**New Media Cultures – SOCY931 – Queen’s University – Fall 2019**
Watson 401, Thursdays 2:30pm-5:30pm

Dr. Michael Siciliano  
Email: m.siciliano@queensu.ca  
Office Location:  
Office Hours: By appointment

**Course Description and Learning Outcomes:**
This course provides graduate-level students with an overview of current issues and approaches in the sociological study of media with an emphasis on ubiquitous, digital or “immaterial” media objects and technologies. Though the course emphasizes “new” media, readings will deal with a variety of cultural and technological forms in order to provide conceptual richness in approaching forms of mediated social life. The final four weeks of course will focus on distinct, contemporary empirical problems to be selected by students. Some options could include (but are by no means limited to social movements and radicalization online, policing and twitter, diversity and twitter, or the labor of new media.

As a sociology course, readings and discussion focus on the social aspects of media and media technologies rather than focusing on the specific content or messages of any particular media object. Oddly enough, studying media remains largely peripheral in North American sociology despite media’s heightened ubiquity in all areas of social life. As such, (new) media sociology tends to be interdisciplinary and so goes this course. Readings comes from cultural sociology, anthropology, communication, cultural studies, and media studies. In each session will discuss contemporary empirical and theoretical texts, occasionally turning our heads back over our shoulders to ponder classic texts on formerly “new” mediums (e.g., photography, film, recorded music, radio, etc.). In doing so, this course hopes to illustrate how recent concerns with materiality and affect as long-standing parts of sociological theorization and investigation.

**Course Aims:**
Students will learn about historical and contemporary issues within the sociology of media and in order to develop knowledge to begin research in the subfield. Students will be evaluated on their ability to critically engage with readings and ideas presented in the course and to develop a viable research project within media sociology.

**Readings, Course Materials, and Copyright:**
All readings will be available through OnQ or through the library. All materials made available through OnQ are intended for use as part of SOCY931: New Media Cultures at Queen’s University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters and articles) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial third-party website) can lead to a violation of Copyright law. Find out more about copyright here:
[http://library.queensu.ca/copyright](http://library.queensu.ca/copyright).
Assignments:
Active Participation and Discussion in Class and Attendance (30%)
Weekly Response Papers (30%) –
   300-500 words, turned in via email the night before class starting in Week 2
Final Paper (40%) –
   5000-6000 words (15-20 pages double-spaced), turned in through TurnItIn during Finals Week.
   a) review of literatures presented in the course
   or
   b) proposal for research project related to media which draws upon course material along with outside readings

Grading:
All components of this course will receive letter grades which, for purposes of calculating your course average, will be translated into numerical equivalents using the Faculty of Arts and Science approved scale (see below). Your course average will then be converted to a final letter grade according to Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale (see below).

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Statement on Academic Integrity:
Academic Integrity is constituted by the six core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/report-principles-and-priorities).
(continued over)
Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations/regulation-1), on the Arts and Science website (see http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

**OUTLINE OF COURSE**

**September 5\(^{th}\) – Introduction / History / Overview**

*Why is media important to the social sciences and where is it going?*

*Readings*


**Part 1: Structures**

**September 12\(^{th}\) – Structural Approaches, Pt. 1 – Political Economy and the “Production of Culture” Perspective**

*How do social forces shape the production and consumption of media?*

Mosco, Vincent. 2009. Chapters 3 and 5 in *The Political Economy of Communication*


*Recommended Supplement*


**September 19\(^{th}\) – Media, Mediation, and New Challenges for Empirical Sociology**

*How does media construct our world? Our sociological data?*


**September 26th – Structural Approaches, Pt. 2 - Infrastructures and Materialities**

*How do media technologies affect or produce social relationships?*


**Optional Supplements**


**Part 2: Inhabiting Media Infrastructures**

**October 3rd – Inhabiting Media Technologies, Pt. 1 – The Body in Mediated Spaces**

*What becomes of the interactional when studying the production / consumption of “new” media?*

**Readings**


**Supplemental**


**October 10th – Inhabiting Media Technologies, Pt. 2 – Design and Power**

*How do media technologies condition the affective and discursive content of everyday life?*

**Readings**


**Supplemental**


October 17th – Audiences and their Sale
How do people make meaning of media and how is this process commodified?

Readings


Supplemental

October 24th – No Class (Fall Break)

October 31st – Cultures of New Media Production
How does organizational structure shape production and work practices?

Readings


Part 3: Contemporary Topics (to be decided upon by the class)

November 7th – Topic Area 1 - TBD

November 14th – Topic Area 2 - TBD

November 21st – Topic Area 3 - TBD

November 28th – Topic Area 4 - TBD / Course Conclusion