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, whose interests are served by them, and how they are interpreted. 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 political pamphlet and popular song, the commercial penny press and immigrant newspapers, and ending with the web, this course will use the history of the printed 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 found on NYU Classes
• As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or
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*
- Ursula LeGuin, “She Unnames them”
- Gerard Winstanley, “True Levellers Standard Advanced”
- Benson Bobrick, “Comparative Translations of the English Bible” from *Wide as The Waters*
- Benedict Anderson, “Cultural Roots” and “The Origins of National Consciousness” from *Imagined Communities*
- "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*
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, from *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*
- *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:

**Sep 7 W**  Class Introduction

**Sep 12 M**  Capturing Words
READ: Plato, Phaedrus and “Sutra of the Great Incantations/ Hyakumanto Darani”

Sep 14 W  In the Beginning was The Word
READ: Genesis 1-3, Exodus 20, Matthew 13, John 1: 1-14 The Bible: King James Version
Ursula LeGuin, “She Unnames them”
LOOK: Illuminated manuscripts

Sep 19 M  Struggle for The Word
READ: Gerard Winstanley, “True Levellers Standard Advanced”
Suggested: Benson Bobrick, “Comparative Translations of the English Bible”

Sep 22 W  Spreading of The Word
READ: Carlo Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms

Sep 26 M  New Interpretations & Heresy
READ: Carlo Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms
First Assignment handed out

Sep 28 W  Reading a Nation
READ: Benedict Anderson, from Imagined Communities

Oct 3 M  New Worlds Born
READ: Read: Massachusetts School Law, and Thomas Leonard, “The Wicked Printer”

Oct 5 W  Print and Politics
READ: Thomas Paine, Common Sense

Oct 10 M  NO CLASS

Oct 12 W  Print and Power
READ: Thomas Jefferson, "On the Press," from Thomas Jefferson on Democracy
Frederick Douglass, "Learning to Read," from The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, from Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature

Oct 17 M  Songs of Freedom
READ: Read: Lawrence Levine's "Slave Songs… " in The Unpredictable Past
DUE: First Assignment
Second Assignment Handed Out

Oct 19 W  Participatory Culture
READ: Lawrence Levine's "William Shakespeare… " in The Unpredictable Past

Oct 24 M  Who Gets to Write?
READ: Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 26 W</td>
<td>Selling the News</td>
<td>&quot;Sensationalism Issue&quot; Primary Documents #2; start Andie Tucher's Froth &amp; Scum</td>
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<td>Oct 31 M</td>
<td>Jefferson's Nightmare</td>
<td>Walter Lippmann's &quot;Blazing Publicity&quot; (last essay in “Sensationalism Issue”) And read to page 96 in Froth &amp; Scum</td>
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<td>Nov 2 W</td>
<td>Intelligent Audiences</td>
<td>finish Froth &amp; Scum</td>
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<td><strong>DUE: Second Assignment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Third Assignment Handed Out</strong></td>
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<td>Nov 7 M</td>
<td>Virtual Community</td>
<td>reprint from Freedom's Journal and &quot;A Bintel Brief: Letters to the Jewish Daily Forward&quot;</td>
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<td>Nov 9 W</td>
<td>Popular Culture and Commercial Culture</td>
<td>Lawrence Levine’s “The Folklore of Industrial Society…” in The Unpredictable Past:</td>
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<td>Nov 14 M</td>
<td>Words to Sell</td>
<td>James Joyce, selections from Ulysses, including chapters 1, 13, 17 &amp;18; and Karl Marx &quot;The Fetishism of the Commodity...&quot;</td>
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<td>Nov 16 W</td>
<td>Creating the Consumer</td>
<td>Captains of Consciousness up to p. 48; Suggested: “Dealing in Futures,” Primary Documents #6</td>
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<td>Nov 21 M</td>
<td>All That Is Solid Melts Into Air…</td>
<td>Captains of Consciousness pp. 51-109 (and beyond)</td>
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<td>Nov 23 W</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<td>Nov 28 M</td>
<td>Manufacturing Consent</td>
<td>finish Captains of Consciousness</td>
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<td><strong>DUE: Third assignment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Fourth assignment handed out</strong></td>
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<td>Nov 30 W</td>
<td>The Brain and the Book</td>
<td>Selections from Nicholas Carr, The Shallows</td>
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<td>Dec 5 M</td>
<td>Print in the Digital Age: Blogs and Web Pages</td>
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<td>Dec 7 W</td>
<td>Print in the Digital Age II: Texting, Tweeting and E-mail</td>
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Dec 12 M  Catch-Up
Dec 13 T  Catch-Up
Dec 14 W  Last Class
ALL ASSIGNMENTS DUE