

Doctoral Core Seminar I, Fall 2010
Department of Media, Culture, and Communication
New York University
E57.3100.001

Tuesdays, 3-5:10, 7th Floor, Room 718 (Conference Room), 239 Greene Street

Prof. Rodney Benson

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(b/w Washington Square East and Greene Street, same side of the street as the old NYU Bookstore) Note: It says 82 Wash. Square East on the door, and 36 Washington Place over the door; take the elevator around the corner to the left of the security guard station.

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Office Hours: Mondays 12-1:30 and Thursdays 2-3:30

Books: Available at NYU Bookstore
Other readings indicated with a * will be available on Blackboard or distributed by email.

Course Description

This course will offer a tour d'horizon of classic and contemporary U.S. and European theorizing and research relevant to media, culture, and communication. It is an advanced graduate seminar designed primarily for PhD students in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication. Together with Doctoral Core Seminar II (taught in the spring), this course serves as the basis for the department's PhD first year theory candidacy examination.

Course Policies

This course has three requirements: Active in-class participation, Two short papers, and one final comparative paper. All requirements must be completed in order to pass the course.

(1) Active and Informed in-class participation: Attendance is required, and any absences must be cleared in advance with me.

(2) Two Short Papers (1000-1250 words): For each paper, pick 1-2 (depending on length) closely related readings from a week's readings (to be approved by me) and address the following issues: a) who is the author addressing, and for what purpose? b) what is the primary argument, c) how does the author conceptualize power, d) what evidence is provided in support of the argument, e) what are the actual or potential arguments against it, and f) how does this work contribute to the field of media, culture, and communication studies, noting any significant connections to other authors. Most of the paper should be concerned with b-e. Do not consult or cite any outside sources. The paper should be emailed to your classmates and me by Sunday 9 p.m., prior to class. Be prepared to quickly summarize and discuss the paper in class.

(3) Final Comparative Paper (3000-3750 words). This paper should offer a detailed comparison of the conception/analysis of power in two of the theorists considered in the course, at least one of whom should be from the second half of the course. Only one may have been the topic of one of your short papers. Topic and approach must be approved by me.

These requirements will count toward your final grade as follows:

Active, Informed Participation in Class Discussions	20 percent
Short papers (15 percent each)	30 percent
Final Comparative paper	50 percent

A = excellent. Outstanding work in all respects. Your papers and essays are thoroughly researched, appropriately documented, logically organized and rhetorically convincing. Your analysis is comprehensive, insightful, and original. In short, you not only get it, but begin to see through it!

B = good. Your understanding of course materials is complete and thorough, and there is at least some evidence of your own critical intelligence at work. You demonstrate basic competence in research, writing and oral presentation. Note, however: for a PhD student, any grade less than a B+ should be considered a serious warning that your work is not meeting expectations.

C = barely adequate. Your writing is vague and incoherent or riddled with grammatical or spelling errors. You do not make proper use of source materials, and there is little depth or concreteness to your research or analysis. Your understanding of concepts and ideas is incomplete and often misguided, but there is at least some evidence that you “got” something from this course.

D = unsatisfactory. Work exhibits virtually no understanding or even awareness of basic concepts and themes of course. Your participation has been inadequate or superficial. Either you have not been paying attention or you have not been making any effort.

F= failed. Work was not submitted or completed according to the basic parameters outlined in the course syllabus (basic requirements for page length, topical focus, types and number of sources).

Grades are calculated according to the following scale: 94-100 A; 90-93 A-; 87-89 B+; 83-86 B; 80-82 B-; 77-79 C+; 73-76 C; 70-72 C-; 67-69 D+; 63-66 D; 60-62 D-; 0-59 F

It should go without saying that plagiarism is strictly prohibited. “Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated. Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score and/or other materials which are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following: Copy verbatim from a book, an article or other media; Download documents from the Internet; Purchase documents; Report from other’s oral work; Paraphrase or restate someone else’s facts, analysis and/or conclusions; Copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.” (NYU Steinhardt School Statement on Academic Integrity)

Assignments must be turned in on-time. Late assignments will be accepted, with one full-grade penalty, up to one week after the due date but not beyond. Unless other arrangements are made beforehand, assignments must be turned in as hard copies, not by e-mail. You are responsible for keeping a copy of the paper. Please staple and number the pages of your assignments.

Books

- Steven Lukes. 2005. *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Todd Gitlin. 2003. *The Whole World is Watching*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Leon Mayhew. 1997. *The New Public*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Pierre Bourdieu. 2008. *Sketch for a Self-Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pierre Bourdieu. 1995. *The Rules of Art*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bruno Latour. 2005. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Raymond Williams. 2003. *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*. London: Routledge Classics.
- Robert W. McChesney. 2007. *Communication Revolution: Critical Junctures and the Future of Media*. New York: New Press.

Schedule (subject to modification): *indicates text available on Blackboard

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1 Introduction and Overview: Course Themes and Approaches

*John B. Thompson. 1994. "Social Theory and the Media." Pp. 27-__ in D. Crowley and D. Mitchell, eds., *Communication Theory Today*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, introduction and ch. 1 (pp. 1-59)

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2 Durkheim

*Emile Durkheim. [1912] 1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Karen Fields, translator). New York: Free Press (pp. 1-18, 207-41, 242-275, and 418-448).

