

Public Intellectuals: Theory and Practice

COMM 620

Wednesdays, 9:30 am-12:20 pm

ANN L115

Instructor: Professor Henry Jenkins

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For an appointment with Prof. Jenkins, please contact his assistant, Amanda Ford, at *amandafo@usc.edu*.

This class is designed to help promote the professional development of graduate students pursuing research in the fields of media and communications. The class was inspired by three primary concerns:

1. USC faculty engage in a broad range of public-facing professional practices which are expected and rewarded through promotion and merit raise practices, yet—for the most part—graduate students are trained with a primary focus on producing academic monographs and essays for peer-reviewed journals and without deep focus on this public-facing role.
2. The digital era has created a much broader range of opportunities for actively engaging as intellectuals in important political and cultural conversations outside of academia, yet there are still relatively few academics who are participating in these dialogues or reacting to arguments that are shaping other realms of professional activity (policy, law, business, education, etc.)
3. There is a growing range of different professions and industries seeking expertise in media and communication at a moment of profound technological and cultural change, yet, for the most part, graduate students are encouraged to think of these other opportunities as afterthoughts as they are being prepared almost entirely for careers as academics.

My goals in this class are to expose you to the diversity of contemporary scholarly and intellectual practices, to encourage you to look closely at outstanding exemplars of work in these arenas, to create conversations with faculty members about their professional experiences, to help students think more deeply about their intellectual profile, and to offer some core advice and practical experiences. We will be exploring a broad range of theories of media and communication across the class, but the primary focus is going to be applied and practical, as students cultivate the skills and understanding required to make meaningful interventions as public intellectuals. For this reason, the class is structured around smaller, more focused assignments than would be typical for a more research-oriented PhD Seminar.

Academic Accommodation/Disability Services and Programs

Any students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me when classes begin. DSP is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m. The office is located in the Student Union room 301 and their phone number is (213) 740-0776.

USC Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located at <http://scampus.usc.edu/university-governance>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The review process can be found at <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS>.

Stress and Angst

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

Assignments (Description of each assignment embedded in class schedule below):

Short Personal Profile 10% (Due Jan. 20)

Blog Post 10% (Due Feb. 10)

Op-Ed Piece 10% (Due Feb. 17)

Written Interview 10% (Due Feb. 24)

Radio Interview 10% (Interviews will be around March 9.)

Scalar Pages 20% (Due April 13)

Personal Reflection 20% (Due April 27)

Class Participation 10%

Required Book:

Nick Sousanis, *Unflattening* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015). All other readings will be via Blackboard.

Class Schedule**Wednesday, January 13 Introduction****Readings:**

- Philip Marchand, “‘Canada’s Intellectual Comet,’ 1964-1967,” in *Marshall McLuhan: The Medium and the Messenger* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 181-203.
- Alan Lightman and Stephen Pinker, “Some Remarks on Becoming a ‘Public Intellectual’,” MIT, December 2, 1999, <http://www.mit.edu/~saleem/ivory/epil.htm>.
- Joe Sartelle, “Public Intellectuals,” *Bad Subjects*, November 1992, <http://bad.eserver.org/issues/1992/03/sartelle.html>.
- David M. Perry, “But Does It Count?,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 23 2014, <http://chronicle.com/article/But-Does-It-Count-/147199>.
- Henry Giroux, “Higher Education Under Siege: Implications for Public Intellectuals,” *NEA*, http://www.nea.org/assets/img/PubThoughtAndAction/TAA_06_08.pdf.
- Mark Greif, “What’s Wrong with Public Intellectuals?,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 13 2015, <http://chronicle.com/article/article-content/189921/>.
- Lili Loofbourow and Phillip Maciak, “The Time of the Semipublic Intellectual,” *The Semipublic Intellectual Blog*, <https://scholcomm.commons.mla.org/semipublic-intellectual/introduction>.

Assignment: Draft a 1-2 page description of your profile as an intellectual that includes your core background, your primary and secondary intellectual interests, your current online activities, the core conversations to which you wish to contribute, and the primary networks/communities within which you participate. Finally, try your hand at writing an author’s blurb for who you want to be, circa 2020. (Due at the start of class on January 20.)

