



CM 315 PANORAMA OF FRENCH MEDIA

IES Abroad Paris BIA

DESCRIPTION: In the 1980's, approximately 75% of French declared that they trust the media. 88% said that they get their news from them, 70% of them evaluated the content of the news as being "trustworthy overall". Today, these numbers indubitably shrunk. According to a poll conducted in 2014, 77% judge the media as "overall untrustworthy", 93% as "biased" and 74% said that "journalists are disconnected from reality."¹ In the last 30 years, the way journalists deal with information has completely changed, because the concept of information *in itself* changed. Nowadays, as the world of communication increases and as the space dedicated to information reduces, journalists have to inform more quickly. The arrival of the 24-hour news channels modified the way we saw information and consequently the position of journalism. Journalists once were the ones who brought the news to the public, they are now merely mediators in a world where information is ubiquitous.

This course is an introduction to the French media landscape. It will offer a historical and international perspective on the media, by comparing the American media and the French media, when relevant and appropriate. This course will give students insight into French culture through the study of its media landscape. It will present the characteristics of the French media while providing a short history, the legal framework, and how its business model can have an impact on their objectivity.

In the first part, the course will answer central questions on today's media world: What constitutes a piece of information? How does the media manipulate, prioritize, to what extent and why does this information differ from one form of media to another?

The second part of the course will approach the relationship that exists between the media and politics, putting communication in the middle of the relationship. This part will answer the following questions: Between the media and politics: who manipulates who? In a world centered on the omnipresence of a politician's image, is it possible to avoid communication?

As a third part, the course will aim at analyzing and demystifying the so-called French "media crisis". By approaching the media through the scope of public opinion, this part aims at explaining the crisis and providing solutions that could potentially save them.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Lecture
- Discussions
- Moodle interactive exchanges
- Case studies

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course participation and active involvement – 10%
- Midterm exam – 20 %
- Quiz – 5%
- Reading notes 3@5% each= 15%
- Film journal: 20%

¹ Poll Ipsos for *Le Monde* : <https://opinionpublique.wordpress.com/2014/01/21/la-profonde-mefiance-des-francais-a-legard-des-journalistes-et-des-medias/>



- Final paper: 30 %

Course participation:

Class participation is a very important part of the learning process in this course. Students are strongly encouraged to comment on readings and to give their opinions. Do not hesitate to ask questions, raise concerns or express your disagreement. Discussions and debates are always welcome in this course.

Midterm:

There will be one exam in this course, a midterm covering approximately half of the course. This exam consists of multiple-choice questions and a few short essay questions. More specific details about the exam will be provided closer to the test date.

Quiz:

A short quiz will take place on the third week of to test the student's knowledge on what has been covered so far. The quiz will consist of 40 questions about the history of the French media.

Reading notes

The students will be required to write 3 synopses, which should but are not limited to include a summary of the book, an explanation of the author's point of view, and student's critical analysis on one or several issues raised by the author. The reading notes are expected to be 1-page long maximum.

Film Journal

Students will be asked to answer a question about a movie that will be shown in class. *The Front Page* is a movie that deals with journalism in the 1970's and how the journalists' situation shifted and changed after the creation of 24-hour news Channel, CNN. The student will be asked a general question on the movie and will be asked to draw parallels between the movie and what journalism is today. The film journal is expected to be 2 to 4 pages long, double-spaced in Times New Roman 12.

Final paper

The final paper will deal with one of the subjects developed in class, with the dual purpose of testing students' knowledge of facts and evaluating their ability to critically analyze the status of journalism today. Students will be welcomed to start a debate with ideas, arguments, with the support of the required readings. The final paper is expected to be 7 to 10 pages long, double-spaced in Times New Roman 12.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Gain knowledge of the public opinion transformation of French media between the 1980's and present day through different readings and documentaries. Students will be able to identify the factors which led to the shift of public opinion and will develop comprehensive conclusions on how to restore public opinion of the media.
- Understand the advantages and disadvantages of the mediums in present day media coverage.
- Compare and contrast main differences between French media and international media through the study of American media coverage.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Regular attendance and punctuality are expected in all classes. Attendance will be taken in each session. Every absence has to be justified with an official document (doctor's note etc.) that has to be signed and approved by administration. Going on holiday is not an acceptable reason for missing a class. It is in the student's responsibility to catch up on the classes that they missed. I will not give my notes and I will not respond to emails or calls concerning missed classes, unless a proper justification has been given and approved.

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
	PART I: THE INFORMATION AGE	
Week 1 – Session 1	General introduction 1. Presentation of the course / objective/ syllabus 2. General considerations about the media in France and the US (figures, polls etc.)	
Week 1 – Session 2	General introduction 3. What is information? 4. What is a journalist’s role and duty?	
Week 2 – Session 1	The media in France 1. Short history of the French media 2. Overview of the French media landscape	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The media in Contemporary France”, Introduction, chapter 1 and 2 (pp 1 - 58)
Week 2 – Session 2	3. Overview of the French media landscape	
Week 3 – Session 1	“The ballad of Marshall McLuhan” QUIZ 1. Who is McLuhan 2. How did he change the media	Required reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Understanding the media: the extensions of man”, (pp. 01 – 36) READING NOTES
Week 3 – Session 2	“The ballad of Marshall McLuhan” 3. Information VS media/medium	
Week 4 – Session 1	Movie: <i>The Front page</i>	Question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are journalists depicted in this movie?
Week 4 – Session 2	The front page 1. To what extent does information change depending on the media? 2. How do journalists treat information	
Week 5 – Session 1	The information business: “Scandal!” 1. The business of news-telling: French and American media	Required reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Losing the news, the future of the news that feeds democracy” chapter 9 READING NOTES
Week 5 – Session 2	The information business: “scandal” 1. The culture of “Infotainment”: when emotions prevail	FILM JOURNAL DUE