*James Carey. 1989. "A Cultural Approach to Communication." In J. Carey, *Communication as Culture*. New York: Routledge (pp. 13-36).

*Eric Rothenbuhler. 1993. "Argument for a Durkheimian Theory of the Communicative," *Journal of Communication*, 43 (1993), pp. 158-163.

*Jeffrey C. Alexander and Philip Smith. 1993. "The Discourse of American Civil Society: A New Proposal for Cultural Studies." *Theory and Society*, 22, pp. 151-174, 183-188, 196-198.

*Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz. 1992. *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, ch. 1 (pp. 1-24).

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3

Marx / Gramsci

Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching*, Preface, Introduction, Chs. 1-3, 6-10

*Antonio Gramsci. 1971. *Selections from The Prison Notebooks*. International Publishers. Excerpts: pp. 5-14, 52-59 (esp. fn 5.), p. 80 (fn. 49), pp. 175-85, p. 244.

*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. [1888, English edition]. 'Manifesto of the Communist Party,' Parts I, II, and IV in *The Marx-Engels Reader* (pp. 473-491, 499-500).

*Karl Marx. [1845-6, first published in 1932]. "The German Ideology: Part I." In R. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 1978 (pp. 148-175).

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Weber / Frankfurt School

*Max Weber. 1958 [1904-5]. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 13-31 (Introduction), pp. 95-128, 144-154 (The Religious Foundations of Worldly Asceticism), 155-183 (Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism)

*Max Weber. 1946. In H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

 "Class, Status, Party" (pp. 180-195)

 "Bureaucracy" (pp. 196-244)

 "The Sociology of Charismatic Authority" (pp. 245-252)

 "The Meaning of Discipline" (pp. 253-264)

 "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions" (pp. 323-359)

(NEW) *Max Weber. 1994. "The Concept of Social Action" and "The Types of Social Action" (pp. 1-6). In W. Heydebrand (ed.), *Max Weber: Sociological Writings*. New York: Continuum.

*Theodor Adorno. 1989 [1967]. 'The Culture Industry Reconsidered'. In *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader*, edited by S.E. Bronner and D.M. Kellner. London: Routledge.

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5

Power and Culture: some alternative approaches

*Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld. 1955. *Personal Influence*. New York: Free Press. Excerpts

*Todd Gitlin. 1978. "Media Sociology: The Dominant Paradigm." *Theory and Society* 6 (2): 205-53.

*Clifford Geertz. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" In *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

*Michael Schudson. 1989. "How Culture Works: Perspectives from Media Studies on the Efficacy of Symbols." *Theory and Society* 18 (2): 153-80.

Lukes, *Power*, chs. 2-3

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6

Habermas and the Public Sphere

Jürgen Habermas. 1989. "The Tasks of a Critical Theory of Society." In S. Seidman (ed.) *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics* (pp. 77-103). Boston: Beacon Press.

(NEW) Jürgen Habermas. 1989. "Social Action and Rationality." In S. Seidman (ed.) *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics* (pp. 142-164). Boston: Beacon Press.

*Jürgen Habermas. [1964] 1991. "The Public Sphere." In C. Mukerji and M. Schudson (eds.), *Rethinking Popular Culture* (pp. 398-404). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Leon Mayhew, *The New Public*.

*Myra Marx Ferree, William Anthony Gamson, Jürgen Gerhards, and Dieter Rucht. 2002. "Normative Criteria for the Public Sphere." In *Shaping Abortion Discourse: Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States* (pp. 205-231). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Additional optional reading:

*Nancy Fraser. 1992. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." In C. Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

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7

Bourdieu: Basic Concepts

(NEW) *Pierre Bourdieu. 1987. "Legitimation and Structured Interests in Weber's Sociology of Religion." In S. Lash and S. Whimster (eds.), *Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity* (pp. 119-136). London: Allen & Unwin.

*Pierre Bourdieu. 1989. "Social Space and Symbolic Power," *Sociological Theory*, 7 (1), pp. 14-25.

*Pierre Bourdieu. 1991. "On Symbolic Power." In J. Thompson (ed.), *Language and Symbolic Power* (pp. 163-170). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

*Pierre Bourdieu. 1984. *Distinction* (pp. 169-200, 260-283, 288-290, 298-301, 324-325, 334-336, 339-357, 440-453). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pierre Bourdieu, *Sketch for a Self-Analysis*

*Pierre Bourdieu. 2000. "Understanding." In P. Bourdieu (ed.), *The Weight of the World* (pp 607-626). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Additional optional reading:

Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (See esp. "interview," pp. 94-140, sections on fields and habitus).

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8

Bourdieu and Cultural Production

Pierre Bourdieu. 1995. *The Rules of Art*. Stanford: Stanford University Press (selected chapters).

*David Hesmondhalgh. 2006. "Bourdieu, the Media, and Cultural Production." *Media, Culture & Society* 28, 2: 211-31.

