Media and Social Change
04:567:380
Fall 2014

Professor: Dr. Todd Wolfsion
Office: 110 SCILS Building
Email: twolfson@rci.rutgers.edu (preferred communication method)
Office Hours: Wednesday 3-5PM and by appointment
Class Room: Campbell Hall A1
Class Time: Wednesday 6:10pm-9pm

Description
This course looks at how social movements (i.e. civil rights, labor, environmental movements, Occupy Wall Street and others) that seek to change dominant social, economic or political structures have been portrayed in the media. It also examines how social movement activists and organizers use media technologies to organize themselves and communicate their messages to wide audiences. Local, national, and global examples of social movements will be studied, examining the successes and challenges of their complex relationships to media.

Course Goals and Outcome
From an historical and global perspective, students will learn about the relationship between activism and media, and how this has shaped culture and society. They will gain an understanding of the political economy of the mass media and how media coverage aids or hinders social movement effectiveness. They will also learn to conduct textual analysis to critically analyze the frames; sources, values, and ideologies found in media coverage of socio-political issues.

Skills Gained

Topical Skills
By the end of the course students will be able to:
• Demonstrate an understanding of debates surrounding media and social change
• Demonstrate an understanding of the role of media on contemporary society
• Apply these theories to everyday life, interrogating the real-life implications of social movements.

Intellectual Skills
By the end of the course students will be able to:
• Analyze and reason critically when discussing media and social change
• Analyze and critically evaluate different theories of social change, demonstrating independent thought
• Analyze the complex interdependent relationship of media, technology and society
Practical and Transferable Skills
By the end of the course a successful learner will be able to:
• Evaluate complex ideas and develop a clear perspective
• Create a thesis statement and write a reasoned analytic paper
• Lead an in-class presentation on academic material

Course Requirements:

• **Readings** – It is essential that seminar participants come to class having read all course materials thoroughly for each session. Grounding our critical exploration in the readings is vital to the analytical success of this course – both in class discussion and in written assignments.

• **Class participation (15% of course grade)** – This is a seminar that depends upon your active participation in class discussion. Emphasis will be placed on critical analysis of the readings, which will be generated primarily through the articulation of thoughts and ideas in a seminar format. Students must be prepared to contribute critical comments grounded in the course readings at each session.

• **Facilitating Discussion (15% of course grade)** – Each week, a group of students will be responsible for providing a short analytic overview of the reading. Of greatest importance, facilitators should raise several key questions about the philosophical and theoretical perspectives evident in the readings, as well as the implications of these in reference to critical media studies. For each of these student presentations, there must be a coherent and organized power point presentation as well as a handout. Students will sign up for presentations on the class wiki located on ecollege. **Please note that you do not have to write a reading response the week you present.**

• **Reading Responses (20% of course grade)** – All students will post written responses to the week’s readings by Monday evening at 9PM, and come to class having read other students’ comments. Contributions should include reflections on the readings and questions for class discussion. Points of discussion include (but are not limited to) the following: What are the key arguments made by the author? What assumptions are made? What ideological positions are evident? What possible perspectives are left out? What did you react to most strongly in the readings and why? Are there any possible points of argument left out of the readings? What questions remain for you in reference to the reading, and how could your classmates help you explore these questions? **Please note: You do not have to write a response on the week you present.**
  o Please upload your written responses to the course site. We will be using eCollege for the class. Go to [https://ecollege.rutgers.edu](https://ecollege.rutgers.edu) and log in using your Rutgers ID and password. I will post announcements, assignments, readings, on the site, so please check regularly. If you have not used eCollege before, register at [www.RutgersOnline.net](http://www.RutgersOnline.net). Direct technical website problems to: [webmaster@ecompanion.rutgers.edu](mailto:webmaster@ecompanion.rutgers.edu).

• **Midterm Assignment:** (15% of course grade)
• **Final Project** (35% of course grade)
**Additional Rules and Information.**

- Cell phones must be turned off upon entering the classroom and may not be used in the classroom or during class time.
- Laptops may be used for note-taking only. No emailing or Web-surfing during class.
- Students must show up on time and stay for the duration of the class. During class, students should not engage in personal conversations, read newspapers, do crossword puzzles, or undertake other personal diversions unrelated to class activity.
- I will return all emails on a first-come, first-served basis. Do not assume that I have received your email. If I don’t reply, follow up with a phone call.

**Academic Integrity.** Plagiarism and cheating are, of course, forbidden, according to Rutgers University policy. You are responsible for reviewing and obeying these policies. A lengthy statement of the policy is at http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html.

- Regarding plagiarism, this statement (from history.rutgers.edu/undergrad/plagiarism.htm) appears in Rutgers University’s rules. Like all such rules, it applies to this class.

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be promptly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one’s words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: “to paraphrase Plato’s comment...” and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one’s general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.

