
COMPARATIVE COMMUNICATIONS HISTORY: MEDIA & MEMORY in Fall 2018 (CM2004FB7)

Course Code	CM2004FB7	Professor(s)	Charles Talcott
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-402
Class Schedule	MR: 13:45-15:05 in PL-3	Office Hours	Tuesdays 17:00-18:00 or by appointment
Credits	4	Email	ctalcott@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2018	Office Tel. Ext.	575

Course Description

FirstBridge: Memory-making

CM2004 Comparative Communications History

Media, Memory & Material/Visual Culture

What makes up our memories? What human capacities, techniques and tools provide historical and lived continuity? How do media, social institutions and designed spaces, such as museums, memorials, and monuments contribute to our lived sense of history and time? This FirstBridge combines Psychology and Global Communications Studies in order to explore the human practice and art of making memories. From Paleolithic cave paintings to contemporary museums and digital photography, from the earliest vocalizations and songs to Auto-tune and mp3s, from archaic scratches of signs and ancient libraries to modern archives and servers, from co-narratives in childhood to national memories, we will study the co-evolution of media and the possibilities of knowing, understanding, remembering. How are speech, inscription, writing, narrative, and storytelling fundamental to the manifold ways of understanding self, world and time?

CM2004 examines the evolution of human communication practices, media forms, platforms and technologies in parallel with social, cultural, political and psychodynamic developments. We will consider the nature of communication in different times, places and cultures, studying oral and literate cultures, the development of writing, printing, imaging and recording and the emergence of transmission technologies and digital media. How have emergent technologies and forms of mediation contributed to human communication, let alone to the human conception of self and to civil society development? How are communications tools used in different cultural contexts? How have communication and media forms expanded human capacities to build, shape, change and know not only our worlds, but also to know ourselves? From communications and cultural studies perspectives, students will undertake an exploration of

'institutions of memory.' We will trace the historical, cultural and technological evolutions of intensely creative 'mediated places' from Paleolithic caves in the South of France to digital archives in the heart of Paris with special focus on museums, monuments and memorials.

CM 2004 is a core Global Communications course with a historical focus, concentrating on the development of media forms, communication practices and technologies. We will study the interplay of speech, sight and sound in different communications regimes while examining the nature of communication in different times, places and cultures. We will discover how scholars 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? What are the historical conditions that contribute to the emergence of new media technologies and novel communication practices? How has the very 'concept' of 'communication' developed in various times and contexts? As the digital age takes shape, how have theorists attempted to go further in theorizing how body and machines work together in constructing mediation?

This course is offered within a FirstBridge Learning Community and is paired with Professor Brian Schiff's course PY1091 Introduction to Memory Studies.

Course Learning Outcomes

General Education

The general education program at AUP consists of four requirements: Speaking the World, Modeling the World, Mapping the World, and Comparing Worlds Past and Present.

This course can be used to fulfill the "Comparing Worlds Past and Present" requirement and as such has the following learning outcomes:

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1. Students will enhance their information literacy, acquiring an understanding of how information is produced, and discovering how to evaluate, create and use it effectively and ethically. Students will develop an awareness of the conversational nature of scholarship and be able to identify appropriate secondary sources to conduct effective research.
 2. Students will develop public speaking and presentation skills in order to participate effectively and appropriately in academic discussion and as community leaders, in a professional and engaging manner that can convey complex information.
 3. Students will be able to appreciate place as a site of knowledge, to interrogate the multiple meanings of place and develop a more informed and sensitive understanding of interactions between people and their physical environment.
 4. Students will learn to formulate questions that can lead to greater learning and productive individual and group research projects.
 5. Students will strengthen the concrete skills and aptitudes to be successful at AUP and beyond, such as study skills and time management, the mindsets that lead to lifelong learning, and desired classroom behaviors and interpersonal skills.

Course Outline

CM 2004 Fall 2018 COURSE OUTLINE:

NB The articles listed for a given date are those we will discuss in class on that day. Much of the material is available on BlackBoard in the course materials file.

Week 1 Early memory spaces: the emergence of pictorial places Paleolithic Cave paintings & ceremonial spaces

Course overview

Theme 1: Primary communication

Monday Sept 10 Palaeolithic cave painting - the first museum/memory place?

