

TOPICS IN FILM & MEDIA HISTORY—MCS 110J

Welcome

Welcome to the class—it's great to have you here. We stand at a moment of exciting change. The media have been a defining aspect of US and global life over the last six decades. They have undergone massive changes as a result of audiences, readers, and profit margins being fractured and reassembled through cable, satellite, and the internet. So we'll harness the tools of media studies both to comprehend the past and present and imagine the future.

Combining theoretical work and applied study, this course is designed for undergraduate students interested in the media and prepared to draw on social and political theory, cultural studies, textual analysis, ethnography, political economy, and cultural policy studies. Throughout, we'll consider the intersection of the social sciences and the humanities.

The class will take place on Mondays and Wednesdays (lectures are from 1710-1830 in INTS 1002). Despite what the Schedule says, there will be no screenings for this course. **You may not use cell phones, headphones, or ear buds in class. If you do, you'll be asked to leave, and will be docked points in your assessment.**

Your professor will be Toby Miller <tobym@ucr.edu>. His office hours are Wednesdays 1500-1700 in INTS 3136. Your teaching assistant will be SR Mishler <smish002@ucr.edu>. Her office hours are Wednesdays 1600-1700. Sadly, the University will not allow us to hold sections for this class, because the course was first taught without them, so you'll need to ask the TA about media-studies issues during her consultation times and in the lecture,

when there will be some occasions for you to speak in a semi-structured way amongst yourselves.

Textbooks

Robert W. McChesney and John Nichols. *The Death and Life of American Journalism: The Media Revolution That will Begin the World Again*. New York: Nation Books, 2010.

David E. Nye. *Technology Matters: Questions to Live With*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007.

Topics

WEEK ONE, January 3 and 5

Topic: INTRODUCTION

WEEK TWO, January 10 and 12

Topic: WHAT IS TECHNOLOGY?

Reading: Nye, Chapter 1

WEEK THREE, January 19 (the 17th is a holiday)

Topic: WHAT ARE THE MEDIA?

Reading: McChesney and Nichols, Appendix I and Appendix II

WEEK FOUR, January 24 and 26

Topic: TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

Reading: Nye, Chapter 1; McChesney and Nichols, Chapter 1

WEEK FIVE, January 31 and February 2

Topic: POLITICS

Reading: Watch the discussion “And the Winner is... The Television Networks”

http://hammer.ucla.edu/programs/detail/program_id/645

WEEK SIX, February 7 and 9

Topic: THE STATE

Reading: McChesney and Nichols, Chapters 3 and 4

WEEK SEVEN, February 14 and 16

Topic: THE MARKET

Reading: Nye, Chapter 8

WEEK EIGHT, February 23 (the 21st is a holiday)

Topic: THE FUTURE

Reading: Nye, Chapter 11; McChesney and Nichols, Conclusion

WEEK NINE, February 28 and March 2

Topic: ECOLOGY

Reading: Nye, Chapter 6

WEEK TEN, March 7 and 9

Topic: REVISION and EXAM

Assessment

YOU MUST COMPLETE EACH ITEM OF THE ASSESSMENT PROFILE OR YOU WILL FAIL THE COURSE. You will also fail the course if we find you have plagiarized, for instance by purchasing, borrowing, or otherwise copying someone else's work without attribution and submitting it as your own.

INCOMPLETES JEOPARDIZE YOUR FUNDING, STATURE, DEGREE QUALITY, AND EFFICIENCY. IF YOU ARE HAVING TROUBLE MEETING DEADLINES, SPEAK TO US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ASSUME, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE ESSAY IS DUE A WEEK EARLY AND PLAN ACCORDINGLY—THAT WAY ALL WILL BE SWEET, EVEN IF A NEUROTIC CAT EATS YOUR WORK AT WHAT APPEARS TO BE THE LAST MINUTE, OR YOUR HARD DRIVE IS OCCUPIED BY FORCES BEYOND OUR KEN. AND DON'T PLAN HOLIDAYS THAT WILL CONFLICT WITH THE EXAM!

Each assessment item will be based on your knowledge of lectures and readings.

Attendance at lectures is compulsory, and you must contribute to the small-group discussions of the readings and lectures that we'll convene during lectures, starting in week 3. Following those groups, we'll reconvene as a plenary—at that stage, we'll look to you to contribute occasionally to the full class, based on discussions in those groups.

Beginning in week 3, attendance and quizzes will be taken in each class through week 9 via the use of electronic clickers. Clickers can be purchased at the bookstore. The same clicker can be used throughout a student's time at UCR, but they must be registered EACH QUARTER. Please make sure to register your clicker. You can do so at <http://clickers.ucr.edu/clicker/login>. It is your responsibility to bring a clicker to every class and ensure that it is registering with the system.

In addition to scores given for attendance and participation (10%) and quizzes (each worth 5% for a total of 35%), there is an exam on March 9 in class (20%) and a 2,000-word essay due on February 28 (35%). Please don't ask how many pages that is—it depends on the font you use, amongst other factors of your choice!

For this paper, you must choose one of the following **two topics**:

- a) **What is the Technological Sublime and how has it functioned in US history?**
- OR**
- b) **“US journalism is dead.” Discuss the basis for such a statement.**