Course Title: CMDS Practicum

Instructor: Marius Dragomir

Term: Winter

Module: Elective

Relation to other courses: None

Background and Overall Aim of the Course:

This course is an introduction to the systems and processes that shape the media. It consists of an introductory part, a short overview of how the media works, and of the key players in the field of media: their competences, power and influence and the impact they have on media systems in general, and media organizations in particular.

The course also aims to describe and problematize the tensions and conflicts that shape the media such as: public versus private interests, international versus national interests, commercial versus social interests; and the impact of media-related policies on media organizations, on journalism, and ultimately, on society.

Most of the course (80% of it) will be practical:

a). students will participate in CMDS' activities, particularly in the center's flagship research project Media Influence Matrix to get hands-on experience with media related research

b). students will carry out a journalism mini-project based on an idea they will develop as a way to have a newsroom experience.

Their contribution to Media Influence Matrix research project and the article written as part of their journalistic project will be the base for evaluation. For their contribution, students will be credited as researchers in this project, which has been publicly disseminated as of January 2018, and will get a byline for their article that will be published by CMDS.

Learning Outcomes:

Learning outcomes: students will be able to understand the way media works from both a macro- and micro- perspective; they will be able to identify the main characteristics of media systems and important actors (their interests and

relationships); they will learn about examples of how to engage with the media; through practice, they will learn a set of fundamental tools and methods to carry out applied research on media and run a journalistic project.

Learning Activities and Teaching Methods:

This course will consist of an introduction to the research methodology that students will use to carry out their research as well as to the methods used in journalism, followed for most of the term by seminar-style classes where students will present their research findings and drafts of their stories to get feedback from peer students and the instructor.

Assessment:

- Presence and active participation in the class (20%)

- Short assignment: writing a short, journalistic article (maximum 800 words) for one of CMDS digital platforms (CMDS website, the Medium blog or CMDS' associated website Mediapowermonitor.com): the story will be finalized during the course of the term

- Research assignment: gathering data and information for one country in the Media & Power research project of CMDS (70%): this will be carried out throughout the course of the term based on guidance from the instructor and using a common research template prepared by CMDS

Course Content and Readings:

Session 1

- Media & Power: how media systems work and who are the main players?
- Introduction to Media & Power in Digital Age Research project (see description of the project above)
- Why is this research needed and what makes it relevant?

Session 2

- **Research topic no 1:** Government and regulation and their impact on media and journalism. The session will include group work to guide students on what data and information they should collect on the topic of government

and regulation, including sources of data and information and ideas for interviews to be conducted as part of the project.

Reading list

The report "Government, Politics and Regulation" in any of the country reports in Media Influence Matrix project run by CMDS

The Curse of Bigness: Antitrust in the New Gilded Age: Wu (2018)

Session 3

- **Research topic no 2:** Funding in the media: who owns and finances media and journalism today? The session will include group work to guide students on what data and information students should collect regarding the key funders of media and journalism, including sources of data and information and ideas for interviews to be conducted as part of the project.

Reading list

A**ny country report** of your interest in Media Ownership Monitor series of the Reporters without Borders available at http://www.mom-rsf.org/

The report "Funding Journalism" in any of the country reports in Media Influence Matrix project run by CMDS

Anya Schiffrin, "Same Beds, Different Dreams? Charitable Foundations and Newsroom Independence in the Global South", CIMA, 2017, available online

Marius Dragomir, "Control the money, control the media: How government uses funding to keep media in line", Journalism 1-18, Sage, 2017 (available for the class in .pdf from the author)

Session 4

- **Research topic no 3:** Technology companies and their role in reshaping media and journalism in the digital age. The session will include group work to guide students on what data and information students should collect when it comes to technology companies, including sources of data and information and ideas for interviews to be conducted as part of the project. It will also include a discussion about the type of work technology companies that affect media and journalism do (social media, internet service providers, telecoms, etc.)

Reading list

Emily Bell, Taylor Owen, "The Platform Press: How Silicon Valley reengineered journalism", available online

Natasha Tusikov, "Regulate social media platforms before it's too late," November 2017, in The Conversation, available online

Elizabeth Kolbert, "Who Owns Our Internet?", August 2017, New Yorker, available online

Session 5

- **CMDS Newsroom**: Story-pitching

A practical story-pitching exercise where students will offer ideas for articles they want to write about issues relevant for media and journalism. CMDS will play the role of the editor, asking questions, challenging the ideas, offering advice on the angle of the article and the sources to consult for putting together a well-researched, accurate, objective story.
Assignment: students are to prepare a 2-minute pitch for an article on an issue within the field of media and journalism.

Session 6

- **Research lab**: key players in government and regulation (**Research topic no 1**)

Discussion on the lessons learnt, experience of data collection: evaluation of the initial datasets and information gathered by students with a focus on the availability of the information and experts interviewed, the accuracy of information as well as the difficulties encountered during the research process and proposed solutions to overcome them.
Assignment: students are to prepare before their initial datasets and information they collected on Research topic no 1.

Session 7

- **CMDS Newsroom**: First drafts

First drafts of the articles will be submitted by students prior to this session, which will be devoted to discussing the stories in a newsroom-type format to identify gaps, check facts and quotes, and eliminate bias. Following this session, CMDS will work with students on the final edits for their stories to prepare them for publication. The articles should be maximum 800-word long.
Assignment: students are to prepare the first draft of their article for this session.

Session 8

- **Research lab**: funders and owners in media and journalism (**Research topic no 2**)

Discussion of the initial datasets and information gathered by students with a focus on the availability of the information and experts to be interviewed, the accuracy of information as well as the difficulties encountered during the research process and proposed solutions to overcome them.

Assignment: students are to prepare before their initial datasets and information they collected on Research topic no 2.

Session 9

- **CMDS Newsroom**: Publication and dissemination planning

This session will be devoted to creating a plan for the publication of the pieces produced by students, including an agreement on the most effective ways and platforms to use in disseminating them to maximize readership and impact.

Session 10
- **Research lab**: key technology companies that have an impact in media and journalism (**Research topic no 3**)

Discussion of the initial datasets and information gathered by students with a focus on the availability of the information and experts to be interviewed, the accuracy of information as well as the difficulties encountered during the research process and proposed solutions to overcome them.

Assignment: students are to prepare before their initial datasets and information they collected on Research topic no 3.

Session 11

- Wrapping-up **research lab**: what are the main changes in the power dynamics in media and journalism (I)

The information and data collected throughout the term will be the basis for a discussion of the key findings of the research in the three areas covered by the project.

Session 12

- Wrapping-up **research lab**: how to use the research (II)

The second part of the wrapping-up research lab will be focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the research carried out by students and the use of the research findings to engage with policy-makers, media and journalists.