Doctoral Core Seminar I, Fall 2018
Department of Media, Culture, and Communication
New York University

Wednesdays 11-1:45, 7th Floor, Room 722 (Conference Room), 239 Greene Street

Professor Rodney Benson

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Books: Available at NYU Bookstore
Other readings indicated with * will be available on NYU Classes.

Course Description
This advanced graduate seminar designed for PhD students in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication will offer a tour d'horizon of theorizing and research relevant to media, culture, and communication. We will read and analyze key texts that represent diverse ways of conceptualizing power, structure, agency, meaning, and the relationships between society, culture, and technology. Classic and contemporary theoretical writings will often be paired with case studies that put these theories to work to describe, explain, and critique. Together with Doctoral Core Seminar II (taught in the spring), this course serves as the basis for the department's PhD General Theories Examination taken at the end of the spring semester.

Course Assignments and Policies

 (1) *Active Class Participation and Discussion Prompts (15 percent)*: Attendance is required, and with the exception of serious illness or religious observance, any absences will negatively affect your grade. At the beginning of the semester, each of you will sign up for two weeks for which you will be responsible for opening and helping lead the discussion (about 10 minutes maximum opening remarks). Your opening remarks should NOT provide a detailed summary of the readings. Rather, you should identify a handful of key themes and questions that span the assigned readings and that can help orient the discussion. You might also engage with online discussion posts of your classmates (see below).

Additional reading is strictly optional; however, when indicated with a *, these texts will also be available on NYU Classes Resources.

No laptop/cellphone policy: I strongly discourage the use of electronic devices in class (e.g., laptops, iPads, phones, or other device), even for note-taking purposes. They create distractions that lower the quality of discussion and the depth of interpersonal engagement in the classroom.

Please print out and bring a paper copy of the assigned readings (articles and/or books) to class. Do not rely on your laptop to consult texts during class. I strongly encourage active, annotated reading practices.

(2) *Discussion Forum Posts (20 percent)*: Each week, no later than 12 hours prior to class, post a 200-250 word critical commentary on the readings. Focus on at least two readings – in some cases, I may specify which ones are most crucial -- and touch on as many of the readings as possible. [You are always responsible for reading and being prepared to discuss all assigned readings in class.] Make clear what you like or do not like about the readings: this not only makes for more interesting discussions, it is also an excellent way to prepare for the general theories exam. I encourage you to also respond directly to other students' comments, either with an additional post, or in class discussions. I will provide individualized non-graded feedback on comments early in the course, and then grade the remaining posts in two batches: around the mid-term and at the end of the class. Comments will be graded for their quality based on breadth of engagement with multiple texts, depth and acuity of critical analysis, and systematic comparisons across texts (including previous weeks' readings): my goal in providing you with feedback is to help you prepare as effectively as possible for the spring exam. Note: For weeks when you are the assigned discussion prompter, you are not required to also post a discussion forum post: It's up to you.

(3) *Three Comparative Papers (1750-2000 words, about 7-8 pp. double-spaced 12 point)*. Each paper should offer a detailed comparison of at least 2 authors, generally taken from two separate weeks' assigned readings. The paper should engage with a broad concept or problematic dealt with by both authors and trace the similarities and differences in their assumptions, definitions, methods, conclusions, etc. I encourage you to meet with me to discuss your selection of authors and framing of each paper before you turn it in.

These requirements will count toward your final grade as follows:

Class Participation (including 2 Discussion Prompts):	15 percent
Weekly NYU Classes Forum Comments	20 percent
Comparative Papers (20 % x 2; 25 % for best paper)	65 percent

A = excellent. Outstanding work in all respects. Your papers and essays are thoroughly researched, appropriately documented, logically organized and rhetorically compelling. Your analysis is comprehensive, insightful, and original.

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: for a PhD student, any grade less than a B+ should be considered a signal that substantial improvement is needed.

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 writing or analysis. Your arguments are not well supported.

D = unsatisfactory. Work exhibits virtually no understanding or even awareness of basic concepts and themes of course. Your participation has been minimal or superficial.

F= failed. Work was not submitted or completed according to the basic parameters outlined in the course syllabus.

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

Plagiarism Policy:
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)

Required Books

Simone Browne. 2015. *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Bruno Latour. 2005. *Reassembling the Social.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

José Van Dijck. 2013. *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Raymond Williams. 2003 [1973]. *Television: Technology and Cultural Form.* London: Routledge Classics.

Recommended Books

Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schedule (subject to modification): *indicates pdf of text available on NYU Classes

9. 5

1	**Toward Interdisciplinary, Global, and Reflexive Theorizing**
*Michele Lamont. 2010. *How Professors Think: Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgment*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 53-201, 204-211.
*Julian Go. 2018. "Postcolonial Thought as Social Theory." In C. Benzecry, ed., *Social Theory Now*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Additional reading:
-Steven Lukes. 2005. *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

9.12

2	**Democracy and Public Spheres**
*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.
*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.
*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*. London: Arnold, pp. 151-171.
*Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner. 1998. "Sex in Public." *Critical Inquiry*, 24 (2): 547-566.
*Yochai Benkler. 2007. *The Wealth of Networks*. New Haven, CN: Yale University Press. Ch. 7, "Emergence of the Networked Public Sphere."
*Bruce Williams and Michael X. Delli Carpini. 2011. *After Broadcast News: Media Regimes, Democracy, and the New Information Environment*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chs. 1 & 8.

