

Spring 2018
T: 11-12:50pm (CAC 333)
Th in CAC 204: 11-11:50 (Section 1)
12-12:50 (Section 2)
1-1:50 (Section 3)

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COMM 190: History of Media

Course Description

Why learn about the history of media? Well, it's pretty safe to say that more than any generation before us, we are constantly bombarded with media. We consume media constantly, day in and day out, and they affect us in both conscious and unconscious ways. At the same time, we are all media producers: whether we choose to skip commercials, or comment on someone's Facebook post, or post a video on YouTube, we participate in the production of meaning by using media to communicate.

Although digital culture has profoundly altered the way we live our lives, it's only the latest in a long line of media that have helped us to organize ourselves as a society, and even define our own identities through creative expression. Communication through media is a dynamic activity; it both influences and is influenced by the political, economic, and social forces of modern democracies and economies. In order to better understand our own relationship to media, as well as the way media have informed the world we live in, we will become acquainted with the historical development of media works, practices, industries, and technologies, its current technologies and practices, its methods of regulation, and cultural, ethical, and social dimensions. In the process, we will identify and interrogate key moments and issues in media studies and the political, social, cultural, and economic forces that surround them.

Finally, though media have been integral to the way people experience the world around them for millennia, the development of communications technologies has accelerated exponentially over the past couple of centuries. We will begin at the beginning, with ancient forms of communication, and end in the present, with digital networks and global culture, but the class will primarily focus on media of the 19th-20th centuries.

Learning Outcomes

COMM 190 is a GEP Investigation Level Arts course. Students who commit themselves to active learning and engagement with the course content and completion of course assignments will be able to:

- Outline the historical development of media texts, practices, industries, and technologies (including their production, distribution, exhibition, and consumption).
- Describe and analyze key media texts within their specific aesthetic, political, economic, and social contexts.
- Identify and explain the relationship between particular practices of creative expression through media and their social, historical and cultural contexts.
- Demonstrate critical reading and writing skills by engaging with readings, screenings, and class discussions.

Requirements (total of 100%)

Participation/attendance	10%
D2L Quizzes (10 @ 2% each)	20%
Media History project (and related assignments)	20%
Midterm	25%
Final	25%

Grading Scale (in %)

A: 94-100	B-: 80-83	D+: 67-69
A-: 90-93	C+: 77-79	D: 64-66
B+: 87-89	C: 74-76	F: 0-63
B: 84-86	C-: 70-73	

Readings

There is one textbook for this course, available as a rental through the bookstore: Bill Kovarik, *Revolutions in Communication: Media History from Gutenberg to the Digital Age, 2nd Ed.* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016). All other readings will be posted as PDFs on D2L.

Reading is VERY IMPORTANT in this class. We cover a lot of ground here, and I rely upon the book to give you an overview of the material. If you neglect the reading, it will quickly become overwhelming, and your relationship to the class will suffer...plus you won't do very well on the quizzes! Please complete each week's reading by the class period under which it's listed.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required, and will be taken at our discussion sections. If you are late, it is your responsibility to make sure I've marked you as present. If you need to miss class for an emergency, let me know *in advance*. Absences will be excused on a case-by-case basis. You are allowed one unexcused absence, then after that each unexcused absence reduces participation grade by a point. If you do not attend, it is your responsibility to pick up, from classmates, any materials that you missed.

Quizzes

One of the big goals of this class is to understand the historical development of media texts, practices, industries, and technologies, and quizzes are essential for testing that understanding. **Online quizzes on the assigned readings must be completed by 11am Tuesdays (right before class).** Quizzes are **open book**, but you are advised to complete the assigned readings for each week/unit and review key terms, main ideas/concepts, and any extended or in-depth examples **before taking the quiz.** Quizzes will be available on D2L from 11am on Thursday to 11am on Tuesday.

