History of Mass Media
JAMS 460; Spring 2020
MW: 11-12:15pm; BOL B52
Prof. Richard Popp
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Office Hours: TBA

Teaching Assistant: TBA

Course Description: Welcome to the History of Mass Media. The purpose of this class is to explore the social and cultural development of modern media. We’ll go all the way back to Medieval times, but much of the course will focus on the roughly 150 years stretching from the Civil War-era to the late 20th century, when media like the popular daily paper, the photograph, film, radio, mass magazines, the telephone, comics, recorded music, and TV became engrained parts of everyday life. Though the focus will be on the United States, the course will pay close attention to how American media took shape in an international context.

During class, we’ll take an in-depth approach by examining media from the eras discussed. We’ll also talk about the tools (beyond Google and YouTube) that are out there for unearthing these bits of the past. Because the readings will provide the groundwork for our discussions, it is imperative that you keep up with the readings.

Course Objectives: By the end of this course, you will:
1) Understand how media industries and technologies took shape over time and roles they have played in broader processes of social change
2) Understand how media are shaped by the social, cultural, and economic currents of their time
3) Improve your ability to find the media artifacts that scholars, journalists, PR professionals, and other content creators use to write about the past
4) Improve your media analysis skills, both oral and written
5) Improve your ability to read and understand media studies research and scholarship

Readings: All course readings are available on the course Canvas page, either as PDF documents or as links to websites. If you have any issues accessing online course material, please call the campus help desk (414-229-4040) or email: help@uwm.edu.