This course examines how the work that people do throughout the culture industries—i.e., newspapers, magazines, television, radio, the movies, music and book publishing—has been affected by a range of post-war factors such as media concentration, hyper-commercialism and partisan manipulation and harassment.

Requirements

Our study of the subject will be based on an extensive bibliography (and filmography), as well as weekly presentations by guest lecturers with pertinent experience in the industries concerned.

Your requirements, therefore, include (a) regular attendance, (b) timely reading and/or viewing of all the works assigned each week, and (c) close and courteous attention to our speakers’ lectures, and your full participation in the Q&A.

You will also be expected to complete a take-home midterm, a final paper. Your grade will be determined on this basis: 40% for your final paper (due May 6), 25% for your midterm (due March 25), and 15% for your overall class participation. There will be no final exam, unless one should seem necessary to impel the class to do the reading.

Your written work must be your own, with full documentation of whatever ideas, writing and/or information you derive from other sources. Plagiarism will result in failure of this course. In doing your research, moreover, you must also go off-line, consulting books and, if appropriate, persons who may shed light on your subject (and whom you may, of course, feel free to reach by email). In other words, a paper based exclusively on Web-based research is unlikely to be well-received.

A note on the reading

Beyond each week’s assignments, you must read The New York Times on a daily basis. The point of this requirement is twofold. First, of all, the Times provides extensive coverage of developments within the culture industries—especially in its Arts and Business sections. It will therefore help to keep you up-to-date on what is happening within those industries. And, second, the Times is also of great interest as a major medium itself. In reading it, therefore, pay close attention not just to its coverage of the culture industries per se, but also to its coverage of the news in general, as some of our guest lecturers, and certain of our readings, will concern the history of the Times’s journalistic practice.
My availability

I am always reachable, either by phone (212-998-5188) or email (mark.miller@nyu.edu). I am also available to meet at any time convenient for us both. To make an appointment, simply contact me by phone or email, or talk to me before or after class.

Course Schedule

Jan. 20: Introductory

Jan. 28: The history of the news, lecture by MCM

READING:
Upton Sinclair, The Brass Check (entire)

VIEWING:
George Clooney (dir.), Good Night and Good Luck

Feb. 4: The Kennedy assassination as an unknown story

GUEST: Lamar Waldron, co-author, with Thom Hartmann, of Ultimate Sacrifice (2005) and its new sequel Legacy of Secrecy.

READING:
Lamar Waldron and Thom Hartmann, Legacy of Secrecy, Introduction and Chapters 1, 23 and 30 (all of which will be provided to you in pdf format)

Robert W. McChesney, The Problem of the Media

Feb. 11: US journalism since the Seventies

GUESTS: Robert Parry, editor of Consortiumnews.com (and formerly with Newsweek); and Craig Unger, free-lance journalist, and author of House of Bush, House of Saud (2004), among other titles.

READING:
Robert Parry, Lost History (entire)

Craig Unger, American Armageddon, Chapters 3 (“Birth of the Neocons”) and 14 (“In the Shadows”).

RECOMMENDED:
SAMPLE SYLLABUS – This syllabus is provided as a sample. Some course content may vary.

Kristina Borjesson, *Into the Buzzsaw*

Feb. 18: The challenge of magazines

GUESTS: Lewis Lapham, former editor of *Harper’s*, and founder/editor of *Lapham’s Quarterly*; and John R. MacArthur, publisher of *Harper’s*.

READING:
MacArthur, *You Can’t Be President*,

*Lapham’s Quarterly*, vol 2, no. 1 (“Eros”)

RECOMMENDED:
James Fallows, *Breaking the News*

Feb. 25: Television documentaries

GUESTS: Tom Yellin, President & Executive Producer of The Documentary Group; Danny Schechter, Executive Director of Globalvision.

READING:
Erik Barnouw, *The Sponsor*

VIEWING:
“Harvest of Shame” (1960)
“The Selling of the Pentagon” (1971).

RECOMMENDED READING:
David Brock, *The Republican Noise Machine*

March 4: Hollywood movies since the Seventies

GUEST: Tony Gilroy, producer/director/screenwriter

VIEWING:

READING:
Mark Crispin Miller, “End of Story”

March 11: Documentary filmmaking
SAMPLE SYLLABUS – This syllabus is provided as a sample. Some course content may vary.

GUESTS: Sam Pollard, producer and editor; Teri McLuhan, producer/director; Lilibet Foster, producer/director.

VIEWING:
When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts (2006), dir. Spike Lee, prod. Sam Pollard
A Patriot Act (2005), prod./dir. Lilibet Foster
The Frontier Ghandi (2009), prod./dir. Teri McLuhan

The Frontier Ghandi is not available on DVD. There will be two special screenings of the film at Tisch, both arranged exclusively for members of the class: on Friday, March 6, and on Tuesday, March 10, both at 12:30 p.m.

This is a requirement, so make arrangements to attend at least one screening of the film.

March 25: The actor’s life

GUESTS: John Connolly, Executive Director of Actors’ Equity, and others to be announced.

READINGS/VIEWINGS to be announced

[TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE TODAY]

April 1: The challenges of comedy

GUESTS: Marc Maron, comedian/author; Steve Cuiffo, comedian/actor; Bart Coleman, executive/producer, Comedy Central

READING:
Lenny Bruce, How to Talk Dirty and Influence People

LISTENING:
Selections from the work of Lenny Bruce, Mike Nichols and Elaine May, Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks, Second City, Bob and Ray

April 8: Television drama

GUESTS: Alan Taylor, director; others to be announced

VIEWING: “Heidi and Kennedy” (episode of The Sopranos);
“Nixon and Kennedy” (episode of Mad Men)
April 15: The book business

GUESTS: Francine Prose, novelist; Chris Jackson, Senior Editor, Pantheon Books; Denise Shannon, Director, Shannon Literary Agency; Sarah McNally, co-owner/manager, McNally Jackson Bookstore

READING:
Francine Prose, *A Changed Man*

RECOMMENDED:
Andre Schiffrin, *The Business of Books* (out of print!)

April 22: The music business

GUESTS: To be announced

READING:
Fred Goodman, *The Mansion on the Hill*
Fredric Dannen, *Hit Men*

April 29: Review

FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 6