New York University
Department of Media, Culture, and Communication
History of Media and Communication
MCC-UE 03, Spring 2017

Nicole Starosielski
nicole.starosielski@nyu.edu
Lecture: M/W 9:30-10:45am
Classroom: CANT 200
Office: 239 Greene St, #724

Course Description
This course will introduce you to the history of media and communication and to the stakes of historical inquiry. Rather than tracing a necessarily selective historical arc from alphabet to Internet or from cave painting to coding, the course is organized around an exploration of key concepts such as literacy, publicity, temporality, visual culture, networks, and information. Students will work with primary and secondary sources in order to analyze the ways that media emerge within and against different social, economic, perceptual, and semiotic conditions. Only by thinking carefully about media, culture, and communication in the past can we hope to understand the pace, direction, and character of changes today.

Required Texts
The required readings for the course will be available via NYU Classes in the “Resources” area.

Expectations
(1) Read. Readings must be completed before class. Lectures provide context for better understanding the texts. Come to class & recitation prepared to engage. Bring the readings to recitation with you, so you can discuss them in detail. There may be pop quizzes or other assignments given during lecture & recitation sections that test your comprehension of the readings.
(2) Participate. We will be looking for knowledge-building contributions that not only show that you understand the readings but also that you can contribute to the intellectual life of the class.
(3) Media History Assignments. You will be asked to construct four histories as part of this class (details to follow). These are opportunities to demonstrate close engagement with the materials of the course and to think critically.
(4) Attend class. Attendance in lecture and recitation is a course requirement. If you miss more than three classes, your grade will be decreased.

Grade Breakdown
Assignment 1: 10% Participation: 15%
Assignment 2: 10% Quizzes: 10%
Assignment 3: 10% Midterm 15%
Assignment 4: 10% Final: 20%

You must complete all assignments in order to pass this class.

NOTE: All official course communications will be conducted through “old media”—if you want to contact your TA or me, come speak to us during office hours. You can use media to take notes in class, but the technology you use must have been established before you were born.
**Evaluation Rubric**

**A= Excellent**
This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.

**B=Good**
This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

**C=Average**
This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is lacking or inarticulate.

**D= Unsatisfactory**
This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic.

**F=Failed**
This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments

\[
\begin{align*}
A & = 94-100 & C & = 74-76 \\
A- & = 90-93 & C+ & = 77-79 \\
B+ & = 87-89 & C- & = 70-73 \\
B & = 84-86 & D+ & = 65-69 \\
B- & = 80-83 & D & = 60-64
\end{align*}
\]

**Plagiarism**
Any plagiarism no matter how accidental will result in failure for the course. Remember, it is plagiarism if you use someone else's ideas without attribution or someone else's words without quotation. The university’s Writing Center is an invaluable resource should you wish to take advantage of it. You are entitled to one-on-one writing tutorials if you plan ahead and make appointments. The Writing Center does not provide copyediting services.

**Resources**
If you need accommodations in light of a documented disability, please be in touch at the beginning of the semester. You must be proactive in making arrangements for the accommodations to which you are entitled. The Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities is a source of support for this.
Course Schedule

Week 1

Monday, January 23

Wednesday, January 25

Part I: Language, Literacy, Inscription

Week 2: Dominant Languages

Monday, January 30


Wednesday, February 1


Week 3: Inscription // Capture

Monday, February 6


Wednesday, February 8

Friday February 10: Assignment #1 due in section
Week 4: Print Cultures and Imagined Communities

Monday, February 13

Wednesday, February 15

Week 5: Ideologies of the Airwaves

Wednesday, February 22


Week 6: Resisting Corporate Media

Monday, February 27
Reading: “The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967”

Wednesday, March 1

Friday, March 3: Assignment #2 due in section

Week 7: The Annihilation of Time and Space

Monday, March 6

Wednesday, March 8

SPRING BREAK

Week 8: Remote Control
Monday, March 20

Wednesday, March 22: MIDTERM

**Week 9: The Place of Television**

Monday, March 27

Wednesday, March 29: Fringe

Friday, March 31: **Assignment #3 due in section**

**Part IV: Visual/Sound Cultures**

**Week 10: Narrative/Attraction**

Monday, April 3

Wednesday, April 5

**Week 11: Aesthetics and Technology**

Monday, April 10: No Reading

Wednesday, April 12:

Week 12: Histories of Electronic Music

Monday, April 17

Wednesday, April 19

Part V: Networks and Information

Week 13: Computer History, Hard & Soft

Monday, April 24

Wednesday, April 26

Friday, April 28: Assignment #4 due in section

Week 14: Networks & Control

Monday, May 1

Wednesday, May 3

Week 15

Monday, May 8: No Reading

Wednesday, May 10: Final Exam – 8:00 - 9:50am