

Media and Global Communication

Fall 2014

MCC-UE 1300.001

Mon/Wed 2:00 – 3:15 PM

Location: 7 East 12th, Room 125

Prof. Rodney Benson

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-3 and Wednesdays 4-5

Course Description

This course seeks to cover the landscape in contemporary theorizing and research on cultural globalization. It is organized broadly around three partially competing/partially complementary theories of globalization – homogenization, enduring differences, and hybridization. We will attempt to bring each of these theories to life with case studies of the production, distribution, and reception of cultural forms and experiences from across the globe. Our focus will be first and foremost empirical, that is, oriented to describing and understanding as fully as possible *what* is happening and *why*. But we will also address at various times normative issues, that is, what *should* be done. Hopefully, by the end of this course, you will have a better sense of what globalization is, what forces are driving it, and what you can or want to do about it as a student and scholar, future communications professional, citizen, consumer, activist, and/or global cosmopolitan.

Teaching / Course Objectives

- * to provide students with a thorough understanding of how media differ around the world and to develop an appreciation of cultural differences;
- * to provide students with knowledge of the major descriptive and explanatory theories of cultural globalization;
- * to help students develop skills in primary research about global media and communication.

Texts

Required Books (Available at NYU Bookstore; Also On Reserve at NYU Library)

George Ritzer. 2013. *The McDonaldization of Society*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Todd Gitlin. 2007. *Media Unlimited*. New York: Henry Holt.

Manuel Castells. 2012. *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Pdf texts: Available on NYU Classes under “Resources” (indicated in schedule with asterisk).

Course Assignments and Evaluation

Grading for this course will be based on your performance on the following:

(1) Attendance and Active Participation (15 %): Please come to class, on time, remain in class for the 75 minutes we are all together, and be prepared to discuss the assigned readings.

Attendance is required and if you need to miss class for any reason, you must notify me in advance. Please bring a paper copy of the assigned reading (article or book) to the class, so that we will all be, literally, on the same page. I strongly encourage active, annotated reading (in other words, print out the assignment and mark it up with underlines and marginal comments).

Cell phone use (including texting) is not permitted in class. Laptops should only be used for note-taking. Use of laptops for email or internet surfing, unless linked to a class assignment, is not permitted: violation of this policy will negatively affect your participation grade.

I strongly encourage you to regularly read the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, the *Guardian*, or other major national or international news publications online or in print.

I will sometimes assign additional short texts from these or other periodicals and you are encouraged to bring to class any articles, blogs, etc. that you think are relevant to the class topic of the day. Short quizzes or writing assignments to test reading comprehension may be offered from time to time.

(2) Mid-Term Exam (25 %): Essays and short answers. Covers lectures and readings from the first half of the course. Exam must be taken at the scheduled time and location.

(3) Research Paper (30%): In this 12-15 pp. research paper, you will examine some aspect of globalization, drawing on class readings and conducting original primary research (political economy analysis, discourse/image analysis, and/or ethnography/in-depth interviews). Additional information about this assignment will be provided.

(4) Final Exam (30 %): Essays and short answers. Focuses on lectures and readings from the second half of the course, but may ask questions about concepts introduced from the first half. Exam must be taken at the scheduled time and location.

Grading Policies

It should go without saying that plagiarism is strictly prohibited. This policy will be strictly enforced. “Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated. Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score and/or other materials which are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following: Copy verbatim from a book, an article or other media; Download documents from the Internet; Purchase documents; Report from other’s oral work; Paraphrase or restate someone else’s facts, analysis and/or conclusions; Copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.” (NYU Steinhardt School of Education Statement on Academic Integrity)

Basic standards:

A = excellent. Outstanding work in all respects. Your exams and essays are thoroughly researched, appropriately documented, logically organized and rhetorically convincing. Your analysis is not only comprehensive and sound, but creative and original. In short, you not only get it, but begin to see through it!

B = good. Your understanding of course materials is complete and thorough, and there is at least some evidence of your own critical intelligence at work. You demonstrate basic competence in research, writing and oral presentation.

C = barely adequate. Your writing is vague and incoherent or riddled with grammatical or spelling errors. You do not make proper use of source materials, and there is little depth or concreteness to your research or analysis. Your understanding of concepts and ideas is incomplete and often misguided, but there is at least some evidence that you learned something from this course.

D = unsatisfactory. Work exhibits virtually no understanding or even awareness of basic concepts and themes of course. Your participation has been inadequate or superficial. Either you have not been paying attention or you have not been making any effort.

F= failed. Work was not submitted or completed according to the basic parameters outlined in the course syllabus (basic requirements for word length, topical focus, types and number of sources, documentation of primary source materials).

