

Tuesday 18.00-21.00, CFA 322  
Instructor: Kevin Dowler  
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Hours:  
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He that reads and grows no wiser seldom suspects his own deficiency,  
but complains of hard words and obscure sentences,  
and asks why books are written which cannot be understood.  
- Samuel Johnson

### Course Description

This course is intended to develop the student's awareness of the different ways in which communications processes, particularly those of mass media, have been and are currently theorized. A number of approaches will be examined, and will be contextualised in relation to the historical conditions within which particular theories and types of communications research emerge. The course seeks to situate those approaches within the circumstances that prompt the posing of particular kinds of questions with respect to communications-related phenomena at given moments.

#### Readings:

The required text for the course is *Canonical Texts in Media Research*, Elihu Katz et al, eds. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), available in the York Bookstore. This will be supplemented by a series of readings available as a kit and on reserve in the Scott Library.

I also recommend as a general introduction to communications as a category Armand and Michèle Mattelart, *Theories of Communication: A Short Introduction*, trans. Susan Gruenheck Taponier & James A. Cohen (London: Sage, 1998), also on reserve in the Scott Library.

#### Evaluation:

First Essay	30%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Proposal	10%
Final Essay	30%
Participation	20%

*This is a seminar: students are expected to come prepared to discuss each week's readings and contribute to the class as a whole, and will be graded on participation.*

**\*\*Remember to keep copies of all assignments in case of dispute or *force majeure*\*\***

#### FIRST ESSAY

- DUE:** October 19, 2002  
**VALUE:** 30% of final grade  
**LENGTH:** 5 – 6 pages double-spaced maximum (1250 – 1500 words), 12 point type. Provide a cover page with assignment name, date, student name and number, course number, and, optionally, a title. *DO NOT* place any of this information on the first page of the essay. *DO NOT* use headers or footers. Page numbers are mandatory. Parenthetical, footnote, or endnote references are all acceptable, as long as *one* style is used consistently throughout. Follow the standard style guides; failure to do so will result in marks being deducted.
- TOPIC:** Each author we have encountered in their own way suggests a transformation of some sort precipitated by communication media taking up a place in social life. With reference to material discussed thus far in class, describe how at least two of the authors characterise the posited transformation. Although analytical, this essay is not intended to be critical: focus on drawing out the authors' contentions with regard to changes argued to be a consequence of media.
- PURPOSE:** This assignment represents a key indicator of your ability to synthesise and organise ideas and concepts drawn from the first part of the course. Keep in mind part of the challenge is the limited length; concision of argument is crucial.

#### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- DUE:** November 9, 2002  
**VALUE:** 10% of final grade  
**LENGTH:** A minimum of 15 *scholarly* sources, including articles from refereed journals and at least 3 books. Other sources such as theses and dissertations may be used; no web sites unless linked to specific case studies. Follow appropriate form for both references and notations. If in doubt, consult the reference section of the library.
- PURPOSE:** To develop a range of source materials relevant to a problematic, leading to a proposal for an essay. Please include a brief topic sentence.

#### PROPOSAL

- DUE:** November 23, 2002  
**VALUE:** 10% of final grade  
**LENGTH:** 2 pages, double spaced, 12 point type  
**PURPOSE:** Utilising the bibliography, to develop a thesis and schematic outline of the argument for the final essay. The proposal should contain not only an idea, but also how you will proceed to develop it. In your text, develop responses to the following questions: What is my problem? Why is it a problem? What am I going to do about it? How am I going to go about it? Where will I end up? By addressing these issues, you will indicate what plan you have formulated to undertake and complete this project.

#### ESSAY

- DUE:** December 3, 2002  
**VALUE:** 30% of final grade  
**LENGTH:** 14 – 15 pages maximum, double-spaced, 12 point type. Use appropriate style guides; marks will be subtracted for incorrect form. See information for first essay above.
- TOPIC:** There is no specific topic assigned for this essay. However, whatever idea you choose to pursue must clearly relate to the course and its content in some manner. The essay should be a deeper inquiry into a particular problem or issue raised by the course. You may choose to develop a question with respect to a particular theoretical issue, or consider the application of theory to a particular problem, or perhaps another approach entirely. Your proposal should indicate your strategy and how you will conduct your inquiry

Schedule

Sep 14: **Introduction: Is There a Field of Communication?**

Sep 21: **Media and Modernity**

Eisenstein, Elizabeth. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*. New York: Cambridge Univ., 1978, 81-88, 129-36.

