

Eastern Illinois University  
New Course Proposal  
CMN 3570A, Topics in Media History I

1. Catalog description

- a) CMN 3570A
- b) Topics in Media History I
- c) 3-0-3
- d) Terms offered: on demand.
- e) Short title: TOPICS MEDIA HIS
- f) Catalog Description: Topics in Media History provides an in-depth study of the history of one particular medium (e.g. film, radio, television, or the internet). It will cover the development of media technology, the structure of media institutions and their regulation, and the social and cultural significance of these media. This class is repeatable with change in topic.
- g) Prerequisites: CMN 2520.
- h) Initial term of course offering: Spring 2007

2. Student Learning Objectives and Evaluation

a) Student learning objectives:

Students will be able to list the main steps in the development of a medium from its beginnings to its contemporary status.

Students will be able to explain the institutional structure of a medium, major media producers, regulation, licensing, censorship of the media.

Students will be able to analyze the social and cultural effects of specific media texts and media genres on culture, for example in relation to race, ethnicity, gender, and class.

Students will be able to analyze key media texts of different periods in the history of a medium.

b) Assessment of student achievement:

Student achievement will be assessed through:

- Short position papers responding to weekly readings
- Two analytical papers discussing historical events and their social and cultural context.
- Midterm and final exams
- Regular assessment of students' contributions to class discussion.

c) Topics in Media History will be traditionally delivered.

d) Requirements for students enrolling for graduate credit:

This class is not available for graduate credit.

3. Outline of the Course

Specific course title, course outline and content will change with topic and instructor. See attached sample for a course on radio history.

#### 4. Rationale

a) Purpose and need: The subject of media history is an established part of the field of communication. This proposal introduces this subject to the Department of Communication Studies as a rotating topics class. It will allow a variety of faculty in the department to teach topics such as film history, radio history, television history, or history of the internet. A course on the history of the media provides students with an enhanced understanding of the role of the media in contemporary society in general. The current state of the media cannot be fully comprehended without significant knowledge of their history. Therefore, Topics in Media History will strengthen the Mass Communication curriculum in the Department of Communication Studies significantly. b) Justification of the level of the course and prerequisites: The difficulty of CMN 3570 is beyond an introductory level. The class would therefore be most appropriate for undergraduate students at the Junior and Senior level. CMN 2520: Introduction to Mass Communication is the only prerequisite. It provides students with a basic understanding of the structure, technology and institutions of the media.

c) Similarity to existing courses:

- (1) CMN 3570 does not substantially duplicate any existing courses.
- (2) CMN 3570 will fill an obvious gap in the curriculum of the Department of Communication Studies. There are currently no courses on the subject of media history in Communication Studies.

d) Impact on Program(s):

- (1) The course will not be required for majors or minors, but will be an approved elective for undergraduate students focusing on the mass communication option for their B.A.
- (2) This class is not available for graduate credit.

#### 5. Implementation

a) Faculty members to whom the course may be assigned: Mr. Mike Bradd, Mr. Joe Heumann, Dr. Olaf Hoerschelmann, Dr. M. Mehdi Semati.

b) Additional costs to students: None.

c) Texts and supplementary materials to be used:

Specific course title, course outline and content will change with topic and instructor. See attached sample for a course on radio history.

#### 6. Community College Transfer:

A community college course will not be judged to be equivalent to a 3000- or 4000-level course but may be accepted as a substitute; however, upper-division credit will not be awarded.

7. Date approved by the Department of Communication Studies: 11/3/2004

8. Date approved by the college curriculum committee \_\_\_\_\_

9. Date approved by CAA: 10/13/15 CGS: Not Applicable

Sample syllabus  
CMN 3570A:  
Topics in Media History I:  
Radio History

Course description:

Radio History provides an in-depth study of the history of radio. It will cover the development of technology and programming, the structure of its institutions and their regulation, and the social and cultural significance of radio.

The course will specifically cover:

- the development of the idea of broadcasting and its implementation as an institutional and cultural practice
- the development of distinct programming forms on radio
- the impact of crucial events such as the Depression, World War I, and World War II
- competition between radio and other media, such as film, theater, vaudeville, and television
- debates over different forms of financing for radio and the rise of advertising as the driving force for the radio industry
- the role of radio broadcasting in the shaping of American national identity
- different approaches to understanding audiences in broadcasting

As a goal of this course, students should gain an understanding of the complex relationship between radio as an institution and a business practice, its role in everyday life, and its impact on American culture.

Books:

Allen, Robert C.. *Speaking of Soap Operas*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.

