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. A variety of mechanisms for media change will be considered, including path-dependence, 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. Themes such as literacy, publics, reproduction, and ideology 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>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>March 9</td>
<td>20%</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**  
  February 5  
  5%
- **Topic + Primary Source**  
  February 26  
  5%
- **Outline, Thesis, Bibliography**  
  March 28  
  10%
- **Final Draft**  
  April 21  
  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. As a matter of common courtesy, please refrain from walking in and out of the room while class is in session.

**Books to Purchase at the NYU Bookstore**


Minae Mizumura, *The Fall of Language in the Age of English* (Columbia)

Michael Newman, *Video Revolutions: On the History of a Medium* (Columbia)

*Books can be borrowed at the Course Reserves desk on Bobst lower level 2. Other readings are available through NYU Classes.*
Books Available On-Line

Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects (Gingko Press, 2006 [1967])
https://archive.org/details/pdfy-vNiFct6b-L5ucJEa

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to the Historical Analysis of Media and Communication
Readings: MacKenzie & 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”)
Nakamura, “Media”
Shapin, “What Else is New?”

January 25 Course Overview; Why Media History?

January 27 Fundamental Concepts: Communication, Media, Technology
Theories of Media Evolution & Media Effects

Week 2: Spoken Words
Readings: Pinch & Oudshoorn, “How Users and Non-Users Matter” (1-16)
Classic Reading: Ong, Orality and Literacy (excerpt)
Peters, “Writing”
Eidsheim, “Voice As Action: Toward a Model for Analyzing the Dynamic Construction of Racialized Voice”

February 1 Historiography II: Use and Re-Use

February 3 Introduction to Library Resources with MCC librarian Katie Boss
Voice, Speech, Orality, Aurality

Week 3: Writing 1: Inscriptions, Pages, Semiotics
Readings: Mizumura, Chs. 2-4
Agarwal-Hollands and Andrews, “From Scroll to Codex and Back Again”
Hassett, “The Near and Far Future of Emoji”

February 8 Inscriptions, Manuscripts, Paper

February 10 Print, Type, Authorship

Week 4: Writing 2: Imagined Communities and Counterpublics
Readings: Hofmyer: 1-45, 46-103, 153-163
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 15</td>
<td>No Class: President’s Day</td>
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<td>February 17</td>
<td>Newspapers and Counterpublics</td>
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<td>Week 5:</td>
<td><strong>Networks</strong></td>
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<td>Readings:</td>
<td>Henkin, <em>The Postal Age</em> (excerpt)</td>
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<td>Thomas, <em>Postal Pleasures: Sex, Scandal, and Victorian Letters</em> (excerpt)</td>
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<td>Marvin, <em>When Old Technologies Were New</em> (excerpt)</td>
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<td>Carey, “Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph”</td>
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<td>February 22</td>
<td>Mail, Telegraphy, Empire</td>
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<td>February 24</td>
<td>Lesbian/Queer Media: Guest Lecture by Jeanne Vaccaro (University of Indiana)</td>
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<td>Week 6:</td>
<td><strong>Sound Reproduction</strong></td>
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<td>Readings:</td>
<td>Martin, “The Culture of the Telephone,” “Hello, Central?” <em>Gender, Technology, and Culture in the Formation of Telephone Systems</em> (140-150)</td>
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<td>Stadler, “Never Heard Such a Thing: Lynching and Phonographic Modernity,” <em>Social Text</em> (87-97)</td>
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<td>Hirschkind, <em>The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics</em> (excerpt)</td>
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<td>February 29</td>
<td>Gender and the Telephone</td>
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<td>March 2</td>
<td>Phonography and Ideology</td>
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<td>Week 7:</td>
<td><strong>Midterm Week</strong></td>
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<td>No Readings/Recitation this week.</td>
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<td>March 7</td>
<td>Review</td>
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<td>March 9</td>
<td>Online Midterm (NYU Classes)</td>
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<td><strong>SPRING BREAK</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 8: Optical Media</strong></td>
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<td>Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”</td>
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<td>Mirzoeff, <em>The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality</em> (excerpt)</td>
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<td>March 21</td>
<td>Images and Modernity: Spectacle, Power, Objectivity</td>
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<td>March 23</td>
<td>TA meetings to discuss midterms and paper topics (during lecture</td>
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& recitation)

**Week 9:** Broadcast Media and Mass Culture

Readings:
- Spigel, *Make Room for TV* (excerpt)
- Horkheimer and Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (excerpt)
- Wilk, “Television, Time, and the National Imaginary in Belize”
- Edmund, “All Platforms Considered: Contemporary Radio and Transmedia Engagement”

March 28 Radio

March 30 Television

**Week 10:** Audiovisuality

Readings:
- McLuhan, *The Medium is the Massage*
- Turner, *The Democratic Surround: Multimedia and American Liberalism from World War II to the Psychedelic Sixties* (excerpt)

April 4 Cinema

April 6 McLuhan, Multimedia, and American Liberalism

**Week 11:** Computing and the Internet

Readings:
- Abbate, “‘The Most Neglected Element’: Users Transform the ARPANET,” *Inventing the Internet*
- Ensmenger, “Making Programming Masculine”
- Mizumura, Ch. 6

April 11 When Computers Were Women

April 13 Users Construct the Internet

**Week 12:** Analog and Digital I: Audio

Readings:
- Goggin, “Making Voice Portable: The Early History of the Cell Phone”
- Okada, “Youth Culture and the Shaping of Japanese Mobile Media: Personalization and the Keitai Internet as Multimedia”
- Sterne, *MP3: The Meaning of a Format* (selection)

April 18 Mobile Communication and Convergence

April 20 Digital Audio: Format and Remix Theories

**Week 13:** Analog and Digital II: Visual Media
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>April 25</th>
<th>Digital Images and Video</th>
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<td>April 27</td>
<td>Electronic Reading</td>
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**Week 14:** **Materials, Labor, and Media Assembly**

**Readings:**
- Nakamura, “*Indigenous Circuits*”
- Nest, *Coltan*, Chs. 1 and 4
- Parks, “Media Fixes: Thoughts on Repair Cultures”

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<th>May 2</th>
<th>Media Supply Chains: Guest Lecture by Matt Hockenberry</th>
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<td>May 4</td>
<td>Course Review</td>
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**Week 15:** **Conclusion**

No Readings/Recitation this week.

| May 9 | Online Final Exam (NYU Classes) |