Wednesday, January 20 The Intellectual in the Public Sphere

Readings:

- Cornel West, “The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual,” in *The Cornel West Reader* (New York: Basic, 2000), pp. 302-315.
- bell hooks, “Black Women Intellectuals,” in Cornel West and bell hooks, *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life* (Boston: South End Press, 1991), pp. 147-164.
- Cornel West, “Why I Left Harvard University,” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 47 (Spring 2005), pp. 64-68.
- Ernest J. Wilson, “Communication Scholars Need to Communicate,” *Inside Higher Education*, July 29, 2013, <http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2013/07/29/essay-state-communications-scholarship>.
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, “What It Means to be a Public Intellectual,” *The Atlantic*, January 8, 2014, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/01/what-it-means-to-be-a-public-intellectual/282907/>.
- Evette Brown, “Why Do We Have More Female Scholars But Few Public Intellectuals?,” *Bitchmedia*, July 8, 2013, <https://bitchmedia.org/post/why-do-we-have-more-female-scholars-but-few-public-intellectuals>.
- Natalia Cecire, “Everybody’s Authority,” *The Semi-Public Intellectual Blog*, <https://scholcomm.commons.mla.org/semipublic-intellectual/everybodys-authority>

Wednesday, January 27 Finding One’s Voice in The Blogosphere

Readings:

- Nicholas Kristof, “Professors, We Need You!” *New York Times*, February 15, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/16/opinion/sunday/kristof-professors-we-need-you.html>.
- Nicholas Behm, Sherry Rankins-Robertson, and Duane Roen, “The Case for Academics as Public Intellectuals,” AAUP, January-February 2014, <http://www.aaup.org/article/case-academics-public-intellectuals>.
- Dennis W. Drezner, “What Nick Kristof Doesn’t Get About the Ivory Tower,” *Politico*, February 21 2014, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/02/nick-kristof-academics-rebuttal-103786>.

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- Maria Konnikova, “Why Grad Schools Should Require Blogging,” *Scientific American*, April 12, 2013, <http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/literally-psyched/2013/04/12/why-grad-schools-should-require-students-to-blog/>.
- Mary C. Francis (ed.), “In Focus: Scholarly Publishing,” *Cinema Journal*, Winter 2013, pp. 114-136.
- Stanley Fish, “The Digital Humanities and the Transcending of Mortality,” *The New York Times*, January 9, 2012, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/09/the-digital-humanities-and-the-transcending-of-mortality/>.
- Joshua Rothman, “Why is Academic Writing So Academic?” *The New Yorker*, February 20, 2014, <http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/why-is-academic-writing-so-academic>.
- Henry Jenkins, “Professor Jenkins Goes to Washington,” in *Fans, Bloggers and Gamers: Understanding Participatory Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), pp. 187-197.
- Jason Mittell, “On Disliking *Mad Men*,” *Just TV*, July 29, 2010, <http://justtv.wordpress.com/2010/07/29/on-disliking-mad-men/>.
- Ian Bogost, “Against Aca-Fans,” *Ian Bogost Blog*, July 29, 2010, http://www.bogost.com/blog/against_aca-fandom.shtml.
- Henry Jenkins, “On *Mad Men*, Aca-Fandom, and the Goals of Criticism,” *Confession of an Aca-Fan*, August 11, 2010, http://henryjenkins.org/2010/08/on_mad_men_aca-fan_and_the_nat.html.
- Anne Kustritz, Louisa Stein, and Sam Ford, “Aca-Fandom and Beyond,” Part One and Two, *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*, June 13-15, 2011, http://henryjenkins.org/2011/06/acafandom_and_beyond_week_one.html, http://henryjenkins.org/2011/06/acafandom_and_beyond_week_one_1.html.
- John Edward Campbell, C. Lee Harrington, and Catherine Tosenberger, “Aca-Fandom and Beyond,” Part One and Two, *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*, July 28-29, 2011, http://henryjenkins.org/2011/07/aca-fandom_and_beyond_harringt.html, http://henryjenkins.org/2011/07/aca-fandom_and_beyond_harringt_1.html.

Assignment: Write a blog post appropriate for sharing via *Confessions of an Aca-Fan* or another academic blog. The post should present some aspect of your research in a format that would be engaging to a non-specialist audience. Try to take advantage of the unique features of the web, such as the ability to embed videos or to link to other materials. (Due at the start of class on Feb. 10.)

