

# COM 227: MEDIA IN THE AMERICAS

## SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO • SPRING BREAK 2024



**Instructor:** Dr. Christopher Boulton ([cboulton@ut.edu](mailto:cboulton@ut.edu))

**Office hours:** Wednesdays 12-3pm or by appointment

**Office phone:** 813.57.3425 • **Cell phone:** 413.687.2720 (emergencies only)

**Class meets:** First Seven Weeks • Mondays and Wednesdays • 12pm-1:50pm • Cass 230

**Travel to Havana, Puerto Rico over Spring Break:** March 2-9, 2024

**Program Assistant:** Prof. Eric Fernandez ([efernandez@ut.edu](mailto:efernandez@ut.edu))

**CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION:** Media in the Americas travels abroad to engage with Latin American media producers, regulators, scholars, and audiences. Students will experience first-hand how media policies, institutions, and technologies intersect with the politics and processes of media production, distribution, and consumption. If not used for a student's major, this course can be counted towards fulfilling the Social Science (SS) and Non-Western and International/Global Awareness (NW/IG) requirements of the Baccalaureate Experience.

**TRAVEL COURSE OVERVIEW:** Media in the Americas examines the various cultural policies, institutional frameworks, technological changes, and social movements that surround media production, distribution, and consumption in Latin America. During the first 7 weeks of the semester, students prepare for the travel portion by writing and presenting reflections based on assigned readings covering cultural industries, public and performing arts, indigenous eco-territorial media cultures, journalism, cinema, radio, and television in Latin America. Then, over Spring Break, students travel to San Juan, Puerto Rico to visit centers of media education, activism, creativity, and commerce in order learn directly from the experiences of scholars, fellow students, professional producers, and audiences. Sites include El Vocero newspaper, WAPA TV, and student media outlets Sagrado TV and Radiorama Universitario at Universidad del Sagrado Corazón. Students will also experience guided walking tours of Old San Juan and the murals of the Santurce district guided by local professors, visit the National Museum of Art, spend a day on Culebra Island, explore El Yunque National Forest, and kayak through the bioluminescent waters of Laguna Grande. The ability to speak Spanish, while helpful, is not required; all site visits will include a translator.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- (1) Describe the key forces that inform Puerto Rican media production and distribution.
- (2) Understand and describe the relationship between history, media, and environment.
- (3) Demonstrate an ability to critically evaluate Puerto Rican media texts and institutions.

### REQUIRED READING:

Selections from *Media Cultures in Latin America: Key Concepts and New Debates*

Selections from *The Routledge Handbook to the Culture and Media of the Americas*

ASSIGNMENTS	%	GRADING SCALE	
Reading/Watching Quizzes	20	A 4.0	95-100 Outstanding
In-Class Presentation and Discussion	20	A/B 3.5	89-94 Excellent
Media Oral History Project	20	B 3.0	84-88 Very Good
Blog Project: Puerto Rican Media and Culture	30	B/C 2.5	79-83 Good
Objectives Reflection	5	C 2.0	72-78 Average
Participation	5	C/D 1.5	68-71 Below Average
		D 1.0	60-67 Passing (Unsatisfactory)
		F 0.0	below 60 Failure

**Participation:** Active, thoughtful, and prepared participation is an important component of this course. In terms of evaluation, simply showing up earns, at best, a “C.” Grading criteria includes: 1) frequency of contributions to class discussions; 2) respectful attentiveness to others’ perspectives; 3) thoughtfulness and relevance of questions and/or observations; 4) clarity of communication regarding any questions, assignments, or deadlines.

## CAMPUS-BASED ASSIGNMENTS

### **Reading/Watching Quizzes**

Throughout the 7-week term, you will be quizzed on that week’s reading and/or watching assignments. These are relatively low-stakes assessments that will reward you for both your engagement with each reading/watching assignments and keeping up with the material in general.

### **In-Class Presentation and Discussion Facilitation**

With a partner, create an in-class presentation of material from an assigned reading. You will be responsible for a ten- to fifteen-minute presentation of the assigned material, followed by a twenty-minute led discussion/activity with the class. Presentations should (a) illustrate the reading’s main purpose and argument; (b) comment on two to three important passages and two to three key terms; and (c) propose at least two topics for discussion. Though you will certainly cover some key aspects of the material, this is not meant to be just a summary of the assigned reading. Rather, it should function as a guide to the pivotal issues raised in the readings and as a catalyst for generating class discussion, which may include bringing in your own relevant outside examples. Prepare and photocopy a one-page typed handout that briefly outlines the key issues/terms you will cover in your presentation and be ready to distribute it. On the day you present, turn in either a detailed outline or a “script” of your presentation that clearly explains what you will talk about—who does what in what order, etc. If you use powerpoint or online supplemental materials, also be prepared to hand in digital copies or links. Grading Criteria will be passed out in class.

