Media, Governance and Diversity: From Principle to Grassroots Practice

Co-instructors:
Jamie Skye Blanco (NYU – jamieskye@nyu.edu)
John D.H. Downing (AUP - downing.john@gmail.com)

This course explores common current definitions of grassroots media and their implications (e.g. 'alternative' media, 'citizens' media, 'tactical' media, 'social movement' media). It then examines a number of self-governed media projects in the USA, France and elsewhere. Examples will include Occupy movement media, media uses in the global anti-apartheid movement (1950-1994), social movement media in the Arab region, and protest media in France. Students in groups of 2-3 produce a short video concerned with social justice/cultural diversity and shorter "on-the-spot" videos as practices of citizen journalism. The course studio component teaches students all of the necessary technical skills to make critical-situational media. Absolutely no prior media production experience is required.

***

NB: The syllabus is in draft and subject to change

***

Schedule

Week 1

9th 9-10am [first class day]: Introduction to the course, and assignment expectations/practicalities

10-11am: Social communication and self-governed media: what are these media? which needs do they express? Who engages with them? Are there just two categories of media, corporate and noncommercial? Living in today’s information economy and polity.

10th 9-noon: 1st media practice workshop: workshop cell phone still images, introduction to social media platforms, introduction to photo editor – start process of capturing images in the Paris streets in preparation for Friday’s photo-essay presentations

11th 9-10am: 2nd media practice workshop: introduction to DSLRs, video cameras and video editor (basic “cutting”)
10-11am: Looking at and learning from online archives (I): e.g. Paris 1968, Iran Election Protests (2009), I am #Jan25 (Egypt); Show Discontent (Gezi Park, Turkey); #occupy (US); sorting through YouTube (video) and Flickr and Google (images).

12th 9-11am: Short presentations by students on earlier examples of social movement media: e.g. Protestant Reformation leaflets (Flugblätter); French and American revolutionary media; the 1960s; anti-slavery movement’s media; the labor movement’s media; the suffrage movement’s media; the Paris Commune (1871); media in the US Black Civil Rights struggle.

13th 9-noon: individual photo-essay presentations to the class: 15 minutes’ display + critique per student. (20% of final grade.)

Week 2

16th 9-11am: Class debate with pro-con student speakers about the media governance system we have in conventional democracies: e.g. ‘media freedom’; ‘the 4th estate’; the ‘five filters’ (Herman/Chomsky); ‘media justice’; ‘the liberal media establishment’; ‘amusing ourselves to death?’; the Media Reform movement; ‘giving the public what it wants’

17th 9-12 noon: 3rd media practice workshop: wiki production; video editing – sound, transitions, titles

        Final projects set.

18th 9-10am: Short presentations by students on transnational social movement media – in e.g. the global anti-apartheid movement; in the global environmental movement; in the global movement against the Iraq war

        10-11am: The 1960s in the USA and France. The last 15 years of social movement media: global social justice movement media; media in the Arab Springs; Occupy media in NYC.


        10-11am: privacy and surveillance, intellectual property, media governance and contestation (PRISOM project)

20th 9-noon: selected rough videos screened and discussed

Week 3
23rd 9-11am: One out of Professors Fabien Granjon (Université de Paris VIII), Benjamin Ferron (Université d’Angers), or Tristan Mattelart (Université de Paris VIII), to speak about social movement media in France

24th 9-noon: workshopping the final presentations (wiki and video)

25th 9-11am: One out of Professors Fabien Granjon (Université de Paris VIII, Benjamin Ferron (Université d’Angers), or Tristan Mattelart (Université de Paris VIII), to speak about social movement media in France

26th 9-11am: Class review of research materials made available during the course on self-governed media projects

27th 9-12 noon [last class day] : screenings and presentations

***

Assignments

In-class presentations (9%): Students will be asked to prepare and present work in class on the 12th, 13th and 18th. These are formal and graded assignments.

Photoessay: Using your cellphone, students will compose a 7-10 image photoessay, documenting an action occurring on the streets (outside) in Paris. Students should anticipate taking many more than 7-10 images, then selecting, editing, cultivating and compositing them in order to explicate and document the chosen event. (11% of final grade)

Video: Using either a contemporary event or compositing a video based on a historical social movement, students working in groups will compose a 3-5 minute video. In either choice, students will be expected to research the issues related to the video subject, to select historical footage, and to shoot new footage. This assignment is closely linked to the Wiki assignment. (30% of final grade)

Wiki: As a class, we will author a collective wiki (think Wikipedia, if you have not used them). Students, both in groups and individually, will be responsible for responding to readings, researching topics, drafting entries, and uploading relevant digital media (found in the Commons and original) to the wiki and for internally and externally linking and citing sources. (30% of final grade)

Final Presentation: Each student will deliver a prepared final presentation, focusing on an approved topic and that the student has worked on in at least one other class assignment. The student will create a full and integrated wiki entry or significantly expand upon an existing entry. Ideally, a student would combine efforts between the video, wiki and final presentation assignments. (20% of final grade)

***
**Reading list (listed by schedule order):**


Håkan Thörn, “The struggle over information and interpretation,” *Anti-Apartheid and the Emergence of A Global Civil Society*, ch. 4.


William B. Warner, “A chain of freedom has been formed,” *Protocols of Liberty*, ch. 5.


Paolo Gerbaudo, “We Are Not People of Comment and Like: The revolutionary coalescence of Shabab-al-Facebook,” *Tweets and the Streets*, ch. 2.

Paolo Gerbaudo, “The hashtag which did (not) start a revolution,” ch.4.

***

Again, this syllabus is in draft. Reading materials, assignments and schedule are subject to change.