The Struggle for The Word
IDSEM-UG 1055

**Description:** The history of the media is the history of struggle, a battle waged over words and images: who produces them, who has access to them, and whose interests are served by them. Media power has traditionally been the province of elites, from Church and State to multinational communication conglomerates. But this is only one side of the story, for everyday people have also fought for their right to speak and be spoken to. Media has moved from the elite to the masses, in the process becoming "democratized"...but also often commodified. Beginning with the printed word, and moving from the Bible through plays and popular song; pamphlets, penny press and advertisements; and ending with the web, this course will use the history of the word to explore enduring questions of power and culture.

**Requirements:**
1) Attendance, diligent reading, and active participation in all class discussions. (25%)
2) Three short essays—6-8 pages each--over the course of the semester. (75%)

**Learning Goals:**
- Thinking critically from a range of intellectual positions and disciplinary traditions.
- Reading challenging texts, including primary documents, and communicating their relevance and importance.
- Writing analytic essays that demonstrate creative, rigorous and original thought.
- Applying theoretical and historical material to the analysis of everyday life.

**Notes:**
- I'm always open to suggestions on assignments. A video, poem, song, performance, web page, etc. in place of one of the written assignments is possible and could be very exciting. Just talk to me first.
- All papers handed in on time can be re-written for new grades, but the re-write must returned within two weeks of first receiving back the corrected paper.
- Syllabus, assignments, links--as well as on-line class forum--can be on the class site on Blackboard
- Plagiarism, in any form, is not tolerated. For a full review of Gallatin’s policy on plagiarism see http://gallatin.nyu.edu/gateways/faculty/plagiarism.html
**Books:**
- Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of Consumer Culture*
- Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller*
- Lawrence Levine, *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History*
- Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*
- Plato, *Phaedrus*
- Andie Tucher, *Froth & Scum: Truth, Beauty, Goodness and the Ax Murder in America’s First Mass Medium*
- Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

**Essays:**
- Plato, *Phaedrus*
- Sutra of the Great Incantations/ Hyakumanto Darani
- Genesis 1-3, Exodus 20, Matthew 13, John 1: 1-14 *The Bible: King James Version*
- Benson Bobrick, “Comparative Translations of the English Bible” from *Wide as The Waters*
- Marcel Thomas, “Manuscripts” from *The Coming of the Book*
- Benedict Anderson, “Cultural Roots” and “The Origins of National Consciousness” from *Imagined Communities*
- Gerard Winstanley, “True Levellers Standard Advanced”
- "Ye ould deluder Satan," Massachusetts School Law of 1647
- Thomas Leonard, “The Wicked Printer” from *The Power of the Press*
- Thomas Jefferson, "On the Press," from *Thomas Jefferson on Democracy*
- Frederick Douglass, "Learning to Read," from *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*
- *Primary Documents #2 “Sensationalism”: selections from Book of Martyrs, chapbooks, Juvenile Key, New York Sun and Walter Lippmann's "Blazing Publicity"*
- reprint from *Freedom’s Journal*
- letters to the *Jewish Daily Forward, from A Bintel Brief*
- James Joyce, selections from *Ulysses*, including chapters 1, 13, 17 &18
- Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of the Commodity..." from *Capital: Vol. 1*
- *Primary Documents #6, “Dealing in Futures,” selections from Printers’ Ink and other period sources.*
- Nicholas Carr, selections from *The Shallows*

All books can be bought at Bluestockings Books, 172 Allen Street (one block south of Houston, and the F train’s 2nd avenue stop) Copies of the essays can be accessed, for reference purposes only, (do not copy or download) via NYU Classes.

