DESCRIPTION:

The seminar will explore and critically analyse major institutions, actors and trends in contemporary French Media and attempt to situate them in the larger contexts of “unifying” Europe and “globalized” world-media-scene.

We will examine the operational schemes, performances and internal decisional and power structures of different branches of French media: written national & regional press, specialized magazines, the publishing industry, advertising, radio, television, the internet.

We will attempt a specific analysis regarding the international and French implications of the growing potential of Social Networks and ‘New Media’; We’ll critically review some aspects of the growing confusion –both in terms of competition and compatibility- between “new” and “old” media and their political, social and cultural impacts.

In the domain of social and political presence we will study and question practices of newsgathering, deontological principles and constraints, media performance under pressure of time, context, profit-making-structures, politics, violence, ethics and ideologies. We will examine forms and styles of “information”, editorial policies and the variety of notions of “democratic pluralism” across the French and European Media landscapes; We will try to define and decode distinctions between “news”, “commentary” and “analysis” as they are being treated on the French and European media scenes.

The seminar will alter traditional lectures with critical discussions and the analysis of written, illustrated, audio, visual and virtual excerpts. Every session will include a compact set of short oral-presentations of students (about 4-5 minutes long), addressing specific aspects of the assigned reading material, previous (or future) class discussions and eventual “field visits”.

NYU Paris Spring 2012

MCC–UE 9454: Global Media Seminar: France and Europe

Joav Toker

Monday 4:30 – 7:30 pm
COURSE MATERIALS:

Articles and book chapters reproduced in the Course Reader.

REQUIREMENTS:

Keeping up steadily with current French and European news is strictly required. (International Herald Tribune, RFI - Radio France Internationale, France-24 in English, other English & French media outlets).

Reading assignments in course reader.

At least one short oral (4-5 minute) ‘class-report’ with a written component.

Midterm and Final Examinations.

Informed and challenging opinions are highly encouraged during class ‘reports’, presentations and discussions.

Please bear in mind that the order and the content of sessions may be modified on short notice due to breaking French or European major news developments.

GRADING:

Class participation and active involvement in discussion: 30%
Class-‘reports’ (written and oral components): 15%
Midterm Examination: 25%
Final Examination: 30%

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1

January 30th, 2012: Introduction: What shall we be looking for? How shall we proceed? some terminology, short-term / long-term definitions we will be dealing with regarding French and European media, political, social and cultural ‘spheres’. Traditional Media vs. the Virtual, the NET, Social Networks and their challenges.
Week 2


**Readings for Week 2:**


Week 3

February 13th, 2012: **How do They Function?** Media ‘machinery’ and performance: How do they operate, compete, comply, survive, disappear or flourish? Instincts, ambitions, limitations and constraints of media coverage and production; senses of editorial, production & financial innovation facing the “New Media”.

**Readings for Week 3:**


Week 4

February 20th, 2012: **Media as Public Actors**: facts, analysis, emotions, power and counter-power. Approaches and nuances related to notions of “media influence” in politics, society and “culture”; Dynamics and impacts of the ‘New Media’; Notions of the ‘local’, the ‘national’, the ‘European’ and the ‘Global’;
Readings for Week 4:


Week 5

February 27th, 2012: Media Business Models; Commercial Realities and Constraints: Political affiliations and sympathies, regulation and innovation; Free media outlets, advertisement, free downloads and copyrights; Who’s really in charge: The Parliament, the Bureaucracy or the Market…?

Readings for Week 5:


Week 6

March 5th, 2012: “Civil Societies”, French and European Political Landscape: Media and political awareness, participation and electoral campaigning: on the French internal scene, in the context of European and international positioning; Media as players in the European unification process.

Readings for Week 6:


**Week 7**

March 12th, 2012: **Midterm Examination (in-class essay)**

**Week 8**


**Readings for Week 8:**


**Week 9**

March 26th, 2012: **“La République Est UNE”; European Media and ‘Identity’ issues:** Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité and Laïcité ; Media contributions and controversies in the domains of « National Identity », immigration, ethnic diversity and “communautarisme”; Cultural ‘shocks’, nationalism, patriotism, xenophobia.

**Readings for Week 9:**


Week 10

April 2nd, 2012: **Entertainment à la Française, à l’Européenne:** Reality-shows and voyeurism. The problematic fascination with Media “violence”; Concepts of ‘Elites’ and ‘Peuple’ in French history, politics, culture and mass-media.

Readings for Week 10:


Week 11

April 9th, 2012: **Notions of “Responsibility” in Political and Media Behaviour:** Interactivity and confrontation between the traditional and the ‘New’ media. Case-studies of electoral periods, extreme-crisis situations.

Readings for Week 11:


Week 12

April 30th, 2012: **And What’s Next ?**: Where are we heading towards, in terms of political, social and “cultural” media coverage in France, within the ‘Francophonie’, in the European Union? Balances and adversities between ‘New’ and ‘Traditional’ Media, contextual relativities, rapidly changing criteria.
Readings for Week 12:


Week 13

May 7th, 2012: Final Examination (in-class essay)