

Global Media & Advertising in a Digital World

COMM-3010 (3 credits)

Portugal: 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.

"Unpacking the Algorithm" Critical Case Study (30%) -*Due before class 5*

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 Media & Advertising Audit (30%) -*Due before class 9*

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.

Global Digital Storytelling/Campaign for Change (30%) -*Final submission due before class 14*

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.

Attendance and Participation

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.

Late Assignments

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.
- Course Communication: Course documents and assignments will be posted on the learning management system, Canvas. Although the course calendar provides a broad overview and the general sequence of work and assignments for the course, what we accomplish in class will vary, and revisions to the calendar will be posted at the course site. You will need to check the course site regularly. You are responsible for letting me know about any network-related problems that prevent you from accessing or submitting assignments.
- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question

assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.

- **Classroom recording policy:** To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

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, readings, 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.*

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

- **Defining the Landscape:** Explore what constitutes "global media" and "digital advertising" today. Discuss key players like Google, Meta, TikTok, and emerging platforms.
- **Core Concepts:** Introduce key terms such as globalization, digitalization, convergence, and cultural imperialism.
- **Course Roadmap:** Review the syllabus, learning outcomes, and introduce course assignments

De Mooij, M. (2021). Global marketing and advertising: Understanding cultural paradoxes.

Dickey, I. J., & Lewis, W. F. (2012). An overview of digital media and advertising. *E-marketing: Concepts, methodologies, tools, and applications*, 31-61.

Martins, M. D. L. (2018). Communication studies cartography in the Lusophone world. *Media, Culture & Society*, 40(3), 458-463.

Rabindranath, M., & Singh, A. K. (2024). Introduction to advertising. In *Advertising Management: Concepts, Theories, Research and Trends* (pp. 3-38). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

Class 2: Historical evolution of global media & advertising

- **From Print to Broadcast:** Trace the history of mass media from the printing press to the rise of global television networks. Discuss how each new technology transformed communication.
- **The Dawn of Global Advertising:** Examine early international advertising efforts and the role of transnational corporations.
- **The Internet Revolution:** Mark the transition from traditional media to the digital age and the birth of new global communication paradigms.
- **Historical Context:** Examine how media control was wielded in the past and how those historical anxieties continue to shape debates about freedom of the press and digital regulation today.

Su, N. (2016, January). Historical track of the development of media technologies and the evolution of advertising forms. In *2015 4th International Conference on Sensors, Measurement and Intelligent Materials* (pp. 474-479). Atlantis Press.

Schwarzkopf, S. (2009). What was advertising? The invention, rise, demise, and disappearance of advertising concepts in nineteenth-and twentieth-century Europe and America. In *Business History Conference. Business and Economic History On-line: Papers Presented at the BHC Annual Meeting* (Vol. 7, p. 1). Business History Conference.

Starcevic, S. (2015). The origin and historical development of branding and advertising in the old civilizations of Africa, Asia and Europe. *Marketing*, 46(3), 179-196.

ur Rehman, F., Javed, F., Yusoff, R. M., Harun, A., Khan, A., & Ismail, F. (2019). What is advertising? A short review of historical development. *Academic Research International*, 10(4).

Class 3: The digital transformation

- **Disruption of Traditional Models:** Analyze how digital technology has disrupted traditional media business models. Discuss the shift from analog to digital content creation and distribution.
- **Interactive and Personalized Media:** Explore the rise of user-generated content, social media platforms, and the move toward personalized, on-demand media consumption.=

- **The Audience as a Participant:** Discuss the new role of the audience as both a consumer and a creator of media.

Hutton, G., & Fosdick, M. (2011). The globalization of social media: Consumer relationships with brands evolve in the digital space. *Journal of advertising research*, 51(4), 564-570.

Lee, H., & Cho, C. H. (2020). Digital advertising: present and future prospects. *International journal of advertising*, 39(3), 332-341.

Mallia, K. L., & Windels, K. (2011). Will changing media change the world? An exploratory investigation of the impact of digital advertising on opportunities for creative women. *Journal of interactive advertising*, 11(2), 30-44.

Class 4: Global news

- **From Gatekeepers to Networked Flows:** Examine how the internet has challenged traditional news gatekeepers. Discuss the rise of citizen journalism, social media as a news source, and the spread of misinformation.
- **Case Studies in Global Reporting:** Analyze how major international events are covered by different news organizations around the world.
- **Challenges of a Digital Newsroom:** Discuss issues such as journalistic ethics in a digital age, the impact of fake news, and the business model crisis in journalism.

Gambier, Y. (2006). Transformations in international news. *Translation in global news*, 23, 9-21.

Valdeón, R. A. (2009, January). Euronews in translation: Constructing a European perspective for/of the world. In *FORUM. Revue internationale d'interprétation et de traduction/International Journal of Interpretation and Translation* (Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 123-153). John Benjamins.

Van Ginneken, J. (1997). Understanding global news: A critical introduction.