Wednesday, February 3 Visualizing Arguments

Guest Speakers: Nick Sousanis; Drew Morton

Readings/Videos:

- Drew Morton, "From the Panel to the Frame: Style and Scott Pilgrim," 2013, <https://vimeo.com/59355775>.
- Drew Morton, "Crosscut," 2013, <https://vimeo.com/109405354>.
- Drew Morton, "Film Noir/Film Genre Part III: Pragmatics," 2015, <https://vimeo.com/124771474>.
- Nick Sousanis, *Unflattening* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

Wednesday, February 10 The Intellectual in the Court of Public Opinion

Guest Speaker: Jeff Brazil

Readings:

- selected op-ed pieces (TBD)
- Kenneth W. Stickers, "John Dewey on the Public Responsibility of Intellectuals," *Ethics and Politics*, 2010, http://www2.units.it/etica/2010_1/STIKKERS.pdf.
- Evan Kindley, "Growing Up in Public: Academia, Journalism and the New Public Intellectual," *PMLA* 130(2), 467-473, <https://scholcomm.commons.mla.org/semipublic-intellectual/growing-up-in-public-academia-journalism-and-the-new-public-intellectual>.

Assignment: Students will write an op-ed piece about some aspect of their research targeted for a specific publication; the op-ed piece should follow basic formulas we were given in class. I am going to be working with the Annenberg news office to try to place as many of these op-eds as possible. (Due at the start of class on Feb. 17.)

Wednesday, February 17 The Interview

Guest Speaker: Terence McNalley

Readings:

- Henry Jenkins, "Coming Up Next! Ambushed on *Donahue*," in *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Understanding Participatory Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), pp. 198-207.
- Read at least three interviews from the Figure/Ground Communications Series <http://figureground.ca/>
- Listen to at least one episode of Aca-Media, <http://www.cmstudies.org/blogpost/923771/Cinema-Journal-Presents-Aca-Media>.

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- Amitai Etzioni, “Reflections on a Sometimes-Public Intellectual,” *PS*, October 2010, 651-655.
http://www.oss.net/dynamaster/file_archive/111005/c2e50b3bf7711a82e4c479e301404dda/2011-10-05%20Amitai%20Etzioni%20Reflections.pdf.
- Terrence McNally, “Q&A: Jane McGonigal,” *Stories of a World that Just Might Work*, January 24, 2012, podcast, <http://aworldthatjustmightwork.com/2012/01/qa-jane-mcgonigal-reality-broken-how-games-make-better-how-they-can-change-world/>. (Please allow time to listen to the podcast.)

Also recommended:

- Terrence McNally, “Q&A: Sherry Turkle,” *Stories of a World that Just Might Work*, February 15, 2011, <http://aworldthatjustmightwork.com/2011/02/qa-sherry-turkle-author/>.
- Terrence McNally, “Q&A: Cornel West,” *Stories of a World that Just Might Work*, October 15, 2009, <http://aworldthatjustmightwork.com/2009/10/qa-cornel-west-author-educator-and-philosopher/>.

Assignment: Students will respond in writing to a series of interview questions posed to them by the instructor about their work and academic profile. As they do so, they will try to apply the lessons about personal narratives that we discuss in class. (Due Feb. 24).

February 24 Digital Scholarship

Guest Speakers: Steve Anderson and Tara McPherson

Readings:

- Kathleen Fitzpatrick, “Peer Review” and “Texts,” in *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), pp. 15-50, 89-120.
- Tara McPherson (ed.) “In Focus: Digital Scholarship and Pedagogy,” *Cinema Journal*, Winter 2009, pp. 119-159.
- Tara McPherson, “Scaling Vectors: Thoughts on the Future of Scholarly Communication,” *Journal of Electronic Publishing*, Fall 2010, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/3336451.0013.208>.
- Steve Anderson and Tara McPherson, “Digital Scholarship: Thoughts on Evaluating Multimedia Scholarship,” *Profession*, 2011, pp. 136-151.
- Check out Critical Commons, <http://www.criticalcommons.org>.
- Check out By Any Media Necessary, <http://byanymedia.org>.

Assignment: Students will write three pages in Scalar discussing a core concept from their research and using as many of the multimedia capabilities as makes sense in relation to their project. (Due at the start of class on April 13.)

Wednesday, March 2 The Policy White Paper

Guest Speaker: Mizuko Ito

Readings:

- Mizuko Ito, et al., *Connected Learning: An Agenda for Research and Design* (MacArthur Foundation white paper), January 2013, http://dmlhub.net/sites/default/files/ConnectedLearning_report.pdf.
- Henry Jenkins, danah boyd, and Mimi Ito, excerpts from *Participatory Culture in a Networked Era* (London: Polity, 2015).