Douglas, Susan J.. *Inventing American Broadcasting, 1899-1922*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.

Hilmes, Michele & Jason Loviglio. *Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Smulyan, Susan. *Selling Radio: The Commercialization of American Broadcasting 1920-1934*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994.

Articles on reserve:

Brecht, Bertold. "The Radio As an Apparatus of Communication." *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, Ed. & Trans. John Willet, 51-53. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964.

Herzog, Herta. "Professor Quiz--A Gratification Study." *Radio and the Printed Page*, Ed. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, 64-93. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1940.

Jewell, Richard B. "Hollywood and Radio: Competition and Partnership in the 1930s." *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 4, no. 2 (1984): 125-41.

Smulyan, Susan. "Radio Advertising to Women in Twenties America: "A Latchkey to Every Home." *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 13, no. 3 (1993): 299-314.

Smulyan, Susan. "The Rise of the Radio Network: Technological and Cultural Influences on the Structure of American Broadcasting." *Prospects: An Annual of American Studies* 11 (1987): 105-17.

Streeter, Thomas. "Selling the Air: Property and the Politics of US Commercial Broadcasting." *Media, Culture & Society* 16, no. 1 (1994): 91-116.

#### Course outline:

Week 1: Introduction to radio history: The development of the study of radio from early radio research in the 1940s to the new wave of radio history in the 1990s and 2000s.

Week 2: Approaches to media history: How have media researchers approached their subject? What underlying theories of history have researchers used? What motivations do media historians have for focusing on specific aspects of their subject?

Week 3: Early radio technology: The development of early radio in the 1900s and 1910s. The strategies of different radio inventors and the resulting advances in technology.

Week 4: The rise of corporate influence in radio: The takeover of radio by large corporations such as General Electric, Westinghouse, and RCA after World War I. The changes in radio as a result of new corporate strategies.

Week 5: The development of network broadcasting: The initial steps in network broadcasting in the 1920s. The corporate organization of networks and the foundation of NBC.

Week 6: The regulation of radio: The disputes over the social and cultural role of radio in the late 1920s and 1930s. The foundation of the Federal Radio commission (FRC) in 1927 and of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 1934. Conflicts over the commercialization of radio.

Week 7: Radio advertising: The proliferation of radio advertising in the 1930s and 1940s. Techniques used by radio broadcasters to ease the introduction of advertising in everyday radio programming.

Week 8: Midterm exam

Week 9: Radio and national identity: The role of national radio networks in the creation and maintenance of national identities. The importance of discourses of race and ethnicity for national identity. Debates over Amos 'n' Andy in the 1940s.

Week 10: Daytime radio programming: The 'discovery' of female daytime audiences in the 1940s. The rise in importance of female audiences for radio advertisers. The development of unique forms of address in daytime broadcasting.

Week 11: Prime time radio programming. Survey of prime time radio genres before and immediately after World War II. Focus on drama and comedy genres.

Week 12: Radio soap operas. Development of soap operas in 1930s Chicago. Advertisers' key role in the rise of the genre. Connection between radio soap operas and television soap operas.

Week 13: Top-40 radio. Changes in the radio industry after World War II and in connection to the rise of television. The change of radio programming formats from narrative programming toward music-based Top-40 radio.

Week 14: Talk radio. The rise in importance of talk-radio formats in radio since the 1970s. Current debates about the politics and social impact of talk radio.

Week 15: New directions in radio research: The development of new methods and theories of studying radio since the 1990s.

#### Evaluation:

##### Undergraduate students:

Position papers:	25%
Attendance and participation:	20%
Midterm exam:	25%
<u>Final exam:</u>	<u>30%</u>
Total:	100%

##### Graduate students:

Position papers:	15%
Attendance and participation:	20%
Midterm exam:	15%
Final exam:	20%
Research paper:	25%
<u>Research presentation:</u>	<u>5%</u>
Total	100%

CMN 3570A: Topics in Media History I: Radio History Assessment Table

Course Objective	Course Content	Exams	Weekly Papers	Analytical Papers	Class Participation
List main steps in the development of the medium	Weeks 1, 3, 11, 13	X		X	X
Explain the institutional structure of the medium; major media producers, regulation, licensing, censorship	Weeks 3, 4, 5, 6	X	X	X	X
Analyze the social and cultural effects of specific media texts and media genres on U.S. culture	Weeks 2, 9, 10, 12, 15	X	X	X	X
Analyze key media texts of different periods in the history of a medium	Weeks 7, 9, 11, 12, 14	X		X	