

INF2243: Critical Histories of Information and Communication Technologies  
Winter 2015, BL 507  
Thursdays 6:30pm to 9:30pm

Prof. Brett Caraway

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Office Hours: Thursdays 4:30pm to 6:30pm or by appointment, BL 614

### **Course Description**

This seminar engages with the recursive relationships between information and communication technologies (ICTs) on the one hand and the social, cultural, economic, and legal structures that condition technological development on the other. These relationships will be investigated using a range of approaches and methods drawn from economics, political science, critical theory, social constructivism, and historical perspectives.

In the first stage of the course we will survey a variety of theoretical literatures useful to the study of technological systems, including mass communication theory, science and technology studies, actor-network theory, social construction of technology, cultural studies, and political economy. The intent is not to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of ICTs, but instead to reveal the complexity and intellectual diversity of the field. In the second stage of the course we will look more closely at a number of historical case studies in technological innovation. We will explore the power relations among firms, inventors, users, and the state. Case studies include orality, writing, telegraphy, telephony, radio, TV/film, computing, and the Internet.

### **Course Objectives and Intended Learning Outcomes**

- Gain familiarity with various theories and methodologies related to the study of communication and information
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of those theories and methodologies
- Attain familiarity with the broad historical trends in ICTs
- Perform independent research in the sociological study of ICTs

### **Relationship to Program Learning Outcomes**

<https://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/studies/learning-outcomes>

### **Assessment**

This is a seminar in which preparation and participation are required. In addition to regular attendance, students must demonstrate critical engagement with the assigned readings. Therefore, students are required to:

- For each week, prepare 2 discussion questions based on the assigned readings. Students must print two copies of these questions, one to turn in before class and one to refer to during class. Questions should refer to specific elements from the readings, including quotations where appropriate. Electronic copies will not be accepted.
- Prepare a 5 minute presentation to give in class on a reading of your choosing, subject to approval by the instructor
- Write a 1,500 to 1,700 word paper in response to a set of readings and discussions
- Write a 3,000 to 3,500 word term paper on a particular topic, technology, issue, case study, theory, or scholarly work(s) relevant to the study of information and communications technologies. The instructor must approve term paper topics in advance.

## **Grading**

Final grades will be assessed according to the following:

Class participation	20%
Class presentation	20%
Response paper	20%
Term paper	40%

Please consult the iSchool's Grade Interpretation Guidelines (<http://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/grade-interpretation>) and the University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>). These documents will form the basis for grading in the course.

## **Writing Support**

As stated in the iSchool's Grade Interpretation Guidelines, "work that is not well written and grammatically correct will not generally be considered eligible for a grade in the A range, regardless of its quality in other respects". With this in mind, please make use of the writing support provided to graduate students by the SGS Office of English Language and Writing Support (<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/English-Language-and-Writing-Support.aspx>). The services are designed to target the needs of both native and non-native speakers and all programs are free. Please consult the current workshop schedule (<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Current-Years-Courses.aspx>) for more information.

## **Academic integrity**

Please consult the University's site on Academic Integrity (<http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>). The iSchool has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism as defined in section B.I.1.(d) of the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf>). You should acquaint yourself with the Code. Please review the

material in Cite it Right and if you require further clarification, consult the site How Not to Plagiarize (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>). Cite it Right covers relevant parts of the U of T *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (1995). It is expected that all iSchool students take the Cite it Right workshop and the online quiz. Completion of the online Cite it Right quiz should be made prior to the second week of classes. To review and complete the workshop, visit the orientation portion of the iSkills site: [uoft.me/iskills](http://uoft.me/iskills)

### Accommodations

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or a health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services Office (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>) as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services staff are available by appointment to assess needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let them and I know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

### Calendar

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
1	Jan 12	Introduction	
2	Jan 19	Theories: Intro to theory and determinisms	Lazarsfeld, McLuhan, Latour, Supa, Winston
3	Jan 26	Theories: Mass Communication	Katz, Schramm, deFleur, McCombs, Lasswell, Bernays
4	Feb 2	Theories: Mass Communication & Information Society	Entman, Lakoff, Beniger, Castells, Benkler
5	Feb 9	Theories: Critical Communication	Hamilton, Adorno, Benjamin, Debord, Habermas
6	Feb 16	Theories: Critical Communication	Innis, Mosco, Schiller, Hall, Hirji, Sawchuk, Alhassan
7	Mar 2	Technology: Orality and Literacy	Clanchy, Eisensstein, Febvre, Graff, Ong
8	Mar 9	Technology: Telegraphy & Telephony	Fischer, Carey, Standage, Winston, Cauley, Barnouw
9	Mar 16	Technology: Radio	Douglas, Streeter
10	Mar 23	Technology: Screens	Gerbner, Maxwell, Spigel
11	Mar 30	Technology: Computing	Ceruzzi, Hicks,

			Suchman
12	Apr 6	Technology: Internet	Castells, Chun, Rheingold, Turkle

## Reading List

Adorno, Theodor W. 1938. "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening." *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 7.

Alhassan, Amin. 2013. "Postcolonialism and communication studies." In *Mediascapes: New Patterns in Canadian Communication*, edited by Leslie Regan Shade. Toronto, ON: Nelson College Indigenous, 43- 58.

Barnouw, Erik. 1990. *Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 6-24.

Beniger, J. 1986. *The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1-27.

Benjamin, Walter. 1968. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. New York: Schocken Books, 217-251.

Benkler, Yochai. 2006. *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1-58.

Bernays, Edward L. 1928. *Propaganda*. New York,: H. Liveright, 9-46.

Carey, J. 1992. *Communication as Culture*. New York: Routledge, 210-230.

Castells, Manuel. 1996. "The Information Technology Revolution." In *The rise of the network society*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 28-76.

Castells, Manuel. 2012. *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 156-199.

Cauley, Leslie. 2008. *End of the Line: The Rise and Fall of AT&T*. New York, NY: Free Press, 32-40.

Ceruzzi, Paul. 1998. *A History of Modern Computers*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 207-241.

Chun, Wendy H. K., and Sarah Friedland. 2015. "Habits of Leaking: Of Sluts and Network Cards." *differences* 26 (2):1-28.

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- DeFleur, M. L. 1988. "Diffusing Information." *Society* 2:72-81.
- Douglas, Susan J. 1987. "Marconi and the America's Cup" and "The Titanic Disaster and the First Radio Regulation." In *Inventing American broadcasting, 1899-1922, Johns Hopkins studies in the history of technology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 3-29; 216-239.
- Douglas, Susan J. 2004. *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 55-82.
- Eisenstein, Elizabeth. 2007. "The Rise of the Reading Public." In *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society*, edited by David Crowley and Paul Heyer. New York, NY: Routledge, 95-103.
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- Entman, Robert M. 1993. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." *Journal of Communication* 43 (4):51-58.
- Febvre, Lucien, and Henri-Jean Martin. 2010. *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450-1800*. New York, NY: Verso, 29-76.
- Fischer, C. (1994). *America Calling*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, 33-53; 255-272.
- Gerbner, George, Larry Gross, Michael Morgan, and Nancy Signorielli. 1986. "Living with Television: The Dynamics of the Cultivation Process." In *Perspectives on Media Effects*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 17-40.
- Graff, Harvey J. 2007. "Early Modern Literacies." In *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society*, edited by David Crowley and Paul Heyer. New York: Routledge, 104-112.
- Habermas, Jürgen, Sara Lennox, and Frank Lennox. 1964. "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article." In *New German Critique*, 49-55. *New German Critique*.
- Hall, Stuart. 1999. "Encoding, decoding." In *The Cultural Studies Reader*, edited by Simon During. London and New York: Routledge, 90-103.

- Hamilton, Sheryl N. 2013. "Considering Critical Communication Studies in Canada." In *Mediascapes: New Patterns in Canadian Communication*. Toronto, ON: Nelson College Indigenous, 4-24.
- Hicks, Marie. 2010. "Only the Clothes Changed: Women Operators in British Computing and Advertising, 1950-1970." *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* 32 (2): 2-14.
- Hirji, Faiza. 2013. "The Colour of Difference: Race, Diversity, and Journalism in Canada." In *Mediascapes: New Patterns in Canadian Communication*, edited by Leslie Regan Shade. Toronto, ON: Nelson College Indigenous, 390-408.
- Innis, H. 2011. "Media in Ancient Empires." In *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society, Sixth Edition*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 14-21.
- Katz, Elihu. 1957. "The Two-Step Flow of Communication: An Up-To-Date Report on a Hypothesis." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 21 (1):61-78.
- Katz, Elihu, Hadassah Haas, and Michael Gurevitch. 1973. "On the Use of the Mass Media for Important Things." *American Sociological Review* 38 (2):164-181.
- Lakoff, George. 2010. "Why it Matters How We Frame the Environment." *Environmental Communication* 4 (1):70-81.
- Lasswell, Harold D. 1927. "The Theory of Propaganda." *The American Political Science Review* 21 (3):627-631.
- Latour, Bruno. 1996. "On actor-network theory. A few clarifications plus more than a few complications." In *Soziale Welt* 47:369-381.
- Lazarsfeld, Paul. 1941. "Remarks on Administrative and Critical Communications Research." *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 9: 2-16.
- Maxwell, Richard, and Toby Miller. 2012. *Greening the media*. New York: Oxford University Press, 65-84.
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- Mosco, Vincent. 2008. "Current Trends in the Political Economy of Communication." *Global Media Journal* 1 (1):45-63.

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- Rheingold, Howard. 2000. *The virtual community : homesteading on the electronic frontier*. Rev. ed. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1-16.
- Sawchuk, Kim. 2013. "Beyond the F-Word: A Constellation of Feminist Concepts for Media Researchers." In *Mediascapes: New Patterns in Canadian Communication*, edited by Leslie Regan Shade. Toronto, ON: Nelson College Indigenous, 59-80.
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- Standage, Tom. 1998. *The Victorian Internet : the remarkable story of the telegraph and the nineteenth century's on-line pioneers*. New York: Walker and Co, 57-73.
- Streeter, Thomas. 1994. "Selling the air: property and the politics of US commercial broadcasting." *Media, Culture, & Society* 16:91-116.
- Suchman, Lucy. 2007. *Human-Machine Reconfigurations: Plans and Situated Actions, 2 edition*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 29-84.
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