

SOCI 220 ¹

Media and Contemporary Society

Instructor: Jason Miller

Course Description:

Media—the diverse means of communication through which information and ideas are shared—are more central to our lives today than ever before. Not only do they shape our perceptions of self, others, and society, they are increasingly important to collective projects for progressive social change—as well as those that maintain systems of oppression. This online course explores sociological perspectives and frameworks for understanding the contemporary influence of media and communication technology, with a special focus on the intersection of media and social movement politics.

Mode of Delivery:

The course will involve one “live” or synchronous online meeting per week (lasting 2 hours & 20 minutes), in addition to more self-directed asynchronous activities.

Course Objectives:

This course aims to provide students with conceptual tools for thinking critically about their own media use and participation, as well as the social structures that facilitate it. Engaging with sociological resources through course readings, lectures, and online participation, students will increase their media literacy and empower themselves to use media effectively for the social good. The course is also designed to improve students’ writing skills, foster academic community, and cultivate capacities for honest, perceptive, and respectful discussion.

Course Pre-requisites:

None

Topics May Include:

Contemporary political polarization, the rise of misinformation, digital globalization, escapism, celebrity culture, advertising, intergenerational dynamics, social inequality, video gaming, news and political storytelling, and the evolution of sports fandom.

Required Resources May Include:

A subscription to the Packback Questions online discussion platform

¹ This outline is only intended to give an overall sense of the course. A detailed course outline will be made available in August before the first day of class. Only that outline is to be considered official.