## PUERTO RICO-BASED ASSIGNMENTS

### **Media Oral History Project**

During the first three days of our time in Puerto Rico, interview a Puerto Rican student to find out how media has impacted their lives (if you don’t speak Spanish, you can interview our bilingual guide). Please organize your interview information according to the following guidelines:

1) group your interview participant's answers under five categories: radio, newspaper, TV, movies, and the Internet; 2) write at least a paragraph for each category; 3) paraphrase your interviewee's responses (however, if there's a great quote—something that you think might be fun to read in class—include what your participant said verbatim); and 4) the entire project should be between one and two pages. This assignment can be hand-written. An interview schedule and more detailed Grading Criteria will be passed out in class.

### **Blog Project: Puerto Rican Media and Culture**

This project is your chance to apply textbook content to your experience in Puerto Rico. Your task is to connect specific examples from your site visits in Puerto Rico with at least three assigned readings from the first 7 weeks of the course. In preparation for this assignment, you will be expected to keep a daily hand-written journal while in Puerto Rico that documents your experiences and connects them to the course textbook. This journal will be due on Friday, March 8th. I will then look them over and meet with you individually to discuss the topic and structure of your blog entry. Grading criteria will be passed out in class. Your blog will be turned in on Blackboard as a typed digital word file on the last day of class, be between 2-3,000 words, and include at least three links or embeds of examples from different types of media. I will later compile all the entries and post them online.

### **Objectives Reflection**

At the end of the semester, you will write an Objectives Reflection, a 1-2 page typed essay that makes an argument for how you achieved the Course Objectives outlined above. Use this as an opportunity to reflect on and demonstrate your learning with specific examples. For instance, I suggest focusing on specific moments that occurred both inside and outside of class. Grading Criteria: 1) clarity of writing; 2) use of specific examples to describe your learning; and 3) overall ability to connect your accomplishments with the particular objectives of this course. This reflection can either be hand-written and turned in at the end of our stay in Puerto Rico or turned in on Blackboard as a typed digital word file on the last day of class.

### **COURSE POLICIES**

**Communication:** If you ever have questions or need help, email is the best way to reach me. I am available at [cboulton@ut.edu](mailto:cboulton@ut.edu) and will respond to all email inquiries within 48 hours. I will hold office hours in case you'd like to meet with me individually. Be sure to check your UT email on a daily basis during the course. Grades will be posted on Blackboard on a weekly basis so that you will always have a recently updated "current grade" that reflects your standing in the course.

**Late Work:** Deadlines/lateness will be based on time stamps for online posts. Computer failure does not constitute an excuse as the University of Tampa provides multiple computer labs for your use. You are responsible for backing up your work and managing your time to avoid and/or solve technical complications. Except in the case of a documented family emergency or illness, late assignments are not accepted and will result in a zero for that assignment. However, if you know ahead of time that you will be missing a class, you may submit your work early and receive full credit. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate about what you need to know for the next session.

**Participation and Attendance:** Unless otherwise stated, the use of any form of technology is not permitted in the classroom during our meetings. *This includes laptops.* Additionally, if you are caught texting, surfing the web, using social media, etc., you will be counted absent for the day. In

short, messaging (of any kind) during class time will hurt your participation grade. You are expected to be in class on time and stay the entire duration of the period unless otherwise noted or announced. Two tardies and/or early class departures (without prior approval) will equal one absence. If you do miss a day, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate for information on any material covered—lectures, assignment announcements, or additional pertinent information will not be repeated. If an absence qualifies as an excused absence, the instructor will accommodate the excused absences in a fair manner. Any work missed must be made up in a timely manner; arranging to replace missed work is the responsibility of the student. You must give notification to your instructors of excused absences in advance as soon as you are aware of it, and documentation is required. Failure to provide notification in advance can result in an unexcused absence. Employment schedules, athletic conditioning and practice schedules, and personal appointments are not excused. Making up work for unexcused absences may be allowed or declined entirely at the discretion of the instructor. Extended illnesses may interfere with the successful completion of courses, and in such cases you may want to withdraw from the course. UT's attendance policy <http://ut.smartcatalogiq.com/current/catalog/academic-policies-and-procedures/class-attendance-and-participation>.