**Required Books**

Please order books online

All other readings can be found at https://ecollege.rutgers.edu

Class and Reading Schedule

I. Introductions and Critical Concepts

9/3: Introduction

9/10: Will the Revolution be Tweeted?
• Malcolm Gladwell, “The Revolution Will Not be Tweeted” in New Yorker (online)
• Ben Brandzel, “What Malcolm Gladwell Missed About Online Organizing and Creating Big Change” in The Nation (online)
• Clay Shirky, “The Political Power of Social Media” in Foreign Affairs
• Cory Doctorow, “We need a serious critique of net activism” in The Guardian,
  Screening: Wael Ghonim: Inside the Egyptian Revolution

9/17: Defining Social Movements
• Marc Edelman, “Changing Paradigms and Forms of Politics, in Annual Review of Anthropology
• Francesca Poletta and James Jasper, “Collective Identity and Social Movements” in Annual Review of Sociology
• Charles Tilly and Lesley Wood, “Social Movements as Politics” in Social Movements 1768-2008
• David Harvey, “The Urban Revolution is Coming” in Right to the City
• Check out Right to the City website at www.righttothecity.org
  Screening: Media Mobilizing Project Montages

9/24: Defining Radical Media
• John Downing, Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements, pp1-99
• Hans Enzensberger, “ Constituents of a Theory of Media”
  Screening: Soy Cuba

II. Explorations into Media and Social Change

10/1: Muckrackers and Social Change: Then and Now
• Ellen Fitzpatrick, “Late 19th century America and the origins of Muckraking,” Muckraking: Three Landmark Articles
• Rachel Carson, Silent Spring, (first published as a series in New Yorker magazine in 1962). Introduction (pp. x-xix) and chapters 1, 2, 3 (pp. 1-37); and ch. 12 (pp.187-198).
  Screening: WikiRebels
10/8: Framing—Mass Media and Social Movements

- Todd Gitlin, “Introduction” and “Framing an Action, II” in The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media and the Making and Unmaking of the New Left
- Charlotte Ryan “Getting framed: The Media Shape Reality,” in Prime Time Activism
- Robert Benford and David Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” in Annual Review of Sociology
- Read the following introductory online essay (about how to analyze news frames):

Screening: The Weather Underground

**MIDTERM DUE 10/15**

10/15: The 1960s

- Michael Renov, “Newsreel: Old and New—Towards a Historical Profile,” in Film Quarterly: Forty Years—A Selection

Screening: Eyes on the Prize-Bridge to Freedom

10/22 NO CLASS

10/29: Radio and Social Movements

- Frantz Fanon, “This is the Voice of Algeria,” in Studies of a Dying Colonialism
- John Downing, “Radio” in Radical Media
- Christina Dunbar-Hester, 'Free the spectrum!' Activist encounters with old and new media technology, New Media Society, 2009

Screening: The Battle of Algiers

11/5: TV, Video and Social Movements

- Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, “Finally Got the News,” in Detroit I Do Mind Dying
- John Downing, “Film and Video,” Radical Media
- Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino “Towards a Third Cinema” Screening: Finally Got the News

**III. Contemporary Questions**

11/12: Zapatistas, Global Social Justice Movement and Indymedia

- DeeDee Halleck, “Zapatistas Online: The Email Read Round the World,” in Hand-Held Visions: The Impossible Possibilities of Community Media
- Jeffrey Juris, “The Seattle Effect,” in Networking Futures
- Dorothy Kidd, “Indymedia.org: A New Communications Commons”

Screening: Subcommandante Marcos Speech to Free the Media Conference 1996
11/19: Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street
- Pablo Gerbaudo, “‘Friendly’ Reunions: Social Media and the Choreography of Assembly,” in Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism
- Sasha Costanza-Chock “Mic Check! Media Cultures and the Occupy Movement”, in Social Movement Studies
- Phillip Howard, “The Upheavals in Egypt and Tunisia: The Role of Digital Media,” in Journal of Democracy
- Check out OWS Tumblr Page: We are the 99%

11/26 NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

12/3: Digital Rebellion
- Todd Wolfson, Digital Rebellion: The Birth of the Cyber Left

12/10: Media Mobilizing Project Presentation
- NO READINGS

December 17: Final Project DUE
In his article *Small Change*, Malcolm Gladwell argues that because of new communication tools people are not able to make the types of social changes necessary to build a better world. He compares contemporary uses of Facebook to the lunch counter sit-ins of the Civil Rights Movement and argues three interrelated things:

1) People cannot build the type of social relationships necessary (strong ties) to build real change, and instead rely on the convenience of weak ties.

2) Consequently, people are not involved with “high risk” activism or structural change and instead engage in “low risk” or “no risk” activism.

3) The organizational structures enabled by the Internet, decentralized networks, cannot build the power or allow for the type of leadership necessary to make structural change.

In a 4-page essay, respond to Gladwell’s article. Consider the above and other central points he makes and analytically corroborate or refute his argument. Please find 1-2 outside academic sources or sources from this class to bolster your argument. Some good places to start are the academic articles he cites in his essay from Granovetter to Shirky and McAdam. Finally regardless of your position, find at least one real world event to strengthen your case.
Final Paper
DUE 12/17
Write 10-12 pgs, double-spaced with 1-inch margins on all sides (11 or 12 font). Your paper should be clearly organized with no misspellings or typos. Grammar counts, so please proofread! Quotes longer than three lines must be indented and single-spaced. All citations must include author’s name and page # listed in parentheses after the quotation (APA Style). If you are not familiar with APA citation style, look it up online. To do well on this paper, you will need to read a good deal of background information on your topic (list all articles or books used in your bibliography). 1-2 page preliminary proposal due in class by November 19