Soc 243 Media in Modern Society: Introduction

- Syllabus (not on blackboard): http://www.uvm.edu/~tstreete/Courses/soc243_syllabus/

- Instructor: Prof. Streeter thomas.streeter@uvm.edu

- Office Hours: https://tstreete.youcanbook.me/ or by appointment

- Reading journals

- Semiotic analysis

- Author overviews

- Research paper: more than half your grade, multiple parts

Media and Society

- Mass Media in Socialization
  - "Socialization"—The process whereby we learn and internalize the values, beliefs, and norms of our culture and, in so doing, develop a sense of self
  - Today, mass media serve as a powerful socializing agent

Media in Social Relations

- Media are bound up with the *process* of social relations
  - Media affect how we learn about our world and interact with one another
  - Media can create moral panics
- Mass-mediated politics
  - Most of our political knowledge is based on mass media
  - Participate in politics through media
- Mass-mediated social interactions
  - "Electronic hearth"
  - Media products are connected to the ways we interact with other people on a daily basis

Sociology of Media

- Importance of Social Relations
  - "Sociological imagination" (C. Wright Mills)
  - "Looking-glass self"
  - Our activities take place within larger groups and institutions
  - Relationships between institutions
    - Interactions between media industry and government
  - Relationships within an institution
    - Relationships between media producers and studios
  - Relationship between institutions and individuals
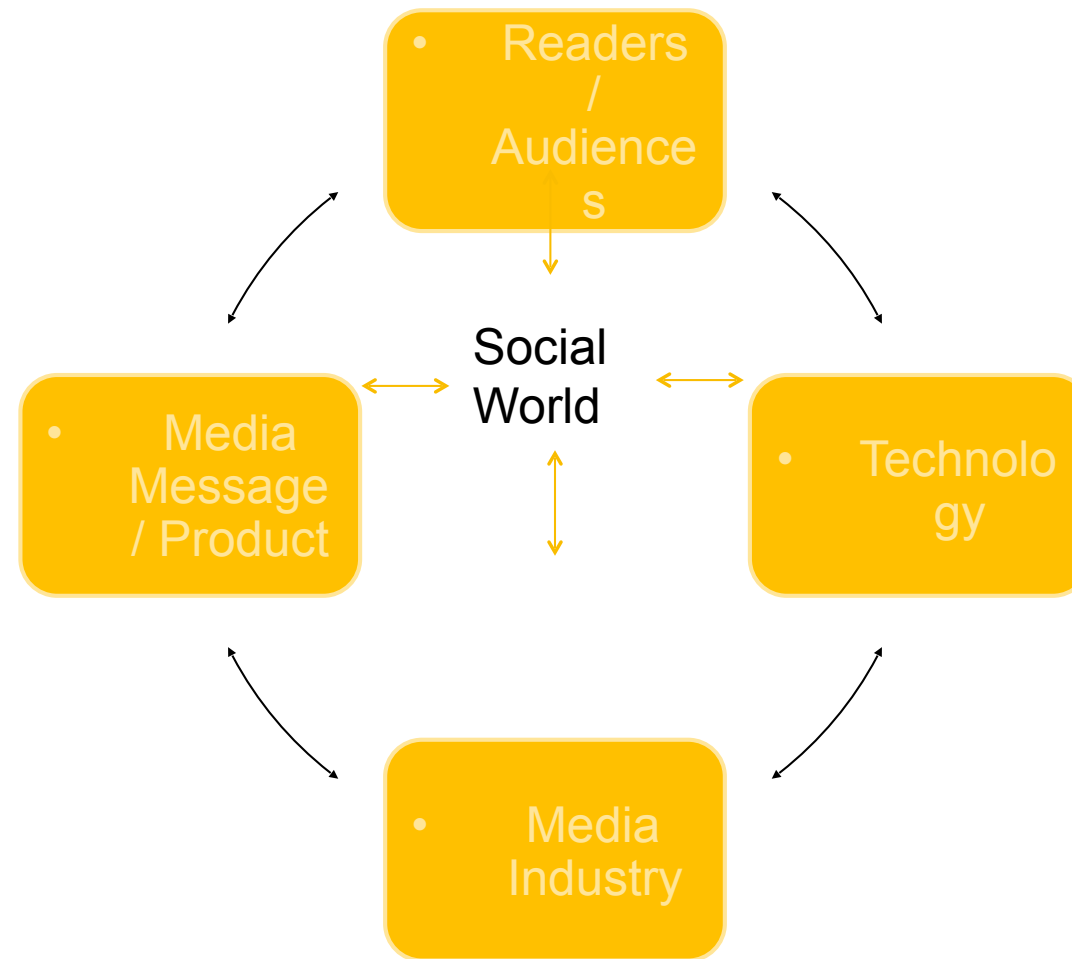   - Relationships between media products and audiences

Structural Constraint and Human Agency

- "Structure" and "Agency" are core concepts of sociology
- Structure
  - Any recurring pattern of social behavior
  - Examples: family structure, educational system
  - Structure limits the human agency
- Agency
  - Intentional and undetermined human action
  - Example: students under an educational system
  - Structure limits the agency, but agency reproduces and changes social structure

Structure and Agency in Media

- Relationships Between Media and Other Institutions
  - Social, economic, and political institutions set certain limits on the media
  - Researchers need to look at how social structures external to media affect the media industry and how the media affect other social institutions
- Relationships Within the Media Industry
  - Internal workings of mass media and processes of professional socialization
  - Researchers need to investigate the structure of media institutions, roles and practices in media production, professional norms, and how much autonomy media personnel have
- Relationships Between the Media and the Public
  - How readers or users interact with media products
  - Researchers need to investigate how media contents are actively interpreted by readers and users.

A Model of Media and the Social World

Applying the Model: The Civil Rights Movement

Readers / Audiences

Technology

Media Message / Product

Media Industry

Civil Rights Movement

- Media messages about the movement affect audience
- Audience interprets the meaning and significance of the message

- Audiences use new technology to access media messages
- Specific formats of technology influence audience's media use

- Industry creates messages about the event
- Norms of news influence media personnel

- Technology affects industry practices
- Industry makes use of new technology to cover the event