This is last year’s syllabus and is subject to change for Spring 2017.

New Media History  
JAMS 660 Fall 2016  
Prof. Michael Z. Newman, Bolton Hall 572  
mznewman@uwm.edu @mznewman  
Class meetings: MW 9:30-10:45  
Office hours: Wednesdays 11-1

This course considers the emergence of new media technologies in historical and social contexts. It begins with the assumption that the term *new media* must be understood to include all media as emergent phenomena; any medium was new once. Our understanding of new media as a term describing recent and contemporary digital and networked technologies should benefit from an understanding of the long history of new technologies of communication.

The course also considers how existing media change to adapt to innovations in technology, such that an old medium like television can be approached as a form of new media when it develops new technologies such as digital sets and recording devices. We will approach new media as a way of understanding both emergent and developing technologies.

**Required texts:**

- Michael Z. Newman, *Video Revolutions: On the History of a Medium*
- Tim Wu, *The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires*
- *You’ve Got Mail* (1998 motion picture)
- Readings posted to D2L as PDFs or links to websites

**Assignments:**

- **Readings Responses:** 10x2=20%
  
  You are required to submit at least 5 reading responses of minimum 200 words during each half of the course. The halfway point is October 25. If you have submitted fewer than 5 on October 25, you cannot make up any of these. Each reading response should engage with the reading for a particular day and must be submitted before the beginning of class time for full credit. Responses submitted after the beginning of class can only earn a maximum of 1 out of 2 points. If you submit more than 5, the top 5 grades will
count. We will circulate a sign-up sheet for reading responses on the first day of class. For more info see the assignment prompt in D2L.

-First project=10%
The first project will be a paper of minimum 1500 words analyzing a particular “old” media artifact using primary sources such as newspaper or magazine articles or advertisements to understand how they were regarded in the past. The cutoff for “old” media is September 7, 2006, and none of your sources may be more recent than that date. For this assignment, you may have an extra credit opportunity to revise the paper based on my feedback to improve your grade or, if you have gotten a very good grade initially (9 or 10), to possibly place out of taking an exam depending on the quality of the revision. The deadline for the extra credit opportunity is November 22.

-Take home exams 15x2=30%
Essay format. Not cumulative. Entirely based on our readings and class discussions. No surprises. You’ll have 48 hours to answer them.

-Final research project including the following components:
   ➢ proposal 3
   ➢ bibliographic essay 3
   ➢ Presentation 3
   ➢ Paper 21
   ➢ total=30%
   If any preliminary piece of the final project is missing (proposal, bibliographic essay, presentation), the maximum grade you can get on the paper will be a C (15/21). More info on this assignment to come later in the semester.

-Participation 5x2=10%
This grade will be calculated twice, once in week 7 (5) and once at the end of the semester.
Ways to earn good grades in participation:
   ➢ Coming to class having done the reading, which you have brought with you.
   ➢ Speaking intelligently in class on the topic of the day’s readings.
   ➢ Answering the instructor’s questions.
   ➢ Asking questions about things you don’t understand or want to know more about.
   ➢ Seeming like you care.
Mostly irrelevant to your participation grade:
   ➢ Showing up.

Policies, policies, policies, policies:

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please read the UWM Academic Misconduct Guide for Students: https://www4.uwm.edu/dos/conduct/academic-misconduct.cfm
Attendance is mandatory. You may miss one class without penalty in each half of the course. Each additional absence during each half of the course will result in a penalty of 2 points off your final grade. If you have to miss more than one class during each half, you should speak with me in person during my office hours.

Extra credit will be given only as specified on the syllabus by rewriting the first paper based on my feedback. No other extra credit assignments will be given.

Please familiarize yourself with the university’s policies on students with disabilities, religious observance, students called to active military duty, incompletes, discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment), complaint procedures, grade appeal procedures, and final examinations. Go to http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf for more information about these policies.

Schedule:

Week 1 Intro

9.7 Course overview

Week 2 Historical Continuities in Familiarizing New Media

9.12 Nancy Baym, “Making New Media Make Sense,” Personal Connections in the Digital Age (Polity, 2010), 22-49 At this class, half the class will need to demonstrate how they are reading and taking notes on PDF files and bringing them to class

9.14 Kristen Drotner, “Dangerous Media? Panic Discourses and Dilemmas of Modernity.” Paedagogica Historica 35.3 (1999): 593-619 At this class, the other half of the class will need to demonstrate how they are reading and taking notes on PDF files and bringing them to class

Week 2 Theorizing Medium & Technology

9.19 Walter J. Ong, “Writing Restructures Consciousness,” Orality and Literacy, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2002), 78-116 First project discussion today or Wednesday


Week 3 Telegraph


McLuhan (North Carolina, 1982), 3-29

Week 4 Telephone

10.3 Claude S. Fischer, “The Telephone in America,” America Calling: A Social History of the Telephone to 1940 (California, 1992), 33-59

10.5 Fischer, “Personal Calls, Personal Meanings,” America Calling, 222-254

First project due: 10.7 (Friday, 5 p.m.)

Week 5 Radio


Week 6 Exam/Television I: Flow

10.17 take-home exam #1 due at 10:45 am.; no class


Week 7 TV II: The Home


<--halfway point for attendance & participation-->

10.26 Spigel, Make Room For TV, 99-135 “The Home Theater”

Week 8 TV III: Video


11.2 Newman, Video Revolutions, 73-106 “Video as the Moving Image,” “Medium and Cultural Status”
Week 9 Video Games/Working with Primary Sources

11.7 Early video games primary sources PDF bundle (NB: not a reading response day)


**Final research project proposal due: 11.11 (Friday, 9 a.m.)**

Weeks 10 Conferences -- no class, please use the extra time to read for weeks 11-12

11.14 conferences
11.16 conferences

**Week 11 The Master Switch I: Corporate Power in New Media History**


**Extra credit deadline: 11.22 (Tuesday, 11:59 p.m.)**

Thanksgiving -- no class 11.23

**Week 12 The Master Switch II: Corporate Power in New Media History**

11.28 Wu, *The Master Switch*, 157-204

11.30 Wu, *The Master Switch*, pages 205-319

**Bibliographic essay due: 12.2 (Friday, 9 a.m.)**

**Week 13 When the Web Was New**


12.7 Julian Dibbell, “*A Rape in Cyberspace*” (1993/1998); continuation of You’ve Got Mail
discussion; presentations II

Final take-home exam due: 12.9 (Friday, 5 p.m.)

Week 14 Presentations

12.12 presentations III

12.14 presentations IV

Final Project due: 12.19 (Monday, 9 a.m.)

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Workload Statement

This 3-credit course should take 144 of your time.
In-class or equivalent (re midterm exam/conferences): 35 hours
Studying for and writing exams: 15 hours
Reading: 3 hours per week or 42 hours
Working on Reading Responses: an hour each, times 10 = 10 hours
Working on first project: 10 hours
Working on final project: 32 hours
TOTAL: 144