Grades are calculated according to the following scale:

94-100 A; 90-93 A-; 87-89 B+; 83-86 B; 80-82 B-;
77-79 C+; 73-76 C; 70-72 C-; 67-69 D+; 63-66 D; 60-62 D-; 0-59 F

LATE POLICY: Any assignment turned in after the designated day and time will be downgraded. For each 24-hour period it is late, it will be downgraded one full grade (B+ to C+, etc.).

You are responsible for keeping a digital copy of any assignments.

Schedule (subject to revision; readings may be added or subtracted; *=articles or excerpts from books available on NYU Classes)

WEEK 1

Wed., 9.3 **Introduction / Overview: What is Globalization? Why does it Matter?**

WEEK 2

Mon., 9.8 **Theorizing and ‘Internationalizing’ Global Communication Research**
*Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 7-21, 41-58

Wed., 9.10 **U.S./Western Cultural/Media Imperialism / Political Economy of Global Media**

*Oliver Boyd-Barrett. 1998. “Media Imperialism Reformulated.” In D.K. Thussu, ed., *Electronic Empires*. London: Arnold.
*Open Democracy debate on media ownership (2001-2012):
<http://www.opendemocracy.net/media-globalmediaownership/debate.jsp>
See especially, essays by Robert McChesney (“Policing the Thinkable”), Benjamin Compaine (“The myths of encroaching global media ownership”), McChesney’s response to Compaine (“Media corporations vs. democracy”), Compaine (“The workable real vs. the absolutist ideal”), McChesney’s final response (“It’s a wrap”), Compaine’s last word (“A world without absolutes”), and James Curran’s summary conclusion (“Global media concentration: shifting the argument”)

WEEK 3

Mon., 9.15 **Western Global Media: Cultural Imperialists or Liberators?**
*PBS Frontline transcript. 2014. “Secret State of North Korea.”
*Joseph Nye. 2008. “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616, 94-109.
*Sonia Serra. 2000. “The killing of Brazilian street children and the rise of the international public sphere.” In J. Curran, ed., *Media Organisations in Society*. London: Arnold, pp. 151-171.

Wed., 9.17

McDonaldization

Ritzer, *McDonaldization*, chs. 1-2
*Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 13-31 (Introduction) and 155-183 (Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism)

WEEK 4

Mon., 9.22 **The Limits of McDonaldization and What to do About it**
Ritzer, *McDonaldization*, chs. 5, 6, and 7

Wed., 9.24

(Global) Audiences: Interpretations and Practices

*Elihu Katz and Tamar Liebes. 1987. “Decoding Dallas: Notes from a cross-cultural study.” In H. Newcomb, ed., *Television: The Critical View*. New York: Oxford University Press.

*David Morley. 2006. "Unanswered Questions in Audience Research." *The Communication Review* 9: 101-121.

WEEK 5

Mon., 9.29

(Global) Media as Environment

Gitlin, *Media Unlimited*

Wed., 10.1

Western News Media Systems

*Benson, *Shaping Immigration News: A French-American Comparison*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press (chs. 2, 6)

*Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini. 2004. *Comparing Media Systems*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, chs. 1-4 (selections)

WEEK 6

Mon., 10.6

Public Media

*Benson, *Shaping Immigration News* (ch. 8)

*Rodney Benson and Matthew Powers. 2011. *Public Media Around the World: International Models for Funding and Protecting Independent Journalism*. Washington, D.C.: Free Press (executive summary and introduction).

*Stephen Cushion. 2012. *The Democratic Value of News: Why Public Service Media Matter*. Palgrave MacMillan (selections).

*James Curran, Shanto Iyengar, Anker Brink Lund and Inka Salovaara-Moring. 2009. "Media System, Public Knowledge and Democracy: A Comparative Study." *European Journal of Communication* 24, 1: 5-26.

Wed., 10.8

News Media Beyond the Western World

*James Curran and Myung-Jin Park. 2000. "Beyond globalization theory." Pp. 3-18 in J. Curran and M-J. Park, eds., *De-Westernizing Media Studies*. London: Routledge.

*Colin Sparks. 2010. "China's Media in Comparative Perspective." *International Journal of Communication* 4: 552-56.

WEEK 7

Mon., 10.13

NYU HOLIDAY

Wed., 10.15

MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 8

Mon., 10.20

Indian Media and Politics: Guest Speaker, Prof. Paula Chakravartty

Wed., 10.22

Research Paper Workshop: Methods

Political Economy / Discourse-Image Analysis / Ethnography

WEEK 9

*Mon., 10.27

Hybridization and Cultural Mixing

*Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture*, pp. 69-83.

