
COMPARATIVE COMMUNICATIONS HISTORY in Fall 2019 (CM2004A)

Course Code	CM2004A	Professor(s)	Justin McGuinness
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-402
Class Schedule	MR: 16:55-18:15 in G-002	Office Hours	Mon period 5, 15h20-16h35 in room 402 in Grenelle building, by prior appointment.
Credits	4	Email	jmcguinness@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	

Course Description

CM 2004 is a course with a historical focus, looking at the development of human communication practices and technologies. The interplay of speech, sight and sound in different communications regimes is the course's theoretical basis. Students will read a variety of texts examining the nature of communication in different times, places and cultures. They will discover how academics have reflected on the nature of oral and literate cultures, writing, printing and more recent recording and transmission technologies of all kinds, including notably digital media.

Another focus area is the changing production and circulation, presences and consumption of the image. The class will reflect upon the parallel development and expansion of mass media and the global circulation of cultural forms, many originating in the North Atlantic world. A broad span of media forms is covered, including the printed book and newspapers, photography, cinema, television and new media. In short, the aim of CM 2004 is to help students to reflect on media evolution and the interlinked nature of media and socio-cultural forms.

In theoretical terms, the aim is for students to think about how communications tools are used in different cultural contexts, to think about technologies and mediation. Is technology the ultimate determining factor or should we think in terms of a dialectic between the human and the technical? As the digital age takes shape, how have theorists attempted to go further in theorizing how body and machines work together in constructing mediation?

Course Learning Outcomes

Understand the ways in which the history of human mediated communication has been studied, while focusing on the theorization of the main phases of media emergence and, in particular, of

the role of technologies in shaping communication practices.

Understand various perspectives and positions on communications history elaborated by key communications theorists.

Understand how institutional actors, from dynastic empires and nation-states to corporations, and social actors and individuals have related to each other through mediated communication.

Understand, from a comparative perspective, how media change takes place and with what impact in a range of historical periods and geographical locations.

Understand the nature and impact of media convergence in the digital age, and be able to compare the emerging digital media paradigm with earlier periods of media flux and change.

General Education

Course Outline

DETAILED OVERVIEW OF COURSE THEMES IN COMPARATIVE COMMUNICATIONS HISTORY:

Introduction

What is mediated communication? Mediums, media and 'the media' / How does a comparative history of communication relate to the rest of the major in communications?

Theme 1: Primary orality

The emergence of visual culture in small-scale societies without writing / Archaeological evidence of early humankind / Ethnic memory and history in oral societies / The variety of visual culture / image and icon, symbol and sign / Parry Lord Hypothesis / Case study: the Quipu / And a contrast: What is new about new media?

Theme 2: Pre-modern media and biotope. The diversity of early 'literacies'

Where did writing begin? What was its impact on human societies? Hierarchy, bureaucracy and agriculture / *The Epic of Gilgamesh* / Pictograms, semasiographic writing, the rebus principle / hieroglyphs and cuneiform / The alphabet, from Uruk to Rome / Media / The first libraries / the possibilities offered by writing and digital technologies – *Phaedrus* and *Her*.

Theme 3: From scroll to codex

The book in the mediaeval Middle East and Europe / The Lindisfarne Gospels / The Qur'an of

Sultan Baybars / The manuscript: circulation and production / U. Eco's *In the Name of the Rose* / Case study: knowledge in mediaeval Baghdad

Theme 4: The Gutenberg Revolution

Where did print first appear? Why? / Reform and Counter-Reform / The Wycliffe Bible, the Sforza *Libro d'ore* and Vesaius *De humanis corporis fabrica* / Print vernaculars, the early press and propaganda / The rise of the reading public / the nation-state and Canada, the first post-national state? / Case study: the spread of learned Latin and French.

Theme 5: Four c's : Time-space compression, capitalism, consumption and community

The rise of industry and empire / inventions and infrastructure: photograph, telegraph and telephone / the city planned, piped and wired / spaces of consumption: great exhibitions and department stores / Case study: Second Empire Paris.

Theme 6: Mass society and communication

Massification of voice and image: radio, cinema and television / Communication and spaces, domestic and local, urban and national / The rise of the nuclear-family home / Sprawl town / Totalitarianism Case studies: *Electric Edwardians* and Nation-state and news: the BBC, 1954-1963, also Um Kalthoum, the Voice of the East.

