

History of the News Media in 20th-Century America
Prof. David Greenberg
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Department of Journalism & Media Studies

Class Time: Wednesday 3.10-5.50 **Room:** Seminar room, 184 College Ave.
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Office Hours: M, W 1-3:00pm **Office:** 106 DeWitt, 185 College Ave.

Course no.: 16:194:663:01 (journalism/media studies)
 16:510:561:02 (history)
 17:194:594:01 (communication/information)

Syllabus

Description. Although the formal name of the course is “Media History,” in practice we focus on the United States in the 20th century (and the early 21st). In the course, we examine the news media not as freestanding institutions but as part and parcel of American politics and culture in the last hundred or so years. We explore, more or less sequentially, key periods of change and issues of controversy, from the Progressive era to the Cold War to the post-9/11 era. During these formative moments, journalists and news institutions did more than simply transmit the news of what happened to the public; they interacted in complex ways with both elite political actors and everyday citizens—simultaneously expressing and shaping attitudes about leaders, events, and policy decisions. The class examines these interactions in an effort to understand the underlying ideological and cultural currents of American life. *A strong knowledge of U.S. history and proficient written and spoken English* are expected.

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 are essential. Students may miss one class during the semester, no questions asked. Students who miss more than one class—or substantial parts 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. (A student on track to receive an A will instead receive an A-, etc.) In case of severe illness or other extraordinary events that necessitate a second absence, students must provide documentation.

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.

- **Reading.** The class reading comes to roughly 200 pages a week.

- **Short Paper. Due February 13.** You are to write a 4-page essay (maximum) dealing with historical changes in journalism and politics between the 19th and 20th Centuries. Besides the historical material from the readings, you should make use of the theoretical material from the first two weeks, or other theoretical material if you prefer. (Assigned readings can be cited with in-text references; outside materials should be footnoted.) 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 provide a broad overview, aiming 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 in its historical and intellectual context. Typically this will involve giving some background: Who is the author? How was the book received upon publication? To answer these questions, it's necessary to do some research and read other works on the topic. I may be able to offer suggestions.

- **Term Paper.** The research for this presentation should form the basis of a 12-page paper, **due December 4.** 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. (Some examples will be available on the Sakai site.) The paper should 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 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 the class presentation—not the center of it.

Second, the paper 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 put forward your own distinctive interpretation.

Some other points to note:

- Please pay attention to your writing. I have asked you to buy *Common Errors in English Usage*. Please consult it often.
- Use “Chicago” footnoting style, based on the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The *Chicago Manual of Style* website is here: <http://tinyurl.com/35v8ru>
- We will be using Sakai for the class. Go to <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal> and log in using your Rutgers ID and password. On the site I will post announcements, assignments, readings, and so on. Please check regularly.
- Please check your Rutgers University email regularly.

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.
- I am on Facebook (but not Twitter), but I don’t “friend” students. Although I hope you will find me approachable and even perhaps likable, social media can blur boundaries that I think are important to maintain. So we’ll use Sakai and email for our online interactions.
- Academic Integrity. Plagiarism and cheating are, of course, forbidden, according to Rutgers University policy. You are responsible for reviewing and obeying these policies. Every year the policies grow longer. Last I checked, it could be found here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/policy-on-academic-integrity>.

On plagiarism, this statement—which I can no longer find on the Web—comes from 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.

- Two other important rules of citation.
 1. Do not identify an author only by his or her last name, as if we all know who this person is. On the first reference, give the whole name and an identifier. This may be common in the sciences or social sciences, but it's awkward in historical, humanistic, or general interest writing.

WRONG: Greenberg (2003) argues that Nixon never really made a comeback.

RIGHT: Historian David Greenberg, in his tedious book *Nixon's Shadow* (2003), argues that Nixon never made a successful comeback.

If you're writing about someone really famous, like Lincoln or Shakespeare, a last name alone can suffice.

2. Never simply use someone else's sentence to substitute for your own thought, even if you put it in quotation marks and footnote it. You must identify the speaker or writer within the text itself.

WRONG: Human rights monitors criticized the Guantanamo prison from the start. "Guantanamo has become the gulag of our times, entrenching the notion that people can be detained without any recourse to the law."¹

This is wrong because a reader doesn't know what to make of the quote. Is the quote being endorsed uncritically? Why? Was it uttered by an authority on the subject?


