Global Media & Advertising in a Digital World
COMM-3010 (3 credits)

Portugual: Communications & Media

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

In today's interconnected landscape, media and advertising are no longer confined by national borders, and digital technologies have profoundly reshaped how they operate. This course offers an in-depth exploration of the dynamic relationship between global media industries, advertising practices, and the transformative power of digital communication. Utilizing a critical lens, we analyze issues of power, ownership, cultural impact, ethical considerations, and the pursuit of justice and equity in the global digital sphere. Students will gain a foundational understanding of the global media economy, advertising strategies, and the evolving role of digital platforms, preparing them to critically engage with, and potentially shape, the future of international communication.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain key structures, trends, and actors within the global media industry, including traditional and digital platforms

- Explain how advertising campaigns are developed, adapted, and disseminated across diverse cultures in a digital environment

- Assess the transformative effects of digital technologies (e.g., social media, AI, data analytics) on media production, distribution, consumption, and advertising practices globally

- Critically analyze issues of power, ownership, censorship, cultural hegemony, data privacy, and ethical responsibilities in global digital media and advertising

- Discuss and evaluate how global media and advertising can either perpetuate or challenge social injustices, stereotypes, and inequalities, particularly concerning representation and access

Language of Instruction
This course is taught in English.

Instructional Methods
SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience*, *reflective observation*, *abstract conceptualization*, and *active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

Required Texts
To be determined by course faculty.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

Class Participation (10%)
    Students are expected to be physically and mentally present for all classes. To prepare for class, students should critically read the assigned texts prior to each class and come prepared with relevant questions and insights.

Global Digital Media & Advertising Audit (30%)
    Students will choose a specific global brand's digital presence OR a significant global digital media event/phenomenon (e.g., a viral social justice campaign, a global news crisis). They will conduct an in-depth audit over several weeks, analyzing how the brand/event utilizes digital media and advertising across different regions. Students will present their findings in a 10-15 minute multimedia presentation.

"Unpacking the Algorithm" Critical Case Study (30%)

Students select a specific digital platform's algorithmic function (e.g., TikTok's FYP, YouTube's recommendation engine, Facebook's news feed, Google Ads targeting) and research an instance of its global impact – it could be something controversial or problematic (e.g., spread of misinformation, amplification of hate speech, discriminatory ad targeting). Alternatively, students could explore a positive impact (e.g. facilitating community building & knowledge sharing; raising and highlighting marginalized voices; increasing access to education and resources; enabling targeting public health campaigns). Students will consider questions such as: How does the algorithm operate on a global scale? Who benefits from the algorithm's design, and who is potentially harmed or marginalized? What ethical frameworks are being violated or upheld? Students will write a 5-6 page policy brief advocating for specific changes or highlighting key processes, potentially including infographics or data visualizations. Students are expected to draw on 5-6 course readings to support their analysis and recommendations and utilize proper citation.

Global Digital Storytelling/Campaign for Change (30%)

Working in pairs or small groups, students will identify a global social justice or equity issue (e.g., climate change impact in developing nations, migrant rights, digital inclusion, gender equality) and develop a concept for a digital media campaign or storytelling project aimed at raising awareness and driving change. Students should utilize various digital formats (e.g., a series of social media posts, a short documentary, an interactive website prototype, a podcast series). Groups/pairs must submit their proposed format for approval from the instructor at least 3 weeks prior to the final deadline.

<u>Attendance and Participation</u>

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

<u>Late Assignments</u>

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.
Example: Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at

that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

Grading Scale

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64	F

Program Expectations
- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Accessibility Services](#), [Counseling Services,](#) [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

Course Schedule

Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs

Details, including site visits and assignment due dates will be fleshed out by the specifically faculty. Below you will find a breakdown of the topics covered in this course each week:

Week 1: Introduction to global media & advertising in a digital world

Week 2: Historical evolution of global media & advertising

Week 3: The digital transformation

Week 4: Global news

Week 5: Entertainment media & cultural flows

Week 6: Global advertising

Week 7: Digital media & power (ownership, control, regulation)

Week 8: Data, privacy & ethics

Week 9: Identity & culture in the media (race, class, gender, nationality, sexuality, etc.)

Week 10: Digital activism, social justice & resistance

Week 11: Emerging technologies and future directions