Theme 7: Fragmentation, convergence and virtuality

The photograph as communication: histories personal and national, interactive individuals / Big Brother – or Little Brothers / Spaces of flows, networks of Control / Amazon, YouTube, FaceBook / Aerotropolis.

CM / HI 2004 (autumn 2019) COURSE OUTLINE:

NB The articles mentioned for a given date are those to be discussed in class on that day. Much of the material is available on Bb in the course materials file. Students are also required to read the whole of *Phaedrus* and chapters from Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy*.

Week I

Monday 02nd September Course overview: what have been the main shifts in mediated communication? how does media change take place? Different areas covered in the course: communication theory; interrelation between media, content and social forms; inventions, figures and events.

How does CM2004 fit into the major in Communications?

Theme 1: Primary orality

Thursday 05th September Theme: Communication, ritual and material culture.

Discussion of **Marshack's** "The art and symbols of ice-age man" and extracts from **Sale's** *After Eden* (on Bb). In-class viewing, *The Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (Werner Herzog)

NB Sunday 08th September, last day to drop or add classes.

Week II (primary orality continued)

Mon 09th September Further discussion of Sale's *After Eden*. Also: T.J. Clark, "Lucky Hunter Gatherers"

Thurs 12th September Walter Ong chapter 3, "Some psychodynamics of orality".

From **week III** onwards, students will present articles or book chapters to the class, either alone or in pairs. The presentations will relate the text to the broader themes covered in the course.

Week III

Theme 2: Pre-modern modern media and biotope. Diverse 'literacies'.

Sound, textile and sign: pre-industrial media to overcome distance and time.

Monday 16th September. Gleick "Drums that talk"

Thursday 19th September. Ascher and Ascher "Civilisation without writing", and Boone, "Writing and recording knowledge".

Week IV (literacy and its impact continued)

What did writing do to human consciousness? Some analyses.

Monday 23rd September. Reading: Ong, chapter 4, 'Writing restructures consciousness'. Also, extra reading: E. Havelock, "The Greek legacy".

Thursday 26 September. Introduction to the *Phaedrus*.

For week V, all students to watch **Her** (Spike Jonz, 2013) at home.

Week V (literacy and its impact continued)

Media and socio-cultural change: how was writing viewed in ancient Greece? How is it used and viewed in the digital age?

Monday 30th September. Discussion of the *Phaedrus*. Short exam on *Phaedrus*.

Thursday 03rd October. Further discussion of the *Phaedrus*. In-class reading of the last sixth of the dialogue, examining the place of writing.

Week VI

Monday 07th October. Listening exercise. Details to be announced in class.

Theme 3: From scroll to codex

Thurs 10th October. Readings: **Eco**, “A Mediaeval library” and **James Burke and Robert Ornstein** “Communication and Faith in the Middle Ages”. Extra: **William Dalrymple**, “The monastery of Mount Iviron, Mount Athos, Greece”.

Week VII

Theme 4: The Gutenberg Revolution

How did the medium of print change society?

Monday 14th October Sub-theme: Impact of print.

Mumford “The invention of printing”, on Bb, from C&H, pp.74-77

Eisenstein “Aspects of the printing revolution”, on Bb, from C&H, pp.78-86.

Thursday 17th October

Reading: **Walter Ong** chapter 5, ‘Print, space and closure’.

Extra readings: **Thompson**, “The trade in news”, C&H, pp.95-100 and **Graff** “Early modern literacies”, on Bb, from C&H, pp.86-95.

Week VIII

Monday 21st October

Theme 5: The four 'c's: time-space compression, capitalism, consumption and community.

Standage "Telegraphy – the Victorian Internet", C&H, pp.105-111

Carey "Time, space and the telegraph", C&H, pp.125-131.

Thurs 24th October.

Readings: **Benedict Anderson** (1983) *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso) extracts. Focus: chapter 2, "Cultural roots", section 'Apprehensions of Time', pp.28-40 and chapter 3, "The Origins of national consciousness", pp.41-48. **Museum visit** (Cité de l'architecture) after class to replace class of Monday 04th November.

Week IX Theme 6: Mass society & communication: image, sound, and speed.

Monday 28th November Williams "Dreamworlds of Mass Consumption" and **Lieven De Cauter** "The Panoramic Ecstasy".

Thursday 31 October. NO CLASS. Fall mini break.

Week X (Mass society & communication: image, sound, and speed, continued).