Week 6 – Session 1	<p>Conclusion of Part I</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conclusion of Part I 2. Review for the midterm 	
Week 6 – Session 2	MIDTERM	
	PART II: POLITICS AND MEDIA	
Week 7 – Session 1	Politicians on TV (informing VS communicating)	
Week 7 – Session 2	<p>“More than words”: manipulating images, manipulating TV</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can images say more than words 2. What advertisement is doing to TV 	<p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Media Crisis” (pp 20 – 81) • “Amusing ourselves to death”, chapter IX
Week 8 – Session 1	<p>“More than words”: manipulating images, manipulating TV</p> <p>Analysis of Hilary Clinton’s announcement video</p>	
	PART III: VIDEO KILLED THE RADIO STAR	
Week 8 – Session 2	<p>“ Why So (un)serious”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is TV a serious media? 	<p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The media in contemporary France” chapter 5 (pp.101 – 120)
Week 9 – Session 1	<p>“ why so (un)serious”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. How is TV influencing our needs and balance 	
Week 9 – Session 2	<p>“ Elmo’s song”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching as an amusing activity 	
Week 10 – Session 1	<p>“Elmo’s song”</p> <p>Media shaped like Sesame Street</p>	
	PART IV: SAVING THE NEWS	
Week 10 – Session 2	Explaining the media crisis	<p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Why Americans hate the media” <p>READING NOTES</p>
Week 11 – Session 1	<p>The media crisis: “ the times they are a-changin’”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media policy and regulations 	
Week 11 – Session 2	<p>General conclusion:</p> <p>“ Magic mirror on the wall”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who/What are the media? 	

Week 12 – Session 1	“magic mirror on the wall” 1. Do they really manipulate us?	
Week 12 – Session 2	“magic mirror on the wall” 2. Final conclusion	
Week 13	FINAL EXAM WEEK	

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Bastié, E. (2014, May 28). Connards de journalistes: pourquoi les medias sont-ils autant détestés ?. *Le Figaro*. Retrieved from : <http://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/medias/2014/05/28/31008-20140528ARTFIG00101-connards-de-journalistes-pourquoi-les-medias-sont-ils-autant-detestes.php>
- Baudry, C. (2014, December 17). Presse écrite en crise cherche avenir de toute urgence. *L’humanité*, retrieved from : <http://www.humanite.fr/presse-ecrite-en-crise-cherche-avenir-de-toute-urgence-560500>
- Dagnes, A. (2010): *Politics On-Demand: The effects of 24-hour news on American Politics*. Ebook, Praeger.
- Fallow, J. (February 1996). Why Americans hate the media, *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1996/02/why-americans-hate-the-media/305060/>
- Jones, A. S. (2010): *Losing the News. The Future of the News that Feeds Democracy*. Oxford University Press.
- McChesney, R. W. and J. Nichols (2010): *The Death and Life of American Journalism. The Media Revolution that Will Begin the World Again*. Nation Books. Chapter 3
- Ladd, M. J. (2011): *Why Americans Hate the Media and How It Matters*. Princeton University Press
- Postman, N. (2005): *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. Penguin Books
- McLuhan, M. and L. Laphal (1994): *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. The MIT press.
- McLuhan, M. and Q. Fiore (2001): *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects*. Gingko Press.
- Chomsky, N. (1997): *Media Control: the Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda*. Seven Stories Press.
- Gladstone B. and J. Neufield (2012): *The Influencing Machine: Brooke Gladstone on the Media*, W.W. Norton & Company.
- Kuhn R. (2011): *The Media in Contemporary France*. Open University Press
- Maras, S. (2013): *Objectivity in Journalism*. Polity.
- Scherer, E. (2011, May 4). A-t-on encore besoin des journalistes ? Manifeste pour un journalisme augmenté. *Les échos*. Retrieved from : http://archives.lesechos.fr/archives/cercle/2011/05/04/cercle_34912.htm
- Watkins, P. (2014) *Media Crisis*, l’Echapée.

FILMOGRAPHY:

- Missy F. and R. Parr (producers) (2007) : *News War : What’s Happening to the News? – Part 3*. United-States: PBS.
- Monash P. (producer) & B. Wilder (director) (1974): *The Front Page*. United-States: Universal Pictures.
- Miller B. and M. Elliott (producers), & D. Deutsch (director) (1989): *Under Orders, Under Fire*. United-States: Annenberg Media. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERgbXRTC_K4
- Arfi, F. (2014): *Le journalisme d’investigation existe-t-il encore en France?*, conference donnée à l’Ecole Militaire par Fabrice Arfi, journaliste à Médiapart. Retrieved from: <http://www.anaj-ihedn.org/conference-le-journaliste-dinvestigation-existe-t-il-encore-en-france/>
- Fox news (January 2014) : *Why americans hate the media*, United-States: Fox News Entertainment Group. Retrieved from: <http://video.foxnews.com/v/3013970437001/why-americans-hate-the-media/?#sp=show-clips>