

MCO 418 – History of Mass Communication

TTH 9:15 to 10:30, Stauffer A15

Fall 2003

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Objective: This is an upper-division course. It is designed to provide you with a glimpse into the history of those who set the foundations of our industries. It will introduce you to people, politics and the environment from which our industries grew. It will expose you to historical works reflecting people, events, and their influence.

Required Text: Christopher Sterling and John Kittross, *Stay Tuned: A History of American Broadcasting*, Third Edition, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2002.

Assignments: (1) Readings as directed on the schedule. Stay ahead in your reading. I will give you questions to search out as you read. (2) Careful note taking is required, especially on films and videos. (3) Attendance. There is no way to catch up on a film if you miss the showing in class.

Exams: There will be two exams. One mid-term, a second at the end of the semester. These will cover the scheduled reading, viewing, and lecture material. The regular exams are all short answer and essays. You will need a Blue Book for each exam.

Grades and Exams: (1) Grades will be determined by simply averaging your exams and your term project. All carry equal weight. (2) Attend class without fail. I will guide you through that door stop we're calling your "required text." We will discuss the films and their significance in history. (3) The two exams cover the chapters, films and lectures. (4) There are no make-up exams without formalized written/documentation from, for example, the ASU health center, a funeral home, etc. If events warrant such a make-up, notify me immediately. Make-up exams required, will be scheduled during the final exam week, as per ASU directions, and will be comprehensive, from the textbook, and always essay in nature. (5) Incompletes are given in accordance with University rules. (6) Grades for each exam will be posted. (6) Grades are assigned according to the following GPS scale:

60-54=4.0-3.4=A; 53-47=3.3-2.7=B; 46-37= 2.6-1.7=C; 36-27= 1.6-0.7=D; below 27=F.

The basic rule... Special considerations are given to one person, only when that same consideration can be afforded to all. So, please plan your attendance accordingly.

Grades are earned they are not negotiated!

Procedures: Lectures and films generally follow the topics in your syllabus. The term “generally” gives us leeway to develop discussions of specific interest to the class as well as accommodate discussions revolving around the development of your term project. The class schedule is primarily organized to help you stay current with your reading schedule and provide us overall subject direction. It will help you space your reading evenly across the semester and thus you’ll be able to stay ahead of the lectures, studying as you go.

Please turn off all electronic devices prior to class.

Notes on Films: You will be tested on film content, so it is essential that you take notes. Check the suggested for at the conclusion of your syllabus.

Term Project Option 1: Your term project is an oral history. You may conduct this history interview with a parent, grandparent, relative, even media pioneer (if you know one), or I am happy to provide you with interview subject. The person does not need to be familiar with the media. You will bring media topics into the general history interview and you will hear living history. The history will be prepared for the family, for the class, and I am hopeful that ASU Special Collections will be a repository for your work. This option teaches you interviewing techniques, organizational skills, writing, draft editing, and it will make history come alive. It is most helpful for those looking at reporting and professional careers.

Term Paper Option 2: The ASU Library Special Collections has several varieties of media and media related papers and recorded video histories such as those from Newsweek Inc. etc. This option is to draft a term paper from those archives. The paper needs to be twenty pages, including footnotes. The footnotes are to follow precisely the Chicago or MLA Style manual. This option teaches you archival research skills, writing and research styles. It is most helpful for those anticipating graduate school or careers such as law, teaching, etc.

Undergraduates may select either option 1 or 2. Graduate students are required to do both.

Class Schedule:

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| Week 1, 8-25 | – Orientation
– Term project discussion |
| Week 2, 9-3 | – Context of Historical Eras to Newspaper
– “Newspapers”
Reading Chapter 1 |
| Week 3, 9-8 | – Context of Industrial and Progressive Eras to Radio
– “The Pulitzer”
Reading Chapter 2 |
| Week 4, 9-15 | – The Roaring ’20s – Radio and RadioVision
– “The Telephone”
Reading Chapter 3 |

- Week 5, 9-22 – More on the '20s – Radio and Documentary Development
 – Oral History Decisions and Directives
 – “Empire of the Air”
 Reading Chapter 4
- Week 6, 9-29 – The Great Depression – Radio, Television, and Documentary
 – “Golden Age of Radio (audio)”
 – “Nanook”
 Reading Chapter 5
- Week 7, 10-6 – More on the Depression – Radio and TV
 – “Radio Priest”
 Reading Chapter 6
- Week 8, 10-13 – Europe’s Phony War – Television’s Development to the False Dawn
 – Jenkins and Baird
 Reading Chapter 7

Exam I – Week 8

- Week 9, 10-20 – Post War Television
 – Farnsworth and Zworykin
 – “Big Dream Small Screen”
 Reading Chapter 8
- Week 10, 10-27 – The Age of Television
 – “History of Television” – Program excerpts.
 Reading Chapter 9
- Week 11, 11-3 – Television Scandals
 – “The Quiz Show”
 Reading Chapter 10
- Week 12, 11-10 – News Become Profitable
 – “60-Minutes Tabloid News”
 – “Business and the Press”
 Reading Chapter 11
- Week 13, 11-17 – Documentary Evolution to Profitable Magazines and Reality
 – “Harvest of Shame”
 – “Nightline”
 Readings Chapter 12

Week 14, 11-24 – New Technology, Consumer Decision
– “Nerd 101: History of the Internet”
Readings – Study Review Questions

Week 15, 12-1 – Historical Issues – Sex, Violence and Stereotyping
– “Hollywood Censorship Wars”
– “The Business of Sex” – Murrow Radio Documentary

Week 16, 12-8 – **Exam II** (last day of class)

The final exam is scheduled for early Wednesday, morning, December 11, 2003 @ 7:40 AM to 9:30AM

“Education is what you have left after you have forgotten everything you have learned.”
Author Unknown

Directions for Film Notes:

Film Title: “Nanook of the North”

Credits (footnote): Robert Flaherty, Filmmaker, 1920, redistributed Kino Video, 1998.

Setting: 1920 Hudson Bay Canada. Life in the frozen arctic. Flaherty, explorer and filmmaker provides the first human drama in the documentary general. The film is a classic first and establishes Flaherty as a pioneer in documentary film making.

* notes on chronological development of the film

* notes on documentary techniques

* notes conclude with your expressions

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Notes need be no longer than a page of two for each film. This will vary according to the film.