

VIRUSES & VIRAL MEDIA

GNDR_ST 390 & JOUR 390 & AMER_ST 310

FALL
2022



What are viruses? Are they living or dead? How does news media affect their influence on the world? And why do we say news “goes viral?” Designed for Medill and non-Medill students alike, Viruses and Viral Media will study how viruses intersect with race, sexuality, disability, economics and the news media. Historically and contemporarily, the course will look at how

actual viruses and infectious diseases (such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, Ebola, Hepatitis C, influenza and SARS-CoV-2) have been covered in the global press. We will consider how certain groups of humans have been depicted as viruses themselves, such as how Jewish/disabled/queer/Roma people were described by the German and US press circa WW II; how African Americans were described in the US press circa Jim Crow; and how Muslim, Mexican and migrant people are described in press and social media now. We will also consider how and why popular news “goes viral.” Students will work in research groups to study viruses and virality in the news throughout the term.

Steven Thrasher

MW 10-11:20am
Fisk Hall 311