the instructor and the students, all necessary information will also be provided through the Canvas system. This includes course materials such as readings together with assignments, deadlines, updated syllabus and other resources. All submissions and communication are via Canvas as well. Students are expected to stay up-to-date regarding the Canvas developments relevant to the course.

Finally, students are encouraged to make use of the regular office hours to consult the instructor to enhance their learning process.

### **Assessment and Final Grade**

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|--|-----|
| 1. Active class participation and quizzes: | 30% |
| 2. Reflection papers:                      | 20% |



- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 3. Leadership of Socratic Seminar activity: | 15% |
| 4. Grant proposal presentation:             | 15% |
| 5. Grant proposal paper:                    | 20% |

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Active class participation and quizzes**

A strong emphasis of this course is placed upon student-centered learning. For this reason, students are expected to participate in class activities and discussions, which may include both oral and written assignments - individually or in groups. Also, students are responsible for keeping up with the class readings and being ready to discuss them constructively.

To support sophisticated understanding of the required course readings, students are expected to complete short conceptual online quizzes on Canvas course page. Quiz for the current week is always due the day before the first class of the week. The first quiz covers the required literature of week 3 and should, therefore, be completed by the day before the start of week 3. Subsequent quizzes follow the same formula. Answers should be analytical, concise and well-structured. The length of each answer should be 75-150 words.

There will be four evaluations of students' in-class performance, each worth 5%. Also, there will be ten online quizzes to be completed outside of the class, each worth 1%. In total, the participation grade is worth 30% of the final grade.

#### **Reflection papers**

Reflection papers aim to further enhance students' perspective and scholarly critique by reflecting on their learning process. While the overall focus of the course is relatively broad, reflection papers enable students to specialize in the areas of their interest.

Each student is expected to submit four reflection papers per semester. The first reflection paper is due at the end of week 4, the second one is due by the end of week 7, the third one is due by the end of week 10 and the fourth and the last one is due by the end of week 12.

In each reflection paper, students choose one of the class topics covered in the preceding semester quarter. Students are encouraged to reflect on crucial takeaways, intercultural learning experience and on issues that may still require further attention. Instructions on how to write a "quality reflection paper" will be provided in class and on Canvas. The length should be 375-750 words. There will be four reflection papers, each worth 5%. In total, all reflection papers are worth 20% of the final grade.

A-grade reflection paper is appropriately structured, while displaying an exceptional analytical reflection of the learning process.

#### **Leadership of Socratic Seminar activity**



Over the first half of course of the semester (week 4-7), students (in the groups of 2-4 people) will take a leadership role in Socratic Seminar activity such as Fishbowl (15 min). Students are responsible for a thorough examination and critique of the provided text and collaboration on the preparation of an engaging discussion in regards to the complexity of ideas in the text provided before the class. Guidelines for the Socratic Seminar will be provided in class as well as on Canvas.

A-grade Socratic Seminar is evidence-focused, devoid of speculation, engaging and thoughtful, respecting diversity of opinions. The leading team is well-prepared and able to make the discussion constructive by asking high-level questions, thus facilitating the creation of new perspectives of their peers.

### **Research grant proposal presentation**

In the second part of the semester (week 8-11), students will present and defend their research grant proposal ideas in teams of 3. Students will demonstrate their compliance with the standards of scientific excellence such as ground-breaking nature, ambition, feasibility and interdisciplinarity. Guidelines for the team presentation (such as how to find a unique selling point) will be provided in class as well as on Canvas. Length of the presentation should not exceed 10 min, with a subsequent Q&A session with the class (5 min). Students are required to submit the presentation outline to the instructors reflecting the feedback provided subsequently in class after the presentations within two days. The presentation is worth 15% of the final grade.

In an A-grade presentation, students display an exceptional grasp of the material and originality of research. Such presentation is structured in a balanced manner, presented in an appropriate style, well-managed timewise and contains a constructive follow-up discussion with the audience.

### **Written research grant proposal paper**

The written grant proposal is the final subsequent stage of the grant proposal teamwork. The evaluation criteria rubric will include clear structure, appropriate style, in-depth literature review and logical organization of the central arguments. The grant proposal will also include evaluation of the teamwork process (communication within the team, distribution and accountability of team members for the joint final product).