*Paul S.N. Lee. 1991. "The absorption and indigenization of foreign media cultures; A study on a cultural meeting point of the East and West: Hong Kong," *Asian Journal of Communication*, 1, 2: 52-72.

*Koichi Iwabuchi. 2010. "Taking 'Japanization' Seriously: Cultural Globalization Reconsidered." Pp. 410-33 in D. Thussu, ed., *International Communication*, London: Routledge.

Turn in 250 word research paper proposals / Sign-up for individual mtgs

Wed., 10.29

Hybridization and Capitalist Power

*Marwan Kraidy. 2005. *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press (selections).

WEEK 10

Mon., 11.3

Regionalization/Transnationalization: Globalization as Mosaics and/or Flows

*Joseph D. Straubhaar. 2007. *World Television: From Global to Local*. London: Sage (selections).

*Joseph D. Straubhaar. 2010. "Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity." Pp. 261-78 in D. Thussu, ed., *International Communication* (Routledge).

*Jeremy Tunstall. 2008. *The Media Were American: U.S. Mass Media in Decline*. New York: Oxford University Press (selections).

*Arjun Appadurai. 1996. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." In *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Wed., 11.5

Transnational Media: International News (Focus on Al Jazeera)

*Muhammad I. Ayish. 2005. "Media Brinkmanship in the Arab World: Al Jazeera's The Opposite Direction as a Fighting Arena." In Mohamad Zayani, ed., *The Al Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, pp. 106-126.

*Tine Ustad Figenschou. 2013. *Al Jazeera and the Global Media Landscape: the South is Talking Back*. London: Routledge (selections).

WEEK 11

Mon., 11.10

Transnational Media: Reality TV

*Marwan Kraidy. 2010. *Reality Television and Arab Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press (selections).

- Wed., 11.12 **Contra-Flows: Telenovelas**
 *Antonio C. La Pastina, Cacilda M. Rego, and Joseph D. Straubhaar. 2003. "The centrality of telenovelas in Latin America's everyday life." *Global Media Journal* 2, 2 (1-15).
 *Daniël Biltreyst and Philippe Meers. 2000. "The international telenovela debate and the contra-flow argument: a reappraisal," *Media, Culture & Society* 22: 393-413.
 *Hanna Rosin. 2006. "Life Lessons: How soap operas can change the world," *The New Yorker*, June 5: 40-45.

WEEK 12

- Mon., 11.17 **Korean Wave**
 Y. Kim, ed. 2013. *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global*. New York: Routledge (selections).

- Wed., 11.19 **Bollywood**
 *Tejaswini Ganti. 2002. "'And Yet My Heart is Still Indian': The Bombay Film Industry and the (H)Indianization of Hollywood." In F.D. Ginsburg et al., eds., *Media Worlds*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

WEEK 13

- Mon., 11.24 **Mobile Media / The Global Divide and Media in Africa**
 *Adam Clayton Powell III. 2012. *Bigger Cities, Smaller Screens: Urbanization, Mobile Phones, and Digital Media Trends in Africa*. (A Report to the International Center for Media Assistance).

- Wed., 11.26 **Nollywood**
 *M. Krings and O. Okome, eds. 2013. *Global Nollywood*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press (selections).

***Friday, 11.28 Research Paper due, 6 p.m., in my mailbox, 8th Floor, 239 Greene St.**

WEEK 14

- Mon., 12.1 **Network Society and Global Activism I**
 Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope*, ch. 1
 *W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerburg. 2012. "The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics." *Information, Communication & Society* 15, 5: 739-768.
- Wed., 12.3 **Network Society and Global Activism II**
 Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope* (selections)

WEEK 15

Mon, 12.8

Cosmopolitanism

*Ulf Hannerz. 1990. "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture," *Theory, Culture & Society* 7: 237-251.

*Kwame Anthony Appiah. 2006. "The Case for Contamination." *New York Times*, January 1. Available at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/01/magazine/01cosmopolitan.html?pagewanted=all>.

Wed., 12.10

FINAL EXAM

ADDENDUM FOR COURSE INNOVATION GRANT APPLICATION

Media and Global Communication: Research Paper Assignment Guidelines

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In this 10-12 pp. (2500-3000 words) research paper, you will examine some aspect of globalization, drawing on class readings and conducting original primary research (political economy analysis, discourse/image analysis, and/or ethnography/in-depth interviews). Note: Your paper must be at least 2500 words; it can be no longer than 3,500 words.

Submit both an electronic and hard copy of the paper and include word count at the top of the first page.

