

Fall 2019

HIST 345-001: Communication Through the Ages

Florencia Pierri

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HIST 345-001 – Communication Through the Ages

Professor: Florencia Pierri

Classroom: CKB 313

Time: Mondays, 6:00-8:50 pm

Office: Cullimore 324

Office Hours: Mondays 1:30-5:30 pm and by appointment

Contact: fpierri@njit.edu

Course Description:

This course examines the history of communication technologies from the advent of the printed book to the creation of the Internet. It will look at the main ways in which knowledge has been produced, shared, and conserved over the last 500 years, and place these communication technologies within a broader social context in which the value of technical innovations is weighed against systems of control over the dissemination of information. We will look at attempts to control the spread of information, and see how the ways in which people communicate fundamentally shapes the ways in which they live.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Recognize the ways in which broader social forces help shape (and destroy) technological innovations in communication, and how these innovations also fundamentally alter the society in which they were developed.
- Demonstrate (through in-class participation, exams, and quizzes) that you can recognize, articulate, and analyze the impact of communication technologies on society throughout history
- Identify, analyze, and deploy primary sources in conversation with secondary sources to make historical arguments.
- Write a robust historical research paper with a clear argument and effective argumentation.

Required Books:

1. Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, second edition, ISBN: 978-1-107-63275-2 *** You will need the second edition of this book, so be sure to double check the ISBN if buying online ***
2. Martin Campbell Kelly, *Computer: A History of the Information Machine (The Sloan Technology Series)* 3rd Edition, ISBN-10: 0813345901 *** You will need the third edition of this book, so be sure to double check the ISBN if buying online ***

All other readings will be posted on Canvas.

Grading :

You must complete all assignments to pass the course. Failure to do so will result in an automatic F.

1. **Assignments: 15%** There will be a total of 5 short writing assignments due over the semester. See the course schedule for due dates, and Canvas for detailed prompts.

2. **Midterm exam: 15%** The midterm exam will be in class, and consist of a few short essay questions and paragraph-long identifications of key terms and their historical importance.
3. **Research Paper: 30%** You will write a research paper where you will analyze and craft a historical argument about a no-longer extant communication technology. You will be given a list of possible topics, and you will be expected to research it, find primary and secondary sources about it, and develop an argumentative paper about it. To assist in this, you will complete a variety of assignments throughout the semester to guide the shape of your final paper.
4. **Final Exam: 25%** The final exam will be on the scheduled exam day, and consist of a few essay questions that will ask you to synthesize the material you learned over the course of the semester, and paragraph-long identifications of key terms and their historical importance
5. **Participation + quizzes: 15%** Students are expected to have completed all readings before class, participate actively in all class discussions and activities, to be respectful to the instructor and their fellow classmates, to arrive to class on time, and to stay focused on what is happening in our classroom not on chatting or using digital devices. We will have a variety of in-class activities and quizzes that will require your full attention and participation during class time. Participation will be assessed on the quality of contributions to class discussions. Quality participation demonstrates the following:
 - Understanding of the historical context as gleaned from lectures and readings
 - Completion of that week's assignments such as readings and reading responses
 - A willingness to engage in critical assessment of course texts and lectures

NOTE: This is a 300 level course. To get the most out of this course, you must maintain an upper college level reading, writing and participation level.

Assignment Submission Guidelines:

Late Assignments: Assignments will lose 1/3 of a grade for every day late (A to A-; A- to B+; etc.). Assignments will not be accepted more than 1 week late.

Paper Formatting: All papers must be typed, double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman, 1” margins, and be submitted as in a hard copy in class, as well as a digital copy on Canvas.

Grading Scale (for assignments only, course grades will not include: A+, A-, B-, C-, D+):

100	A+	76-78	C+
93-99	A	73-75	C
89-92	A-	69-72	C-
86-88	B+	66-68	D+
83-85	B	60-65	D
79-82	B-	0-60	F

Academic Integrity: An essential part of NJIT’s policy of academic integrity is that students demonstrate honesty and integrity in their courses. It is also a policy that will serve you in good stead in the rest of your personal and professional life. Turning in a

paper that includes plagiarism, was written by someone else and passed off as your own work, or cheating on an examination will result in a 0 for that assignment. All cases of suspected plagiarism/cheating will be reported to the office of the Dean of Students for investigation. If you're unclear on what constitutes an honor code violation, please see the university policy on academic integrity at:

<https://www.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>

Technology Policy: I fully understand the irony inherent in banning laptops from a course that deals with the history of technology. That being said, I ask that you take notes on paper and leave your laptops and cell phones in your bags during class. Texting, using Twitter, playing games, etc. interrupts the flow of discussion, distracts other students, and will inevitably embarrass you when I have to call you out and confiscate your device for the remainder of the lecture. If you need to send an important text or take an important call, please excuse yourself from the room and reenter when you can return your attention to the course. Students are also prohibited from using headphones or keeping headphones in their ears during class. Essentially, you are in class once a week for approximately 3 hours. Please be present and prepared while you are here.

Cell phones: Use of a cell phone in class for unauthorized activity will result in student's choosing either:

1. Immediate expulsion from class
2. Placement of the student's cell phone at the front of class with the instructor for the remainder of that class and each class for the remainder of the semester.

Students with Disabilities or Special Needs:

Students who have disabilities or special needs should contact NJIT's Student Disability Services to help procure accommodations in completing coursework. The center can be found at <http://www.njit.edu/counseling/services/disabilities.php>.

Other Resources:

There are several writing assignments both big and small for this course, and if you need them, the [Writing Center](#) can provide you with help on every part of the writing process. Also, please don't hesitate to drop by my office hours or send me an email if you're having difficulties.

We all need a support network. If you need them, the [Center for Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (C-CAPS) in Campbell Hall, Room 205, is available to listen and to help.

