Special Topics in Media History:
Documents, Documentary, Data, Database
E57.3031
Lisa Gitelman

This is a doctoral-level seminar aimed at exploring the nexus of fact and format. More particularly, the course will consider the ways that the modern category "information" has emerged in relation to different media and different genres. What are the social, material, institutional, and semantic conditions that have worked to align communication with truth or authenticity? What routes can be discerned between a history of media and a history of objectivity? Significant attention will be paid to the elaboration of key terms and concepts as well as to different disciplinary and interdisciplinary resources that shape such an inquiry.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Upon completion of the course students should be able to:
--Define and identify the primary literatures addressing issues of documents and data across several disciplines
--Assess primary and secondary sources relevant to the subject of documents and data
--Apply a range of interdisciplinary theories to engage with media history and how media is historicized
--Critique and engage with theoretical concepts for understanding objectivity

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS
Students will be required to develop original research projects in the context of discussing readings in common, and each student will be expected to produce an article-length research paper by the end of finals week. Grades will be based upon students' value to class discussion (40%); a paper proposal submitted and then revised (20%); and the research paper (40%). Paper grades will reflect the insight, originality, and effectiveness of the research *and* writing. As part of their participation in discussion students will prepare several very brief presentations in conjunction with the assigned readings.

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 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
A- = 90-93
B+ = 87-89
B = 84-86
B- = 80-83
C+ = 77-79
C = 74-76
C- = 70-73
D+ = 65-69
D = 60-64
F   = 0-59

COURSE POLICIES
Absences and Lateness
More than two unexcused absences will automatically result in a lower grade. Chronic lateness will also be reflected in your evaluation of participation. Regardless of the reason for your absence you will be responsible for any missed work. Travel arrangements do not constitute a valid excuse for rescheduling exams. There are no extra credit assignments for this class.

Format
Please type and double-space your written work. Typing improves the clarity and readability of your work and double-spacing allows room for me to comment. Please also number and staple multiple pages. You are free to use your preferred citation style. Please use it consistently throughout your writing. If sending a document electronically, please name the file in the following format Yourlastname Coursenumber Assignment1.doc

Grade Appeals
Please allow two days to pass before you submit a grade appeal. This gives you time to reflect on my assessment. If you still want to appeal your grade, please submit a short but considered paragraph detailing your concerns. Based on this paragraph I will review the question and either augment your grade or refine my explanation for the lost points.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism
http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity

The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience at New York University in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. This relationship takes an honor code for granted and mutual trust, respect, and responsibility as foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is as important as what you learn. A university education aims not only to produce high-quality scholars, but to also cultivate honorable citizens.

Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams to making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours.

You violate the principle of academic integrity when you
• cheat on an exam,
• submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors,
• receive help on a takehome examination that calls for independent work, or
• plagiarize.

Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning, and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated.

Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score, and/or other materials that are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following:
• copy verbatim from a book, an article, or other media;
• download documents from the Internet;
• purchase documents;
• report from other's oral work;
• paraphrase or restate someone else's facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; or
• copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

Your professors are responsible for helping you to understand other people's ideas, to use resources and conscientiously acknowledge them, and to develop and clarify your own thinking. You should know what constitutes good and honest scholarship, style guide preferences, and formats for assignments for each of your courses. Consult your professors for help with problems related to fulfilling course assignments, including questions related to attribution of sources.

Through reading, writing, and discussion, you will undoubtedly acquire ideas from others, and exchange ideas and opinions with others, including your classmates and professors. You will be expected, and often required, to build your own work on that of other people. In so doing, you are expected to credit those sources that have contributed to the development of your ideas.

STUDENT RESOURCES
- Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 719 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.

- Writing Center: 269 Mercer Street, Room 233. Schedule an appointment online at www.rich15.com/nyu/ or just walk-in.

Week 1 Introduction: "Information"

- Readings: Geof Nunberg "Farewell to the Information Age"
- Albert Borgmann, *Holding On to Reality: The Nature of Information at the Turn of the Millennium* (University of Chicago Press, 1999) [pp. 9-37]
- N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics,* (University of Chicago Press, 1999) ["Prologue," "Toward Embodied Virtuality," "Virtual Bodies and Flickering Signifiers"]

Primary sources

- Alan Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"
- Norbert Wiener, "Men, Machines, and the World About"
- Vannevar Bush, "As We May Think," *Atlantic Monthly* (July 1945)
- Robert C. Binkley, "New Tools for Men of Letters," Ya*le Review* (1935)

Week 2 Documents

- Suzanne Briet, "What is Documentation?" (1951)
- Michael Buckland, "What Is a Document?"
- Bernd Frohmann, "Revisiting 'What Is a Document?'"
- John Guillory, "The Memo and Modernity," *Critical Inquiry* 31 (2004): 108-132.
- JoAnne Yates, *Control Through Communication* (selections)
- Annelise Rile, *Documents: Artifacts of Modern Knowledge* ["Introduction"]

Week 3 The Documentary Subject

- James Agee and Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1939)
- Pat Mullen, *Man of Aran*

Secondary sources

- Jonathan Kahana, *Intelligence Work* ["Introduction']
- Michael Renov, *Theorizing Documentary* (selections)

Week 4 The History of Objectivity

- Shapin & Schaffer, "Literary Technology of Virtual Witnessing"
- Galison and Daston, *Objectivity*

Week 5 Inscription

- M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066-1307*, 2nd ed. (Blackwell, 1993) [pp. 1-21, 25-43, 81-113, 114-44, 185-96, 253-93, 328-34]
- Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge UP, 1983) [pp. 3-107]
- Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (University of Chicago Press, 1998) [pp. 1-40]
- Peter Stallybrass, "Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible," in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies*, ed. Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) [pp. 42-79]
- D. F. McKenzie, "The Book as an Expressive Form" (1984), in *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge UP, 1999) [pp. 9-29]

Week 6 Inscription (continued)

- Bruno Latour, "Drawing Things Together" and *Pandora's Hope* (selection)
- Lucy Suchman, *Plans and Situated Actions* (2nd ed.)

Week 7 Networks

- Daniel Headrick. *When Information Came of Age: Technologies of Knowledge in the Age of Reason and Revolution,* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Ceruzzi, *Internet Alley*

Week 8 Discipline(s)

- Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* and other writings

Week 9 Data

- Mark Poster, "Databases as Discourses" in David Lyon and Elia Zureik, eds. *Computers, Surveillance and Privacy*
- Lev Manovich, *Software Takes Command* and selections from *The Language of New Media*

Week 10 Data (continued)

- Alan Liu, *The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information* (University of Chicago Press, 2004).

Week 11 Code

- Johanna Drucker, "Intimations of (Im)materiality"
- Rita Raley, "Machine Translation and Global English"
- John Cayley, "The Code is Not the Text," *Electronic Book Review* (May 2002)
- Lessig, *Code*, an excerpt

Week 12 In-class discussion of paper proposals.

Week 13 Classification

- Bowker and Starr, *Sorting Things Out*
- Galison, "Removing Knowledge"
- Daston, "Type Specimens"

Week 14 Conclusion: Online today

- Readings TBA based on paper topics.