**Professor Bruce Williams**

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Office Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 12:00-1:30 and by appointment.

**Teaching Assistants:**

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**INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA STUDIES**

Lecture: Tuesday, Thursday 2:00-3:15

402 Wilson Hall

**Course Overview**: Our class takes place at a remarkable moment. After two years of social disruption, isolation, and anxiety due to the COVID pandemic, we face a changed and uncertain world, still threatened by a daunting list of challenges: climate change, inequality, racism, sexism, war in Europe, political polarization, and declining faith in democracy itself, to name just a few. This class is rooted in the assumption that media – whether print, film, broadcast, or online -- will play a major role in shaping the post-pandemic world. Most fundamentally, media and communications technologies are the lens through which we experience and define reality. My goal is to provide you with an understanding of what media *are*, how they *function*, what they actually *do*, and how *you*, as a consumer and producer of media, can navigate and improve the media environment.

As well, this course is an introduction to Media Studies, a relatively new area of study, which draws on the humanities and social sciences to understand the role of media in constructing social, political, economic, and cultural realities. We will explore media industries, laws and policies, texts, audiences, and contexts. Throughout the course, we will develop a critical vocabulary and theoretical toolkit to recognize, describe, and analyze the role of media in our identities, communities, societies, daily lives, nation-states, and on the global stage.

**Required Text and Software**:

* David Croteau and William Hoynes, *Media Society: Industries, Images, Audiences.* 7th Edition, Sage, 2021.
* Packback. You must create your own Packback account for this class (approximately $40). Instructions about this software and its use in class are provided below.

Available at the University Bookstore.

* All other required readings are available on Collab.

You should read the assigned textbook and Collab materials prior to the class in which they are due.

**Packback**

Packback participation is a requirement for this course, and the Packback Questions platform will be used for online discussion about class topics. Packback Questions is an online community where you canbe fearlessly curious and ask open-ended questions to build on top of what we are covering in class and relate topics to real-world applications.

Packback Requirements:

Weekly Packback submissions due each Sunday at 11:59PM EST**. Your submissions should address new class content since your last submissions.** In order to receive full credit, you should submit the following per each deadline period:

* 1 open-ended Question every week with a minimum Curiosity Score of 50, worth 33.33% of each assignment grade
* 2 Responses every week with a minimum Curiosity Score of 50, worth 66.67% of each assignment grade
* Half credit will be provided for questions and responses that do not meet the minimum curiosity score.

**How to Register on Packback:**  
An email invitation will be sent to you from help@packback.co prompting you to finish registration. If you don’t receive an email (be sure to check your spam), you may register by following the instructions below:

1. Create an account by navigating to https://app.packback.co and clicking “Sign up for an Account”  
   Note: If you already have an account on Packback you can log in with your credentials.
2. Then enter our class community’s lookup key into the “Looking to join a community you don't see here?” section in Packback at the bottom of the homepage.

Community Lookup Key: **7387e13a-58a7-498a-9641-fcc393c91903**

1. Follow the instructions on your screen to finish your registration.

Packback requires a paid subscription. Refer to [www.packback.co/product/pricing](http://www.packback.co/product/pricing) for more information.

**How to Get Help from the Packback Team:**

If you have any questions or concerns about Packback throughout the semester, please read their FAQ at [help.packback.co](http://help.packback.co/). If you need more help, contact their customer support team directly at help@packback.co.

For a brief introduction to Packback Questions and why we are using it in class, watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV7QmikrD68>

**Assessments:**

**Paper 1:** Media Journal 10% (Due Friday October 7)

**Paper 2:** Textual Analysis of Media 15% (Due Friday December 2)

**Packback Postings**: 10%

**Weekly Online Quizzes on Readings:** (Starting on September 8, 10 multiple choice questions each): 15%

**Midterm Exam**: 20% (Thursday October 25).

**Section Attendance and Participation**: 10%

**Final Exam**: 20%

**COURSE POLICIES**

**THE BIG 4:**

1. **No late work or assignments whatsoever are accepted in this class.**
2. **You cannot make-up a quiz if you miss one.**
3. **You must take the midterm and final on the date assigned. It is up to you to organize your schedule accordingly.**
4. **You will fail the course on your 4th absence from discussion section.**

**Attendance:** Attendance at weekly discussion sections is required. Regardless of your other grades for the course, three discussion section absences will lower your course grade by one whole letter. **You will fail the course on your 4th absence from discussion section.**

**Email policy:** I as well as the TA’s will not entertain last minute “panic” emails. The requirements of the course are clearly explained well in advance so do not ask for substantial help the day before an assignment is due. Clarification questions are fine.

**Originality of student work:** All student work must be conducted in accord with the UVA Code of Honor. Visit the following site for more information: http://www.virginia.edu/honor/

When it comes to written assignments, all work must be your own. You may not access any old exams or answer keys. Do not quote directly or paraphrase from sources without a proper citation. Footnote ideas and information that are not common knowledge. Show the highest respect and take the greatest care when using library materials and Internet sources. Assignments that evidence plagiarism or cheating will earn a zero and suspected violations will be forwarded to the Honor Committee at my discretion.