Class Schedule and Readings:

I. Paper Technologies

- Week 1: Monday, September 9, 2019 - **Introductions + Terms + Medieval Books**
- Week 2: Monday, September 16, 2019 - **From Manuscript to Print**
 - Read: Eisenstein, Chapter 1, "An Unacknowledged Revolution," pp. 3-12
 - Read: Eisenstein, Chapter 2, "Defining the Initial Shift," pp. 13-44

- Week 3: Monday, September 23, 2019 - **Print Culture**
 - Read: Eisenstein, Chapter 3, “Some Features of Print Culture,” pp. 46-101
- Week 4: Monday, September 30, 2019 - **The Reading Public**
 - Read: Eisenstein, Chapter 4, “The Expanding Republic of Letters,” pp. 102-120
 - Read: Eisenstein, chapter 5, “The Permanent Renaissance,” pp. 123-163
- Week 5: Monday, October 7, 2019 **Books and Their Discontents**
 - Read: Eisenstein, Chapter 6, “Western Christendom Disrupted,” pp. 164-208
 - Read: Eisenstein, Chapter 7 “The Book of Nature Transformed,” pp. 209-285

II. Electronic Revolution

- Week 6: Monday, October 14, 2019- **The Visual Revolution**
 - Look at: the photographs in “Faking it. Manipulated Photography Before Photoshop.” Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2012/faking%20it>
 - Read: Daniel J. Czitrom, “American Motion Pictures and the New Popular Culture,” *Media and the American Mind*, pp. 30-59
 - Watch: one video in the Library of Congress’s “Inventing Entertainment: The Early Motion Pictures and Sound Recordings of the Edison Companies” collection, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/edison-company-motion-pictures-and-sound-recordings/?fa=original-format:film,+video> ****Be prepared to discuss your video in class****
 - Write: A one-paragraph description of your video, due as a printed copy in class.
- Week 7: Monday, October 21, 2019-- **It’s All Morse To Me**
**** Assignment 1 Due: Choose the technology for your paper, 1 paragraph explanation of what it is and why it is important****
 - Read: Tom Standage, “The Mother of All Networks” , “Strange, Fierce Fire,” and “Wiring The World,” in *The Victorian Internet*, pp. 1-40, 74-91.
 - Read: David Hochfelder, “Why the Telegraph was Revolutionary,”; “The Promise of Telegraphy”, in *The Telegraph in America*. pp. 1-5; pp. 176-180.
- Week 8: Monday, October 28, 2019—**Ring Ring**
**** Assignment 2 due: Find one primary source about your topic and analyze it - 2 pages ****
 - Read: Hochfelder, “The Telegraph, The Telephone, and the Logic of Industrial Succession,” in in *The Telegraph in America*. pp. 138-175.
 - Robert MacDougall, “Visions of Telephony” in *The People's Network: The Political Economy of the Telephone in the Gilded Age*, pp. 61-91
- Week 9: Monday, November 4, 2019—**Wireless World**
**** MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS****

- Read: Daniel J. Czitrom, "The Ethereal Hearth: American Radio from Wireless through Broadcasting, 1892-1940," *Media and the American Mind*, pp. 60-88.
- Read: Clive Thompson, "The Debate Over Net Neutrality Has Its Roots in the Fight Over Radio Freedom," *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 2014
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/debate-over-net-neutrality-has-its-roots-fight-over-radio-freedom-180952774/>
- Listen: The Mercury Theatre on Air, "The War of the Worlds" 1938
https://archive.org/details/the_war_of_the_worlds_ORdelcroix , 59 minutes.
- Week 10: Monday, November 11, 2019 - **Stay Tuned for TV**
**** Assignment 3 Due: Annotated Bibliography ****
 - Read: Jason Mittel, "Why Television," pp. 1-14; "Television's Transforming Technologies," pp. 403-418 in *Television and American Culture*
 - Read: Susan Murray, "And Now—Color: Early Color Systems," in *Bright Signals: A History of Color Television*, pp. 11-33
 - Watch: The first public television broadcast, 1936,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6iWJ5LObN2o>

III. Computers

- Week 11: Monday, November 18, 2019 - **Analog Computers**
**** Assignment 4 due: Assignment TBA****
 - Read: Campbell-Kelly, Chapter 1 "When Computers Were People," Chapter 2 "The Mechanical Office," Chapter 3 "Babbage's Dreams Come True," pp. 3-61

Optional:

 - Solve some mathematical problems using The [Slide Rule Museum's virtual slide rule](#).
- Week 12: Monday, November 25, 2019 **Inventing the Computer**
**** Assignment 5 due: Introductory paragraph(s) with clear thesis statement****
 - Read: Campbell-Kelly, Chapter 4 "Inventing the Computer," Chapter 5 "The Computer Becomes a Business Machine," Chapter 6 "The Maturing of the Mainframe," pp. 65-85; 97-139.
- Week 13: Monday, December 2, 2019- **Innovation and Expansion**
 - Read: Campbell-Kelly, Chapter 7 "Real Time: Reaping the Whirlwind," Chapter 9, "New Modes of Computing," pp. 143-166, 203-225
 - Play: Spacewar!, a 1962 computer game, on a PDP-1 emulator on
<https://www.masswerk.at/spacewar/>
- Week 14: Monday, December 9, 2019 - **Getting Personal**
**** FINAL PAPER DUE - BRING PAPER COPY TO CLASS****
 - Read: Campbell-Kelly: chapter 10, "The Shaping of the PC", Chapter 11, "Broadening the Appeal," and Chapter 12, "The Internet," pp. 229-291 (Stop at The Internet Land Rush)

I have read, understood, and will abide by the course policies for HIS 345

Name:

Date:

Signature: