

**MCC-UE 03 Fall 2015**  
**History of Media and Communication**

Professor [Lisa Gitelman](#)  
**Lectures Mondays and Wednesdays 4:55-6:10 PM**  
**19 University Place room 102**

**Recitations (Sections 2-7) on Fridays according to your registration**  
**Recitation Leaders: [John Watson](#), [Audrey Turner](#), [Rory Solomon](#),**

**Course Description**

This course introduces students to the history of media and communication and to the stakes of historical inquiry. Rather than tracing a necessarily selective historical arc from alphabet to Internet or from cave painting to coding, the course is organized around an exploration of key concepts such as literacy, publicity, temporality, visual culture, networks, and information.

Students will work with primary and secondary sources in order to analyze the ways that media emerge within and against different social, economic, perceptual, and semiotic conditions that are themselves culturally and historically specific. Only by thinking carefully about media, culture, and communication in the past can we hope to understand the pace, direction, and character of changes today.

Lisa Gitelman, Professor and Chair of Media, Culture, and Communication

Office: 239 Greene St., 812

Office Hours: Before class and also by appointment (please email my assistant, [Annette Morales](#), to schedule an appointment)

**Required Texts**

Four books have been ordered for you at the university bookstore. All are also available through online booksellers should you wish, but please obtain the specified editions in hard copy (not Kindle). A substantial number of additional readings will be available via Classes. The books should also be available for consultation in Bobst Library's [Course Reserves](#) area, Lower Level 2. Please bring the assigned reading to class with you as indicated on the schedule below.

- Isabel Hofmeyr, *Gandhi's Printing Press: Experiments in Slow Reading* (Harvard)
- David Henkin, *The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago)
- Michael Newman, *Video Revolutions: On the History of a Medium* (Columbia)
- Paul E. Ceruzzi, *Computing: A Concise History* (MIT)

**Expectations and Assessment**

(1) Readings are to be completed before class. Lectures provide context for better understanding the texts. You will get a lot more out of the texts and the lectures if you do the reading beforehand. Weekly recitations are an opportunity to work through these texts and related key concepts as a community. The prerequisite for high-quality discussion is that everyone reads material ahead of time. Come to class prepared to engage. Remember, "skimming" is never enough.

(2) Engaged participation. We will be looking for knowledge-building contributions that show not only that you are trying to understand the readings but also that you can contribute to the intellectual life of the class. A pre-requisite for active and intelligent participation in discussions is prompt and regular attendance. Plan on attending every class meeting this semester.

As a matter of common courtesy, please refrain from walking in and out of the room while class is in session, and please silence your phones and put them away. Please don't be a distraction. Laptops must remain closed unless otherwise instructed for class activities. If special circumstances make your laptop necessary please be in touch at the beginning of the semester and please sit in the front row.

(3) Essay Writing: You will be asked to craft three essays as part of this class (details to follow). These essays are opportunities to demonstrate close engagement with the materials of the course. This kind of analytical essay writing is a critical skill for thriving in college and beyond. Please email an electronic copy of each essay to your recitation leader as instructed.

Any plagiarism *no matter how accidental* will result in failure for the course. Remember, it is plagiarism if you use someone else's ideas without attribution or someone else's words without quotation. The university's [Writing Center](#) is an invaluable resource should you wish to take advantage of it. You are entitled to one-on-one writing tutorials if you plan ahead and make appointments. The Writing Center does not provide a copyediting service

(4) Resources: [Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities](#) If you are entitled to accommodations in light of a documented disability, please be in touch at the beginning of the semester.

(5) Grading policy: Grading will be done by the entire teaching staff working together, including and closely supervised by Professor Gitelman. Recitation leaders will assign participation grades themselves when final grades are tabulated. Repeated absences from recitation will have a depressing effect on your participation grade. Semester grades will be tabulated as follows:

- a. Participation (includes homework assignments, details to follow) **20%**
- b. Essays **50%**
  - Essay 1 10%
  - Essay 2 20%
  - Essay 3 20%
- c. Examinations **30 %**
  - i. Midterm 10 %
  - ii. Final 20 %

(6) Evaluation Rubric

A= Excellent

This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.

B=Good

This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

C=Average

This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is inarticulate.

D= Unsatisfactory

This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic.

F=Failed

This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments

A = 94-100      C = 74-76  
A- = 90-93      C+ = 77-79  
B+ = 87-89      C- = 70-73  
B = 84-86      D+ = 65-69  
B- = 80-83      D = 60-64

**Course Schedule** (Any necessary changes will be announced in class and/or via Classes.)

Class meeting	Required reading/Assignments due
1. Wednesday, September 2 Introductions Friday, September 4 No Recitations This Week	
2. Labor Day Holiday Wednesday, September 9 Lecture #1 Friday, September 11 Recitation I	<u>Language Writing Inscription</u> Read <a href="#">Nakamura</a> , Kafka, and <a href="#">Shapin</a>
3. Monday, September 14 Lecture #2 Wednesday, September 16 Lecture #3 Friday, September 18 Recitation II	Read <a href="#">Worf</a> , Peters (sections I, III-V) Read <a href="#">Mullaney</a> , <a href="#">Hassett</a> ; browse <a href="#">Omniglot.com</a>
4. Monday, September 21 Lecture #4 Wednesday, September 23 Lecture #5 Friday, September 25 Recitation III	Read: Foucault Read: Latour & Lowe <u>Pages Print Codex</u>
5. Sunday, September 27 Monday, September 28 Lecture #6 Wednesday, September 30 Lecture #7 Friday, October 2 Recitation IV	Essay #1 due by 6 PM Read: Hofmeyr, pp. 1-45 Read: Hofmeyr, pp. 46-103, [153-163]
6. Monday, October 5 Lecture #8 Wednesday, October 7 Lecture #9 Friday, October 9 Recitation V	Read: <a href="#">Agarwal-Hollands &amp; Andrews</a> Read: <a href="#">Mills</a> , Wissoker
7. Columbus Day Holiday	<u>Time Space Storage Transmission</u>