Keep up with the readings and the quizzes. You may not make up missed quizzes except in the case of a verifiable severe illness or family emergency. However, you will have at least one chance during the course of the semester to attend an extra-credit event. If you attend an event and write a thoughtful response, I will drop your lowest quiz score and give you full credit for that quiz (up to two quizzes) or give you full credit for a missed quiz (up to two quizzes), as applicable. As these opportunities arise, I will announce them in class and post them to D2L.

Media History Project

During the second half of this class, we will complete group research projects on media technologies in order to learn how to:

- evaluate information and representation of historical events and objects online
- analyze historical sources to understand how different sources produce different types of historical knowledge
- create a presentation that interrogates and contextualizes a medium of the past.

More information on this project will be provided as the class develops, but each project will involve several smaller assignments that will contribute to a final product to be presented in our discussion sections during the last two weeks of class.

Midterm and Final exam

Our Midterm will be on Tuesday, 3/13, and our final will be on Thursday, 5/17, from 12:30-2:30. More guidelines for the midterm and final will be given as the semester progresses.

Papers and assignments must be:

Typed, in 12 point font, double-spaced, and stapled, with the pages numbered. I reserve the right to deduct points for violations of these requirements. Late assignments drop by 10% for each 24 hours it's late, whether it's the weekend or a weekday (i.e., a 50-point paper one day late will be penalized 5 points before I grade it). Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis for personal emergencies, but ONLY if you ask me IN ADVANCE of the actual due date.

Class Environment

Students are expected to contribute to a respectful, productive learning environment. This includes being on time, being alert and attentive, participating in class discussions, and being nice to everyone, regardless of their views. Technology is a big issue, but rest assured that it's pretty easy to tell whether a student is actually taking notes on a laptop or checking email/whatever. If you're going to use a laptop or tablet, please use it for class purposes, and please switch cell phones to silent. Also, no texting in class, please. Any violation of the above will impact your grade.

Guidelines for Assessing Participation Grades

- Tardiness; degree and frequency. **If you are more than 10 minutes late, I reserve the right to not let you in.**
- Not just frequency, but quality of comments. Is it evident that the student has done the readings and engaged with the material?
- Consideration and respect for other students and their points of view
- Engagement with the class (i.e., sleeping or excessive talking to others while the professor or another student is speaking)
- Technology use: disrespectful or reasonable? Did I have to yell at you or give you the stinkeye?

Disability Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, check here: <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center and then contact me at the beginning of the course. I am happy to help in any way that I can. For more information, please visit the Disability and Assistive Technology Center, located on the 6th floor of the Learning Resource Center (the Library). You can also find more information here: <http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>

Statement of Academic Integrity

UW-Stevens Point values a safe, honest, respectful, and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to succeed, we have developed a set of expectations for all students and instructors. This set of expectations is known as the Rights and Responsibilities document, and it is intended to help establish a positive living and learning environment at UWSP. Click here for more information: <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Pages/rightsandresponsibilities.aspx>

Academic integrity is central to the mission of higher education in general and UWSP in particular. Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) is taken very seriously. Don't do it! The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. For more information, see the UWSP "Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures" section of the Rights and Responsibilities document, Chapter 14, which can be accessed here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>

Also: if you use Wikipedia, or anything online, you have to CITE IT. I don't care whether you use MLA or Chicago style citations, but please be consistent. When in doubt, CITE THE SOURCE. I cannot stress this enough. Consequences for plagiarism are severe: again, see the above link to your Rights and Responsibilities document.

Terms of Enrollment

This syllabus is a contract. By taking this class, you agree to the policies listed here. I reserve the right to change the syllabus, but only within reason, and with timely notification to students.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week One: INTRODUCTION: HISTORY OF MEDIA/MEDIATED HISTORY

Before class on Thursday: Read Kovarik, Introduction (1-15)

Tuesday, 1/23

Thursday, 1/25 Discussion sections meet

Week Two: ORAL CULTURE, WRITING, AND PRINTING

Before class on Tuesday: Read Kovarik, Ch. 1 (17-66); Complete Quiz 1 on D2L

Tuesday, 1/30

Thursday, 2/1 Discussion sections meet

Week Three: PRINT CULTURE AND JOURNALISM

Before class on Tuesday: Read Kovarik, Ch. 2 (67-83; 88-91; 95-104) and Ch.3 (105-111, 123-138);

Complete Quiz 2 on D2L

Tuesday, 2/6

Thursday, 2/8 Discussion sections meet

Week Four: THE VISUAL REVOLUTION AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Before class on Tuesday: Read Kovarik, Ch. 3 (139-179); Complete Quiz 3 on D2L

Tuesday, 2/13

Thursday, 2/15 Discussion sections meet

Week Five: ADVERTISING, PUBLIC RELATIONS, AND IMAGE CULTURE
Before class on Tuesday: Read Kovarik, Ch. 6 (217-248); Complete Quiz 4 on D2L

Tuesday, 2/20
Thursday, 2/22 Discussion sections meet

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Week Six: PRE-FILM TECHNOLOGY AND EARLY CINEMA
Before class on Tuesday: Read Kovarik, Ch. 5 (181-197); NO QUIZ THIS WEEK

Tuesday, 2/27
Thursday, 3/1 Discussion sections meet

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Week Seven: HOLLYWOOD, THE COMING OF SOUND, AND THE STAR SYSTEM
Before class on Tuesday: Read Kovarik, Ch. 5 (197-215); Complete Quiz 5 on D2L (covers all of Ch. 5)

Tuesday, 3/6
Thursday, 3/8 Discussion sections meet

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Week Eight: MIDTERM

Tuesday, 3/13 **MIDTERM**
Thursday, 3/16 No discussion sections—Cary out of town

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Week Nine: ELECTRONIC REVOLUTION: TELEGRAPHY AND THE TELEPHONE
Before class on Tuesday: Read Kovarik, Ch. 7 (249-274); Complete Quiz 6 on D2L

Tuesday, 3/20
Thursday, 3/22: Discussion sections meet; discuss parameters of research project.

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Week Ten: SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, 3/27: **NO CLASS**
Thursday, 3/29: **NO CLASS**

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Week Eleven: THE NEW WORLD OF RADIO
Before class on Tuesday: Read Kovarik, Ch. 8 (275-307); Complete Quiz 7 on D2L

Tuesday, 4/3
Thursday, 4/5: Discussion sections meet

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Week Twelve: THE BEGINNINGS OF TELEVISION

Before class on Tuesday: Read Kovarik, Ch. 9 (309-318); NO QUIZ THIS WEEK

Tuesday, 4/10

Thursday, 4/12: Visit to library for research instruction

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Week Thirteen: THE GOLDEN AGE OF TELEVISION

Before class on Tuesday: Read Kovarik, Ch. 9 (318-341); Complete Quiz 8 on D2L (covers all of Ch. 9)

Tuesday, 4/17

Thursday, 4/19: Visit to archives; meet on 5th floor of library

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Week Fourteen: THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION: COMPUTING TECHNOLOGIES

Before class on Tuesday: Read Kovarik, Ch. 10 (349-374); Complete Quiz 9 on D2L

Tuesday, 4/24

Thursday, 4/26: Discussion sections meet; work in groups (Assignment #1 due)

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Week Fifteen: DIGITAL NETWORKS AND THE BIRTH OF THE INTERNET

Before class on Tuesday: Read Kovarik, Ch. 11 (375-404); Complete Quiz 10 on D2L

Tuesday, 5/1

Thursday, 5/3: Discussion sections meet; work in groups (Assignment #2 due)

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Week Sixteen: CONVERGENCE, GLOBAL CULTURE, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Before class on Thursday: Read Kovarik, Ch. 12 (405-430); NO QUIZ THIS WEEK

Tuesday, 5/8: Final presentations/projects due

Thursday, 5/10: Discussion sections meet

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FINAL EXAM MONDAY, 5/14, 12:30-2:30