

MEDIA CRITICISM I
E58.2100-001
SPRING 2009

COURSE SYLLABUS

In this course, we will discuss the question of what “media criticism” is, how it has been influenced or determined by “the media” itself, and what, if anything, it can accomplish—or if it should be expected to accomplish anything. Although not a course in theory per se, we will deal with theoretical concerns as they come up in the assigned texts and/or class discussions.

Grading will be based on class participation and a final paper, due May 6. The subject of the paper is, of course, your choice, which we can talk about when you have settled on it, and at your convenience.

Course Schedule

Jan 26: Introduction

Feb 2: Mark Crispin Miller: “The Hipness Unto Death,” “Massa, Come Home,” “Getting Dirty,” “Virtu, Inc.,” “A Viewer’s Campaign Diary, 1984,” “How TV Covers War,” “The Lives of the Stars,” and “Big Brother is You, Watching,” all in *Boxed In: The Culture of TV*.

Feb 9: George Orwell: “Boys’ Weeklies,” “Raffles and Miss Blandish,” “The Art of Donald McGill,” “Wells, Hitler and the World State,” Propaganda and Demotic Speech,” and “Politics and the English Language.” Also, I recommend that you read, or reread, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Feb 16: T.W. Adorno: “Refuge for the Homeless,” “Do Not Knock,” “Baby with the Bath Water,” “Tough Baby,” “Out of the Firing Line,” “Death of Immortality,” “People Are Looking at You,” “Second Harvest,” “Institution for Deaf Mutes,” “More Haste, Less Speed,” “Olet,” “Service to the Customer,” “Wolf as Grandmother,” all in *Minima Moralia*.

Feb 23: Marshal McLuhan: selections from *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man*.

Mar 2: Roland Barthes: *Mythologies*

Mar 9: Daniel Boorstin: *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*

Mar 23: Susan Sontag: *On Photography*

Mar 30: George W.S. Trow: *Within the Context of No Media*

Apr 6: Robert W. McChesney: *The Problem of the Media*

Apr 13: Noam Chomsky: *Media Control* and *Letters from Lexington*
RECOMMENDED: Edward Bernays, *Propaganda*

Apr 20: David Brock: *The Republican Noise Machine*

Apr 27: Mark Crispin Miller: *Cruel and Unusual*