Class 5: "Unpacking the Algorithm" Critical Case Study

- **Class Discussion:** After students submit their paper assignments, the class will discuss key learnings and findings, as well as questions that emerged from the process.

Assignment: Case studies must be submitted prior to the start of class.

Class 6: Entertainment media & cultural flows

- **The Lusophone World and Cultural Flows:** Explore how the historical ties between Portugal and its former colonies—Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, and others—create a unique media ecosystem.

- **Media and Language:** Examine the powerful influence of Portuguese-language media, particularly the flow of content between Portugal and Brazil (e.g. telenovelas).
- **Post-colonial Narratives:** Consider how media represents and negotiates the legacy of colonialism, national identity, and immigration from Lusophone Africa and Brazil.

Davis, S., Straubhaar, J., & Ferin Cunha, I. (2016). The construction of a transnational Lusophone media space: A historiographic analysis. *Popular Communication*, 14(4), 212-223.

Figueiras, R., & Ribeiro, N. (2013). New global flows of capital in media industries after the 2008 financial crisis: The Angola–Portugal relationship. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 18(4), 508-524.

Golemo, K. (2024). Postcolonial narratives in contemporary Portugal: a cultural perspective. In *Routledge Handbook on Cooperation, Interdependencies and Security in the Mediterranean* (pp. 134-149). Routledge.

Lamour, C., & Lorentz, N. (2021). Mass media and the attraction of the arts in small-size global cities: The (re) distribution of cultural capital. *International Journal of Communication*, 15, 20.

Ledo-Andión, M., & Castelló-Mayo, E. (2012). Identification of barriers and motivations in the circulation of audiovisual media contents in the Lusophone space: communication, interculturality, citizenship, and interactivity. *Communication & Society*, 25(2), 85-116.

Vargas, C., Sarmiento, C., & Oliveira, P. (2017). Cultural networks between Portugal and Brazil: A postcolonial review. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 23(3), 300-311.

Class 7: Global advertising

- **The Digital Advertising Ecosystem:** Break down the complex system of digital advertising, including ad exchanges, programmatic buying, and data brokers.
- **Cross-Cultural Campaigns:** Analyze successful and unsuccessful global advertising campaigns. Discuss how brands adapt their messaging for different cultures.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Examine the ethical implications of data collection, targeted advertising, and the commercialization of digital spaces.

Becari, J. (2025). Intercultural marketing and adaptation of global campaigns: a review of key theories and practices. *Revista JRG de Estudos Acadêmicos*, 8(18), e082082-e082082.

De Mooij, M. (2021). Global marketing and advertising: Understanding cultural paradoxes.

Shishcan, Z., & Anton, L. (2022). Trends in the development of global market of advertising services. In *Competitivitatea și inovarea în economia cunoașterii* (pp. 98-106).

Sinclair, J. (2023). Regional Trends in Global Advertising. In *The Routledge Companion to Advertising and Promotional Culture* (pp. 88-100). Routledge.

Class 8: Digital media & power (ownership, control, regulation)

- **Consolidation of Power:** Examine the consolidation of media ownership in a digital age. Discuss the role of a few large corporations in controlling the flow of information.
- **State Control vs. Free Expression:** Analyze how different governments regulate digital media and the ongoing global battle over censorship and freedom of speech.
- **Net Neutrality:** Discuss the concept of a neutral internet and the implications of its regulation or lack thereof.

Farinho, D. S. (2022). Self-Regulation and Public Regulation of Social Networks in Portugal. In *The Rule of Law in Cyberspace* (pp. 349-385). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Fidalgo, J. (2021). Portugal: Impoverished media struggling for survival. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1557929/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Lusike Mukhongo, L., Mwaura, J., & Omwoha, J. (2023). Reconceptualising media ownership and shifting power relations in an emerging digital media framework. *African Studies*, 82(3-4), 300-315.

Oldenbourg, A. (2024). Digital freedom and corporate power in social media. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 27(3), 383-404.

Class 9: Global Digital Media & Advertising Audit

- **Student Presentations:** Students present their findings from their audit assignments.
- **Peer Review:** Students provide feedback to their peers, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of each audit.
- **Synthesizing Learnings:** Tie the key takeaways from the audits back to the core themes of the course.

Assignment: Presentations must be submitted prior to the start of class.

Class 10: Data, privacy & ethics

- **Data as Currency:** Discuss the concept of data as a commodity in the digital world.
- **Privacy Concerns:** Examine major privacy scandals and the evolving landscape of data protection laws.
- **Ethical Frameworks:** Explore different ethical frameworks for data collection, usage, and security, as well as the rights of individuals in a data-driven world.
- **EU Regulations:** Situate the discussions in an understanding of specific regulations such as GDPR, DSA and DMA, and their role in creating a legal framework.

