

## **Media Economics (MRTS 4670 & MRTS 5620) Syllabus**

Instructor: Dr. Xiaoqun Zhang

E-mail: xiaoqun.zhang@unt.edu

Office: RTFP 233

Office Hours: Thursday 9:00 am-11:00 am or Zoom (make an appointment in advance)

### **Introduction**

This course will cover the fundamental concepts, theories, and approaches of media economics. You will learn how to use these theoretical constructs to analyze media markets, industries, and the practices of media organizations. Moreover, you will learn how media economy has been shaped by multiple factors, including technology, globalization, and regulation. We will also discuss the new trends in media economy, especially the rapid development of social media industries.

### **Course Objectives**

- Understand basic concepts, theories, and approaches of media economics.
- Utilize these constructs to analyze the media markets and industries
- Understand multiple factors that shape media economy including technology, globalization, and regulation.
- Analyze the new trends in media industries and the driving forces underlying these new trends.
- Understand the business model of multi-platform media companies.
- Analyze the development of social media industries and its influence on media economy.

### **Textbook:**

- Albarran, A. B. (2016). *The media economy* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.
- Other reading materials will be posted on the Canvas.

### **Course requirements**

- You are encouraged to participate in the class activities. There are various kinds of participations including asking questions, responding to questions asked by instructors as well as class members, and making comments.
- All the writing assignments are required to be turned in on time. These assignments should be typed and **double-spaced in 12 point standard font**. Accurate **APA documentary style** is required.

### Class Rules and Guidelines

- Regular on-time attendance is required. **Late for the class and early leaving will render the deduction of attendance points.** Please contact me by email if you have reasonable reasons, such as illness, prior to the class. Otherwise, your absence will be taken as the unexcused one. Your unexcused absence will render the deduction of points. **Students with more than THREE unexcused absences will NOT get “A” for this course.** Please notify me before the second week of the class if you will not attend the classes due to the religious holidays/holy days.
- You are expected to respect your peers and the instructor. Mutual respect should be practiced.
- **Late work can only get half of the corresponding points.** I know people give many reasons for late work (e.g., system crash, illness, etc.). You need to plan and schedule to complete work early.

### COVID Guidelines

UNT has developed protocols to track UNT faculty, staff and students who have tested positive for or been diagnosed with COVID-19. All protocols are in adherence with CDC guidelines and developed in conjunction with local health authorities. See the [COVID Guidelines website](#) for more information.

A COVID email address has been established to help UNT community members report and understand COVID-19 symptoms, testing information and/or results; receive guidance on actions they may need to take following potential exposure; and with questions related to COVID-19's impact on our university operations. Email [COVID@unt.edu](mailto:COVID@unt.edu) to report symptoms, positive COVID results, or ask COVID-related questions.

If a student in an in-person class tests positive, they should contact the COVID-19 Team for guidance about when they may return to class. Faculty teaching the COVID-positive student will be notified and provided additional information, including [a video to share](#) with other students in the class. You are not required to play the video every time a student in class tests positive.

COVID-19 antigen testing is available in the student health and wellness center or in the Union Mondays through Friday. Book online at [cur.tv/UNTunion](https://cur.tv/UNTunion).

If a student would like to obtain a face covering for class, they are available several campus locations. Some of the most convenient locations include:

- Willis Library
- Union Information Desk
- VP Student Affairs office – Hurley Administration Building
- Discovery Park – Engineering Dean's Office & College of Information Dean's Office
- Inspire Park –Administrative Office 115

- Hall Park – Library 166

### **Academic integrity and special needs**

- University of North Texas is a community that considers academic integrity essential to its sustenance. It is important to acknowledge and comply with the university academic integrity policy. Any violation of this policy will be punished. The punishment will be a failure for the course, or expulsion from the university. More information about the academic integrity can be obtained from <http://policy.unt.edu/policydesc/student-standards-academic-integrity-18-1-16>.
- The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) at 1167 Union Circle Sage Hall Suite 167 (phone: 940-565-4323) to verify your eligibilities. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations are at <http://www.unt.edu/oda/apply/index.html>. Please meet me early in the semester if you have special needs to be accommodated.

### **Assignment descriptions**

- **Online discussion:** You are required to answer the prompts posed on Canvas. You should post an original response (no less than 300 words) to the question, and comment on the posts (no less than 50 words each) of at least THREE classmates.

20 points are for the original response to the question, and 15 points are for the comments on other students' responses. The short essay will be graded on the quality of writing and arguments, the ability of applying concepts/theories, and the strength of the evidence. The comments on other's responses will be graded on the number of the comments, the quality, and timeliness of the comments.

