

## Social Justice & Communication, Spring 2014

TTh 11:30-12:45pm MU 304

### ***Instructor***

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Office hours are by appointment

### ***Description***

In this course we will examine the implications of communication processes and practices for democracy and social justice. We will pay particular attention to: (1) tensions in the U.S. in the past century between progressive theories that promote an ideal of a rational, informed public and communication practices guided by a view of publics as emotional, uninformed, and easily manipulated; and (2) interconnections between issues of social justice and opportunities for cultivation of situated impartial thinking.

### ***Learning Objectives***

Students will be able to articulate and defend their conception of the role of communication in achieving a just society and demonstrate an understanding of how existing communication institutions, laws, and norms impede or assist movement towards that goal. More particularly, students will be able to articulate criteria they believe are essential to judging acts or states of affairs as socially just or unjust. Additionally, they will be able to discuss how various communicative practices, norms, processes, and institutions contribute to or impede social justice. Finally, students will be able to identify and act upon social justice issues in a manner informed by their experience in the course.

### ***Reading Materials***

Stuart Ewen, PR! A social history of spin (Basic Books, 1996).

Nancy Fraser, Scales of justice: Reimagining political space in a globalizing world (Columbia UP, 2008). Available as Kindle e-book on multiple platforms.

Other reading material will be made available via Sakai or in class.

### ***Assessments***

Midterm examination: 200 points. Due **Feb 20** @ 12:45pm (on Sakai)

Wiki project: 200 points. Due **April 29** @ 11am (online and on Sakai)

Reflection paper: 100 points. Due **April 18** @ 5pm (on Sakai)

### ***Ground Rules***

- **Academic dishonesty:** Plagiarism, whether in papers or on examinations, is the ultimate offense to academic values. Any student who plagiarizes will receive a grade of F in the course, and will be reported to the dean's office for consideration of further penalties. Plagiarism is the appropriation of the ideas or words of

another without proper public acknowledgement or citation. A rough rule of thumb is that you should always cite the source not only of direct quotations, but also of paraphrasing of the argument, interpretation, or claim of another. In addition, you should never present the work of another as your own. If you have further questions about this matter, you may consult me. There also is information about rules for citation in style manuals such as those of the Modern Language Association (MLA) or the American Psychological Association (APA). You also may consult the university website page on Academic Integrity.

- **Due dates:** Make up exams will not be given without documented proof that the student was unable to attend the night of the quiz, and then only at the discretion of the instructor. In the case of a make up exam being administered, it will be done at a time and place determined by the instructor. If you have reason to believe that you will be unable to turn in an exam on time, contact me as far in advance as possible to see if an extension will be granted.
- **Written work:** All written work must be typed (or word-processed), using 12 pt type and following MLA or APA guidelines for margins, pagination, etc.
- **Attendance:** Regular attendance is mandatory. A note from a doctor or from the Student Health Service will excuse you for an illness.
- **Grade scale:** A=92+; A-=90+; B+=88+; B=84+; B-=80+; C+=77+; C=74+; C-=70+; D+=67+; D=64+; D-=60+; F=below 59