*Semester Schedule:*
Feb 27 M  Class Introduction

Feb 29 W  Capturing Words
READ: Plato, *Pheadrus* and “Sutra of the Great Incantations/ Hyakumanto Darani”

Feb 3 M  In the Beginning was The Word
READ: Genesis 1-3, Exodus 20, Matthew 13, John 1: 1-14  *The Bible: King James Version*, and Benson Bobrick, “Comparative Translations of the English Bible”
LOOK: Illuminated manuscripts

Feb 5 W  Struggle for The Word
READ: Marcel Thomas, “Manuscripts” and Gerard Winstanley, “True Levellers Standard Advanced”

Feb 10 M  Spreading of The Word
READ: Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*

Feb 12 W  New Interpretations & Heresy
READ: Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*
First Assignment handed out

Feb 17 M  No Class

Feb 19 W  Reading a Nation
READ: Benedict Anderson, from *Imagined Communities*

Feb 24 M  New Worlds Born
READ: Read: Massachusetts School Law, and Thomas Leonard, “The Wicked Printer”

Feb 26 W  Print and Politics
READ: Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*

Mar 3 M  Print and Power
READ: Thomas Jefferson and Frederick Douglass

Mar 5 W  Songs of Freedom
READ: Read: Lawrence Levine's "Slave Songs… " in *The Unpredictable Past*
DUE: First Assignment
Second Assignment Handed Out

Mar 10 M  Participatory Culture
READ: Lawrence Levine's "William Shakespeare… " in *The Unpredictable Past*

Mar 12 W  Who Gets to Write?
READ: Virginia Woolf’s  *A Room of One’s Own*
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 17 &amp; 19</td>
<td>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</td>
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<td>Mar 24 M</td>
<td>Class TBA</td>
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<td>Mar 26 W</td>
<td>Class TBA</td>
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<td>Mar 31 M</td>
<td>Selling the News</td>
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<td>READ: &quot;Sensationalism Issue&quot; <em>Primary Documents #2</em>; start Andie Tucher's <em>Froth &amp; Scum</em></td>
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<td>Apr 2 W</td>
<td><em>Jefferson's Nightmare</em></td>
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<td>READ: Walter Lippmann's &quot;Blazing Publicity&quot; (last essay in “Sensationalism Issue”) And read to page 96 in <em>Froth &amp; Scum</em></td>
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<td>Apr 7 M</td>
<td><em>Intelligent Audiences</em></td>
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<td>READ: finish <em>Froth &amp; Scum</em></td>
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<td>DUE: Second Assignment</td>
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<td>Third Assignment Handed Out</td>
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<td>Apr 9 W</td>
<td><em>Virtual Community</em></td>
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<td>READ: reprint from <em>Freedom's Journal</em> and &quot;A Bintel Brief: Letters to the Jewish Daily Forward”</td>
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<td>Apr 14 M</td>
<td><em>The Culture of Advertising</em></td>
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<td>READ: James Joyce, selections from <em>Ulysses</em>, including chapters 1, 13, 17 &amp;18; and Karl Marx &quot;The Fetishism of the Commodity...&quot;</td>
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<td>Apr 16 W</td>
<td><em>Creating the Consumer</em></td>
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<td>READ: <em>Captains of Consciousness</em> up to p. 48; “Dealing in Futures”</td>
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<td><em>Primary Documents #6</em></td>
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<td>Apr 21 M</td>
<td><em>All That Is Solid Melts Into Air…</em></td>
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<td>READ: <em>Captains of Consciousness</em> pp. 51-109 (and beyond)</td>
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<td>Apr 23 W</td>
<td><em>Engineering Consent</em></td>
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<td>READ: finish <em>Captains of Consciousness</em>, and read Edward Bernay's &quot;Engineering of Consent‘</td>
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<td>DUE: Third assignment</td>
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<td>Apr 28 M</td>
<td><em>The Brain and the Book</em></td>
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<td>READ: Selections from Nicholas Carr, <em>The Shallows</em></td>
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<td>Apr 30 W</td>
<td><em>Print in the New Millennia I: Texting, Tweeting and E-mail</em></td>
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<td>May 5 M</td>
<td><em>Print in the New Millennia II: Blogs and Web Pages</em></td>
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<td>May 7 W</td>
<td>Catch- Up</td>
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May 12 W  Last Class
ALL ASSIGNMENTS DUE