

UC Center Program Courses - Fall 2014
PCC 117. **Media, Politics & Society in France & the EU**

Prof. Joav Toker
email: tokerj@free.fr

Lecture
Monday 3:30-5:00 pm
Tuesday 1:15-2:45 pm

Office Hours
By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will explore and critically analyze major institutions, actors and trends in contemporary French and European Media and attempt to situate them in the larger contexts of “unifying” Europe and “globalized” world-media-scene.

We will examine the operational schemes, performances and internal decisional and power structures of different branches of French media: print national & regional press, specialized magazines, the publishing industry, advertising, radio, television, the internet.

We will attempt a specific analysis regarding the international and French implications of the growing potential of social networks and “New Media”. We’ll critically review some aspects of the growing confusion -both in terms of competition and compatibility- between “new” and “old” media and their political, social and cultural impacts.

In the domain of social and political presence we will study and question practices of newsgathering, deontological principles and constraints, media performance under pressure of time, context, profit-making-structures, politics, violence, ethics and ideologies. We will examine forms and styles of “information”, editorial policies and the variety of notions of “Democratic pluralism” across the French and European Media landscapes;

We will try to define, decode and interpret distinctions between “news”, “commentary” and “analysis” as they are being treated on the French and European media scenes. We’ll analyze what all these may mean, encourage, cultivate or block in terms of politics, society, culture and media during “high times” of political turmoil, violent crisis or social unrest.

In the domain of entertainment and “services” offered by the Media we will examine different variations of publishing, broadcasting and ‘accompanying’ practices over the last 20-30 years. We may attempt a parallel analysis of possible interaction between these two domains (News/Entertainment), following political and ideological lines and some study of the dynamics of change along the ambitions, the strategies and the priorities of the media industries alongside “public demand”.

The course will alter traditional lectures with critical discussions and the analysis of print, illustrated, audio, visual and virtual ‘excerpts’.

Every session will include a compact set of a variety of short oral-presentations by students (about 5-8 minutes long), addressing specific aspects of the assigned reading material, , previous (or future) class discussions and the “field visits”. Some class presentations will be organized in a form of “critical teams” or “simulation-panels” **5.0 credits**. Suggested subject areas for this course: *Political Science/Communications/Film and Media Studies/Sociology*

Two “Media visits” and/or guest-lectures are planned during the semester:

- The first one at the ‘operational centre’ of a Web site, including a discussion with the editorial board and contributors of the site (which will probably be chosen for its focus on ‘cultural’, ‘social’ or ‘ethnic’ perspectives (“la banlieue”, or immigration-minded, or “young-generation-oriented” Web site).
- The second at the headquarters and studios of a major Radio or Television ‘institutional’ station (RFI, France 2, France 3, France-24, Canal Plus, etc.);
- The visits will be pre-introduced in class the week before and debriefed in detail during the following session.

Goals

The overriding aim of this course is to provide students with the tools to understand the evolution of contemporary French and European media and its place in the global context through an in-depth examination of the diverse forms and trends in this fast-changing landscape. In order to meet this goal, the course centers on the following texts, themes, and topics:

Texts:

- Kuhn, Raymond. *The Media in Contemporary France*, McGraw-Hill Education, 2011.
- Selected critical readings of philosophers, sociologists, political scientists, and media scholars, such as Baudrillard, Nye, Bollinger, Dauncey, and Oates.

Themes and Topics:

- The central characteristics of European media and its social, political, and cultural functions
- The means by which we as consumers understand, analyze, and interpret media products
- The impact of media products on the collective and individual consciousness
- The participation of media institutions in power structures

Learning Outcomes

The course also seeks to develop students' written and oral rhetorical skills as well as their analytical skills through the following activities and assignments:

- Class discussion on readings and on selected media items in which students evaluate the historical context and analyze contemporary practices and trends in both traditional and “new” French and European media.
- A class visit to a multi-lingual French news station provides students with the opportunity to experience first-hand the way in which media is constructed, and they are responsible for submitting a short reflection essay.
- Students are also asked to do an oral presentation, accompanied by a written component, in which they analyze, compare, and critically evaluate media coverage, operational modes and involvement in the French and European political, social, cultural, and “mental” landscape.
- Through discussion, presentation, and written assignments, students also engage in comparisons of European media characteristics with the US media sphere alongside “global” considerations of modern media impacts.

The midterm and final exams test students on their ability to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired by analyzing media products and evaluating the interactive role played by the media in power-sharing structures in the context of political, economic and social trends.

COURSE MATERIALS

Kuhn, Raymond. *The Media in Contemporary France*, McGraw-Hill Education, 2011.
Articles and textbook chapters reproduced in the Course Reader [CR].

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance at lectures and site visits is mandatory. It is essential that you attend all classes and participate actively. As per the UC Paris Attendance Policy, excessive absences and tardies will result in a lowered final grade. Please refer to UC Paris Academic Handbook for the policy on absences and tardies.