Additional optional reading:

Gustave Flaubert. *Sentimental Education*. New York: Penguin Classics.

*Roger Dickinson. 2008. "Studying the Sociology of Journalists: The Journalistic Field and the News World." *Sociology Compass*, 2 (5), pp. 1383-1399.

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Latour and Actor-Network Theory

Gabriel Tarde. 1969 [1890-1904]. "A Debate with Emile Durkheim" (pp. 136-140), "General Principles of Sociology" (pp. 143-174), and "The Laws of Imitation" (pp. 177-191) in T.N. Clark (ed.), *Gabriel Tarde: On Communication and Social Influence*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bruno Latour. 2005. *Re-assembling the Social*, pp. 1-17 (Introduction), 21-140 (Part I), 159-262 (Part II).

*Michel Callon. 1986. "Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay." 29 pp. manuscript. First published in J. Law (ed.), *Power, action and belief: a new sociology of knowledge?* (pp. 196-223). London: Routledge

*Bruno Latour. 2005. "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik, or How to Make Things Public." In B. Latour and P. Weibel (eds.), *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (pp. 14-41). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Additional optional reading:

*Georgina Born. 2010. "On Tardean relations: Temporality and ethnography." In M. Candea (ed.), *The Social after Gabriel Tarde* (pp. 230-247). London: Routledge.

*Jim Johnson [Bruno Latour]. 1988. "Mixing Humans and Nonhumans Together: The Sociology of a Door-Closer." *Social Problems*, 35, 3, pp. 298-310.

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10

Medium Theory

*Harold Innis. 1951. *The Bias of Communication* (pp. 33-60, and introduction [1964] by Marshall McLuhan). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

*Marshall McLuhan. 1995. Pp. 97-179, 233-69 in E. McLuhan and F. Zingrone, eds., *Essential McLuhan*. New York: Basic Books.

*Neil Postman. 1998. "Five Things We Need to Know About Technological Change." Speech delivered to new technologies conference, Denver, CO, March 27.

*Joshua Meyrowitz. 1994. "Medium Theory." Pp. 50-77 in D. Crowley and D. Mitchell (eds.), *Communication Theory Today*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

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Network Society

*Manuel Castells. 1996. "The Culture of Real Virtuality" in *The Rise of the Network Society* (pp. 327-375). Oxford: Blackwell.

*Manuel Castells. 1997. "The Other Face of the Earth: Social Movements against the New Global Order" in *The Power of Identity* (pp. 68-83, 104-109). Oxford: Blackwell.

*Manuel Castells. 2007. "Communication, Power and Counter-Power in the Network Society." *International Journal of Communication*, 1, 238-266.

*W. Lance Bennett. 2003. 'New Media Power: The Internet and Global Activism'. In N. Couldry and J. Curran (eds.) *Contesting Media Power* (pp. 17-37). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

*Sonia Serra. 2000. "The killing of Brazilian street children and the rise of the international public sphere." In J. Curran, ed., *Media Organisations in Society* (pp. 151-171). London: Arnold.

Additional optional reading:

* Jürgen Habermas. 1998. "Civil Society and the Political Public Sphere." Pp. 329-87 in *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

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Critical Responses to Medium Theory

Raymond Williams. 2003. *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*. London: Routledge Classics.

*Claude S. Fischer. 1992. "Technology and Modern Life." Pp. 1-31 in *America Calling: A Social History of the Telephone*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

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Media reception and audience studies

*John Fiske. 1989. "Moments of television: Neither the text nor the audience." In E. Seiter et al. (eds.), *Remote Control: Television, Audiences and Cultural Power* (pp. 56-78). London: Routledge.

*Stuart Hall. 1980. "Encoding / Decoding." In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe and P. Willis (eds.), *Culture, Media, Language* (pp. 128-138). London: Routledge.

*Arvind Rajagopal. 2000. "Mediating modernity: Theorizing reception in a non-Western society." In J. Curran and M-J. Park (eds.), *De-Westernizing Media Studies* (pp. 293-304). London: Routledge.

*Jack Bratich. 2008. "Activating the Multitude: Audience Power and Cultural Studies." Pp. 33-55 in P. Goldstein and J.L. Machor, eds., *New Directions in American Reception Study*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*Sonia Livingstone. 2004. "The Challenge of Changing Audiences: Or, What is the Audience Researcher to do in the Age of the Internet?" *European Journal of Communication*, 19 (1), pp. 75-86.

*Sonia Livingstone and Ranjana Das. 2009. "The end of audiences? Theoretical echoes of reception amidst the uncertainties of use." Paper presented to "Transforming Audiences" conference, University of Westminster, London, Sept. 3-4.

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Politics, Policy, and Activism

Robert W. McChesney. 2007. *Communication Revolution: Critical Junctures and the Future of Media*. New York: New Press.

*Michael Warner. 2005. *Publics and Counterpublics* (selections). New York: Zone Books.

*Michael Burawoy. 2008. "Durable Domination: Gramsci meets Bourdieu." Text of speech delivered March 19, Berkeley, CA (34 pp.).