Seminar in Media, Culture and Communication
MCC-GE 2001
Department of Media, Culture, and Communication, New York University

This course examines a broad range of theoretical approaches central to the study of media, culture, and communication. The course is organized around four broad and interrelated themes: (1) Media and Communication; (2) Power and Cultural Production; (3) Media and Technology; and (4) The International Frame. We will seek to understand the complex linkages between the social structures of media industries (technological, political, economic), the meaningful cultural objects they produce and distribute (texts, sounds and images), and the interpretations and uses people make of these objects. Students will learn the differences among the major theoretical and methodological approaches, be able to explain the advantages and disadvantages of each, and put them into practice for their own analysis, research, and professional practice.

Readings
There are some books that are central to this course. While it is not mandatory to purchase them, you will need them as references throughout the course, and may want them for your library. All are in print and available through major booksellers, including the NYU bookstore.


All the assigned book excerpts and articles listed on the course schedule will be made available through the New York University Classes system.

I will also occasionally upload audio and video examples. These will also be found on the NYU Classes Site. Any CDs or videos that are placed on reserve will be in the Avery Fisher Center for Music and Media (on the second floor of the Bobst Library). The syllabus is an outline only. Modifications are inevitable.

N.B. There will be no laptop usage in class: http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=EJ893903&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=EJ893903

Assignments

Weekly Assignments
For most weeks you will be asked to post a short response paper or a fragment of your research to the “Forums” Section of NYU Classes.

Sound/Video/Web Examples
You will frequently be expected to upload a sound, video or web example that illustrates some of the major themes covered in the reading for that particular week. There will be folders for this purpose on the website. Also, insofar as it's possible, you should bring these examples with you to class.

Research Papers
In addition to the in-class assignments, two research papers on a class topic are required for this course. We will discuss options for these papers during the semester. These papers should range between seven to fifteen 1.5 spaced pages, and will be proofread by two of your colleagues before being handed in to me. The papers will be due by classes 7 (October 23) and 13 (December 11) respectively. You may circulate them earlier if you wish.
Evaluation Standards and Policies

A=Excellent. Outstanding work in all respects. Demonstrates comprehensive and solid understanding of course material, and presents thoughtful interpretations, well focused and original insights, and well reasoned commentary and analysis. Includes skillful use of source materials, illuminating examples and illustrations, fluent expression, and contains no grammatical or typographical errors.

B=Good. This work demonstrates a complete and accurate understanding of course material, presents a reasonable degree of insight and broad levels of analysis. Work reflects competence, but stays at a general or predictable level of understanding. Source materials and examples are used appropriately and articulation/writing is clear. Paper has been carefully proofread.

C=Adequate/fair. This work demonstrates understanding that hits in the ballpark but which remains superficial, incomplete, or expresses some significant errors or weaknesses. Source materials may be used inadequately or inappropriately, and arguments lack concrete, specific examples and illustrations. Writing or articulation may appear vague, hard to follow, or loaded with typos and other technical errors.

D=Unsatisfactory. This work demonstrates a serious lack or error in understanding, and fails to express the most rudimentary aspects of the course. Sources may be used entirely inappropriately or not at all, and writing is deficient.

F=Failed. Work not submitted or attempted.

Grading Rubric

weekly written online responses (6 times 5 % each – you will be assessed on your ten best entries)
oral presentation (10 %)
two essay papers (2 times 20%)
class participation (20%)

COURSE SCHEDULE

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Class 1: Philosophy, Sociology, & History of Communication

Plato, Phaedrus, p.43 (line 259e1) to p. 69 (line 278b5)
John Durham Peters, Speaking Into the Air, 1-32 (and 33-62, optional)
John Thompson, Media and Modernity (10-43)

Further Reading
Daniel Czitrom, Media and the American Mind: From Morse to McLuhan

Class 2: Mediation & Reproducibility

Georg Friedrich Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, (opening arguments, only 58-66)
Walter Benjamin, Illuminations, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”
Horkheimer and Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass
Deception”

Further Reading
Friedrich A. Kittler, *Grammaphone, Film, Typewriter*, “Introduction”
On the new “Urban” Suburban:
http://www.salon.com/2012/09/22/invasion_of_the_faux_cities/?source=newsletter

Class 3: Immediacy, Presence & Spectacle
Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, “The Commodity as Spectacle”
Carolyn Abatte, *Critical Inquiry*, “Music: Drastic or Gnostic?”