Participation and reading assignments are critical. For the purposes of this class, participation means reading the materials in advance (readings are in the course reader), coming to class on time, staying for the entire class period, and actively taking part in discussions and other in-class exercises and activities. A large part of this portion of your grade is simply paying attention; in order to pay attention, you must be present! Any tardies or absences will have a strong negative effect on your participation grade.

Keeping up steadily with current French and European news is strictly required. (International Herald Tribune, RFI - Radio France Internationale, France-24 in English, other English & French 'old' & 'new' media outlets). Informed and challenging opinions are highly encouraged during class 'reports', presentations and discussions.

Please bear in mind that the order and the content of sessions may be modified on short notice due to breaking French or European major news developments.

GRADING

Class participation and active involvement in discussion: 20%

Class-'reports' (written and 5-8 minute oral components): 15%

2 Short 'reaction papers' (2-3 pages): 15%

Midterm Examination: 25%

Final Examination: 25%

A Note on Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious offense and could result in your dismissal from the program. All instances of suspected plagiarism will be reported to EAP for disciplinary action. If you borrow words or an idea from any source, whether it be a book, journal, magazine, the Internet, or a lecture, you need to indicate where the information came from. Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* identifies three different acts that are considered plagiarism: "(1) failing to cite quotations and borrowed ideas, (2) failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks, and (3) failing to put summaries and paraphrases [of other texts] into your own words" (Hacker 261). (By both citing the source of this definition of plagiarism and by "enclosing borrowed language in quotation marks," this syllabus has avoided charges of plagiarism.) If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please ask me.

A Note on Electronic Devices

As a courtesy to your instructor and fellow students, please do not use cell phones, laptops, tablets, e-readers, or other electronic devices during class, even to check the time. Make sure phones are turned off. Use of these devices will lower your participation grade. No recording (audio or visual) of class sessions will be permitted.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1

September 15 & 16, 2014:

Introduction: What shall we be looking for? How shall we proceed? Some terminology, short-term / long-term definitions we will be dealing with regarding media, political, social and cultural 'spheres'. Traditional Media vs. the Virtual, the NET, Social Networks and their challenges.

Reading for September 16, 2014:

Kuhn, Raymond. (2011). Historical development of the media in France. *The Media in Contemporary France*, McGraw - Hill Education, Introduction + ch.1, pp. 1-28.

Week 2

September 22 & 23, 2014:

Mapping the Media and political scenes: "Horizontal view" of French Media scene: Who's who in the written Press, Radio, Television, the NET, Publishing & Advertisement Industries; 'specialized' press, "free-time", leisure and "Magazine" press; Media institutions of reference; Notions in historical and 'trend' evolutions.

Readings for Week 2:

Chalaby, Jean K. (2002). Reason of State and Public Communications: De Gaulle in Context. *The De Gaulle Presidency and the Media*, ch. 9, pp. 189-208. [CR]

Kuhn, Raymond. (2011). The contemporary media landscape. *The Media in Contemporary France*, McGraw - Hill Education, ch.2, pp. 29-57.

Week 3

September 29 & 30, 2014:

Media 'machinery' and performance: How do they operate, compete, comply, survive, disappear or flourish?; Instincts, ambitions, limitations and constraints of media coverage and production; senses of editorial, production and financial innovation facing the "New Media". Preparation for the 1st Media visit.

Readings for Week 3:

Oates, Sarah. (2008). The Internet and Democracy. *Introduction to Media and Politics*, Sage, L.A., London, pp. 155-176. [CR]

Fenton, Natalie. (2011). Drowning or Waving? New Media, Journalism and democracy; In Fenton, Natalie (ed.) *New Media, Old News: Journalism & democracy in the Digital Age*; Sage, London, Los-Angeles, Part 1, Introduction, pp. 3-15. [CR]

Week 4

October 6 & 7, 2014: 1st Media-visit / guest-speaker

“Civil Societies”, French and European Political Landscape: How does the media influence politics, what impacts it may carry over civil societies? What is its effect on political awareness, participation and electoral campaigning: on the French internal scene and in the context of European and international positioning? Does media have a role in the European unification process?

Debriefing of the 1st Media visit.

[1st short ‘reaction-paper’ is due on October 7]

Readings for Week 4:

Nye, Joseph S. Jr. (2008). Public Diplomacy and Soft Power, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616: 94-109, In Daya Kishan Thussu (ed.) (2009). *International Communication: A Reader*, Routledge, London & New York, pp. 333-344. [CR]

Ibrahim, Yasmin (2009). The Mediated ‘Ummah’ in Europe: The Islamic Influence in the Cultural Age. Charles, Alex, ed. *Media in the Enlarged Europe: Politics, Policy and Industry*, Intellect, pp. 113-122. [CR]

Week 5

October 13 & 14, 2014:

Media as public actors: facts, emotions, analysis, power and counter-power. Approaches and nuances related to notions of “media influence” in politics, society and “culture”; Dynamics and impacts of the ‘New Media’; Notions of the ‘local’, the ‘national’, the ‘European’ and the ‘Global’.