The grant proposal paper is due by the end of week 13 and should be 1500-3000 words long. Preferred citation system is Chicago: Author-Date. This assignment is worth 20% of the final grade.

An A-grade written paper contains a competent grant proposal idea, which further develops on the presentation and demonstrates a deep understanding of the scholarly context. Such paper



clearly communicates its scientific significance, has a logical structure and a sound methodology. Furthermore, students demonstrate a high-level of critical thinking and an appropriate usage of quality sources.

### CIEE Prague Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and **all absences are treated equally regardless of reason** for any affected CIEE course. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursions or events, as well as Internship.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

Missing classes will lead to the following penalties:

#### **90-minute semester classes:**

<i>Number of 90-minute classes</i>	<i>Equivalent percentage of the total course hours missed</i>	<i>Minimum penalty</i>
<b>one to two</b> 90-minute classes	up to 10%	no penalty
<b>three</b> 90-minute classes	10.1–15%	reduction of the final grade by 3%
<b>four</b> 90-minute classes	15.1–17%	reduction of the final grade by 5%; <b>written warning</b>
<b>five</b> 90-minute classes	17.1–20%	reduction of the final grade by 7%; <b>written warning</b>
<b>six and more</b> 90-minute classes	more than 20%	automatic <b>course failure</b> and possible expulsion

#### **180-minute semester classes:**

<i>Number of 180-minute classes</i>	<i>Equivalent percentage of the total course hours missed</i>	<i>Minimum penalty</i>
<b>one</b> 180-minute class	up to 10%	no penalty



<b>two</b> 180-minute classes	10.1–20%	reduction of the final grade by 5%; <b>written warning</b>
<b>three and more</b> 180-minute classes	more than 20%	automatic <b>course failure</b> and possible expulsion

Persistent absenteeism (students approaching 20% of the total course hours missed, or violating the attendance policy in more than one class) will result in a written warning, a notification to the student’s home school, and possibly a dismissal from the program.

**Missing more than 20% of the total class hours** will lead to a **course failure**, and **potential program dismissal**. This is a CIEE rule that applies to all CIEE courses and is in line with the Participant Contract that each CIEE student signs before arriving on-site.

**Late arrival to class** will be considered a partial (up to 15 minutes late) or full (15 or more minutes late) absence. **Three partial absences due to late arrivals will be regarded as one full class absence.**

**Students must notify their professor and Program Coordinators (PC) beforehand if they are going to miss class for any reason** and are responsible for any material covered in class in their absence.

If missing a class during which a test, exam, the student’s presentation or other graded class assignments are administered, **make-up assignment will only be allowed in approved circumstances**, such as serious medical issues. In this case, the student must submit a local doctor’s note within 24 hours of his/her absence to the PC, who will decide whether the student qualifies for a make-up assignment. Doctor’s notes may be submitted via e-mail or phone (a scan or a photograph are acceptable), however **the student must ensure that the note is delivered to the PC.**

Should a truly **extraordinary situation** arise, the student must contact the PC immediately concerning permission for a make-up assignment. Make-up assignments are not granted automatically! The PC decides the course of action for all absence cases that are not straightforward. **Always contact the PC with any inquiry about potential absence(s) and the nature thereof.**

**Personal travel (including flight delays and cancelled flights), handling passport and other document replacements, interviews, volunteering and other similar situations are not considered justifiable reasons for missing class or getting permission for make-up assignments.**

**For class conflicts** (irregularities in the class schedule, including field trips, make-up classes and other instances), **always contact the Academic Assistant** to decide the appropriate course of action.



Course attendance is recorded on individual Canvas Course Sites. **Students are responsible for checking their attendance regularly to ensure the correctness of the records.** In case of discrepancies, students are required to contact the Academic Assistant **within one week of the discrepancy date** to have it corrected. Later claims **will not** be considered.

CIEE staff does not directly manage absences at FAMU and ECES, but they have similar attendance policies and attendance is monitored there. Grade penalties may result from excessive absences.