Further Reading
Donna Jean Haraway, “The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others”
Matthew Lombard and Theresa Ditton, “At the Heart of It All: The Concept of Presence”
Roland Barthes on Wrestling

Class 4: Public Sphere & Imagined Communities
Jurgen Habermas “The Public Sphere”
Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*
humdog, “pandora’s vox: on community in cyberspace”
Christopher Kelty, “Geeks, Social Imaginaries, and Recursive Publics” (optional)
Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (optional)

Further Reading
Craig Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, 1-50
Howard Rheingold, *Virtual Communities*
Jurgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*
Peter Dahlgren “The Public Sphere and the Net”**
Julian Dibbel, “A Rape in Cyberspace; or How an Evil Clown, a Haitian Trickster Spirit, Two Wizards, and a Cast of Dozens Turned a Database into a Society”
Andrew Whelan, Cybersounds, “Do U Produce?: Subcultural Capital and Amateur Musicianship in Peer-to-Peer Networks”

POWER AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Class 5 a: Communication as Culture

James Carey, “Mass Communication Research and Cultural Studies: An American View”
Pierre Bourdieu Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste (excerpt)
Stuart Hall, “Encoding / Decoding”
Michel De Certeau, “Introduction” and “Making Due: Uses and Tactics” The Practice of Everyday Life

Further Reading
Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures, “Thick Description” and “Deep Play”
Mikhail Bakhtin, “The Problem of Speech Genres,” Speech Genres and Other Late Essays
Jacques Ranciere, Aesthetics of Politics (excerpt)*
James Carey, “Mass Communication Research and Cultural Studies: An American View”
Raymond Williams, Television, Technology and Cultural Form, “The Technology and the Society”
Durkheim, Emile. Elementary Forms of Religious Life (ch 1)
Rothenbuhler (excerpt on the Olympic games)
Dayan & Katz, Media Rituals (excerpt on Princess Di Wedding)
Klaus Bruhn Jensen and Karl Erik Rosengren “Five Traditions in Search of the Audience”
Simon During, Cultural Studies Reader, (Ch. 1)
Goffman presentation of self in everyday life

Class 5 b: Power, Knowledge & Practice

Michel Foucault, Discipline & Punish (“The Body of the Condemned,” “Docile Bodies,” and optionally “Panopticism”)
Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus”
Pierre Bourdieu, “Structures and the Habitus”

Further Reading
Dreyfus book on Foucault
Michel Foucault Power/Knowledge
Paul Edwards, *Closed World*, (Chapter 1)
Suzanne Cusick, “Music as Torture/Music as Weapon”
See, Brian Holmes on Society of Control: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzDR9HLBIJU

**Class 6: Ideology, Hegemony & Political Economy**

Karl Marx “The Values of Commodities” and “The Fetishism of Commodities”
Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, “Hegemony” and “Culture”
Yochai Benkler, *The Wealth of Networks*, (Chs. 5-7 from Part II)
Tiziana Terranova, “Free Labor”

**Further Reading**

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Class Struggle”
Marshall Berman, *Adventures in Marxism*, “All that is Solid Melts into Air: Marx, Modernism and Modernization”
John Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture*, “The Concept of Ideology”
David Forgacs, “National-Popular: Genealogy of a Concept”
Nicholas Garnham, “Contribution to a Political Economy of Mass-Communication”
Sut Jhally, “The Political Economy of Culture”
Nicholas Garnham, “Political Economy and Cultural Studies: Reconciliation or Divorce?” and Lawrence Grossberg “Cultural Studies vs. Political Economy: Is Anybody Else Bored with this Debate?” *Colloquy*, March 1995
Herbert Schiller, *Culture, Inc.*, “The Corporation and the Production of Culture”

**Class 7: Piracy, IP Law, and Paradoxes of Technical Reproducibility (Case Study: Music Industry in the Age of Digital Networks)**

Primo and Libby Lloyd), 2011, 99-147


Additional Reading:


See also HYPERLINK http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/index.htm
See also HYPERLINK http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/publications/2011/Rethinking_Music
See also HYPERLINK http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703727804576017592259031536.html?mod=googlenews_wsi
See also HYPERLINK http://futureofmusic.org/blog/2009/10/14/29-streams
See also HYPERLINK http://vimeo.com/14912890
See also HYPERLINK http://www.carseywolf.ucsb.edu/mip/net-worth-roundtable-3-compensation-and-creative-labor


Hilderbrand, Lucas. Inherent Vice: Bootleg Histories of Videotape and Copyright, 2011


Aeroplano Ed. (optional)

**Viewing**
*RIP! A Remix Manifesto* (dir. Brett Gaylor)
*Good Copy, Bad Copy* (dir. Andreas Johnsen, et al)

**MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Class 8: Medium as Message, Technologies as Actors**

Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology* (excerpt)
Lev Manovitch, *Language of New Media*, “What is New Media?”
Marshall McLuhan, “The Medium is the Message” (excerpt)
Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (excerpts)
Nicholas Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” *Atlantic* 2008
Bill Brown, “Thing Theory”
Geoff Bowker, *Sorting Things Out*