Readings for Week 5:

Baubérot, Jean (2009). Laïcité and the Challenge of ‘Republicanism’, *Modern and Contemporary France*, vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 189-198. [CR]

Vince, Natalya. (2010). France, Islam and Laïcité : Colonial Exceptions, Contemporary Reinventions and European Convergence. Chafer, Tony and Godin, Emmanuel ed. *The End of French Exception? Decline and Revival of the ‘French Model’*. ch. 8., pp. 153-170. [CR]

Week 6

October 20 & 21, 2014:

Media business models: Commercial realities and constraints; Political affiliations and sympathies, regulation and innovation; Free media outlets, advertisement, free downloads and copyrights; Who’s really in charge: The President, the Parliament, the Bureaucracy or the Market...?

Readings for Week 6:

Kuhn, Raymond. (2011). Media pluralism. *The Media in Contemporary France*, McGraw - Hill Education, ch.3, pp. 59-80.

Tworzecki, Hubert. (2012). Political Communication and Media Effects in the Context of New Democracies of East-Central Europe. Semetko, Holli A. & Scammell, Margaret [Ed.], *The Sage Handbook of Political Communication* (2012), ch. 35. [CR]

Week 7

Review & Midterm Examination – Dates and Times TBA

Fall Break & Armistice Holiday (November 3rd through November 11th)

Week 8 - Exceptional Course Meeting (Make-up Session for November 10th and 11th)

Friday November 14, 2014 (2:30-5:30 pm):

The Media and French ‘universal’ claim: The ‘Francophonie’; Revised notions of “Soft Power” in Media, in Diplomacy and the “peaceful deployment of Democracy”; “across the borders” multi-directional impacts. Some EU comparisons: Northern ‘Rhine .Model’, British traditions and “solidity”, Mediterranean Europe, the Central-Eastern newcomers to the EU; Media as players in the European unification process.

Preparation for the 2nd Media visit.

Readings for Week 8:

Kuhn, Raymond. (2011). The French Media on the World Stage. *The Media in Contemporary France*, McGraw - Hill Education, ch.7, pp. 143-163.

Mason, Moya K. (1999). La Francophonie: The History, Structures, Organization and Philosophical Underpinnings; report to the "Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie" (excerpts). [CR]

Week 9

November 17 & 18, 2014:

Entertainment à la française, à l’européenne, reality shows and voyeurism. The problematic fascination with Media “violence”; Concepts of ‘Elites’ and ‘People’ in French history, politics & mass-media; Different notions of “responsibility” and “awareness” in political and Media behaviour; Interactivity and confrontation between the traditional and the ‘New’ media.

Readings for Week 9:

Dauncey, Hugh. (2010). L’exception culturelle’. Chafer, Tony and Godin, Emmanuel (ed.) *The End of French Exception? Decline and Revival of the ‘French Model’*, ch. 4, pp. 72-84. [CR]

Harmsen, Robert. (2010). French Eurosepticism and the Construction of National Exceptionism. Chafer, Tony and Godin, Emmanuel ed. *The End of French Exception? Decline and Revival of the ‘French Model’*, ch. 6. pp. 105-122. [CR]

Week 10

November 24 & 25, 2014:

2nd Media visit: At the headquarters and studios of a major Radio or Television ‘institutional’ station (RFI, France 2, France 3, France 24, Canal Plus, etc).

Debriefing of the 2nd Media-visit.

Reading for Week 10:

Baudrillard, Jean (2002). The Racing Driver and His Double. TV Fantasies, *Screened Out*: pp. 166-170. [CR]

Week 11

December 1 & 2, 2014:

“La République est UNE”: Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité and Laïcité ; Media contributions and controversies in the domains of « National Identity », immigration, ethnic diversity and “communautarisme”; Cultural ‘shocks’, nationalism, patriotism, xenophobia.

Readings for Week 11:

Kuhn, Raymond. (2011). The political executive and news management. *The Media in Contemporary France*, McGraw - Hill Education, ch.5, pp. 101-120.

Drake, Helen. (2010). France, Europe and the Limits of Exceptionalism. Chafer, Tony and Godin, Emmanuel ed. *The End of French Exception? Decline and Revival of the ‘French Model’*, ch. 10, pp. 187-202. [CR]

Week 12

December 8 & 9, 2014:

[2nd short ‘reaction-paper’ is due on December 9th]

And what’s next?: Where are we heading towards, in France, within the ‘Francophonie’, in the European Union? Balances and adversities between ‘New’ and ‘Traditional’ Media, contextual relativities, rapidly changing criteria.

Readings for Week 12:

Kuhn, Raymond. (2011). Conclusion. *The Media in Contemporary France*, McGraw - Hill Education, pp. 165-168.

Bollinger, Lee C. (2010). Regardless of Frontiers. *Uninhibited, Robust and Wide-Open: A free Press for a New Century*, Oxford University Press, ch. 3, pp. 68-106. [CR]

Week 13

Review & Final Examination – Dates and Times TBA