

SAMPLE SYLLABUS – *This syllabus is provided as a sample. Some course content may vary.*

NYUSteinhardt
DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA, CULTURE, AND COMMUNICATION

E59.1352
EMPIRE, REVOLUTION AND MEDIA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the role of media in the history and emergence of empires and revolutions and the history of media empires. It focuses on the investment in media forces by both empires and revolutions, and the tendency of media to form empires that are subject to periodic “revolution” in the marketplace within the contexts of colonization, decolonization and globalization. Media discussed include prints, paintings, photography, journalism, fiction, cinema, the Internet and digital media.

COURSE DETAILS

This course examines first the role of media in representing and informing the history of empires and revolutions in the formation of what we today call globalization. Its second area of study is, then, the emergence of media empires and media revolutions, especially the digital revolution, as a signal feature of today’s globalization. Empires and the revolutions that challenge them have had a signal investment in media from Napoleon Bonaparte’s careful cultivation of his own image to the present. Empires have been challenged by media representations that have also promoted revolutionary change. Media may even be the place in which revolution happens, such as the takeover of state television by Czech popular forces in 1989. The understanding of empire and revolution in media must be historical because that history continues to have a widespread influence on present day events. The critical interpretation of media, by the same token, needs to understand the tendency of the media to form empires that are subject to periodic revolution. With the spread of media into everyday life, are we all revolutionaries now?

The course is divided into five overlapping sections that provide an interpretive framework for discussion of these ideas, beginning with the anti-slavery revolution that established Haiti in 1804. This revolt against French empire is followed up with a consideration of nineteenth-century revolutions in France and the 1954-62 independence war in Algeria. The next sections look at 1968 in a global context, followed by the Cold War and recent nostalgia for it, concluding by looking at the digital revolution from the point of view of decolonization, as epitomized by the film *Avatar* (2009). Media discussed include prints, paintings, photography, journalism, fiction, cinema, the Internet and digital media.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

-Describe the role of media in the emergence and functioning of empires and the formation of revolutions throughout history.

-Synthesize cross-cultural understanding of the histories of empire and revolution in the formation of present-day globalization.

-Apply concepts from the analysis of historical empires and revolutions to the structure of media institutions, corporations, and empires.

-Contrast and compare historical revolutions with contemporary revolutions in media and media empires.

EVALUATION

Breakdown of assignments and their relative worth.

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Participation 10%

First Paper assignment 10%:

close reading of one of the media texts assigned in Part One (2-3 pages)

Midterm Exam (Week 7) 25%

Factual quiz format on materials in lectures and readings

Final Paper or Project (Week 12) 30%

Comparative study of two related sections of the course demonstrating individual research (10-15 pages)

Final Exam 25%

Essay exam on a set list of questions relating to the last third of the course.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media

Eric Hobsbawm, The Age of Extremes: A History of the World 1914-1991

Guy Debord, The Society of the Spectacle (1967)

Michael Kerr, Dispatches (1977)

Paco Ignacio Taibo, '68 (2008)

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.

No late papers will be accepted without written permission from the instructor.

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 (Chicago, MLA, APA)--please use it consistently in all your assignments. If sending a document electronically, please name the file in the following format Yourlastname Coursenumber Assignment1.doc

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

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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

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.

General Decorum

Slipping in late or leaving early, sleeping, text messaging, surfing the Internet, doing homework in class, eating, etc. are distracting and disrespectful to all participants in the course.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

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.

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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.

The Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development imposes heavy penalties for plagiarism in order to safeguard the degrees that the University grants. Cases of plagiarism are considered among the most serious of offenses.

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.

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COURSE OUTLINE

Part One: Introduction

Week One

Empire and Media: From Napoleon to Rupert Murdoch.

Reading:

Edward Said, "Introduction," from *Orientalism*

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (2000), 1-21.

Week Two

Revolution and Media: Image Wars from Prints to the Internet

Reading:

McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 7-22, 170-79.

Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), pp. 11-58

Part Two French Empires/Anti-French Revolutions

Week Three:

The Revolt of the Enslaved

Reading:

CLR James, *The Black Jacobins* 3-26.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide, *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, Introduction and 25-31.

Viewing: *Toussaint* (2010)

Week Four:

French Empires and Revolutions 1830-1871

Reading:

Karl Marx: *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

Viewing Abel Gance, *Napoleon* (1927) and Peter Watkins (from) *La Commune* (2000)

Week Five:

Battling for Algiers: Delacroix to Fanon (1830-1962)

Reading:

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans Constance Farrington (New York: Grove, 1963), pp. 1-35.

Viewing: *The Battle of Algiers* (1966).

First paper on *The Battle of Algiers* or *Toussaint*

Part Three: Open and Closed Worlds

Background reading for this part: Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, 54-85; 225-257.

Week Six:

1917

Reading:

Lenin, *The State and Revolution* 1-10.

Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, 54-85.

Viewing: *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) *October* (1927)

Week Seven:

Imagining the Cold War: The Western

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Reading:

Hobsbawm, Age of Extremes, 225-52.

Viewing *The Searchers* (1956); *High Noon* (1952)

Midterm examination

Week Eight:

After the Wall: From Euphoria to *Ostalgie*

Reading:

Sunil Manghani: Image Critique and the Fall of the Berlin Wall, 3-35.

Viewing: Goodbye Lenin (2002)

Part Four: Global 1968.

Background reading for this part: Hobsbawm, Age of Extremes, 287-344

Week Nine:

The World of the Spectacle.

Reading:

Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967).

Viewing: Antonioni, Blow Up (1966)

Week Ten:

Vietnam: Tet and After

Reading:

Michael Kerr, *Dispatches* (1977)

Viewing: *Apocalypse Now* (1979)

Week Eleven:

The Americas and 1968

Reading:

Paco Ignacio Taibo, '68

Viewing: The Weather Underground.

Part Five: From Decolonization to Globalization:

Week Twelve:

The Decolonial and Neo-Colonial Americas

Reading:

Michael Casey, Che's Afterlife: The Legacy of an Image (2009), 23-110.

Diana Taylor, Disappearing Acts 183-223.

Week Thirteen:

Web 1.0 and Globalization

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Reading:

Paul N, Edwards, The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America (1996), 310-51.

Viewing, Blade Runner (1982).

Final papers due

Week Fourteen:

Web 2.0 and Climate Change

Viewing: *Avatar* (2009)

Week Fifteen: Revision

Final exam