

## **Comparative Media Systems: Special Focus on France**

Spring 2015

MCC-GE 2184-001 / IFST-GA 2910-001

Wednesday, 11 am – 1 pm

Location: IFS, 15 Washington Mews

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:45-2:45 pm; Wednesday, 2:00-3:00 pm

### **Course Description**

How does the production of culture differ around the world? And to the extent that it does, why? Beyond the personal idiosyncrasies of individual media owners and creative workers, which factors play the greatest role in shaping cultural production: professional values and traditions, forms of ownership and funding, government regulations, organizational dynamics, and/ or the social properties of media owners, workers, and audiences? Adequately sorting out the factors that shape cultural production can best be accomplished via comparative research – across geographical regions, time periods, and institutional fields, including news, television entertainment, digital media, art, and others. This course offers a theoretical and methodological roadmap to such a project, incorporating a range of U.S. and international case studies, but with a special focus on France, which represents a stark alternative in many ways to the U.S. market-driven model.

### **Teaching / Course Objectives**

- \* to provide students with an understanding of similarities and differences in cultural production as they vary by genre, audience, and world region
- \* to provide students with knowledge of the major evaluative and explanatory theories for the production of culture
- \* to equip students with the research methods needed for comparative media production research, including analysis of political and economic data, ethnography, in-depth interviewing, and content analysis
- \* to introduce students to contemporary developments in U.S., French, and other national and transnational media

### **Texts**

Required Books (Available for purchase at NYU Bookstore)

Tamara Chaplin, *Turning on the Mind: French Philosophers on Television* (Chicago, 2007)

Marion Fourcade, *Economists and Societies: Discipline and Profession in the United States, Britain, and France, 1890s to 1990s* (Princeton, 2010)

Abigail Saguy, *What's Wrong with Fat?* (Oxford, 2014)

Pdf texts: Available on NYU Classes under “Resources” (indicated in schedule with asterisk).

### **Course Assignments and Evaluation**

Evaluation of your performance in this course will center around four elements:

(1) Active and Informed in-class participation (15 percent of grade):

You are expected to arrive on time, fully prepared to discuss the readings and participate in class discussions. The course is a collaborative, interactive seminar: please bring your experience, insight, and intelligence to our discussions. You will be evaluated on the amount and quality of your informed participation.

Please bring a paper copy of the assigned reading (article or book) to the class, so that we will all be, literally, on the same page. I strongly encourage active, annotated reading practices.

Cell phone use (including texting) is not permitted in class and I discourage use of laptops in class. If you do bring a laptop to class, it should only be used for note-taking. Use of laptops for email or Internet surfing, unless linked to a class assignment, is not permitted: violation of this policy will negatively affect your participation grade.

I strongly encourage you to regularly read the *New York Times* (especially Monday business section), *Wall Street Journal*, the *Guardian*, or other major national or international news publications online or in print. I will sometimes assign additional short texts from these or other periodicals and you are encouraged to bring to class any articles, blogs, etc. that you think are relevant to the class topic of the day.

Please inform me in advance if you will be missing class for religious observances, family emergencies, or medical problems.

(2) Two Critical Reading Essays (30 percent; 15 percent each): Each student will summarize/critique 2 weeks of assigned readings with two 4-page (800-1000 words) essays. 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) what evidence is provided in support of the argument, e) what are the actual or potential arguments against it (this is the place for critique) and f) how does this work contribute to the field of comparative media systems / production of culture research, noting any significant connections to other authors. You should also feel free to draw connections to contemporary media developments, but only after you have adequately addressed points a through e. The paper should be emailed to your classmates and me 24 hours prior to the class (thus, by Tuesday, 11 a.m.). Be prepared to quickly summarize your major take-aways in class.

(3) Final paper and presentation (55 percent: 15 percent for presentation, 40 percent for paper): In this 16-20 page paper (4000 - 5000 words) paper, you will design a plan to research some aspect or type of cultural production (medium, genre, targeted audience, nation-state, etc.), drawing on the theories and methodologies presented in the course,

and conduct preliminary research. Paper topic (as well as approach and use of any outside sources) must be approved in advance by me.

### **Grading Policies**

It should go without saying that plagiarism is strictly prohibited. This policy will be strictly enforced. “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 of Education Statement on Academic Integrity)

### Assignments:

1) must be turned in on-time: unless excused, late assignments will be down-graded (one half grade if not turned in by the appointed hour; one full grade after one week, and one full grade per week thereafter); 2) must be stapled, if more than one page; 3) must have your name at the top of the page; 4) must have all pages numbered. You are responsible for keeping a digital copy of all assignments.

### Grading Standards:

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 and sound, as well as creative and original. In short, you not only get it, but also begin to see through it!

B = good to fair. Your understanding of course materials is relatively solid and you demonstrate basic competence in research, writing and oral presentation. For graduate-level work, however, anything less than a B+ suggests the need for substantial improvement.

C to D = unsatisfactory. 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.

F= failed. Work was not submitted or completed according to the basic parameters outlined in the course syllabus and any additional information provided about assignments (basic requirements for page length, topical focus, types and number of primary and secondary sources, deadlines).

