

Global Media
MSCR 2325.01, Spring 2026
Northeastern University

1:35 pm – 3:15 pm, Tuesdays and Fridays
Ryder Hall 235

Instructor: Dr. Nora Suren

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Office hours: Wednesday 1:30-2:30pm or by appointment

Course Description

Global Media examines how media systems, platforms, and cultural industries operate across national and regional contexts, shaping power, identity, and everyday life. The course introduces students to key debates in global media studies, including media imperialism, soft power, transnational cultural flows, platform capitalism, surveillance, algorithmic governance, and digital labor.

Through case studies drawn from film, television, streaming platforms, social media, and influencer economies, students will analyze how media circulate globally and how histories of colonialism, the Cold War, neoliberalism, and technological change continue to shape contemporary media landscapes. Particular attention is paid to the political economy of platforms, the role of algorithms in visibility and suppression, and the uneven conditions under which media are produced, distributed, and consumed, especially in the Global South.

The course combines theoretical frameworks with close analysis of media texts and infrastructures, encouraging students to critically engage with global media power while developing their own analytical voice. Assignments emphasize applying theory to real-world media examples, collaborative knowledge production, and creative public-facing communication.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will analyze global media systems, platforms, and cultural industries within historical and political contexts.
2. Students will critically evaluate how power, inequality, and ideology operate through media texts, technologies, and algorithms.
3. Students will compare media practices and industries across different national, regional, and cultural contexts.
4. Students will apply theories of global media, political economy, and platform governance to contemporary case studies.
5. Students will develop research, presentation, and collaborative skills through written, oral, and creative assignments.

How to do well in this class

1. Attend class regularly and participate fully.

2. If you must miss class, communicate with me about the absence as soon as possible.
3. Follow instructions carefully. Be professional and artful with your work. Edit all your work carefully before posting it.
4. Be adaptable. Unexpected occurrences may impact the class plan and/or your participation in the class, as well as my participation. I will notify you by email and Canvas announcements.
5. Most important is that we communicate regularly.
6. Be thoughtful, curious, critical, and creative!

Email Policy

Please allow at least 24 hours for response to emails during the work week and plan accordingly.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will receive a **20% deduction**. Work will not be accepted more than one week past the deadline without documented emergency circumstances. In such cases, I will try to accommodate you, but make-up time cannot be guaranteed.

Participation

Active engagement with your instructor, peers, and course material is vital to the learning success of everyone in the class and is thus required in this class.

You may miss two classes during the semester using **Wellness Days**. Any additional days away from class, beyond the two Wellness Days, will be counted as an unexcused absence. If you anticipate being absent for more than two class sessions, please reach out to Professor Suren to discuss how we can work together towards your success in the course.

Class time missed due to documented illness or disability, religious holidays, university athletics obligations are excused absences.

Assignments:

Assignment	Percentage of Grade	Points
Attendance and Participation (2x)	20	100 points each
Online Discussion Posts	10	130 total (13 for each)
Student lecture	15	100 Points

Media Diary and Reflection Essay	25	230 total. 120 for the weekly posts (12 total) and 100 for the final essay
Class in Context Papers (2x)	15	100
Comparative Analysis	15	100

Reading: Each week there will be several readings assigned. My intention is not for you to do all of them. Pick what's interesting to you and try to read 1-2 of the articles. If you want to read more, you are welcome to but notice that I do not quiz or test you on the readings. However, not doing any reading will affect your ability to participate fully in the life of the class, which will affect not only your attendance and participation scores, but also the quality of your other assignments.

Discussion Posts: Once a week (except week 1), students will be required to post a reading question to a class discussion board. These questions should demonstrate a substantive engagement with the reading. Posts can be as long as you want as long as they demonstrate serious engagement with at least one reading. If you ask broad or vague questions, you will lose points. You should also post a link to another media source that discusses a global issue or piece of media related to that week's topic. Posts are due by 11:30 am every Tuesday.

Student Lectures: Once during the term, students will act as guest lecturers for the week. As guest lecturers, students will work with 2-3 other students to create a presentation on that week's readings. Each student will do one reading. If there are more readings assigned than speaker, you do not need to present on all the readings. Additionally, groups will draw up 4-5 discussion questions to facilitate a discussion of the reading after presenting. Students should aim for their presentations to take 25-30 minutes.

Media Diary and Essay: Beginning week 3, students will start keeping a media diary. This diary asks students to consume a media type for the entire term and reflect on that experience using class concepts and readings. I am flexible about content choice. Feel like watching Korean horror films all term? That works. Feel like watching a season of reality television from India? That works. Feel like watching the films of a single director or actor? That works. Want to watch romantic comedies from around the world? That works! The only caveat is your selection cannot be from your home country. Diary entries will consist of 1 double-space page in 12-point Times New Roman font. Entries will be due each Saturday at 11:59 PM. Students will not submit their entries to Canvas. Students will not post these assignments to Canvas. Instead, you will share a Google Doc with me and keep a rolling set of entries. During finals week, students will write a 4–5-page paper (also double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman font) analyzing an issue brought up in their diaries. Students will need to use at least 1 course reading and 3 outside academic sources in this analysis.

Reading in Context Papers (2x): Reading in context papers asks students to deepen their engagement with the course readings. Students will submit 2 of these papers throughout the course of the term. Students may submit their reading in context assignment at any point during the two main sections of the course. The last day to turn in the reading in context assignment for each part of the course is the Sunday of the last week of each section of the course. We will discuss this assignment more extensively in class. Papers should be in 12-point font, Times New Roman, and double-spaced.

Comparative Analysis: We live in an era of global remakes and reproductions. From *How I Met Your Mother* and *Breaking Bad* to *The Office* and *Oldboy*, stories told within one cultural context can be retold in a different cultural context. For this assignment, you are to choose one such remake and watch each version. You will then write a 4-5 page paper, double-spaced, analyzing the similarities and differences between each show/film in terms of production qualities, story arcs, themes, and character choices. You should also account for how the decision to remake the show in another cultural context was made. For television shows, try to find one-to-one remakes of 2-3 particular episodes. Use academic and popular sources to ground your thematic analysis. The paper should be double-spaced with 12-point Times New Roman font.

***A note about Chat GPT:** There are many excellent ways to use AI in class. You can use it to polish writing, create an outline, or spark an idea. That said, some students will be tempted to simply use AI to write their papers. I strongly discourage this. Papers that have the hallmarks of AI production will be penalized accordingly (if you find a comment on your paper that “this sounds like it was written by AI” and you feel this is unfair come chat with me). We will talk about this in class, but our goal for the class is to create a class environment that disincentivizes the use of AI.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: 1/9 F - Introduction to Course

Discuss syllabus, course expectations, and introductions

Week 2: 1/13 & 1/16 T F – Global Media Systems and Culture Industries

T: Read: Barrett, Media Imperialism

F: Read: BAYKURT, B., & DE GRAZIA, V. (2021). Introduction: Soft-Power Internationalism.

In class: Watch: The Century of the Self (2002), Part 1: Happiness Machines

Week 3: 1/20 & 1/23 T F – Global Cultural Industries and Transnational Flows

T: Read: Huat & Iwabuchi. Introduction: East Asian TV Dramas: Identifications, Sentiments and Effects.

Shim. The Growth of Korean Cultural Industries and the Korean Wave. (only the Introduction)

F: Watch: A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night (2014)

Student lecture:

Zahra Khosroshahi. Vampires, Jinn and the Magical in Iranian Horror Films.

Ledesma. Cell Phone Cinema: Latin American Horror Flicks in the Post-Digital Age.
Robe. When Cultures Collide: Third Cinema Meets the Spaghetti Western.

Librarian visit

Week 4: 1/27 & 1/30 T F – Politics of Reality TV

T: Read: Chapter 1, Sender, “Real Worlds” (*The Politics of Reality Television: Global Perspectives*)

The Atlantic, Why America Loves Love Is Blind

F: Student lecture:

Chapter 8, Volcic & Andrejevic, “Commercial Nationalism on Balkan Reality TV”

Chapter 9, Darling-Wolf, “World citizens “à la française”

Chapter 10, Punathambekar, “Reality television and the making of mobile publics”

Week 5: 2/3 & 2/6 T F – Streaming

T: Read: Hallinan and Striplas

F: Student lecture:

Kim, Historical Drama

Ribke and Wayne

Lotz and Lobato

Week 6: 2/10 & 2/13 T F – Surveillance and Global Media Power

T: Read: Zuboff. *The age of surveillance capitalism*. Chapter 1: “Home or Exile in the Digital Future”

Student lecture:

Chapter 2: “August 9, 2011: Setting the Stage for Surveillance Capitalism”

Chapter 8: “Rendition: From Experience to Data”

Chapter 10: “Make Them Dance”

F: Read: Marianne von Blomberg & Chuncheng Liu, Techno-orientalism in the US media: the case of ‘China’s social credit system.

Guest lecture: Chuncheng Liu

Week 7: 2/17 & 2/20 T F – MID SEMESTER CHECK IN: ONLINE INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS. NO IN PERSON CLASS

Week 8: 2/24 & 2/27 T F – Algorithmic Governance and Suppression

T: Read: Safiya Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. Read Introduction

In Class: Watch: Coded Bias (2020) on Kanopy

F: Student lecture:

Safiya Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. Chapter 1: “A Society, Searching”

Chapter 2: “Searching for Black Girls”

Chapter 4: “Searching for Protections from Search Engines”

Week 9: 3/3 & 3/6 T F - SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

Week 10: 3/10 & 3/13 T F – Ghost Work/Hidden Labor

T: Read: Alessandro Delfanti, “Work Hard,” *The Warehouse: Workers and Robots at Amazon* (London: Pluto Press 2021): 30-54.

Julian Posada, “[Family Units](#),” *Logic* 15 (2021).

In class: <https://events.amazontours.com/na/virtual> &
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nKPC-WmLjU>

In class: Watch: [Exposing The Dark Side of America’s AI Data Center Explosion \(2025\)](#)

F: Read: Emily West, *Buy Now: How Amazon Branded Convenience and Normalized Monopoly*, Introduction + one more selected chapter

Guest lecture: Emily West

Week 11: 3/17 & 3/20 T F – Networked Resistance in the Global South

T: Read: Laura Cervi & Tom Divon, Playful Activism: Memetic Performances of Palestinian Resistance in TikTok #Challenges

~~**Guest lecture:** Tom Divon~~

F: Read: Zeynep Tufekci. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*.
Read: Preface and Introduction

Student Lecture:

Zeynep Tufekci. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*. Chapter 1: “A Networked Public”

Chapter 3: “Leading the Leaderless”

Chapter 6, “Platforms and Algorithms”

Week 12: 3/24 & 3/27 T F – Monetization Models and Political Economy

T: Read: David Nieborg & Thomas Poell, “The Platformization of Cultural Production” in *New Media & Society*

 **Read:** Tugce Bidav, Localised precarity in social media entertainment: YouTubing in Turkey

Guest lecture: Tugce Bidav

Week 13: 3/31 & 4/3 T F – Creative Labor and Precarity

T: Read: Brooke Erin Duffy et al, The Nested Precarities of Creative Labor on Social Media

F: Read: Nora Suren, “Love From Me and My Belly”: The Politics and Performance of Body Positivity on Instagram

Week 14: 4/7 & 4/10 T F – Platform Capitalism and Fast Fashion

T: Read: Zhang and Chen, Platform Capitalism.

Student lecture: Andrew Deck, “[The Chinese Content Farms Behind Factory TikTok](#),” *Rest of World*, June 24, 2021.

Vauhini Vara, “[Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control: Inside Shein’s Sudden Rise](#),” *Wired*, June 2022.
[‘It’s the industry’s dirty secret’: why fashion’s oversupply problem is an environmental disaster](#),
The Guardian, Jan 2024.

F: No Class on 4/10. Conference Travel.

Week 15: 4/14 & 4/17 T F – **Last day of class is 4/14: Final Paper Workshop & Student Evaluations.**

No Class on 4/17. Finals Week.