**Writing:** All writing should reflect thoughtful college-level composition. Grading will be determined by style, proper grammar, level of analysis, and content. For each assignment, you will be given a grading rubric that delineates specific expectations and grading criteria. All assignments must be typed and double-spaced. All academic and expert sources must be appropriately cited in a Works Cited or Bibliography. Citations should follow APA, MLA, Chicago or another commonly accepted academic style. Citation style should remain consistent throughout the assignment (*e.g.* do not switch between APA and MLA). Some papers may be returned ungraded if the writing is extremely poor.

**Writing Help:** I encourage you all to visit the University of Virginia Writing Center for assistance writing your papers. We *all* could use a little extra help with our writing. Please visit <https://virginia.mywconline.com> to make an appointment and for further information.

**Safety and Equality:** The University of Virginia is dedicated to providing a safe and equitable learning environment for all students. Religious based bigotry, white supremacy, racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and misogyny have no place here. It is vital that you know power-based violence and intimidation of any kind will not be tolerated. Everyone has a responsibility to do their part to maintain a safe and inclusive community on Grounds.

If you or someone you know has been affected by power-based personal violence, information can be found on the UVA Sexual Violence website that describes reporting options and available resources - [www.virginia.edu/sexualviolence](http://www.virginia.edu/sexualviolence). I care about you and your well-being and stand ready to provide you with support and resources. As a faculty member, I am a “responsible employee,” which means that I am required by University policy and federal law to report what you tell me to the University's Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator's job is to ensure that the reporting student receives the resources and support that they need, while also reviewing the information presented to determine whether further action is necessary to ensure survivor safety and the safety of the University community. If you would rather keep this information confidential, there are Confidential Employees you can talk to on Grounds (<http://www.virginia.edu/justreportit/confidential_resources.pdf>).

**COURSE SCEHDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**IMPORTANT:**

**You are responsible for reading and watching the following BEFORE you attend your weekly discussion section.**

**I.**  **Course Overview**

August 23: No reading

**II.**  **Where We Find Ourselves Today: Social Media, the Attention Economy, and Surveillance Capitalism**

August 25, 30, September 1:

1. *Media/Society,* Chapter 1: Media/Society in a Digital World.
2. Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power.* Public Affairs Books, 2019, pp. 1-25.
3. Watch “The Social Dilemma” (Netflix Streaming).
4. Data Brokers: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqn3gR1WTcA>

**FIRST PACKBACK CONTRIBUTIONS DUE SEPTEMBER 1**

**FIRST COLLAB QUIZ DUE BEFORE CLASS ON SEPTEMBER 8**

**III.** **The Long History of Media**

September 8, 13, 15:

1. *Media/Society,* Chapter 2: The Evolution of Media Technology

2. Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, pp. 44-63, 83-98. [ON COLLAB]

**IV.**  **Media Industries: Concentration, Ownership, and Conglomeration**

September 20, 22:

1. *Media/Society,* Chapter 3: The Economics of the Media Industry.
2. Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power.* Public Affairs Books, 2019, pp. 26-62.

September 27, 29:

1*. Media/Society,*  Chapter 5, Media Organizations and Professionals.

**READING DAYS: NO CLASS OCTOBER 4**

**FIRST WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (MEDIA JOURNAL) DUE ON FRIDAY**

**OCTOBER 7**

**V.**  **Media, Politics and Policy**

October 6, 11:

1. *Media/Society,* Chapter 4: Political Influence on Media

2. Andrea L. Press and Bruce A. Williams, “Chapter 3: Media and Democracy,” *The New Media Environment: An Introduction..* New York: Blackwell, 2010. [ON COLLAB]

October 13, 18:

1. *Media/Society,* Chapter 6: Media and Ideology

**MIDTERM: TUESDAY OCTOBER 25**

**VI. Media and Identity**

October 20, 27, November 1:

1. *Media/Society,* Chapter 7: Social Inequality and Media Representation
2. Cavalcante, Andre. "Anxious Displacements: The Representation of Gay Parenting on *Modern Family* and *The New Normal* and the Management of Cultural Anxiety."

**VIII.**  **Making Media, Making Meaning**

November 3, 10

1. *Media/Society,* Chapter 8 Audiences and Creators

**ELECTION DAY: NO CLASS NOVEMBER 8**

**IX.** **Technology and a Changing Media Environment**

November, 15, 17

1. *Media/Society,* Chapter 9: Media Technology

**X. Global Media**

November 22, 29, Decmeber 1

1. *Media/Society,* Chapter 10: Media in a Changing Global Culture

2. P.W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *LikeWar: The Weaponization of Social Media.* New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018.Chapter 4: The Empires Strike Back: Censorship, Disinformation, and the Burial of Truth,” pp. 83-118.

**NOVEMBER 25 – THANKSGIVING NO CLASS**

**SECOND WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (IDEOLOGY) DUE ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2**

**XII. Final Thoughts**

December 6

No reading.

**FINAL EXAM**

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8**

**9:00AM-12:00PM**

**WILSON 403**