Course Description
This course will introduce you to the history of media and communication and to the stakes of historical inquiry. Rather than tracing a necessarily selective historical arc from alphabet to Internet or cave painting to cinema, the course is explores key historical concepts such as silence, archives, origins, modernity, and invention, alongside key media concepts such as indexicality, code, record, and liveness. Students will work with primary and secondary sources in order to analyze the ways that media emerge within and against different social, economic, perceptual, and semiotic conditions. Only by thinking carefully about media, culture, and communication in the past can we hope to understand the pace, direction, and character of changes today.

Required Texts
The readings for the course will be available via NYU Classes in the “Resources” area.

Expectations
(1) Read. Readings must be completed before class. Lectures provide context for better understanding the texts. Come to class & recitation prepared to engage. Bring the readings to recitation with you, so you can discuss them in detail. The quizzes given during lecture will test your comprehension of the readings.

(2) Participate. In section and in lecture, we will be looking for knowledge-building contributions that not only show that you understand the readings but also that you can contribute to the intellectual life of the class.

(3) Write. Every week, you will be required to write a response that demonstrates your understanding of the readings, lecture, and concepts of the prior week. This is due each Friday in section.

(4) Media history assignments. You will be asked to construct two histories as part of this class (details to follow). These are opportunities to demonstrate close engagement with the materials of the course and to think critically.

(5) Attend class. Attendance in lecture and recitation is required. If you miss more than three classes, your grade will be decreased one grade level per absence. (For example, if you miss five classes and you have earned a B+, your grade will drop to a B-).

Grade Breakdown
Assignment 1: 15%       Midterm       15%
Assignment 2: 20%       Final:         20%
Reading and participation grade: 30%

This includes quizzes, in-section participation and weekly wrap-ups.

You must complete all assignments in order to pass this class.
NOTE: All official course communications will be conducted through “old media”—if you want to contact your TA or me, speak to us during office hours. You can use media to take notes in class, but the technology you use must have been established before you were born.

Evaluation Rubric

A= Excellent
This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.

B=Good
This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

C=Average
This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is lacking or inarticulate.

D= Unsatisfactory
This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic.

F=Failed
This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments

A = 94-100   C = 74-76
A- = 90-93   C+ = 77-79
B+ = 87-89   C- = 70-73
B = 84-86   D+ = 65-69
B- = 80-83   D = 60-64

Plagiarism
Any plagiarism no matter how accidental will result in failure for the course. Remember, it is plagiarism if you use someone else's ideas without attribution or someone else's words without quotation. The university’s Writing Center is an invaluable resource should you wish to take advantage of it. You are entitled to one-on-one writing tutorials if you plan ahead and make appointments. The Writing Center does not provide copyediting services.

Resources
If you need accommodations in light of a documented disability, please be in touch at the beginning of the semester. You must be proactive in making arrangements for the accommodations to which you are entitled. The Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities is a source of support for this.
Course Schedule

Part I: Modes of Mediation

Voice, Body, Text, Sound, Image

Week 1: Silence & Speech
Tuesday, January 23

Thursday, January 25
Concepts: Archive, Silence
Read:

Week 2: Dominant Languages
Tuesday, January 30
Concepts: Code, Translation
Read:

Listen:
• “Kia Ora: Maori Rights Breakthrough in New Zealand,” BBC Witness (May 20, 2016), 9 min, http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03tzbz0

Thursday, February 1

Week 3: Capturing Sound & Image
Tuesday, February 6
Concepts: Invention, Indexicality
Read:

Thursday, February 8
Week 4: Making Sense of Modernity
Tuesday, February 13
Concepts: Origin, Record
Read:

Thursday, February 15
Concepts: Attraction, Modernity
Read:

Friday February 16: Assignment #1, part 1 due in section

Part II: Publics
Readers, Listeners, Audiences, Users

Week 5: Publics and Imagined Communities
Tuesday, February 20
Concepts: Publics, Imagined Community
Read:

Thursday, February 22
Concepts: Liveness, Nostalgia
Read:
- Franz Fanon, “This is the Voice of Algeria”

Week 6: Image Ideologies
Tuesday, February 27
Concepts: Narrative, Causality
Read:
- Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, *Film History* (selections)
Watch:
- *Metropolis* (1927), version (rescored by The New Pollutants), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCDQzGTBA3E
Thursday, March 1
Concept: Memory, Genre
Read:

**Week 7: Corporate/Corporeal Resistance**
Tuesday, March 6
Concept: Queer
Read:

Thursday, March 8: Midterm Review

Friday, March 9: **Assignment #1, part 2 due in section**

**SPRING BREAK**

**Part III: Time & Space**

**Week 8: New Media**
Tuesday, March 20: MIDTERM

Thursday, March 22
Concepts: New Media, Interpretive Flexibility
Read:

**Week 9: Tele-transformations**
Tuesday, March 27
Concept: Annihilation of Time and Space
Read:
Thursday, March 29
Concept: Connection, Consolidation
Read:

Listen:

Week 10: The Place of Television
Tuesday, April 3
Concept: Reception
Read:

Thursday, April 5
Concept: Media Capital
Read:

Friday, April 6: Assignment #2, part 1 due

Week 11: Cultures of Production
Tuesday, April 10
Concept: Pornography
Read:

Thursday, April 12
Concept: Exploitation
Read:

Part IV: Systems and Structures
Week 12: Systems, Hard & Soft
Tuesday, April 17
Concept: Labor
Read:

Thursday, April 19
Concept: Modularity
Read:

Week 13: Hidden Histories of Computation
Tuesday, April 24
Concept: Appropriation, Deregulation
Read:
  
Listen:
- “Give it up for DJ BLACKFACE,” *CodeSwitch* (https://one.npr.org/?sharedMediaId=528816138:530986266) (28:30)

Thursday, April 26
Concept: Network
Read:

Friday, April 27: *Assignment #2, part 2 due in section*

Week 14: Control
Tuesday, May 1
Concept: Control
Read:

Thursday, May 3
Final Review

Week 15
Tuesday May 15: Final Exam – 2:00-3:50pm