

**History of the News Media in 20<sup>th</sup> Century America**  
**Prof. David Greenberg**  
**History/Media Studies**

**Class Time:** Monday 6.10-9.00

**Room:** 313 SCILS (4 Huntington St.)

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**Office Hours:** Mon. 10.30 a.m.-12 p.m.

**Office:** 4 Huntington St., Rm 110

**Course No.:** 16:194:663:01 (*media studies*)/16:510:561:01 (*history*)

**Syllabus**

**Description.** The course looks at the news media not as freestanding institutions but as a part of American politics and culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It explores several periods of major change, including the Progressive era, the Depression, the Red Scare, the civil rights movement, and others. During these moments, journalists and news institutions interacted in complex ways with political actors—while at the same time both expressing and helping to shape public attitudes about key events and policy decisions. The class examines these interactions of political actors and the public with the media in an effort to understand the underlying ideological and cultural currents of American life.

**Course Requirements.**

- Regular attendance and active participation. This course meets only two and a half hours a week. Arriving on time and staying for the duration is essential. Students may miss **one** class during the semester, no questions asked. Students who miss more than one class—or substantial portions of more than one class—will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each class missed, even if they inform the professor in advance. In case of severe illness or other extraordinary events, documentation must be provided.

One purpose of a seminar like this is to teach students to form their own ideas and share them with their peers. The very work of the course consists of engaging in a discussion of ideas. Students who abstain from discussion are missing the course's whole purpose. A class in which a student doesn't contribute to discussion is equivalent to a missed class. Proficient English is expected.

- Reading. The class reading comes to roughly 200 pages a week.
- Short Paper. Due October 2. You are to write a 4-page essay (maximum) making an argument about the changes in journalism between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. You should make use of the theoretical material from the first two weeks (or other theoretical material). You will be graded on the clarity and style of the writing, the originality and cogency of the thesis, and your use of the readings.
- Classroom Presentation. Each week one student will prepare a 15-minute presentation framing the readings. **This presentation should *not* summarize the reading chapter by chapter.** Rather, it should aim to achieve two main goals:

First, it should locate the reading within a scholarly literature to which it belongs. How, for instance, does this book resemble or differ from others on the same topic? What is its contribution to understanding the topic? What controversies did it respond to or spawn?

Second, the presentation should offer salient ideas and questions about the reading. Typically this will involve giving some background: Who is the author? How was the

book received upon publication? To answer these questions, of course, it's necessary to read other works on the topic and do some research. (I may be able to furnish suggestions.) As a rough rule, you should plan to read at least three books for the presentation. You will not necessarily be rewarded for reading more books, although doing so will probably make for a richer presentation, and that richness will be rewarded.

- **Term Paper.** The research for this presentation should form the basis of a 12- page paper, **due November 27**. The paper should be in the form of a review-essay such as you might read in *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Republic* or an academic journal. The paper must not simply rehash the presentation. Nor should it focus primarily on the class reading. Rather it should address two things:

First, it should address some larger set of questions raised by all the books you read. For example, if your presentation is on Daniel Hallin's book on Vietnam, the paper might ask how the myth came to take hold that the press was antiwar, or what lay behind different media treatments of the war. Hallin's book should be a part of your paper, but (unlike in the class presentation) should not be at the center of it.

Second, it should work toward conclusions that are your own, not those of one of the writers you read. Think of the essay as a way to master a small body of literature on a topic and come up with and put forward your own distinctive take.

### **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. If the volume become too great to handle, I will limit the time I spend replying to them to a few hours a week, 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>.

On plagiarism, this statement (from [history.rutgers.edu/undergrad/plagiarism.htm](http://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.

## Reading List.

Alan Bennett, *The History Boys* (Faber & Faber).  
 Michael McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics* (Oxford University Press).  
 Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Muckraking: Three Landmark Articles* (Bedford/St. Martin's).  
 Charles L. Ponce de Leon, *Self-Exposure* (University of North Carolina Press).  
 William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (U of Chicago Press).  
 Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium* (Columbia University Press).  
 Daniel C. Hallin, *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam* (U of California Press).  
 Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Challenging the Secret Government* (U of North Carolina Press).  
 Eric Alterman, *Sound and Fury* (Cornell University Press).  
 Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier Than the Sword* (Westview).

## Weekly Assignments.

📖 **Book** available at Rutgers University Bookstore or in Alexander library reserves  
 📁 **Article** available at online library reserves. Go to [www.libraries.rutgers.edu](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu) and click on "Find Reserves" in the left-hand column.