Additional reading:
*Jürgen Habermas. 2006. "Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy Still Enjoy an Epistemic Dimension? The Impact of Normative Theory on Empirical Research." *Communication Theory* 16: 411-426.
*Jürgen Habermas. 1998. "Civil Society and the Political Public Sphere." Pp. 329-87 in *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
*Myra Marx Ferree, William A. Gamson, Jurgen Gerhards, and Dieter Rucht. 2002. "Four Models of the Public Sphere in Modern Democracies." *Theory and Society* 31(3): 289-324.

9.19

3   **Media Power and Influence**
*Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton. 1948. "Mass communication, popular taste, and organized social action." In L. Bryson, ed., *The communication of ideas*. New York: Institute for Religious and Social Studies.
*Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld. 1955. *Personal Influence*. New York: Free Press. Selections.
*Todd Gitlin. 1978. "Media Sociology: The Dominant Paradigm." *Theory and Society* 6 (2): 205-53.
*W.A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani. 1989. "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach." *American Journal of Sociology* 95(1): 1-37.
*Michael Schudson. 1989. "How Culture Works: Perspectives from Media Studies on the Efficacy of Symbols." *Theory and Society* 18 (2): 153-80.

Additional reading:
*Elihu Katz. 1987. "Communications Research Since Lazarsfeld." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 51: S25-S45.
*Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann. 1974. "The spiral of silence: A theory of public opinion." *Journal of Communication* 24: 43–51.

9.26

4   **Modernities I**
*Max Weber. 1958 [1904-5]. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 13-31 (Introduction) and pp. 155-183 (Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism)
*Michel Foucault. 1975. *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Random House. Selections.
*Ghurminder Bhabra. 2007. *Rethinking Modernity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Chs. 1-3 and Conclusion.
*Gilles Deleuze. 1992. "Postscript on the Societies of Control." *October*, 59 (winter): 3-7.

10.3

5   **Modernities II**
Simone Browne. 2015. *Dark Matters*.
*Frantz Fanon. 2008 [1952]. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press. Selections.
*Frantz Fanon. 1963 [1961]. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press. Selections.

10.10
6   **Conceptualizing Technology I: McLuhan vs. Williams**
Raymond Williams. 2003 [1973]. *Television: Technology and Cultural Form.*
*Marshall McLuhan. 1994 [1964]. *Understanding Media*. Cambridge: The MIT
Press. Selections.
*Marshall McLuhan. 1995. Pp. 233-69 in E. McLuhan and F. Zingrone, eds.,
Essential McLuhan. New York: Basic Books.
*Claude S. Fischer. 1992. "Technology and Modern Life." Pp. 1-21 in *America
Calling: A Social History of the Telephone*. Berkeley, CA: University of
California Press.

10.17
7   **Structures and Contingencies of Political Engagement**
*Todd Gitlin. 2003 [1980] *The Whole World is Watching,* pp. 1-126, 249-282.
*Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam. 2012. *A Theory of Fields*. Oxford: Oxford
University Press. Pp. 3-33, 83-139.
*W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerburg. 2012. "The Logic of Connective
Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics."
Information, Communication & Society 15, 5: 739-768.
*Deen Freelon, Charlton McIlwain, and Meredith Clark. 2018. "Quantifying the
power and consequences of social media protest." *New Media & Society* 20(3):
990-1011.

Additional reading:
*Antonio Gramsci. 1971. *Selections from The Prison Notebooks*. International
Publishers, esp. pp. 5-14, 52-59 (esp. fn 5.), p. 80 (fn. 49), pp. 175-85, p. 244.
-William F. Sewell, Jr. 2005. *Logics of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago
Press. Chs 3 & 8.
-Zeynep Tufekci. 2017. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of
Networked Protest.* New Haven: Yale University Press.
-Paolo Gerbaudo. 2012. *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary
Activism*. Pluto Press.

10.24
8   **Solidarity, Ritual, Performance**
*James Carey. 1989. "A Cultural Approach to Communication." In J. Carey,
Communication as Culture. New York: Routledge (pp. 13-36).
*Clifford Geertz. 1973. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cock Fight." In *The
Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic.
*Randall Collins. 1998. *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of
Intellectual Change*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Ch. 1, pp. 19-
53.
*Jeffrey Alexander. 2004. "Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance Between
Ritual and Strategy." *Sociological Theory* 22: 527-573.
*Jeffrey Alexander. 2017. "Seizing the Stage: Mao, MLK, and Black Lives
Matter Today." Ch. 1 in *The Drama of Social Life,* pp. 10-38. Cambridge, UK:
Polity.