### **CIEE Academic Honesty Policy**

CIEE subscribes to standard U.S. norms requiring that students exhibit the highest standards regarding academic honesty. Cheating and plagiarism in any course assignment or exam will not be tolerated and may result in a student failing the course or being expelled from the program. Standards of honesty and norms governing originality of work differ significantly from country to country. We expect students to adhere to both the American norms and the local norms, and in the case of conflict between the two, the more stringent of the two will preside. Three important principles are considered when defining and demanding academic honesty. These are related to the fundamental tenet that one should not present the work of another person as one's own.

**The first principle** is that final examinations, quizzes and other tests must be done without assistance from another person, without looking at or otherwise consulting the work of another person, and without access to notes, books, or other pertinent information (unless the professor has explicitly announced that a particular test is to be taken on an "open book" basis).

**The second principle** applies specifically to course work: the same written paper may not be submitted in two classes. Nor may a paper for which you have already received credit at your home institution be submitted to satisfy a paper requirement while studying overseas.

**The third principle** is that any use of the work of another person must be documented in any written papers, oral presentations, or other assignments carried out in connection with a course. This usually is done when quoting directly from another's work or including information told to you by another person. The general rule is that if you have to look something up, or if you learned it recently either by reading or hearing something, you have to document it.

The penalty ranges from an F grade on the assignment, failure in the course to dismissal from the program. The Academic Director is consulted and involved in decision making in every case of a possible violation of academic honesty.

### **Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1      Class 1: What is the role of media sociology?**

In the first class, we will examine the central issues studied by the discipline of media sociology. Why is there a need for a discipline that offers an interdisciplinary way to study media and their impact on society? How does its analytical approach differ from other related disciplines? What are the fundamental questions we should ask when examining the mediasphere in the Central and Eastern Europe?

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Shoemaker and Reese, chap. 1.
- 2) Kostadinova, 453–66.

**Class 2: How do we study it? The development of a theoretical framework**

We will consider the main developments in the field of media sociology. Furthermore, we will also discuss the most prominent theories that help us to fathom the world of media and give us the opportunity to use these “theoretical lens” in specific cases during the semester.

**Required reading:**

- 1) Shoemaker and Reese, chap. 2.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Brienza and Revers, 539–52.

**Week 2**

**Class 1: The emergence of the Hybrid Media System**

We will discuss the revolution of the communication technologies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that has profoundly transformed the media, society and politics. How can we define this new, so-called, Hybrid Media System and distinguish it from previous media systems? In the second part of the class, we will analyze the functioning of this new system in the case of the US presidential election of 2016.

**Required reading:**

- 1) [Short video: Hybrid media system by Andrew Chadwick](#)
- 2) Chadwick, chap. 10.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Dennis and Chadwick, 1–19.

**Class 2: Media and audience - powerful or limited effects?**

We will look at the age-old scholarly debate: do media exert powerful or limited effects on its audience? What are the main strengths and limitations of these theoretical effect models?





**Required reading:**

- 1) Perse and Lambe, chap. 1.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Valkenburg, 315–38.

**FIRST ONLINE QUIZ DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 2**

**Week 3**

**Class 1: Political communication – intro to the theory & practice**

We will focus on the study of “PolComm” - political communication and its relevance for understanding the nexus of media and politics. What are the field's central debates?

**Required reading:**

- 1) McNair, chap. 1.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Nielsen, 1–5.

**Class 2: The time machine: ancient Rome political communication case study**

While the scholarly study of political communication is a comparatively modern endeavor, the practice of it is significantly older. For this reason, the second class of the week shifts its focus from present-day to the times of the ancient Rome to investigate the way Roman politicians communicated their political agendas to their audience.

**Required reading:**

- 1) [Video: Claudia Tiersch & political communication in the Roman Republic](#)

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Steel, 17–33.

**SECOND ONLINE QUIZ DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 3**

**INDIVIDUAL STUDENT TEAMS WILL BE FORMED AND DATES SCHEDULED FOR EACH TEAM TO LEAD THE SOCRATIC SEMINAR AND GRANT PROPOSAL IDEA PRESENTATION BY THE END OF WEEK 3**

**Week 4**

**Class 1: What is populism & how do we study it?**

We will examine the emergence of the scholarly inquiry of populism in the past two decades, from Cas Muddle's interpretation of populism as a “thin ideology” to the subsequent research of populism as a discourse and a “populist frame” in communication.