(Revised) Deadlines:

Wed., Oct. 8: 250 word proposal (which option, specific case study, possible primary sources), turn in at beginning of class

Thursday, Oct. 23 – Tuesday, Oct. 28: Individual meetings on paper proposals

Friday, Nov. 28: Final Paper, email copy AND hard copy due in my mailbox no later than 5:30 p.m., 8th Floor, 239 Greene St.

OPTION #1: Comparative Media Organization/Media Genre Study (U.S. globally-oriented media organization or non-U.S.-based media organization, news or non-news): institutional and content analysis. This paper will have four components (with suggested minimum lengths). Minimum source requirements: 3 class readings, 2 other secondary sources, 3 primary organization profile sources, 6 total media output texts.

(1) Introduction (1 page)

Introduce the media outlets/programs you will be comparing and which aspects of their output you will be comparing. E.g., you could compare similar news shows, entertainment shows (reality TV, children's programs, documentaries, etc.) in two countries. Your "cases" should be comparable in as many ways as possible (similar genre, similar audience, similar medium) so that any differences you find can be linked to the national media system in which they operate. Justify the comparison in relation to globalization theories (what general questions does this case study comparison contribute to?). Explain how you will investigate your question (what methods and primary sources will you be using?).

(2) Media organization/program profiles (4 pp.)

(a) Drawing on relevant course readings and additional secondary and primary sources, situate your media organizations in their national/regional context. For example, if you were comparing Al Jazeera and CNN, you would need to provide some background about the Qatari/Arab and U.S. media systems.

(b) Provide specific background on the media organization (e.g. TV Globo) and, if relevant, specific program (e.g., a particular telenovela), you are profiling. This part of the paper should

address the following elements: a) historical background, b) ownership, c) funding, d) audience, and e) professional mission/philosophy of the organization.

For this section of your paper, you should draw on at least: 2 secondary readings (outsiders writing about the media system, organization, or program), and 3 primary sources (insider documents). (These would be in addition to any assigned course readings that you choose to use.)

For the purposes of this assignment, secondary sources may include: a) articles in scholarly journals such as *European Journal of Communication*; *Media, Culture & Society*; *Gazette*; *Press/Politics*; *New Media and Society*, etc.; b) scholarly books written by academics or other experts about the organization, including biographies or organizational histories; c) professional reviews such as *Columbia Journalism Review*, etc.; d) articles in major business newspapers, business magazines, or general newspapers with business sections (e.g., *BusinessWeek*, *Bloomberg*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, *New York Times* business section, etc.) – but no matter how many of (d)-articles you use, they will only count as one secondary source, and you will have to use at least one additional secondary source from categories a-c.

For the purposes of this assignment, primary sources may include: a) Hoover’s company reports, b) Corporate annual reports, c) Articles in relevant trade publications such as *Ad Age*, *Editor & Publisher*, *Strategies* (French), *Variety*, etc. d) Reports of the World Association of Newspapers, etc., e) other Government or Industry Trade Group or International Regulatory Agency (UN, OECD, WTO, etc.) reports, f) memoirs or autobiographies by managers or creative professionals working at the organization, g) interviews conducted by you (provide notes or transcript).

(3) Content (text/image/format) analysis (5 pp.)

(a) Draw a sample of at least 3 “texts” from each media outlet/program (6 texts total)

(b) Conduct a close reading of these texts to draw out similarities/differences of the “output” of your two media outlets/programs.

(c) Support your interpretations with evidence (quoted passages, captured images, statistics – e.g., numbers of times in which certain themes, frames, characters, images appear in each sample).

(4) Conclusion (2 pp.)

Summarize what you have learned from this study: Link your findings to globalization theories and concepts (at least three assigned readings). Reflect on the research process: what worked well? What might you do differently next time? What kinds of future research might extend or qualify this study?

Provide a bibliography listing all primary and secondary source materials.

Attach hard copies or provide links for all primary source materials used for the assignment.

OPTION #2: Globalization in New York (Ethnography/ Interviews)

The purpose of this paper is to observe and describe globalization processes in action in New York City.

Minimum source requirements: 3 class readings, 3 other secondary scholarly sources, 4 pp. of field notes (based on 4 hours of observations).

Research on this paper should involve the following steps:

(1) Pick two research sites to make your observations.