Jürgen Habermas. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1989, 14-43.

Sep 28: **Chicago School**

Rothenbuhler, Eric. "Community and Pluralism in Wirth's 'Consensus and Mass Communication.'" In *Canonic Texts in Media Research*. Elihu Katz et al, eds. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003, 106-120.

Dewey, John. *The Public and Its Problems*. Denver: A. Swallow, 1954, 143-84.

Tarde, Gabriel. "Opinion and Conversation." In *On Communication and Social Influence; Selected Papers*. Terry N. Clark, ed. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1969, 297-318.

Oct 5: **Payne Fund**

Blumer, Herbert. *Movies and Conduct*. New York: MacMillan, 1933, 141-191.

Jowett, Garth, Ian C. Jarvie & Kathryn A. Fuller. *Children and the Movies: Media Influence and the Payne Controversies*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ., 1996, 92-121.

Oct 12: **Psychology and Media**

Cantril, Hadley & Gordon W. Allport. *The Psychology of Radio*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1935, 3-35.

Hovland, Carl, Arthur A. Lumsdaine & Fred D. Sheffield. *Experiments in Mass Communication, vol. 3 of Studies in Social Psychology in World War II*. Princeton: Princeton Univ., 1949 182-200.

Oct 19: **Sociology of Mass Communication**

Simonson, Peter & Gabriel Weimann. "Critical Research at Columbia: Lazarsfeld's and Merton's 'Mass Communication, Popular Taste, and Organized Social Action'." In *Canonic Texts*, 12-38.

Katz, Elihu, "The Two-Step Flow of Communication," in *Public Opinion Quarterly* 21 (1957): 61-78.

**FIRST ESSAY DUE TODAY**

Oct 26: **Critical Theory**

Durham Peters, John. "The Subtlety of Horkheimer and Adorno: Reading 'The Culture Industry'." In *Canonic Texts*, 58-73.

Horkheimer, Max. "Art and Mass Culture." In *Studies in Social Science and Philosophy* 9, 1 (1941): 290-304.

Nov 2: **Political Economy of Communication**

Garnham, Nicholas. "Contribution to a Political Economy of Mass Communication." In *Capitalism and Communication: Global Culture and the Economics of Information*. London: Sage, 1990, 20-55.

Golding, Peter & Graham Murdock. "Culture, Communications, and Political Economy." In *Mass Media and Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. James Curran & Michael Gurevitch, eds. New York: St. Martin's, 1996, 15-32.

Nov 9: **Cultural Studies**

Gurevitch, Michael & Paddy Scannell. "Canonization Achieved? Stuart Hall's 'Encoding/Decoding'." In *Canonic Texts*, 231-247.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Studies and the Centre: Some Problematics and Problems." In *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*. London: Routledge, 1982, 15-47.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE TODAY**

Nov 16: **Texts and Subjects**

Loshitsky, Yosefa. "Afterthoughts on Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure' in the Age of Cultural Studies." In *Canonic Texts*, 248-259.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." In *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*. Brian Wallis, ed. New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984, 361-73.

Nov 23: **Toronto School**

Blondheim, Menahem. "Harold Adams Innis and his Bias of Communication." In *Canonic Texts*, 156-190.

Innis, Harold. "Paper and the Printing Press." In *Empire and Communications*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto, 1972, 142-70.

**PROPOSAL DUE TODAY**

Nov 30: **Mediality**

Gumprecht, H. U. (1994). "A Farewell to Communication." In *Materialities of Communication*. H. U. Gumprecht & K. L. Pfeiffer, eds. Stanford: Stanford University, pp. 389-402.

Winthrop-Young, Geoffrey and Michael Wutz, "Translators' Introduction." In Friedrich Kittler *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. Stanford CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1999, xi-xxxviii.

**FINAL ESSAY DUE DECEMBER 3**