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

**Schedule** (subject to revision): \*course readings available through NYU Classes  
“Resources”

**1 1/28**

**Overview / What’s at Stake**

\*David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker. 2011. “A model of good and bad work,” in *Creative Labour*. London: Routledge (pp. 1-10, 25-51)

\*Myra Marx Ferree et al. 2002. “Normative Criteria for the Public Sphere,” in *Shaping Abortion Discourse*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Recommended:

\*Bruce Williams and Michael X. Delli Carpini. 2011. “Shaping a New Media Regime.” In *After Broadcast News: Media Regimes, Democracy, and the New Information Environment*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

**2 2/4**

**Explanatory Theories (I): Fields and the Question of the Dominance and Character of Market Logics**

\*Pierre Bourdieu, “Social Space and Symbolic Space”

\*Pierre Bourdieu, “The Political Field, the Social Science Field, and the Journalistic Field”

\*David Hesmondhalgh, “Bourdieu, the Media, and Cultural Production”

\*Rodney Benson, “Modes of Ownership Power”

Recommended:

\*Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, “interview,” pp. 94-140, sections on field and habitus.

\*Richard A. Peterson and N. Anand. 2004. “The production of culture perspective.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 311-334.

**3 2/11**

**Explanatory Theories (II): Actor-Networks, Worlds, and the Questions of Technology and Competition vs. Cooperation**

\*Bruno Latour, “Technology is society made durable”

\*Fred Turner, 2005. “Actor-Networking the News.” *Social Epistemology* 19, 4: 321-24.

\*Howard Becker, “Art as Collective Action” and/or *Art Worlds* (excerpts)

\*Daniel Kreiss, Megan Finn, and Fred Turner, “Limits of Peer Production”

Recommended:

\*Roger Dickinson. 2008. “Studying the Sociology of Journalists: The Journalistic Field and the News World.” *Sociology Compass*.

4 **2/18****Cross-National Comparative Research: Justifications, Models, and Methods**

\*Frank Esser and Thomas Hanitzsch, eds. 2012. *The Handbook of Comparative Communication Research* (introduction and chapter by Livingstone). London: Routledge.

\*Werner Wirth and Steffen Kolb. 2004. "Designs and Methods of Comparative Political Communication Research." In F. Esser and B. Pfetsch, eds., *Comparing Political Communication: Theories, Cases, and Challenges*, pp. 87-111.

Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

\*Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini. 2004. *Comparing Media Systems* (selections). Cambridge.

**Paper Proposal due (250 words)**5 **2/25 NO CLASS**6 **3.4****Methods Workshop: Framing Analysis**

Saguy, *What's Wrong with Fat?*

Recommended:

\*Rossler, "Comparative Content Analysis"

\*Muller and Griffin, "Comparing Visual Communication"

**Makeup Class: In-Depth Interviewing**

\*Pierre Bourdieu, "Understanding," from *The Weight of the World*

\*Steinar Kvale, *InterViews*, excerpts

\*Robert Mikecz, "Interviewing Elites: Addressing Methodological Issues"

7 **3.11****Case Study: News in France and the U.S.**

\*Benson, "Why Narrative is Not Enough: Immigration and the Genres of Journalism" and *Shaping Immigration News: A French-American Comparison* (ch. 1 excerpt, ch. 2)

\*Elise Vincent, "Journalistic Strategies to Write About Immigration under Nicolas Sarkozy's Presidency"

\*Nina Bernstein, "The Making of an Outlaw Generation"

\*Angele Christin, "Counting Clicks: Quantification and Commensuration in Online Journalism in the United States and France"

**March 16-20, NYU Spring Break**

- 8     **3.25**  
**Extending Global Comparative Research**  
 \*C.C. Lee, ed., *Internationalizing International Communication* (Michigan, 2014), selections  
 \*Curran and Park, *De-Westernizing Media Studies* (Routledge, 2000), introduction  
 \*Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World* (Cambridge, 2011), introduction, conclusion, and selected chapters  
 \*R. Shome and Radha Hegde. 2002. "Postcolonial Approaches to Communication." *Communication Theory* 12(3): 249-270.
- 9     **4.1**  
**Case Study: Philosophy on French Television**  
 Chaplin, *Turning on the Mind*
- 10    **4.8**  
**Case Study: Comics in France and the U.S.**  
 \*Paul Lopes, *Demanding Respect: The Evolution of the American Comic Book* (Temple, 2009), excerpts  
 \*Laurence Grove, *Comics in French: The European Bande Dessinée in Context* (Berghahn, 2013), excerpts  
 \*Other readings TBA
- 11    **4.15**  
**Case Study: Economics in France and the U.S.**  
 Fourcade, *Economists and Societies*
- 12    **4.22**  
**Case Study: French and U.S. film industries**  
 \*Vanessa Schwartz, *It's So French! Hollywood, Paris, and the Making of Cosmopolitan Film Culture* (Chicago, 2007) (excerpts)  
 \*Sherry Ortner. Not Hollywood: Independent Film at the Twilight of the American Dream (Duke, 2013) (excerpts)
- 13    **4.29**  
**Student Presentations**
- 14    **5.6**  
**Student Presentations**

**\*Final Paper due 5/15**