MCC-UE 3
History of Media and Communication
T/Th 11-12:15
TISC UC50

Professor Mara Mills
mmills@nyu.edu

Office Hours:
Tuesdays 2:30-4
and by appointment
3rd Floor, 411 Lafayette Building

TAs:
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Course Description
This course explores the emergence and development of different media in relation to particular social, economic, and technological conditions. The course also serves as an introduction to historical analysis and research methods. Weekly topics are roughly chronological, and a variety of mechanisms for media change will be considered, including path-dependence, remediation, convergence, technological appropriation, and the social shaping or social construction of technology. In addition to “media causes,” readings will examine “media effects” on perception, culture, and communication. Certain themes—such as “information,” “reading,” and “piracy”—will be traced across media systems and/or time periods. At the end of the semester, we will take a comparative look at analog and digital formats for particular media.

Course Requirements

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>May 9</td>
<td>25%</td>
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*Header image courtesy of Studio Sport, www.studiosport.in
Historical Research Essay (6-8 pages):

- Library/Database Research Assignment  
  - Completion Date: February 7  
  - Percentage: 5%
- Topic + Primary Source  
  - Completion Date: February 19  
  - Percentage: 5%
- Outline + Bibliography  
  - Completion Date: March 8  
  - Percentage: 5%
- Final Draft  
  - Completion Date: April 19  
  - Percentage: 25%

Section Attendance and Participation:  
10%

*Your participation grade, to be determined by your TA, is based on attendance, discussion, readiness (bringing readings/notes to class), and attentiveness.*

**Grading Policies**

This course follows the standard Steinhardt Policies & Procedures for academic integrity and grading (including incompletes):

http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/procedures
http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/registration/standards#grading_policies

*Your TAs will occasionally grant extensions if given advance notice and adequate reason. Otherwise, late work will be marked down one full grade per week (or fraction thereof) and may not receive written comments.*

**Accessibility and Accommodations**

I want this course to be accessible to all interested students. If you need specific accommodations, please let me and your TA know as soon as possible. To make arrangements for accommodations through NYU, contact the Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

**Etiquette**

While laptops are allowed in lecture, they should not pose a distraction to me, you, or to other students. Other devices should be out of sight & earshot. If you need to leave early or arrive late, please do so quietly—and warn the professor in advance of lecture.

**Books to Purchase at the NYU Bookstore**


Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (Gingko Press, 2006 [1967])

*Books can be borrowed at the Course Reserves desk on Bobst lower level 2. Other readings are available through NYU Classes.*
## Course Schedule

**Week 1:** **Introduction to the Historical Analysis of Media and Communication**

[http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2007/05/14/070514crbo_books_shapin](http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2007/05/14/070514crbo_books_shapin)  
Trevor Pinch & Nelly Oudshoorn, “How Users and Non-Users Matter” (1-16)  
Donald MacKenzie & Judy Wajcman, “Introductory Essay: The Social Shaping of Technology” (skip pp 18-27, sections on economics & the state)

January 29  
Course Overview & Fundamental Concepts: Communication, Media, Technology

January 31  
Do Machines Make History? Or, Media Causes and Effects

**Week 2:** **Orality and Literacy**

Readings:  
Crowley & Heyer: 1, 2, 3, 6 (pp. 44-45 only), 7  
Jill Lepore, “A National Alphabet,” *A is for American* (excerpt)

February 5  
Orality (and its critics)  
Introduction to Library Resources with Alexa Pearce

February 7  
Early Writing, Its Consequences and Critics

**Week 3:** **Manuscript and Print**

Readings:  
Crowley & Heyer: 8 (skim), 9, 10, 11, 12  
David Henkin, Introduction & Ch. 2, *The Postal Age*  
Tom Mullaney, “The Chinese Typewriter,”  

February 12  
From Manuscripts to Print

February 14  
Print + Manuscript in the Industrial Era: Newspapers and the Postal Network (and Valentine’s Greetings)

**Week 4:** **News, Continued**

Readings:  
Crowley & Heyer: 13, 15

February 19  

February 21  
TA meetings to discuss paper topics (during lecture & recitation)

**Week 5:** **Telegraph and Photograph**

Readings:  
Crowley & Heyer: 14, 17, 18, 19  
John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, Chs. 1 and 7
February 26  Optical and Electrical Telegraphy; Wirelessness

February 28  Photography
Mini Lecture: Hannah Zeavin

**Week 6:**  Sound Reproduction
Readings:  Crowley & Heyer: 16, 20, 21
Michèle Martin, “The Culture of the Telephone,” “Hello, Central?” Gender, Technology, and Culture in the Formation of Telephone Systems (140-150)
Gustavus Stadler, “Never Heard Such a Thing: Lynching and Phonographic Modernity,” Social Text (87-97)

March 5  Telephone

March 7  Phonograph

**Week 7:**  Midterm Week
No Readings/Recitation this week.

March 12  Review

March 14  Midterm

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 8:**  Moving Images
Readings:  Crowley & Heyer: 22, 23, 24
Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (excerpt)

March 26  Toward Cinema; Mass Culture

March 28  Cinema 2: Audiovisuality

**Week 9:**  Broadcast Media
Readings:  Crowley & Heyer: 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33
Lynn Spigel, “Introduction” (pp. 1-10) Make Room for TV

April 2  Radio

April 4  Television

**Week 10:**  The Electronic Age
Readings:  McLuhan, The Medium is the Massage
Crowley & Heyer: 37, 38
April 9        Pause/Rewind: The Electric Information Age Book

April 11       From Analog to Digital Computing

Week 11:       Internet
Readings:      Crowley & Heyer: 39, 40
                Lisa Nakamura, “Introduction,” Digitizing Race

April 16       No Class: Prof. at University of Oregon

April 18       Internet History

Week 12:       Analog and Digital I: Audio
Readings:      Crowley & Heyer: 41
                Gerard Goggin, “Making Voice Portable: The Early History of the Cell Phone”
                Tomoyuki Okada, “Youth Culture and the Shaping of Japanese Mobile Media: Personalization and the Keitai Internet as Multimedia”
                Jonathan Sterne, MP3: The Meaning of a Format (selection)
                Lucas Hilderbrand, Inherent Vice, 33-49

April 23       Mobile Communication Technologies

April 25       Magnetic Tape to MP3

Week 13:       Analog and Digital II: Visual Media
Readings:      Crowley & Heyer: 36
                Andrew Piper, “Take it and Read” and “Turning the Page,” Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times
                Lucas Hilderbrand, “The Aesthetics of Access,” Inherent Vice

April 30       Electronic Reading

May 2          Videotape to Digital Imaging

Week 14:       Conclusion
No Readings/Recitation this week.

May 7          Course Review

May 9          In-Class Final Exam