
COMMUNICATION & THE GLOBAL PUBLIC SPHERE in Fall 2018 (PO5025)

Course Code	PO5025	Professor(s)	Charles Talcott
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-402
Class Schedule	MR: 10:35-11:55 in G-002	Office Hours	Monday 15:30-17:00 and by appointment
Credits	4	Email	ctalcott@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2018	Office Tel. Ext.	575

Course Description

This course focuses on the concept of the/a "Public" - the "Public" as a critical conceptual matrix, a form of social and individual consciousness and a vital 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 constitute "public opinion" and strive to articulate and further "the public interest." We will consider how the political economy of media and social practices facilitate or stifle 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, more recently, "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

Course Outline

CM/PO 5025 Communications & the Global Public Sphere

Fall Semester 2018

Professor Charles Talcott

Week 1 Introduction to course: the emergence of a "public"

What is a "public"? Conceptualizing and defining a "public"

For Thursday:

Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp Chapter 2 “The Social World as Communicative Construction” and Chapter 9 “Collectivities’ from *The Mediated Construction of Reality* (2017).

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

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 on Blackboard.

Week 2 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 on Blackboard.

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

Supplemental Advanced/Recommended reading: T. McCarthy: ‘Enlightenment and the Idea of Public Reason’, *European Journal of Philosophy*, (1995) 3/3: pp. 242-56.

Week 3 ‘The Public Sphere’: The Conceptual Underpinnings

From Sensibility & Space to Social Consciousness & Practice

‘The Public Sphere’: Jürgen Habermas

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

Week 4 Public Reason, Democracy, and the Public/Private Distinction

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

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

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).

No class Thursday, October 4 due to Warsaw Study Trip

Please watch *Century of the Self* documentary series Parts 1-4 (view outside of class)

Week 5 Rise of Public Relations within Modern Democracies

'Unruly Masses": From Fear of the Crowds to "Citizenships of Control"

Edward Bernays, *Propaganda*, (Ig Publishi

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 Opinion within 'Mass' Democracies: Classic Debates

Publics, Audiences, Crowds

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.

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

RECOMMENDED

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

J. Habermas: 'Public Deliberation for democratic decision-making' (1996) excerpt in *IPS*, 184-204

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

Week 7 (Un)Reasonable Publics: Setting the Agenda and The Rise of Affect

"Affect Publics"

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

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.

MID-TERM - Second class Week 7 - THURSDAY October 25

Week 8 "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).

Case study: Charlie Hebdo/Jyllands-Posten controversy

University Holiday - no class on Thursday November 1

Week 9 Alternative 'kinds' of Publics, Counter-publics and Difference

Bodies, Genders, Sex & Publics

Michael Warner, *Publics & Counterpublics* (M.I.T. Press), Chapters I-IV

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

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

Michael Warner, *Publics & Counterpublics* (M.I.T. Press), Chapters V & VI

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality I*, excerpts

Documentary: *Paris is Burning* (screening outside of class)

Week 10 Digital Publics - Digital Advocacy: The Data-fication of Crowds

From #Hashtag Publics to Platform Publics

The Metrics of 'Attention Publics'

Excerpts from Nathan Rambukkana, ed. *#HashtagPublics: The Power and Politics of Discursive Networks*.

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).

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

Week 11 Making Spaces for Publics: 'Delimiting' Public Spaces from Local to Global

Bernhard Peters: "National and Transnational Public Spheres" in *IPS*, 237-246

Excerpts from James C. Scott *Seeing Like A State*

Nick Couldry and Tanja Dreher "Globalization and the public sphere: Exploring the space of community media in Sydney" (2007)

Sizing up Publics! How 'big' is a public? Does 'Magnitude' Matter?

Gary Allen Fine and Brooke Harrington "Tiny Publics: Small Groups & Civil Society"

The Materiality of Publics: Architecture, Urban Planning & the Public

Week 12 Public and Public Ignorance/Denial/Disavowal - Our Climate

Publics and our Material Commons

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

Case study: Climate Change

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

Week 13 "StratCom" & Capital Publics: 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 Media* 4(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).

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).

Documentary "Requiem for the American Dream" featuring Noam Chomsky

Week 14 Alternative Voices & the Future(s) of Public Sphere(s)

Last class

Seyla Benhabib, Excerpt from *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*, in *IPS*, 279-289

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).

Week 15 Final Exam Week - Seminar Conference

December 20, 2018 8:30-11AM

Presentation of Final Seminar Papers in conference format

We may need to re-schedule the date due to the India Practicum departure

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.

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.

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 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.

Grading Policy

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Active, informed participation in class sessions. This includes a text presentation/discussion-leading session. In pairs, you will present a short summary of an assigned reading and then lead a discussion session. You should include a handout of select passages and questions for your colleagues.

2. Three short (400-word) "**Thought Papers**" regarding aspects, themes, or concepts discussed within the readings and/or one of our case studies (Three total: two will be assigned during the semester and one will involve a summary of *one* episode of the "Making Public" radio series from McGill University and Radio Canada) **The Origins of the Modern Public, Parts 1-14**

<http://www.davidcayley.com/podcasts/7uozov7z7rd05dcpun494yh0ew2l7u>

3. **Mid-term review exam**

4. **Seminar research paper** (18 pages) - Due Thursday November 22nd

5. **Final presentation** of research in a conference format (TBA – during exam week)

GRADING:

Class Participation, Engagement, Attendance	10%
Three "Thought Papers" during the term (400-600 words):	30%
Discussion leading session (in pairs)	10%
Mid-term review exam	20%
Seminar Research Paper (18 pages + bibliography)	30%
+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 turn off cell phones and mobile devices before class begins. Our full attention and concentration needs to be on the course material 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