**Required reading:**

- 1) Mudde and Kaltwasser, chap. 1.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Aslanidis, 88–104.
- 2) Aalberg et al., chap.1.

**Class 2: Populism as a style of political communication**

We will examine populism as a style of political communication. We will discuss the strategies of populist political communicators with specific attention paid to the distinction between empty-populism, anti-elitist populism and excluding populism.

**Required reading:**

- 1) [Short video playlist: Populist political communication](#)
- 2) Aalberg et al., chap.2.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Jagers and Walgrave, 319–45.

**FIRST REFLECTION PAPER DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 4**

**THIRD ONLINE QUIZ DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 4**

**TEAM A LEADS SOCRATIC SEMINAR IN THE SECOND CLASS**

**Week 5**

**Class 1: Populist political communication in Europe**

We will discuss the most recent research on the populist political communication strategies of the far-right and far-left parties across Europe. Additionally, we will discuss the effects of these strategies on the populist party preferences of the European citizens. We will use a practical tool to study these phenomena – a content analysis codebook. This exercise will provide insights into the challenges faced by the researchers of populist communication.

**Required reading:**

- 1) Ernst et al., 1347–64.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Hameleers, Bos, and de Vreese, 1–19.

**Class 2: Populist political communication in Europe & beyond**

We will continue our survey of contemporary populist political communication. We will focus on a comparative case analysis between the UK and Venezuela. Also, following up on the relationship between populism and European society examined in the previous class, we will look at the other side of the coin – media preferences of citizens with populist attitudes.

Furthermore, we will do the content analysis of selected media articles, this time in independent groups. Towards the end of the class, group results will be compared and discussed.

**Required reading:**

- 1) Block and Negrine, 178–97.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Hameleers, Bos and de Vreese, 481–504.

**FOURTH ONLINE QUIZ DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 5**

**TEAM B LEADS SOCRATIC SEMINAR IN THE SECOND CLASS**

**Week 6**  
**Midterm**  
**Exam**  
**Period**

**Class 1: Journalism & professionalism**

We will shift from our focus on communication & politics to the study of the journalistic profession and we will discuss its 21<sup>st</sup>-century. What are the most prominent challenges faced by the journalistic actors in this new environment?

**Required reading:**

- 1) Waisbord, chap. 1.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Steen and Ahva, 1–18.

**Class 2: Journalism & social context**

We will find answers to: How has the role of journalists as “gatekeepers” changed in the modern era? Do different ownership and business models significantly influence the media system? To answer these questions, we will assess the factors of media ownership, economic models and media regulations with a focus on the CEE region.

**Required reading:**

- 1) Waschková Císařová and Metyková, 6–18.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Fengler et al., 249–66.

### TEAM C LEADS SOCRATIC SEMINAR IN THE SECOND CLASS

#### FIFTH ONLINE QUIZ DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 6

**Week 7**  
**Midterm Exam Period**  
**Class 1: Alternative vs. mainstream media & beyond**  
We will examine the usefulness of the alternative vs. mainstream dichotomy in the comprehension of the functioning of the Hybrid Media System. We will discuss the possibilities of further expansion of this dichotomy with other typologies, such as community, anti-systemic media and propaganda outlets. We will analyze and categorize selected Czech media outlets and their results will be discussed.

**Required reading:**

- 1) Rauch, 756–67.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Hájek and Carpentier, 365–82.
- 2) [Columbia Journalism Review: Breitbart-led right-wing media ecosystem altered broader media agenda](#)

**Class 2: Opportunities and pitfalls: journalistic profession guest lecture**

We will engage with the guest speaker - a working professional journalist based in the Czech Republic, who is a political correspondent for BBC and Deutsche Welle - in discussion over topics from previous classes.

**Required reading:**

- 1) Urbániková and Volek.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Hájek et al., 52–61.
- 2) Štetka and Örnebring, 413–35.