- **Media company case study**

You will conduct the case study on a media company. You have the freedom to select the media company. It can be either a big media conglomerate or a small local media company (A sample of media companies will be posted on the Canvas). Your research could discuss/address one or several of the following topics/questions:

- (1) The market(s) the company's products/services are directed at the local, national, and international levels.
- (2) The financial performance of this company.

(3) The essence of its business model in terms of such things as where does the profit come from, its targeted market or audience, the production and distribution strategy, the choice of content?

(4) The extent to which its products/services exemplify the impact of regulatory structures.

(5) The extent to which its products/services exemplify the impact of new technology.

At least 10 sources are needed, at least five of which should be scholarly/academic sources. Scholarly/academic sources include journal articles, books/book chapters, research reports/projects, etc. The length of the reports should be at least FIVE pages, excluding reference pages.

You will record a video for the presentation of this case study, which should be posted on Youtube or another video platform. The presentation should be 8-10 minutes long.

- **Media industry issue analysis.** Students will conduct the research on one media industry issue. They have the freedom to select any particular issue they are interested in (A sample of the issues will be posted). The analysis should address one or several of the following questions:

(1) What are the nature and causes of the issue?

(2) What are the impacts of the issue on media economy?

(3) What are the factors, such as new technology, globalization, and regulation influence the issue?

(4) What are the impacts of the issue on media regulation, and how the regulation influences the issue?

(5) What are the broad economic and social impacts of the issue?

At least 10 sources are needed, at least five of which should be scholarly/academic sources. Scholarly/academic sources include journal articles, books/book chapters, research reports/projects, etc. The length of the reports should be at least FIVE pages, excluding reference pages.

You will record a video for the presentation of this case study, which should be posted on Youtube or another video platform. The presentation should be 8-10 minutes long.

- **Peer review.** The students will be divided into multiple groups to conduct peer review for media company case study presentation and media industry issue analysis presentation. The members in the group will watch these videos and review these presentations of other people in the same group. The instructor will provide evaluation form as well as the group members on the Canvas.

- **Final Exam.** You will have a final exam. The exam consists of 100 multiple choice and true/false questions. These questions come from Albarran, A. B. (2016). *The media economy* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.
- **Exams.** You will have three exams. They will cover the materials in the textbook and consist of multiple-choice questions. The exams are not cumulative. That means later exam will only cover the topics not covered in the earlier exam.

## **Evaluation**

### Assessment weighting

Online discussion: 350	35 × 10 = 350
Media company case study: 200	Writing = 150 Presentation = 50
Media industry issue analysis: 200	Writing = 150 Presentation = 50
Peer review: 50	Media company case study presentation = 25 Media industry issue analysis presentation = 25
Final exam: 200	2 × 100 = 200

Total 1000

Final grading scale: A=900-1000; B=800-899; C=700-799; D=600-699; F=below 600

For graduate students, an additional shorty essay is required, which counts for additional 200 points.

## **Addendum**

### **Short analytical essay on emerging technology (only graduate student required)**

In this essay, the graduate students are required to conduct research on the impacts of the new media technology on media industries. This new technology should be one (maybe more) of the most cutting-edge emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), Cloud, big data, algorithm, machine learning, artificial intelligence (AI), and 5G. The topic you choose should be different from the media industry issue analysis assignment.

You should analyze the one or several issues regarding this technology such as how this technology has been developed, how it has been adopted in media industries, how it would challenge the long-established technologies, how it would influence consumers'/audiences' behaviors, and how it would affect the market shares of different media technologies/products/services, the revenue sources of media companies, the business models of media industries, as well as the government regulations.

At least 10 sources are needed, at least five of which should be scholarly/academic sources. Scholarly/academic sources include journal articles, books/book chapters, research reports/projects, etc. The length of the reports should be at least FIVE pages, excluding reference pages.

Recommended readings for this assignment:

Arsenault, A. (2017). The datafication of media: Big data and the media industries. *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics*, 13(1&2), 7-24.

Athique, A. (2018). The dynamics and potentials of big data for audience research. *Media, Culture & Society*, 40(1) 59–74.

Balmer, R.E., Levin, S.L., & Schmidt, S. (2020). Artificial intelligence applications in telecommunications and other network industries. *Telecommunications Policy*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2020.101977>

Chan-Olmsted, S.M. (2019). A review of artificial intelligence adoptions in the media industry. *International Journal on Media Management*, 21(3-4), 193-215.

Helles, R., & Ørmen, J. (2020). Big data and explanation: Reflections on the uses of big data in media and communication research. *European Journal of Communication*, 35(3) 290–300.