Mon 04 November. NO CLASS. Make-up class (museum visit) held on Thursday 24th October.

Thurs 07th November. IN-CLASS examination on the communications revolutions of the long nineteenth century: Standage, Carey, Anderson, Williams and De Cauter.

Week XI (Mass society and communication, continued)

Monday 11 November Readings: **Main viewing:** documentary *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon* available on YouTube. Reading: **Walter Benjamin**, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Re-production", on Bb. Optional reading: **Chapman** (2005) chapter 05, 'The

business and ideology of mass-culture', pp.143-179

Thursday 14 November Main reading: **Fowles**, "Mass media and the star-system" (in C&H, pp.175-182) and extracts from **Virginia Danielson's** "The Voice of Egypt" (Bb).

If time: **Tim Dant** (2002) "Pictures of the Past: Benjamin and Barthes on photography and history" in EJCS, vol.5 (1), pp.5-25.

Week XII (Mass society and communication continued)

Monday 18th November. In-class film-viewing.

Thursday 21st November. In-class film-viewing.

Week XIII Theme 7: Image, fragmentation, convergence and global communities

Monday 25th November. Discussion of film-viewing.

Thursday 28 November. Reading: **Mazzucato** (2018) "The State behind the iPhone".

Week XIV (Image, fragmentation, convergence and global communities)

Monday 02 December. Readings on digital platforms: **Soar** (2011) "It knows", **Burt** (2010) "Always on", and **Lanchester** (2017) "You are the product". If time, **J. van Loon**, "New media and networked (dis)embodiment". Discussion of final exam.

Friday 06th December. Last day of classes.

Final examination

Thursday 12th December at 15h30. Attendance is compulsory.

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is compulsory. Absences will be reflected in your performance in class tests. Explain your absences in a brief e-mail to jmcguinness@aup.edu. If you miss more than six class sessions without very good reasons, you will not pass the course.

Grading Policy

CM 2004 Assessment structure

Grades will be awarded on the basis of six basic elements. (Homework to be handwritten or typed on A4 paper, in TNR font, size 11, spacing 1,5)

1. Assignments related to readings or class activities – 60% of grade.

1.1 Presentation of reading to class. 10%. **From week 3 onwards**

1.2 Brief exam on the *Phaedrus* and *Her.* 10%. **Monday 30th September.**

1.3 Reflective essay on a radio discussion, listened to in class: three sides of A4 paper minimum, to be written at home. 10%. **Due on Thursday 17th October.**

1.4 Exam on the second third of the course. 20%. **Thursday 07th November**

1.5 Short quizzes, 10%. **Throughout the semester.**

2. Final examination – 40% of grade.

Essay to be handed in on **Thursday 12th December in final exam period** (20% of grade)

Written exam (20%) to be held in final exam period **Thursday 12th December.**

KEY DATES

Presentation of reading to class. From week III onwards.

Short exam on *Phaedrus* and *Her.* Monday 30th September.

Take-home reflective essay due: Thursday 17th October.

Exam on second third of course: 07th November.

Final essay (first draft): due Thursday 28th November.

Rewrite of final essay due: Thursday 12th December.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STATEMENT: As an Anglophone university, The American University of Paris is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the undergraduate level. Most courses require scholarly research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end, professors include English proficiency among the criteria in student evaluation, often referring students to the university Writing Lab where they may obtain help on specific academic assignments. Proficiency in English is monitored at various points throughout the student's academic career, most notably during the admissions and advising processes, while the student is completing general education requirements, and during the accomplishment of degree program courses and senior theses.

GRADING POLICY: There follow a list of grades and the sort of performance expected to achieve each grade. These standards are followed in all courses in the Department of Global Communications. They are held to reflect lecturers' common sense vision of what constitutes student work at each grade level.

A Almost always in class on time. Fully prepared to participate in class. Has done all the relevant reading and sometimes more. Outstanding performance in tests and examinations. Writes clearly and concisely.

B Almost always in class on time. Frequently participates in both class discussion and group work. Tries hard in examinations and writes well.

C Average effort. Sometimes late. Not always ready to participate but pays attention. On the whole has read the required texts.

D Generally unprepared and this is reflected by an unwillingness to participate in class discussion. Uses class time for other activities. Generally uninterested in course material.

F No evidence of preparation for class. Often late or absent. Fails to hand in assignments on time. Misses more than three classes without proof of a legitimate reason.

Other