(2) A research site could include, but is not limited to the following:

- a neighborhood (such as Chinatown, Times Square, Jackson Heights, Chelsea, Harlem, Union Square, etc.) or any portion thereof
- a street corner
- a restaurant
- a cafe
- a newspaper kiosk
- a bookstore
- a public building, such as a post office or government agency
- a subway car or subway station
- a public performance (theater, music, dance, film festival) (note: this can only be one of your sites, and keep in mind you are analyzing not only the event but the built environment and the audience)

For this option, what does not count as a research site? Your dorm room or apartment, an NYU classroom, or what you see on TV or the internet. If you have questions, check with me.

(3) What are you looking for?

You are looking for intersections of the global and the local, or how global processes are manifested in our local (and global city) environment of New York. Identify, describe, and analyze at least four examples total (at least one from each research site) of globalization in action, meaning, one or more of the following:

- McDonaldization (Ritzer)
 - Enduring differences (foreign cultures preserving their differences from American 'culture' and/or any negative or confrontational interactions between western/consumerist culture and more traditional cultures)
 - Active audiences: diverse interpretations/uses of global culture
 - Disposable feeling (Gitlin)
 - Glocalization
 - Contra-flows
 - Hybridization
- etc.

(4) How do you go about looking for such things? And for how long?

You can observe people, street or store signs, goods for sale, buildings, cars, etc. You can find a place to sit still and observe, or you can walk or drive around. Spend at least 2 hours at each site making observations or talking with people (you may find that you will want to spend more time than this). If you interview people, make it clear that this is only for the purposes of an NYU class project (not for publication) and that their names will not be used.

NOTE: You may also draw on documentary materials (e.g., brochures or handouts from a sponsoring organization, scholarly or news articles, or websites) to provide additional evidence of

the global character of any social phenomena you have observed. However, your own observations and interviews should be the primary source of data.

(5) How will you remember what you saw or heard?

Write up at least two pages of field notes for each research site. You can also take photographs or video, which you can analyze later or add as an appendix to your research paper.

(6) Once your observations are finished, then what?

The paper should be organized into three parts (with suggested minimum lengths):

1. Introduction (1 pages): What are you setting out to observe and how will it relate to media and globalization research?

2. Narrative Thick Description (6 pp.): Provide a narrative description of your observations (a synthesis of your field notes), weaving in as appropriate references to appropriate globalization theories and concepts. You can also supplement your observations with any other primary documents you were able to obtain about your observations sites (websites, online videos posted by a business or organization you observed, etc.)

3. Methodological/Theoretical Discussion (5 pp.): Explain more fully how your observations can serve as examples of globalization processes. Fully define the globalization concepts (with references to at least six scholarly readings – minimum three assigned readings and three outside readings) and provide evidence for why you think your observations illustrate (or challenge) these concepts. Reflect on the process of research (any difficulties or challenges you encountered, etc.).

In sum, you are encouraged to use your narrative, creative, and artistic skills and interests to the fullest. However, there is also an important analytical component to the paper. You should organize your observations into an essay that coherently and logically relates them to the above-listed major concepts of globalization. In other words, you need to be able to explain these concepts in order to show how any phenomena you observed illustrate (or not) processes of globalization (McDonaldization, hybridization, etc.). Even better, use your observations to critique and go beyond the theories we have read.

In addition to your 10-12 pp. paper (2500-3000 words), attach your four pages (minimum) of field notes (can be handwritten). Optional Extra: You may also add up to 3 pages of photographs or send me a link to an online portfolio (photos or videos).

OPTION #3: MISC. OTHER

If neither Option #1 nor #2 appeal to you, you may design your own research project that involves primary research. Before proceeding, approve final topic and approach with me. As with the other options, primary research and links to theory are crucial. Regardless of your specific topic, you must use a minimum of at least 3 course readings, 3 outside secondary sources, and 4 primary sources (but see specific guidelines below).

Some possibilities:

(1) Glocalization: how an advertising or PR campaign or entertainment product (TV show, film, Broadway musical, etc.) is 'glocalized' to adapt to a specific culture

Primary source possibilities: Corporate strategy documents, published interviews with company CEOs or other executives, company or show website, your personal interview with someone in a responsible position who works for the organization, actual advertisements or shows, etc. Note: This choice may be similar to Option#1, but the emphasis would be less on a systematic comparison between two distinct national products but rather on how a cultural export is adapted to a different market.

(2) Global social movement activism: how a social movement organization organizes or communicates its message across national borders

Primary source possibilities: organization website, press releases, published interviews or your personal interview with a movement/NGO leader, videos posted on YouTube, etc.

(3) Cosmopolitanism in everyday life: public attitudes toward international cultural differences

Primary source possibilities: in person in-depth interviews or focus groups with a total of at least 6 individuals, web-based quantitative supplemented by qualitative surveys (if you use quantitative methods, you need a sample of at least 10 individuals)

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