Thursday Sept 13 In-class viewing, scenes from: *The Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (Werner Herzog)

Reading: Alexander Marshack's "The art and symbols of ice-age man"

Pierre Nora "General Introduction: Between Memory & History" from *Realms of Memory: Conflicts and divisions* pp 1-7

Jacques Le Goff "Conclusion: The Stakes of Memory" (2 pages)

Week 2 Signs, Symbols and External Memory

Monday Sept 17 Communication, Ritual, Memory: Unique communication/memory systems

Speculating on and interpreting the meaning of a memory place: Chauvet Caves

Stephan Feuchtwang "Ritual & Memory"

"Drums That Talk" from *The Information*, James Gleick (13-27)

Thursday Sept 20 Invention of Sign, Symbol and the possibility of Narrative

"Civilization without Writing-The Incas and the Quipu", Ascher and Ascher (on Bb, C&H, pp.21-26)

Early writing and recording systems

"Media in ancient empires", Harold Innis, C&H, pp.14-20.

Week 3 Orality, Literacy & Memory

Monday Sept 24 Reading: Walter Ong *Orality & Literacy*, Chapters 1-3: "The Orality of Language"; "The modern discovery of primary oral cultures"; "Some psychodynamics of orality"

Optional: Extracts from the Epic of Gilgamesh.

Theme 2: Orality, Literacy and the impact of symbolic print

Thursday Sept 27

The rise of the alphabet

In-class listening exercise: BBC "The Alphabet"

Week 4 The 'Symbolic' Revolution

Monday Oct 1

Readings "Persistence of the Word" from *The Information*, James Gleick (28-50)

Walter Ong, chapter 4, "Writing restructures consciousness"

The development of the capacity to symbolize

Thursday Oct 4 No class – Cultural Programs trip to Warsaw Poland

Week 5 The Image of Memory: Remembering/Forgetting

Monday Oct 9 'Picturing' traumatic memory

Screening: *Waltz with Bashir*, by Ari Folman

Thursday Oct 12 The trace of memory (writing as metaphorical memory)

'Picturing' traumatic memory

Reading Freud's metaphor of memory: "The Mystic Writing Pad"

Week 6 Writing, Memory and Human relations

Monday Oct 16

Reading: Plato's *Phaedrus*

(Watch on your own time: Spike Jonze's film *HER*)

Thursday Oct 19

Reading: Plato's *Phaedrus*

Comparing and contrasting Jonze's *HER* with Plato's *Phaedrus*

Week 7 The figure of "writing"

Monday Oct 22

Comparative modeling: comparing and contrasting the figure of writing in *Phaedrus*, *HER*, and Kafka's "In the Penal Colony"

Thursday Oct 25 Review and preparation for Midterm

Week 8 Midterm

Monday Oct 29 *In-class midterm exam*

Wednesday-Friday Oct 31-Nov 2 ****University Holiday**** no classes

Week 9 Monuments & meaning: interpreting social memorials

Monday Nov 5 Reading: Antoine Prost "Monuments to the Dead"

Thursday Nov 8 Reading: Jay Winter "Sites of Memory"

Reminder 2nd stage of Memory-Places projects : Final work on the analytical essay: Due November 13

Week 10 The Visual Revolution – the Memorable Image

Monday Nov 12 what is a photograph?

Bill Kovarik Chapter 4: Photography: Giving Vision to History

Thursday Nov 15 Reading an Image

Roland Barthes, *camera lucida, the stadium, the punctum*

The materiality of the photograph and its use in the press

Week 11 Cultures of Display & the Institutions of Memory: Museum as Medium

Monday Nov 19

What is a museum?

Tuesday Nov 20

Julie Thomas "Manipulations of Memory"

Visit to the National Museum of Immigration, Paris, Palais de Porte Doree

Thursday Nov 22

Edward Alexander and Mary Alexander, Chap 1 "What is a museum?" from *Museums in Motion*

Week 12 The Visual Revolution II – the Moving Image

Monday Nov 26

Kovarik Chapter 5: Motion Pictures, Dream Factories and Popcorn Palaces

Thursday Nov 29

The 'Time' of Cinema

Cinema, Memory & 'mediated' Justice In-class screening

Week 13 The 'Aura' of Memory & the problem of repetition, representation, reproduction

Monday Dec 3

Reading: Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

Thursday Dec 6

Memory in Contemporary Art

Week 14 Last Week of Class: Review

Monday Dec 10 Last class – In-class summary & review

Tuesday, December 11 ***FirstBridge*** Cohort evening Memory Project Presentations & performances

Week 15 – **DECEMBER 20, 12:00-14:30***

Final examination & presentation period

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
Phaedrus	Plato	Penguin	9780140449747	Yes

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.

Grading Policy

GRADING, ASSESSMENT, ASSIGNMENTS & DEADLINES:

Please note: this course involves a significant amount of academic reading.

Your understanding of the course material will be monitored in a number of ways, including:

1. **Attendance, Participation and FirstBridge Learning Community Engagement, including one presentation of an article or chapter to the class (in pairs):** 10%
2. **Reflection writing exercises and essays:** assigned essays and written responses: 20%
3. **Mid-term exam:** 10%
4. **Final Exam:** 10%
5. **FirstBridge 'Memory Place' Research Project 50% (three parts) 20%, 20% 10%**

Over the course of the semester, students will conduct research on an established 'memory place' in Paris/Ile de France.

The 'memory' research project will integrate the two sections of our Firstbridge. We will dedicate some of our Reflective Seminar time on Tuesdays to this project. Students will begin by researching and choosing a "memory place" in Paris/Ile de France – a museum, an archive, a library, a memorial site, etc. The 'memory place' project will involve **three** assignments, distributed over the semester:

1) a descriptive, 'ethnographic' overview essay of the material nature and contents of the place of memory in Paris

2) a more interpretative 'analytical' research essay using scholarly sources where you will contextualize the memory place historically, culturally, socially and, possibly politically. This essay will also analyze the psychological, social and cultural significance of the place of memory while examining the enabling media and communications frameworks and technologies that have made the memory place and the archived material, meaning and messages possible and accessible. We will undertake a critical examination of the structure and function of the 'place of memory'. The project will include oral and written components.

3) a 'creative/artistic' conceptual intervention/representation that communicates and engages an audience with the fundamental nature of your memory place. This can take a wide variety of creative forms: a video, a sound piece, an installation, a performance, a visual/graphic essay, a digital representation. We will explore various potential form that the project can take.

More information regarding this project will be presented in both FirstBridge classes and the Reflective seminar.

GRADING POLICY: The following guidelines will be used to evaluate and grade your work and performance.

A = Exceptional; the quality of the student's work meets the highest standards of the department and the university, going well beyond the assigned requirements. A student demonstrates creative mastery of the course material. Work evinces great planning, extensive

development, originality, rigorous research and argumentation, unique ideas and excellent written expression. 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 = Very good; A student demonstrates a thorough understanding of the course material. Work fulfils all the assigned requirements and then some. Work demonstrates careful planning and organization, strong, well-formulated argumentation and a solid grasp of course concepts and material. Written work is clear, cogent and correctly constructed. Nearly always on time in class. Frequently participates in both class discussion and group work.

C = Satisfactory; Work satisfies all the basic minimum requirements for the course. Work reflects a basic understanding of all the course fundamentals. Average effort. Sometimes late for class. Not always ready to participate but pays attention. On the whole has read the required texts. Written work covers all the necessary requirements in terms of content and form and shows reasonable command of argumentation, organization, style and grammar.

D = Unsatisfactory; Generally unprepared and this is reflected in reluctance to participate in class discussions. Uses class time for other activities, such as checking a cellphone, Facebooking, texting. Generally uninterested in course material. Work submitted is incomplete; Written work is confused in argumentation and lacks unity and coherence. Claims are unsubstantiated. Written work does not adhere to basic academic standards in terms of content, form, register and style; written work contains grammatical and stylistic errors of various kinds

F = Poor; 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. No evidence of effort to fulfil even the most basic of course requirements.



Other

Classroom Digital Etiquette Policy

Please turn off cell phones and mobile devices before class begins. Our full attention and concentration needs to be on the course material and the questions and topics at hand. Laptop computers and tablets can be used for note-taking and reading of digital texts, but please, for your sake and your colleagues', do not multi-task in class, i.e., checking email, engaging in social media, etc. Let's collectively avoid the "shallows" of hyper-mediated environments during

class time and work to cultivate a space of intellectual development and rich conversation. If I feel that you are distracted by technology, I will ask you to put away your laptop or tablet. In aggravated cases, I may dismiss you from the classroom as such behavior undermines the concentration and learning of your colleagues. I also will call for 'no digital technology' days. Please have paper and pen/pencils at hand.