Wednesday, March 9 Student Interviews

Students will be interviewed by members of the Annenberg Radio News Team. Details to be announced closer to the time.

Wednesday, March 23 Beyond the Academy

Guest Speakers: Sam Ford; Mary L. Gray, Tarleton Gillespie, Nancy Baym

Readings:

- Grant McCracken, "How to Be a Self-Supporting Anthropologist," in Riall Nolan (ed.), *A Handbook of Practicing Anthropology* (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 104-113.
- Sam Ford, "Listening and Empathizing: Advocating for New Management Logics in Marketing and Corporate Communications," in Derek Kompare, Avi Santo, and Derek Johnson (eds.), *Intermediaries: Management of Culture and Cultures of Management* (New York: NYU Press, 2014).
- Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green, "How to Read This Book," in *Spreadable Media: Creating Meaning and Value in a Networked Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), pp. ix-xv.
- Jeannette M. Wing, "Here's Why Microsoft Cares About Basic Research and You Should, Too," *Inside Microsoft Research*, Oct. 19, 2015, http://blogs.technet.com/b/inside_microsoft_research/archive/2015/10/19/why-microsoft-cares-about-basic-research-and-you-should-too.aspx.

- Lucy Suchman, “Consuming Anthropology,” in Andrew Barry and Georgina Born (eds.), *Interdisciplinarity: Reconfigurations of the Social and Natural Sciences*, Routledge, forthcoming.

Wednesday, March 30 Risks and Rewards of Industry-Academia Relations

Guest Speaker: Robert Kozinets

Readings: TBA

Wednesday, April 6 NO CLASS

Wednesday, April 13 Scholarship and Curation

Guest Speaker: Joshua Kun

Readings:

Joshua Kun has asked us to explore some of the following links that illustrate different dimensions of his current projects:

- Popular Music Project overview:
 - <http://usc.edu/PMP>
- Songs in the Key of Los Angeles (collaboration with Library Foundation, Los Angeles and LA Public Library, KCET Artbound, & BedrockLA)
 - <http://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/visual-collections/collection-page/songs-key-la>
 - <http://www.kcet.org/arts/artbound/counties/los-angeles/songs-in-the-key-of-la.html>
 - <http://www.kcet.org/arts/artbound/counties/los-angeles/songs-in-the-key-of-la-aloe-blacc.html>
 - <http://www.kcet.org/arts/artbound/counties/los-angeles/songs-in-the-key-of-los-angeles-julia-holter.html>
 - <http://www.kcet.org/arts/artbound/counties/los-angeles/songs-in-the-key-of-los-angeles-petrojvic-blasting-company.html>
 - <http://www.latimes.com/news/columnone/la-et-ms-los-angeles-sheet-music-20130529-dto,0,4682948.html>
- Phillips Music Company (collaboration with Grand Performances)
 - <http://phillipsmusiccompany.tumblr.com>

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- Trouble in Paradise (Getty Foundation/Grammy Museum)
 - <http://annenbergl.usc.edu/News%20and%20Events/News/110502Kun.aspx>
 - <http://www.boomcalifornia.com/2013/03/sonic-turbulence/>
- Crossfader (ongoing live collaborations with J. Period & Toy Selectah)

- <http://www.scp.org/programs/take-two/2012/10/17/28887/josh-kun-presents-the-art-of-the-crossfade/>
- <http://rapgenius.com/Josh-kun-the-art-of-the-crossfade-excerpt-lyrics>
- At the Edge of Urban Identity (ongoing collaboration with Ozomatli)
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxqlROnk7WY>
- Writing examples- journalism
 - <http://www.laweekly.com/2006-02-16/news/the-island-of-jorge-hank-rhon/full/>
 - <http://prospect.org/article/death-rattle>
 - <http://goo.gl/5Abz8q>

Wednesday, April 20 Identifying Strong Examples of Public Intellectualism

Readings:

Students will collectively choose a range of readings, reflecting public intellectuals they particularly admire.

Assignment: Students should write a short five-page reflection sharing their current understanding of the concept of the public intellectual and discussing which models from the class they might choose to pursue in their own career. Be as specific as possible about how these ideas might apply to the intellectual interests you identified in the opening audit. (Due at the start of class on April 27.)

Wednesday, April 27 Final Reflections

Reading:

- David Scott, “Stuart Hall’s Ethics,”
https://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/small_axe/v009/9.1scott.html