RIGHT: Human rights monitors criticized the Guantanamo prison from the start. “Guantanamo has become the gulag of our times, entrenching the notion that people can be detained without any recourse to the law,” said Roed Trevor-Larssen, the secretary-general of Amnesty International, in 2005.¹

Reading List.

Paul Brians, *Common Errors in English Usage* (William, James & Company).
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 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 Hallin, *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam* (U of California Press).
Kathryn Olmsted, *Challenging the Secret Government* (U of North Carolina Press).
Eric Alterman, *Sound and Fury* (Cornell University Press).
Frank Rich, *The Greatest Story Ever Sold* (Penguin).


Weekly Assignments.

 **Book** available at Rutgers University Bookstore.

 **Article** available online on the Sakai site.

Sep. 4 **Introduction**


Sep. 11 **Thinking About History**


 Alan Bennett, *The History Boys*.


 E. H. Carr, *What Is History?* pp. 3-35.

Sep. 18 **Thinking About Media**

 Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*

 James Carey, *Communication as Culture*, ch. 1.

 Daniel Boorstin, *The Image*, ch. 1.

 Christopher Lasch, “Journalism, Publicity & the Lost Art of Argument.”


Sep. 25 **The 20th Century and Changes in the News Media**

 Michael McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics*

 Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News*, ch. 4.

Oct. 2 **Muckraking**

 Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Muckraking: Three Landmark Articles*.

 Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform*, ch. 5.

- 📁 Thomas Leonard, *The Power of the Press*, ch. 7.
- 📁 Kathleen L. Endres, “Woman and the Larger Household: The Big Six and Muckraking,” *American Journalism* 14:3-4 (Summer-Fall, 1997): 262-282.

Oct. 9

The Age of Ballyhoo

- 📖 Charles Ponce de Leon, *Self-Exposure: Human Interest Journalism & the Emergence of Celebrity in America*
- 📁 William Leach, *Land of Desire*, Chs 10, 11.
- 📁 Jackson Lears “From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture.”

Oct. 16

Photojournalism & Realism

- 📖 William Stott, *Documentary Expression & Thirties America*
- 📁 Lawrence Levine, “The Historian and the Icon: Photography and the History of the American People in the 1930s and 1940s” (ch. 13 in *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History*).

Oct. 23

FDR and the Media Presidency

- 📁 Lawrence Levine, *The People and the President*, Preface & Introduction, New Deal, Packing the Court, Arsenal of Democracy.
- 📁 Betty Houchin Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*.
- 📁 Richard W. Steele, “The Great Debate: Roosevelt, the Media, and the Coming of the War, 1940-1941.”
- 📁 Anne Norton, *Republic of Signs*, Ch. 3.
- 📁 Christopher Clausen, “The President and the Wheelchair.”

Oct. 30

Cold War & Television

- 📖 Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium*.
- 📖 Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier Than the Sword*, ch. 10.
- 📁 Stephen Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, ch. 7.

Nov. 6

The Civil Rights Movement and the Liberal Media

- 📖 Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier Than the Sword*, ch. 11.
- 📁 Mary Ann Watson *The Expanding Vista*, ch. 4.
- 📁 Sasha Torres, *Black, White and in Color*, chs. 1 & 2.
- 📁 Allison Graham, *Framing the South*, Introduction.
- 📁 Dan T. Carter, “Good Copy,” *Media Studies Journal*, 12:3, 1998.

Nov. 13

Vietnam

- 📖 Daniel Hallin, *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam*.
- 📖 Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier Than the Sword*, ch. 12.

📁 Chester Pach, “And That’s the Way It Was,” in *The Sixties: From Memory to History*.

Nov. 20

Nixon, Watergate & The New Muckraking

📖 Kathryn Olmsted, *Challenging the Secret Government: The Post-Watergate Investigations of the CIA & FBI*.

📖 Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier Than the Sword*, ch. 13.

📁 Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News*, ch. 5.

📁 Mark Feldstein, “Watergate Revisited,” *American Journalism Review*, August/September 2004.

<http://www.ajr.org/article.asp?id=3735>

Nov. 27

NO CLASS

Dec. 4

The Conservative Ascendancy

📖 Eric Alterman, *Sound and Fury*, chs. 1-6, 8.

📖 Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier Than the Sword*, ch. 14.

📁 Sidney Blumenthal, *Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, Intro, chs. 1, 6.

Dec. 11

9/11 and Terrorism

📖 Frank Rich, *The Greatest Story Ever Sold*, Chs 1-9.

📁 Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East*, ch. 5.

📁 Readings on Media and Iraq War.