**Further Reading**
Marshall McLuhan *Gutenberg Galaxy*
Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication*
Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*
Joshua Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place*
Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks*
Ruth Cowan, *Consumption Junction*
Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*
Pinch & Bijker, *Social Construction of Technology*
Boczkowski, *Digitizing the News*
Reeves and Nass, *The Media Equation*
Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media*

On algorithmic culture today:
THE INTERNATIONAL FRAME

Class 9: Post-Modernism, Networks & Rhizome

Slavoj Zizek, "It's Ideology, Stupid!" in First as Tragedy, Then as Farce
Slavoj Zizek, “Politics” in Organs Without Bodies
Jean-Francois Lyotard, “What is Postmodernism?”
Frederic Jameson, “Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”
Jacques Derrida, Margins of Philosophy, “Differance”
Sherry Turkle, Life on The Screen (excerpt)
Gabriella Coleman, “Code is Speech”
David Harvey, The Condition of Post-Modernity, “Postmodernism” (excerpt)

Further Reading
Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Thousand Plateaus (excerpt)*
David Harvey, The Condition of Post-Modernity, “Postmodernism”
Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire
Alexander R. Galloway, Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture
David Harvey, The Condition of Post-Modernity, “Modernism”
Dick Hebdige, Hiding in the Light, “Staking out the Posts”
Jean-Francois Lyotard, “The Postmodern Condition”
Manuel Castells, The Network Society V. 1 (excerpts)

Class 10: The National & Post-Colonial Imagination

Edward Said, Orientalism (excerpt)**
Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy”
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (excerpt)

Further Reading
Homi Bhabha “DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation”
Partha Chatterjee, The Nation and its Fragments (excerpt)
Jesus Martin-Barbero ‘The Processes: From Nationalisms to Transnationalisms’
Annabelle Sreberny ‘The Global and the Local in International Communications’
Jan Nederveen Pieters ‘Globalization as Hybridization’ Background:
Joseph Straubhaar ‘(Re)Asserting National Television and National Identity Against the Global, Regional, and Local Levels of World Television’
Ernest Renan, Joseph Stalin, various (very!) short readings on definitions of nation/alism
Franz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks (excerpt)

Helpful Additional Background Readings
Janice Radway, Reading the Romance Novel**
Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses”
Hanno Hardt, Critical Communication Studies: Communication, History and Theory in America
Raymond Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society
Dominic Strinati, An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture
Michael Gurevitch (ed.), Culture, Society and the Media
Tim O'Sullivan, John Hartley, Danny Saunders, Martin Montgomery, John Fiske (Eds). Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies
William Outhwaite & Tom Bottomore (eds.), The Blackwell Dictionary of Twentieth Century Social Thought
Cultural Studies Reader
Nicholas Mirzoeff, Visual Culture Reader

TOPICS

Class 11: Feminism & Queer Theory

Denise Riley, Am I that Name? Feminism and the Category of ‘Women’ in History (excerpt)*
Michael Warner, The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics and the Ethics of Queer Life (excerpt)*
Eve Sedgwick, Epistemology of the Closet (excerpt)
Gayle Salomon, Assuming a Body (excerpt)
Judith Butler, Undoing Gender (excerpt)
Further Reading
Joan Wallach Scott, The Politics of the Veil (excerpt)
Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses”
bell hooks, “Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance”
Donna Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs”
Janice Radway, Reading the Romance Novel**

Class 12: Sound Studies, Noise & Music

Murray Shafer, “Open Ears,” in Audible Culture Reader (ed. Michael Bull and Les Black)
Reproduction.
Lisa Gitelman, “Media, Materiality, and the Measure of the Digital” (optional)

Further Reading
Murray Shafer, Auditory Culture Reader “Open Ears”

Class 13: Visual Cultures, Screens & Space

Nicholas Mirzoeff, “On Visuality”
Susan Buck-Morss, “Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin’s Artwork Essay Reconsidered”
Zaloom, Caitlin. “Markets and Machines: Work in the Technological Sensoryscapes of Finance”

Further Reading
Susan Sontag, On Photography, “In Plato’s Cave” and “The Image-World”
Laura Mulvey “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”

More on Rhetoric, Influence, & Information
Kant, Immanuel, Critique of Judgment, “Comparison of the Aesthetic Value of the Various Fine Arts”
C. Wright Mills, People, Power, Politics, “The Cultural Apparatus” and “Mass Media and Public Opinion”
Elith Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld, Personal Influence, (only 1-47)
Jacques Ellul, Propaganda, (only 3-32 and 61-87)
See also
Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*
Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, “A Propaganda Model”
Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion*