Media History and Weekly Intelligencer

Fall 2008 Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9:25 a.m. to 10:25

COURSE GOAL

BY EXAMINING the historical impact of mass communication, students gain an appreciation for the interaction of media and society, and an understanding how the past has shaped media.

MEDIA OBJECTIVES

Survey the salient events and people of media history, and examine the roles of media and their importance.

Develop an understanding of media influence on society as it relates to diverse audiences.

Explore how people have used media as an instrument of free expression throughout American history.

Apply research skills to examine and critically evaluate topics related to the development and impact of mass media.

DEADLINES

Work must be turned in ON TIME. Deadlines are a part of every communication professional’s life; therefore, you must meet deadlines in class. Master the ability to work on deadline early in the semester, and do not fall into the habit of pushing deadlines and turning work in late. Meeting deadlines is imperative. Work that is to be shared with the class that is turned in late punishes the entire class and is inconsiderate of all. Late papers may not be accepted or may be lowered a letter grade or more.

Late work will receive a reduced grade unless you make arrangements with the instructor BEFORE the assignment is due that leniency is justified. A project that cannot be turned in one week following its due date will not be accepted except under rare of circumstances.

MEDIA TEXTS

Media history will use as the main reading the book compiled by Mr. W.M. David Sloan. Professor Sloan is one of the most famous media historians in the United States. He has enlisted the assistance of numerous media history scholars to prepare this text, including your humble professor. The book is THE MEDIA IN AMERICA, 7th ed. (Northport, Ala.: Vision Press, 2008).

Besides Mr. Sloan’s book, we will read a book written by Mr. James Baughman, a highly intelligent person in his own right. His book is THE REPUBLIC OF MASS CULTURE: JOURNALISM, FILM-MAKING, AND BROADCASTING IN AMERICA SINCE 1941, 3rd ed., Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.

A third book for this semester is Kate Turabian, A MANUAL FOR WRITERS OF RESEARCH PAPERS, THESIS, AND DISSERTATIONS, 7th ed. (2006).

In addition to our texts, we will read handouts and primary documents. The media, regardless of form, have played an important role in shaping our nation and the world.

Here’s how Mr. Alexis de Tocqueville, who visited America in the 1830s, explained the power of the press:

“It rallies the interests of the community round certain principles and draws up the creed of every party... When many organs of the press adopt the same line of conduct, their influence in the long run becomes irresistible, and public opinion, perpetually assailed from the same side, eventually yields to the attack.”

Knowing what media say or present, therefore, is important.

POET'S CORNER

At Media History and the Weekly Intelligencer, we are always looking for works that will please our readers. We have found poetry is a favorite of all our subscribers. Here is a poem from Mr. Purdie’s and Mr. Dixon’s Virginia Gazette, January 22, 1770, that tells the value of the press. We are certain that you will agree with its message:

Newspapers are the spring of knowledge.
The general source throughout the nation,
of every modern conversation.

What would this mighty people do
If them, alas was nothing new?

A News-paper is like a feast,
Some dish there is for every guest;
Some large, some small, some strong,
some tender.

For every stomach, stout or slender,
Those who roast beef, and ale delight in,
An ale with trumpets, drums and fighting;

For those who are more finny maidens,
Art, arts and sciences, and trade;
For fanciful and amorous blood,
We have a soft poetic food;
For witty and satyric folks,
High-seasward, aid, BITTERJOKES;
And when we strive to please the mob,
A jest, a quizzed, or a joke.

If any gentleman wants a wife,
A partner, as ‘tis termed, for life
An advertisement does the thing,
And quickly brings the pretty thing.

If you want health, consult our pages
You shall be well, and live for ages.
Our services you can express
The good we do you hardly guess;
They’re not a want of human kind,
But we a remedy can find.

BLACKBOARD

Additional assignments or readings will be posted on Blackboard. It’s your responsibility to stay abreast of all assignments in the syllabus and on Blackboard and to complete them when due.
COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

MEDIA HISTORY will afford students various opportunities to be involved with history. Below are some of those ways.

- Oral history: History is all around us, and, unfortunately, much of it is dying. One of our assignments this semester will be an interview and documentation project. This will give you the opportunity to talk to people who witnessed history, and to place their comments within a frame provided by scholarly and contemporary accounts of the incidents. For this project, we'll produce a series of radio, television, or online programs, kind of like an in-depth NPR program, a TV show or a special interactive Web site. I'm still thinking about this, and we'll talk about the best way to proceed. I want you to be able to use all your acquired communications skills for this project rather than to write another paper, with a group of people. We'll start on this shortly after the beginning of the semester.

- Examinations: We will have 3 tests, including the exam. The exam will be given on Tuesday, Dec. 16, at 8:30 a.m. The final will be inclusive only because of recurring themes in media history.

- Interpreting history: We will read opposing accounts of events and issues to find the role media has played in shaping America's direction. You will be given primary documents for this assignment, then do more research to produce a paper of 10 pages. More specific information will be provided later.

GRADING

- 12 percent daily assignments
- 12 percent media history interpretation
- 20 percent oral history project
- 56 percent examinations

ANOTHER OBJECTIVE

Another objective of JCM 360 is simple: The course hopes to teach you something that few workers in mass media know anything about—the history of their profession.

MERIT OF ATTENDANCE

IN JCM 360, as in other communications classes you are expected to assume a professional attitude as a participant. Your attendance is required, and attendance will be taken daily. Because discussion is very much a part of JCM 360 as well as your presentations in class, missing class can only harm you. If you must be absent, please try to let me know BEFORE the absence.

According to School of Communications policy, a student who misses 20 percent of a class (8 absences MWF) automatically receives an F.

- In-class daily assignments missed without following absence procedure will result in zeros in the grade book.

- As per the School of Communications policy, any absences in excess of two will result in your final grade being lowered 1/3 of a letter grade for each excessive absence, meaning a person with a B and 4 absences receives a grade of B-.

- Any missed quiz, test or exam can only be made up with a written request, per School rules.

A missed final exam requires permission from department chair Dr. Don Grady, picture above

To learn more about the School's policy, see BLACKBOARD COURSE DOCUMENTS, PROFESSIONAL POLICIES STATEMENT to view the primary document.

GRADING SCALE

93 and above = A
90-92 = A-
87-89.99 = B+
83-86 = B
80-82 = B-
77-79.99 = C+
73-76 = C
70-72 = C-
67-69.99 = D+
63-66 = D
60-62 = D-
59.99 and below = F

LEARNING DIFFERENCES

If you have a diagnosed learning difference, please see me so that we can discuss your specific academic needs. If you are a student with a documented disability who will require accommodations in this course, please register with Disabilities Services. In

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Because media history is part of your “job” as a future communications professional, you should be aware of and follow these professional standards.

These standards were developed in relation to print journalism, they may be applied to any area of mass communications. Schools of communication such as ours at Elon expect students to adhere strictly to these guidelines.

- Writing ability: Grammar and spelling; ability to tell a good story well; use of quotes, anecdotes and descriptive detail; use of active voice and strong verbs; ability to write leads that are inviting and that hit the point of the story; ability to write tightly and to organize information in logical, compelling sequence.

- Reporting ability: Pursuit, digging, enterprise, ability and eagerness to see and pursue promising angles; ability to seek and obtain anecdotes, details and quotations that provide documentation and add liveliness; ability to see the need for and to get both sides of the story; ability to cultivate sources.

- Promptness: Be on time. If you're a communications professional covering an event that begins at 11 a.m. and you arrive at 11:15, your boss will not be happy. Coming into class late disrupts other students. If you are late, take the first available seat. If you make a habit of being late, your tardies will become absences.

- Accuracy: Skill with basic factual information such as names, addresses, dates and figures; ability to identify and make use of the best sources, whether they are documents, references or people.

- Work habits: Punctuality, reliability, readiness to go beyond the minimum requirements of the job; interest in assuming and ability to assume more than minimum responsibility; ability and willingness to anticipate and fulfill the demands of an assignment without prompting; ability to deal even-handedly with peers and superiors to accept constructive criticism and to offer constructive suggestions.

- Being considerate, part 2: Sometimes emergencies necessi-
Semester calendar  
(If assignments have no due date, you are to prepare for class discussion or for tests.)

Week 1, September 3-5

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course introduction</th>
<th>Read-</th>
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<tr>
<td>Getting to know you</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why is media history important</td>
<td>Blackboard: Search for Significance</td>
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<td>Why study media history</td>
<td>Sloan &amp; Baughman: Introductions</td>
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<td>Blackboard: Communication and Opinion</td>
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Assignments- 1. Read “Communication and Opinion” on Blackboard. Take major events that have occurred that you remember (Sept. 11 being an example as well as Clinton’s impeachment) and others that you think have been of great importance since 1970 (use your text readings to help you select). Explain the effects of media on your understanding of them. Use concrete examples from media. How do memory, attention, and choice, as described by Pender, affect our understanding of events? We will discuss your selections in class, so be prepared to talk about your perceptions. In addition, make sure you have “expert” support of your selections, not just your opinion. Think beyond your lifetime. We’ll use this assignment to explain others (September 5).

“Article” usually means something that’s in a journal. It may be an online or print journal like Journalism History or The American Historical Review. It does not mean a book review or anything from Wikipedia. When “article” is preceded by newspaper or magazine in the assignments (or they are implied), then you may use that type of article.

Week 2, September 8-12

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starting history from a familiar point</th>
<th>Read-</th>
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<tr>
<td>Media: What are they and what’s their function?</td>
<td>Sloan: Chapts. 24 and 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpreting history/oral history project/basic research</td>
<td>Baughman: Chapts. 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>18th-century newspapers</td>
<td>Blackboard: Folder-research, footnote sheet</td>
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<td>Blackboard: Communication and Opinion</td>
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Assignments- 1. Interpreting history. Information sheets will explain.

Week 3, September 15-19

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Read-</th>
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<tr>
<td>18th-century newspapers, cont.</td>
<td>Sloan: Chapts. 1-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the public sphere?</td>
<td>Blackboard: America &amp; the public sphere</td>
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<tr>
<td>The tyranny of printers: B. F. Bache/Press freedom</td>
<td>Blackboard: The Zenger Trial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free speech!<em>?</em>! The Baltimore Riots</td>
<td>Blackboard: Rhetorical Analysis</td>
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Assignments- 1. Find stories/editorials in media about one of America’s “wars” from the First Persian Gulf war or the current Iraq war. Stick with one of them. Find news articles and especially editorials that are pro and con on the issues and even some on the president. We’ll use in class (Sept. 19) to compare with statements from the 18th-19th centuries on going to war with Great Britain and on George Washington and on James Madison (We’re looking at how the media can/cannot shape public opinion). Directions for written assignment given in class. Write up your rhetorical analysis in less than 5 pages and turn in September 22.

2. Be ready to discuss these questions in class or to answer on your tests: A. How did the printed word enter and cultivate public debate and help produce a “marketplace of ideas”? B. Describe the elements that “fueled” the desire for news in colonial America. Why were they of such importance 200 years ago? Are they still the driving forces behind news in the 21st century?

Week 4, September 22-26

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<th>The penny press</th>
<th>Read-</th>
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<tr>
<td>Antebellum, abolitionist, black press</td>
<td>Sloan: Chapt. 4</td>
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Assignments- 1. Documents/journal assignment: Find press articles from the period 1790-1828 and a journal article about the period. Copy the documents and journal article. With them, provide a synopsis of the article and use the documents to to explain how the press was used in this period. Pay special attention to issues that deal with the First Amendment and freedom of the press, 2 pages max. (Due Sept. 26).
Week 5, September 29-October 3
Civil War
Test 1 review

Assignments-
Test covers these readings: (Sloan: Chaps.24-25, 1-9; Baughman: Chaps. 7-9; Blackboard readings)

Test 1: October 3

Week 6, October 6-10
Advertising/Public relations
Oral history assignment
Blackboard: Doing research papers

Assignments-
1. Find 2-3 advertisements from 1880-1970 that appeared in media. Figure out from them something about society, its interests and the development of advertisement in America. Upload them and deposit in the Digital Dropbox on Blackboard (October 9 by 6 p.m.) Find a journal article on advertising history a provide a synopsis of it and a write-up about the ads. This is a maximum of 2 pages (October 10).

Week 7, October 13-17
Crime and media
Yellow journalism

Assignments-
1. Krakatau 1883 and the 2004 Asian Tsunami—Analyzing Disaster Coverage. How do media cover tragedy? For this assignment, you will compare two tragedies and media coverage. If you don’t know what Krakatau was, finding out is where you start. You want to find coverage of these two events and then compare. Within the documents you find, look for fact (things that can be proven through historical record, scientific replication, or personal verification through the senses), opinion (personal emotional response impossible to prove) and inference (conclusion based on facts).

Fall Break: October 20-21

Week 8, October 20-24
Yellow journalism, cont.
Pulitzer, Hearst, Bly

Assignments-
1. Read Blackboard selection “Journalism of Action.” The reading has a series of questions. Use them and find contemporary examples of the two types of journalism discussed to create a 2-3 page paper on the subject. Conclude by deciding which kind of news is better and more prevalent today (Nov. 3).

Interpreting history due: October 24

Week 9, October 27-31
Journalism of action
Radio

Assignments- 1. Test 2 review (Sloan, Chaps. 8-12; 14-15; 18, 21, 22; Blackboard)

Test 2: October 31 (Trick or Treat?)
Week 10, November 3-7
Modern media
Recorded music—jazz, rock, rap

Assignments-
1. Visit www.otr.com, www.radiolovers.com or some other site and listen to at least two radio shows. Write up your reactions. Find a journal article on radio before 1960. Provide a synopsis of the programs and the article (Nov. 3).

Week 11, November 10-14
Motion pictures???
Television

Assignments- Work on your oral history projects.

Week 12, November 17-21
Television, cont.
Magazines, comic books

Assignments- Answer these questions: 1. Magazines are essentially products of culture and economic factors. Is this true? Support one side or the other with concrete examples. 2. How has the entertainment industry affected other aspects of media (e.g. news)? Refer to earlier readings to help you with this question. What is public relations and how long has it been around? Give historical examples. 3. How could war have been good for media?

Week 13, November 24-28
Television, cont.
Media and reform

Assignments- 1. What has been television's effect on all other media? Examples, please. 2. Were Muckrakers, as Progressive historians claimed, true liberal reformers with the correction of social ills foremost in their motives?

Thanksgiving holiday, November 26-28

Weeks 14-15, December 1-8
Motion pictures???
Television, cont.
Exam review

Assignments- Read-
Sloan: Chapt. 17
Baughman: Chapt. 6

Oral History research due: December 5

Final Examination, December 16 (Tuesday), 8:30 a.m.
Chapters 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23 (Sloan)
Chapters 1-6 (Baughman)

The final examination will be given at this time only, unless you are able to obtain signatures from Peter Zenger, Horace Greeley, Edward R. Murrow, Dean Paul Parsons, Chair Don Grady and Goofy of Disney Studios. If they all agree, you may take the exam at another time.