### TEAM D LEADS SOCRATIC SEMINAR IN THE SECOND CLASS

#### SECOND REFLECTION PAPER DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 7

#### SIXTH ONLINE QUIZ DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 7

**Week 8**  
**Class 1: Czech media system case study**  
Following-up on all the previous themes covered during the semester, we will focus on the intersection of media and political landscape in the Czech Republic.

Primarily, we will analyze the consequences of the dramatic transformation of the media sphere in the past decade through processes of oligarchization, tabloidization and hybridization.

**Required reading:**

- 1) Štětka, 85–98.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Hájek, Vávra, and Svobodová, 36–50.

**Class 2: Czech political communication and media coverage case study cont.**

Continuing with the case study of the Czech media landscape, we will inspect the current state of research of the Czech political communication. We will also analyze the media coverage of some of the controversial public topics, such as the European refugee crisis and the Roma community.

**Required reading:**

- 1) Aalberg et al., chap.22.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Tkaczyk, 90–110.
- 2) Veselková, 141–54.

**Class 3: Excursion to a Prague-based Media Outlet**

We will gain a more complex understanding of how major European newsroom works by conducting an excursion to a media organization in Prague. We will meet up with the working journalists and editors of the outlet. Students will be able to link their theoretical knowledge from the first two classes of this week with practical experience of the professionals.

**TEAM A PRESENTS RESEARCH GRANT IDEA IN THE SECOND CLASS**

**SEVENTH ONLINE QUIZ DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 8**

**Week 9**

**Class 1: Social media: their role & impact on our lives**

We will review the state-of-the-art research regarding the connection between the social media and well-being, populist messages and political communication.

**Required reading:**

- 1) Verduyn et al., 274–302.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Rune, and Enjolras, 338–57.

2) Hameleers and Schmuck, 1425–44.

**Class 2: Are YouTubers the new Czech celebrities? Guest lecture**

We will investigate the unexpected emergence of the Czech YouTube celebrity culture through expert guest lecture and subsequent debate. What are its specificities? How is Czech YouTube stardom comparable to other countries, such as the US? Could YouTube be characterized a new locale for industrial celebrity manufacturing? How does our “need to belong” influence the way we look up to celebrities in general?

**Required reading:**

1) Hou.

**Recommended reading:**

1) Escalas and Bettman, 297–308.

**TEAM B PRESENTS RESEARCH GRANT IDEA IN THE SECOND CLASS SESSION**

**EIGHTH ONLINE QUIZ DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 9**

**Week 10 Class 1: Media, identity, communication and participation**

We will explore the relationship between media and personal identity. We will devote a specific focus to the link between “offline” and “online” identity and the role of age in the patterns of communication and political participation of Czech citizens.

**Required reading:**

1) Schwartz and Halegoua, 1643–60.

**Recommended reading:**

1) Macková et al., 46–65.

**Class 2: Women & the online world: guest lecture**

During this guest lecture and ensuing discussion, we will examine the experiences, characterization and political participation of women in the world of online news and social networks, with particular scrutiny of the Czech online environment.

**Required reading:**

1) Vochocová, 1–16

**Recommended reading:**

1) Humprecht and Esser, 1–18



2) Vochocová, Štětka, and Mazák, 1321–39.

**TEAM C PRESENTS RESEARCH GRANT IDEA IN THE SECOND CLASS**

**THIRD REFLECTION PAPER DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 10**

**NINTH ONLINE QUIZ DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 10**

**Week 11 Class 1: The era of whistleblowing? The case of Wikileaks.**  
We will analyze the evolution of the practice of whistleblowing from a media sociology standpoint. Specifically, we will examine the rise of Wikileaks as the leading whistleblower platform and assess the four scholarship approaches to the research of it. Furthermore, we will discuss Wikileaks' impact on the day-to-day work of journalists, legal and ethical consequences of its operations and reflect upon the “new digital culture of disclosure” and its complicated relationship with the public interest journalism.

**Required reading:**

1) Benedetta, 1–11.

**Recommended reading:**

2) Landert and Miscione, 13–21.

**Class 2: Media & polarization of society**

We will focus on a discussion of two critical questions - are social media, partisan news outlets, filter bubbles and echo chambers important factors in the process of polarization of our societies? How can we link these issues with the citizens' news bias perception and media trust in general?