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| Sept. 11 | <b>Introduction</b>  |
| Sept. 18 | <b>Thinking About History</b><br>📖 Alan Bennett, <i>The History Boys</i> [106 pp.]<br>📁 E. H. Carr, <i>What Is History?</i> pp. 3-35 [32 pp.]  |
| Sept. 25 | <b>Thinking About Media</b><br>📁 Michael Schudson, Introduction and James Carey, "The Problem of Journalism History" [14]<br>📁 James Carey, <i>Communication as Culture</i> , Ch. 1 [24]<br>📁 Daniel Boorstin, <i>The Image</i> , Ch. 1 [38 pages]<br>📁 Walter Lippmann, <i>Public Opinion</i> , Foreword, Chs. 1, 6, 21-24 [64]<br>📁 Christopher Lasch, "Journalism, Publicity & the Lost Art of Argument" [11] |
| Oct. 2   | <b>The 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Changes in the News Media</b><br>📖 Michael McGerr, <i>Decline of Popular Politics</i> , Chs. 1,2, 4-6 [153]<br>📁 Michael Schudson, <i>Discovering the News</i> , Ch. 4 [39]<br><b>**Short Papers Due**</b>  |
| Oct. 9   | <b>Muckraking</b><br>📖 Ellen Fitzpatrick, <i>Muckraking: Three Landmark Articles</i> [132]<br>📖 Rodger Streitmatter, <i>Mightier Than the Sword</i> , Ch. 6 [16]<br>📁 Richard Hofstadter, <i>The Age of Reform</i> , Ch. 5 [40]<br>📁 Thomas Leonard, <i>The Power of the Press</i> , Ch. 7 [29]  |
| Oct. 16  | <b>Research Session</b>  |
| Oct. 23  | <b>The Age of Ballyhoo</b><br>📖 Charles Ponce de Leon, <i>Self-Exposure: Human Interest Journalism &amp; the Emergence of Celebrity in America</i> , Chs. 1, 2, 6<br>📁 William Leach, <i>Land of Desire</i> , Chs 10, 11 [51]<br>📁 Stewart Ewen, <i>PR!</i> , Ch. 8 [28]<br>📁 Jackson Lears "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture" [5]              |

- Oct. 30           **Photojournalism & Realism**  
 📖 William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America*, Chs. 1-7, 10, 13 [180]  
 📁 Lawrence Levine, “The Historian and the Icon: Photography and the History of the American People in the 1930s and 1940s” [35]
- Nov. 6           **FDR and the Media Presidency**  
 📁 Bruce Lenthall, “Critical Reception: Public Intellectuals Decry Depression-Era Radio, Mass Culture, and Modern America,” in *Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio* [18]  
 📁 Lawrence Levine, *The People and the President*, [75]  
 📁 Betty Houchin Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, selected chapters [75]  
 📁 David Halberstam, *The Powers that Be*, Prelude [ 15]  
 📁 Richard W. Steele “The Great Debate: Roosevelt, the Media, and the Coming of the War, 1940-1941” [23]
- Nov. 13           **Cold War & Television**  
 📖 Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium* Chs. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8-11 [173]  
 📖 Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier Than the Sword*, Ch. 10 [16]  
 📁 Stephen Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, pp. 153-178 [26]
- Nov. 20           **The Civil Rights Movement and the Liberal Media**  
 📖 Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier Than the Sword*, Ch. 11 [17]  
 📁 Mary Ann Watson *The Expanding Vista*, Ch. 4 [22]  
 📁 Sasha Torres, *Black, White and in Color*, Chs. 1 & 2 [37]  
 📁 Allison Graham, *Framing the South*, Introduction [17]  
 📁 Susan Weill, “Mississippi’s Daily Press in Three Crises,” in *The Press & Race: Mississippi Journalists Confront the Movement* [35]  
 📁 Dan T. Carter, “Good Copy,” *Media Studies Journal*, Vol. 12 Issue 3, Fall 1998 [8]
- Nov. 27           **Vietnam**  
 📖 Daniel C. Hallin, *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam* (except ch. 3) [172]  
 📖 Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier Than the Sword*, Ch. 12 [16]  
 📁 Chester J. Pach, “And That’s the Way It Was,” in *The Sixties: From Memory to History* [24]  
**\*\*Term Papers Due\*\***
- Dec. 4           **Nixon, Watergate & The New Muckraking**  
 📖 Kathryn Olmsted, *Challenging the Secret Government: The Post-Watergate Investigations of the CIA & FBI* (except chs 3, 6) [162]  
 📖 Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier Than the Sword*, Ch. 13 [15]  
 📁 Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News*, Ch. 5 [35]
- Dec. 11           **The Conservative Ascendancy**  
 📖 Eric Alterman, *Sound and Fury*, Chs. 1-6, 8 [141]  
 📖 Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier Than the Sword*, Ch. 14 [14]  
 📁 Sid Blumenthal, *Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, Intro, Chs 1, 6