- Bendiek, A. (2021). The Impact of the Digital Service Act (DSA) and Digital Markets Act (DMA) on European Integration Policy. *Working Paper Research Division EU/Europe 2021*, (02), 15.
- Pathak, M. (2024). Data Governance Redefined: The Evolution of EU Data Regulations from the GDPR to the DMA, DSA, DGA, Data Act and AI Act. *Full paper available: European Data Protection Law Review (EDPL)*, 10(1).
- Pollak, D. G. Chapter III. The European Union Digital Strategy: GDPR, DSA, DMA and AI Act. *Smart Cities, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation Law*, 47.
<https://air.unimi.it/retrieve/ed239284-3fad-4e5d-9254-4940d556bdb6/Ziccardi-DEF-online2.pdf#page=47>

Class 11: Identity & culture in the media (race, class, gender, nationality, sexuality, etc.)

- **Representation Matters:** Analyze how various identities are represented in global media and advertising. Discuss stereotypes, tokenism, and the push for authentic representation.
- **Power and Privilege:** Examine how media reinforces or challenges existing power structures related to race, class, and gender.
- **Audience and Identity:** Discuss how media consumption influences and is influenced by personal and cultural identity.

Casquilho-Martins, I., Belchior-Rocha, H., & Alves, D. R. (2022). Racial and ethnic discrimination in Portugal in times of pandemic crisis. *Social Sciences*, 11(5), 184.

Santos, A., Cerqueira, C., & Cabecinhas, R. (2022). "Challenging it softly": a feminist inquiry into gender in the news media context. *Feminist Media Studies*, 22(1), 66-82.

Müller, M. S., Cabecinhas, R., & Silva, D. S. (2023). Cultural Journalism In Brazil And Portugal: a cross-country analysis (2012-2018). *Brazilian journalism research*, 19(1), E1546.

Posch, P., Correia Borges, G., Simões, C., & Cerqueira, C. (2024). Emerging perspectives: An overview of alternative digital media and migrant and/or racialised people in Portugal. *Lusophone Journal of Cultural Studies*, 11(2), e024015.

Class 12: Digital activism, social justice & resistance

- **Social Media as a Tool for Change:** Analyze case studies of successful digital activism campaigns.
- **Youth Activism:** Examining recent protest movements in Portugal led by young people, such as those related to climate change or housing policy, and how they utilize digital tools for organizing and communication.
- **Misinformation and Populism:** Analyzing how digital platforms are used to spread political misinformation and the role of social media in a parliamentary republic.
- **The "Slacktivism" Debate:** Critically evaluate the effectiveness of online activism. Discuss the difference between online engagement and tangible change.

- **Challenges and Limitations:** Explore the challenges of digital activism, including censorship, surveillance, and the spread of disinformation.

Campos, R., & da Silva, D. F. (2024). Visibility, solidarity, and empowerment via the internet: A case study of young Portuguese activists. *Communications*, 49(2), 297-317.

Cavar, S., & Baril, A. (2021). Blogging to Counter Epistemic Injustice: Trans disabled digital micro-resistance. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 41(2).

Malafaia, C., & Meriluoto, T. (2024). Making a deal with the devil? Portuguese and Finnish activists' everyday negotiations on the value of social media. *Social Movement Studies*, 23(2), 190-206.

Müller, N. (2022). Public relations and dissent: Anti-racism digital advocacy Portuguese case study. *Ciências e Políticas Públicas*, 35(2), 19-35.

Ramalho, J., & Silva, M. J. (2025). Digital Activism in Portugal: Strategies for Communication and Social Mobilization. In *Impact of Digitalization on Communication Dynamics* (pp. 215-238). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.

Class 13: Emerging technologies and future directions

- **Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning:** Discuss the growing role of AI in media creation, content moderation, and personalized advertising.
- **The Metaverse and Virtual Worlds:** Explore how virtual reality and augmented reality are shaping the future of media consumption and social interaction.
- **Looking Ahead:** Speculate on the future of global media, advertising, and the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

de-Lima-Santos, M. F., & Ceron, W. (2021). Artificial intelligence in news media: Current perceptions and future outlook. *Journalism and media*, 3(1), 13-26.

Maddocks, S., Siegel, J. A., Eaton, A. A., & Agarwal, S. (2024). Who is invited to the metaverse? Analyzing media coverage of an emerging virtual world. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 27(1), 76-82.

Natale, S. (2021). Communicating through or communicating with: Approaching artificial intelligence from a communication and media studies perspective. *Communication theory*, 31(4), 905-910.

Olausson, U., & Engström, A. (2025). 'The road to the metaverse is not a straight one': Social representations of virtual reality in the news media. *Convergence*, 13548565251325530.

Wang, C. L. (2021). New frontiers and future directions in interactive marketing: inaugural Editorial. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 15(1), 1-9.

Class 14: Global Digital Storytelling/Campaign for Change

- **Student Presentations:** Students present their final projects, showcasing their campaigns for social change.
- **Critical Feedback:** The class provides constructive feedback on the creativity, effectiveness, and ethical considerations of each campaign.

Assignment: Must be submitted prior to the start of class

Class 15: Course Reflections

- **Connecting the Dots:** Tie all the course themes and assignments together, from the historical evolution to the final projects.
- **Open Discussion:** Engage with any lingering topics that emerged through the course.