**Required reading:**

1) Bessi et al., 1–24.

**Recommended reading:**

1) Ardèvol-Abreu and Gil De Zúñiga, 703–24.

2) Flaxman, Goel and M. Rao, 298–320.

**TEAM D PRESENTS RESEARCH GRANT IDEA IN THE SECOND CLASS**

**TENTH ONLINE QUIZ DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 11**

**Week 12 Class 1: Media as a tool of propaganda & hybrid warfare: guest lecture**

We will debate the role of media instrument of propaganda and hybrid warfare. Specifically, we will examine the case study of the Ukrainian conflict with the added perspective of a guest lecturer, who served as a correspondent in Ukraine during the 2014 Euromaidan revolution and the subsequent escalation of the security situation in Eastern Ukraine.

**Required reading:**

- 1) Khaldarova and Pantti, 891–901.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Lanoszka, 175–95.

**Class 2: What exactly is “Fake News”?**

We will carefully analyze the buzzword “fake news” from a scholarly standpoint. How can we operationalize this concept in media research? Furthermore, we will look at the impact of misinformation on political attitudes of the citizens. We will also assess the most recent advances regarding machine-learning and misinformation detection. Finally, we will conclude with a discussion of the underlying socio-psychological foundations of misperceptions.

**Required reading:**

- 1) Tandoc, Wei Lim and Ling, 1–17.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Balmas, 430–454.
- 2) Conroy, Rubin and Chen, 1–4.
- 3) Flynn, Nyhan and Reifler, 127–50.

**FOURTH REFLECTION PAPER DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 12**

**Week 13**  
**Final**  
**Exam**  
**Week**

**Class 1: Media & democracy**

We will tackle two vital questions. What is and what should be the role of media in a democracy? What impact do media have on the process of democratization?

**Required reading:**

- 1) McNair, chap. 2.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) Jebril, Loveless and Štětka, 84–98.

**Class 2: Where do We go from Here? The future of media & media sociology**

In the final session, we will reflect upon the themes introduced in the previous class and discuss the prospects of the media landscape in Europe and beyond.





Does high-choice media environment spell doom for the future of liberal democracies? Which media business models are sustainable and which are destined to fail? Are current theories sufficient for understanding and anticipating future media transformations?

**Required reading:**

- 1) Van Aelst et al., 3–27.

**Recommended reading:**

- 1) [Podcast: 7 Predictions About the Future of Media](#)
- 2) Revers and Brienza, 1–17.

**GRANT PROPOSAL PAPER DUE BY THE END OF WEEK 13**

**Course Materials**

**Required Readings**

- Aalberg, Toril, Frank Esser, Carsten Reinemann, Jesper Stromback, and Claes De Vreese, eds. *Populist Political Communication in Europe*. New York: Routledge, 2017.
- Aelst, Peter Van, Jesper Strömbäck, Toril Aalberg, Frank Esser, Claes de Vreese, Jörg Matthes, David Hopmann, et al. "Political Communication in a High-Choice Media Environment: A Challenge for Democracy?" *Annals of the International Communication Association* 41, no. 1 (2017): 3–27.
- Bessi, Alessandro, Fabiana Zollo, Michela Del Vicario, Michelangelo Puliga, Antonio Scala, Guido Caldarelli, Brian Uzzi, and Walter Quattrociocchi. "Users Polarization on Facebook and Youtube." *PLoS ONE* 11, no. 8 (2016): 1–24.
- Block, Elena, and Ralph Negrine. "The Populist Communication Style: Toward a Critical Framework." *International Journal of Communication* 11, no. 1 (2017): 178–97.
- Brevini, Benedetta. "WikiLeaks: Between Disclosure and Whistle-Blowing in Digital Times." *Sociology Compass* 11, no. 3 (2017): 1–11.
- Ernst, Nicole, Sven Engesser, Florin Büchel, Sina Blassnig, and Frank Esser. "Extreme Parties and Populism: An Analysis of Facebook and Twitter across Six Countries." *Information Communication and Society* 20, no. 9 (2017): 1347–64.
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