MCC-UE 3
History of Media and Communication
Spring 2015
M/W 11-12:15
GCASL C95

Professor Mara Mills
mmills@nyu.edu

Office Hours:
Mondays 4-5 p.m.
and by appointment
8th Floor, 239 Greene St.

TAs:
William Lockett wjl285@nyu.edu
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Course Description
This course explores the emergence, development, and use 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

Midterm Exam: March 11 25%
Final Exam: May 6 25%

*Header image courtesy of Studio Sport, www.studiosport.in
Historical Research Essay (6-8 pages):

- Library/Database Research Assignment
  - Due: February 4
  - Weight: 5%

- Topic + Primary Source
  - Due: February 20
  - Weight: 5%

- Outline, Thesis, Bibliography
  - Due: March 25
  - Weight: 5%

- Final Draft
  - Due: April 20
  - Weight: 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/policies/procedures)

[http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/registration/standards#grading_policies](http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/registration/standards#grading_policies)

*Your TAs may 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.*
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Course Schedule</th>
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<td><strong>Week 1:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Introduction to the Historical Analysis of Media and Communication</strong></td>
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| Readings: | Donald MacKenzie & Judy Wajcman, “Introductory Essay: The Social Shaping of Technology” (skip pp. 18-27; on p. 27 start with section “Case Studies of the Shaping of Technology”)  
W. Russell Neuman, “Theories of Media Evolution,” 1-13  
David Edgerton, “Introduction,” The Shock of the Old |
| January 26 | Course Overview; The Media of Historiography (or, Picturing the History of Technology) |
| January 28 | Fundamental Concepts: Communication, Media, Technology  
Historiography I: Theories of Media Evolution & Media Effects |
| **Week 2:** | **Orality and Literacy** |
| Readings: | Crowley & Heyer: 1, 2, 6 (pp. 44-45 only), 7 (+ Intro to Parts I & II)  
Trevor Pinch & Nelly Oudshoorn, “How Users and Non-Users Matter” (1-16)  
John Durham Peters, “Writing” |
| February 2 | Introduction to Library Resources with MCC librarian Katie Boss  
Historiography II: Use and Re-Use |
| February 4 | Orality and Writing, Their Consequences and Critics |
| **Week 3:** | **Manuscript and Print** |
| Readings: | Crowley & Heyer: 9, 10, 11, 13, 15 (+ Intro to Part III)  
Jing Tsu, “Chinese Scripts, Codes, and Typewriting Machines” |
| February 9 | From Manuscripts to Print |
| February 11 | Newspapers  
| **Week 4:** | **Mail and Telegram** |
| Readings: | Crowley & Heyer: 14, 17  
David Henkin, Introduction (pp. 1-5) & Ch. 2, The Postal Age |
| February 16 | *No Class: President’s Day* |
| February 18 | The Postal Network; Optical and Electrical Telegraphy; Wirelessness |
| **Week 5:** | **Photography** |
| Readings: | Crowley & Heyer: 18, 19 (+ Intro to Part V) |
Ruben Gallo, “Media and Modernity in Mexico”

February 23  TA meetings to discuss paper topics (during lecture & recitation)

February 25  Photography

**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 2  Telephone

March 4  Phonograph

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

March 9  Review

March 11  Midterm

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 8:**  **Moving Images**
Readings:  Crowley & Heyer: 22, 23, 24

March 23  Lesbian/Queer Media: Guest Lecture by Jeanne Vaccaro (University of Indiana)

March 25  Early Cinema and other Optical Media

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

March 30  Radio; Mini-Lecture by Jesse Mitchell Lindsey

April 1  Television

**Week 10:**  **Audiovisuality**
Readings:  McLuhan,  *The Medium is the Massage*
April 6
Cinema 2: Sound Film

April 8
Pause/Rewind: The Electric Information Age Book

**Week 11: Computing and the Internet**
Readings:
Crowley & Heyer: 39, 40
Lisa Parks, “Media Fixes: Thoughts on Repair Cultures” and “Around the Antenna Tree”

April 13
From Analog to Digital Computing

April 15
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”
Lucas Hilderbrand, *Inherent Vice*, 33-49

April 20
Mobile Communication Technologies

April 22
Magnetic Tape to MP3

**Week 13: Analog and Digital II: Visual Media**
Readings:
Crowley & Heyer: 36
Mara Mills, “What Should We Call Reading?” *Flow*,
[http://flowtv.org/2012/12/what-should-we-call-reading/](http://flowtv.org/2012/12/what-should-we-call-reading/)
Lucas Hilderbrand, “The Aesthetics of Access,” *Inherent Vice*
Mimi Ito, “Technologies of the Childhood Imagination: Yu-Gi-Oh!, Media Mixes, and Everyday Cultural Production”

April 27
Videotape to Digital Imaging; Mini-Lecture on analog/digital surveillance by Paula Kift

April 29
Electronic Reading

**Week 14: Conclusion**
No Readings/Recitation this week.

May 4
Course Review

May 6
In-Class Final Exam