### **ADDITIONAL SYLLABUS DISCLOSURES**

These policy statements are also in effect for this course:

<https://www.ut.edu/academics/center-for-teaching-and-learning/required-syllabus-disclosures>

## **SCHEDULE**

Relevant learning Objectives are noted with the following numbers:

- (1) Describe the key forces that inform Puerto Rican media production and distribution.
- (2) Understand and describe the relationship between history, media, and environment.
- (3) Demonstrate an ability to critically evaluate Puerto Rican media texts and institutions.

### **ON-CAMPUS**

#### **Week 1: Course Overview**

#### **Week 2: Media Institutions and Audiences (1/3)**

In-Class Presentation and Discussion Facilitation

*Routledge Handbook 27: "Cultural industries" by Rodrigo Gómez, José Carlos Lozano*

*Routledge Handbook 34: "Media consumption" by David González Hernández*

#### **Week 3: History, Art, and Culture (2/3)**

In-Class Presentation and Discussion Facilitation

*Routledge Handbook 7: "Dance" by Lisa Jo Sagolla*

*Routledge Handbook 25: "Cinema" by Sebastian Thies*

*Routledge Handbook 37: "Muralism" by Wilfried Rausert*

#### **Week 4: Media and the Environment (2/3)**

In-Class Presentation and Discussion Facilitation

*Media Cultures 8: "Indigenous Media Cultures in Abya Yala" by Juan Francisco Salazar, Amalia Córdova*

*Media Cultures 10: "Social Movements and Media Cultures in Defense of Life and Territory" by Diana Coryat*

### **Week 5: Newspapers and Radio (1/3)**

In-Class Presentation and Discussion Facilitation

*Routledge Handbook 32: "Journalism" by Jesús Arroyave*

*Routledge Handbook 40: "Radio" by Inés Cornejo Portugal*

### **Week 6: Television (1/3)**

In-Class Presentation and Discussion Facilitation

*Routledge Handbook 35: "Media flows" by José Carlos Lozano, Francisco Hernández Lomeli*

*Routledge Handbook 42: "Telecommunications" by Joseph Straubhaar, Jeremiah Spence*

*Routledge Handbook 43: "Television" by Gabriel Moreno Esparza*

### **Week 7: Departure preparation**

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## **PUERTO RICO**

### **Saturday, March 2, 2024: Arrival + Logistics**

*Arrival to SJU*

*Transfer from Airport to Hostel*

*Welcome Orientation*

*Welcome Dinner*

### **Sunday, March 3, 2024: Excursion (2)**

*Transfer to Ceiba*

*Culebra Day Trip*

*Return to San Juan*

### **Monday, March 4, 2024: Student Media + Digital Culture (1/3)**

*Old San Juan Walking Tour*

*Visit to Sagrado TV at Universidad del Sagrado Corazón*

*Lecture on Digital Media in Puerto Rico by Prof. Alexandra Vega*

### **Tuesday, March 5, 2024: Radio + Street Art (1/3)**

*Visit to Radio Universidad at Universidad del Sagrado Corazón*

*Lecture on Radio in Puerto Rico*

*Santurce es Ley Walking Tour led by Prof. Maite Gonzalez*

*Transfer to Hostel*

### **Wednesday, March 6, 2024: Television (1/3)**

*Transfer to Guaynabo*

*Visit to WAPA TV*

*Lecture on Television in Puerto Rico*

*Transfer to Hostel*

*DUE: Media Oral History Project*

**Thursday, March 7, 2024: Eco-tourism (2)**

*Transfer to Rio Grande*

*Visit El Yunque National Forest*

*Transfer to Cabezas de San Juan Nature Reserve*

*Laguna Grande Bioluminescent Tour*

*Transfer to Hostel*

**Friday, March 8, 2024: Newspapers + Art (1/3)**

*Transfer to Santurce*

*Visit to El Vocero*

*Lecture on Newspaper Evolution in Puerto Rico*

*Visit to Museo de Arte de PR (MAPR)*

*Farewell dinner*

*DUE: Journal + blog meetings*

**Saturday, March 9, 2024: Departure + Last Day of Class (3)**

*Transfer to airport*

*DUE: Blog Project: Puerto Rican Media and Culture*

*DUE: Objectives Reflection*

**(NOTE: schedule is subject to change with notice)**