Additional reading:
*Emile Durkheim. [1912] 1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Karen Fields, translator). New York: Free Press (pp. 1-18, 207-41, 242-275, 418-448).
-Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz. 1992. *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Preface, Chs. 1-2.

10.31
9   **Producing Culture I: Logics of Capitalism**
*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.
*Christian Sandvig. 2015. "The Social Industry." *Social Media + Society*: 1-4. DOI: 10.1177/2056305115582047.
*Matt Stahl. 2012. *Unfree Masters: Recording Artists and the Politics of Work*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Selections.
*Sarah Banet-Weiser. 2012. *AuthenticTM: The Politics of Ambivalence in a Brand Culture*. New York: NYU Press. Selections.

Additional reading:
*Karl Marx. 1978. [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. Pp. 148-175.
*Tiziana Terranova. 2000. "Free labor: Producing culture for the digital economy." *Social Text* 18(2): 33-58.
-David Harvey. 2007. *Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

11.7
10   **Producing Culture II: Fields and Worlds**
*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.
*Pierre Bourdieu. 1992. *The Field of Cultural Production*. New York: Columbia University Press, Ch. 1, pp. 29-73.
*Howard Becker. 2008 [Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition]. *Art Worlds*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Chs. 1, 2, and Afterword.
*Angèle Christin. 2018. "Counting Clicks: Quantification and Variation in Web Journalism in the United States and France." *American Journal of Sociology* 123 (5): 1382-1415.

Additional reading:
*David Hesmondhalgh. 2006. "Bourdieu, the Media, and Cultural Production." *Media, Culture & Society* 28, 2: 211-31.
*Larissa Buccholz. 2016. "What is a Global Field?" *The Sociological Review Monographs* 64(2): 31-60.

11.14 [NO CLASS]
MAKEUP TIME TBD
11   **Cultural Consumption, Reception, and Circulation**
              *Janice Radway. 1991. "Interpretive Communities and Variable Literacies: The
              Functions of Romance Reading." In C. Mukerji and M. Schudson, eds.,
              Rethinking Popular Culture. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
              *Stuart Hall. 1980. "Encoding / Decoding." In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe and
              P. Willis (eds.), *Culture, Media, Language*. London: Routledge, pp. 128-138.
              *Pierre Bourdieu. 1984. *Distinction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
              Selections.
              *Néstor García Canclini. 2001. *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and
              Multicultural Conflicts*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
              Introduction and Chs. 1-2, pp. 15-66.
              *Henry Jenkins et al. 2013. *Spreadable Media*. New York: NYU Press.
              Chs. 1, 4, 5, & 7.

              Additional reading:
              *Elihu Katz and Tamar Liebes. 1987. "Decoding Dallas" In H. Newcomb, ed.,
              Television: The Critical View. New York: Oxford University Press.
              *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.

11.21 [NO CLASS: UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY]

11.28
12   **Theorizing Globalization and Global Communication**
              *Raka Shome and Radha Hegde. 2002. "Postcolonial Approaches to
              Communication." *Communication Theory* 12 (3): 249-270.
              *Arjun Appadurai. 1990. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural
              Economy." *Public Culture* 2(2): 1-24.
              *Marwan Kraidy. 2005. *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*.
              Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. Chapters 4-5, 7.
              *Manuel Castells. 2010. *The Rise of the Network Society*. Malden, MA: Wiley-
              Blackwell. Preface to the 2010 edition.
              *Terry Flew and Silvio Waisbord. 2015. "The ongoing significance of national
              media systems in the context of media globalization." *Media, Culture & Society*
              37(4): 620-636.

              Recommended:
              *Chandra T. Mohanty. 1984. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and
              Colonial Discourses." *Boundary* 2(12): 333-358.
              *Joseph D. Straubhaar. 2010. "Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical
              Interdependence and Cultural Proximity." Pp. 261-78 in D. Thussu, ed.,
              International Communication. London: Routledge.
              -Raewyn Connell. 2007. *Southern Theory*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

12.5

13   **Conceptualizing Technology II: Actor-Network Theory**
*Bruno Latour. 1991. "Technology is society made durable." In *A Sociology of Monsters: Essays on Power, Technology and Domination*, ed. J. Law, Sociological Review Monograph 38: 103-132.
*Bruno Latour. 2005. *Reassembling the Social.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. Introduction, pp. 63-86, and Part II.

Additional reading:
*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.
*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.
*John Law. 2009. "Actor-Network Theory and Material Semiotics." In *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, ed. B.S. Turner, 141-158. London: Blackwell.

12.12

14   **Conceptualizing Technology III: Deploying Theories of Networks and Actor-Networks for Media Research**
José Van Dijck. 2013. *The Culture of Connectivity,* chs. 1-3, 7-8.
*David Stark. 2009. *The Sense of Dissonance: Accounts of Worth in Economic Life*. Chs. 1, 3, 5. Princeton: Princeton University Press.