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

Mar 2: Roland Barthes: Mythologies


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