

Ryerson & York University – Communication and Culture

CC 8836 / CMCT 6135: Special Topics in Media & Culture: Weekend Editions (Cultural Circulation and the Intermediality of Popular Culture)

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2-5 PM , June 26-Aug 2, 2012. Kerr East 118A

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Course Description

With the weekend newspaper in the 1890s, readers became spectators and readerships became audiences. Sunday editions (in the U.S.) and Saturday papers (in Canada) animated modernity's unprecedented social, technological, and political changes. The Sunday paper was a visual medium that transformed journalism's written texts into a distinct media supplement to weekday news. Inherently intermedial, weekend editions openly adapted aesthetic forms and publicity techniques from newer media between 1889 and 1922—first magazines, later moving pictures, then radio—even as illustrated features and advertising stewarded these novelties' cultural currency. By analyzing the visual organization and marketplace identities of this conduit of secular, weekend leisure, a history of the Sunday paper makes the newspaper itself central to the creation of a North American mass public in popular culture—not least by allowing individual readers to understand themselves as such.

Why this course now?

The digitization of news and newspapers has transformed not just the profession of journalism but the status of the newspaper as a cultural object—something both ephemeral and tossed away daily, but carefully archived and preserved as a document of historical events and everyday life, even as it participates in shaping culture. Newspaper heritage risks deterioration and deterritorialization even more complete than the notorious earlier transition to microfilming, the subject of Nicholson Baker's notorious public condemnation in *The Double Fold* (2001). The course reviews the history of a specific media form, but at a moment when media histories converge with theoretical and methodological studies of the cultural status of communications technologies. Historical perspectives are not merely nostalgic and entertaining for their look back at popular culture—they are analytically urgent as the archive itself is enveloped within “new media” platforms.

The lectured content of the first half of the course will be a history of the particularities of the weekend newspaper form, but we will also be considering the document and the archive now mediated by digital interface. **Students are encouraged to pursue any aspect or example** from media and culture, historic or current, and theorize how the history of the newspaper, as cultural aggregator, helps conceptualize the intermedial networks of the case. **I am confident this is possible for almost any initial interest**, and I will spend some time consulting on methodology and the conceptualization of student projects.

Readings will be made available. Many will be available through library databases.

The Argument:

What’s in The Weekend Edition? A color comic supplement; a glossy, pictorial magazine; sensational, illustrated features; a serial novel; a collectible poster; a cut-out toy; ads for department stores; sports, theatre, film & radio program listings; a prize to guess how many want ads are in the classified section...

Weekend Editions traces the origins of popular culture and media society to the addition of leisure reading supplements in weekend newspapers. The course reviews how newspaper publishing borrowed and collaborated with other media between 1888 and 1922—first magazines, later moving pictures and radio—to transform news reading into media consumption. Under this single media form, American journalism stewarded the mass practices of consumer society and found its own economic engine, appealing to mass readerships and mass market advertisers alike. Weekend supplements made readers hold and savor the newspaper, pull it apart, cut it open, to save and collect such inserts as posters and coupons. Engaging fully with the materiality of the paper, readers made the commitment of subscribing and including themselves in the mass public encapsulated by the circulation figure.

Component	Format	Value	Due Dates
Participation and Leading Seminar	Participation is expected, and you will once lead discussion	15%	Lead Seminar once each, Classes 3 through 10
Interpretive Summary of Text	Synthesis Reflection on seminar text, 4-5 pages	20%	Due 48 hours after leading seminar
Essay Proposal Statement	“Abstract” of Final Essay and brief bibliography	15%	Due Sunday, July 15, Strictly by 5PM
Seminar on essay-in-progress	Presentation of Essay Research in progress	15%	Classes 11 or 12
Research Essay	3500-4500 word final essay	35%	Due Friday, August 10 Strictly by 5PM

Participation, including Leading Seminar Discussion once 15%
 Attendance and participation is expected. Also, you will lead seminar discussion by presenting in class a reflective summary and preparing discussion questions, connected to an example from historical media.

Reflective Summary on Text (submitted 48 hours after leading seminar) 20%
 4-5 page synthesis of an analytical point, related to the seminar discussion you led. Should be an accurate, careful summary of a theoretical point or analysis of an example, but also introduced and interpreted with a reflective point of your own (ideally incorporating elements of class discussion).

Proposal Statement, Abstract of Final Essay (DUE: Sunday, July 15 by 5PM)..... 15%
 One-page, approximately 300 word abstract proposal of your final essay, and a brief annotated bibliography of relevant course readings and other references as appropriate.

Presentation of Essay-in-progress (Last two classes) 15%
 15 minutes maximum. If reading a composed text, this is about 5 pages maximum. I will share my own note-taking from your presentation, but you do not submit anything for grading.

Research Essay (DUE: Friday, August 10, via e-mail by 5PM) 35%
 A 10-12 page (3500-4500 words) essay argument based primarily on course material with other examples as appropriate, aiming to theoretically interpret your choice of media examples.

Schedule of Lectures and Reading

Class 1 – June 26 – Introduction: What's In The Sunday Paper?

Introductory Lecture on the Argument and Methodologies
Local and Online Resources, and a first, casual assignment

Class 2 – June 28 – Your First Thoughts, first browsing results, your initial research interests

- Charles Johanningsmeier, "The Devil, Capitalism, and Frank Norris: Defining the 'Reading Field' for Sunday Newspaper Fiction, 1870-1910," *American Periodicals* 14.1 (2004): 91-112.
- Sandra Gabriele, "Cross-Border Transgressions: The American Sunday Newspaper, the Lord's Day Alliance and the Reading Public, 1890 to 1916," *Topia* 25 (2011): 115-132.
- John C. Nerone, "Newswork, Technology, and Cultural Form, 1837-1920," in Barbie Zelizer, ed., *Explorations in Communication and History*. New York: Routledge, 2008: 136-156.

Class 3 – July 3 – Subscription: the Constitution of Sunday Subjects

- Bruno Latour, "Can we get our materialism back, please?" *Isis* 98 (2007): 138-142.
- Michael Schudson, "Public Spheres, Imagined Communities, and the Underdeveloped Historical Understanding of Journalism," in Barbie Zelizer, ed., *Explorations in Communication and History*. New York: Routledge, 2008: 181-189.
- Benjamin Lee & Edward LiPuma, "Cultures of Circulation: The Imaginations of Modernity," *Public Culture* 14.1 (2002): 191-213.
- Pamela Epstein, "'Villainous little paragraphs': Nineteenth-century personal advertisements in the NEW YORK HERALD," *Media History* 18.1 (2012): 21-32.

Class 4 – July 5 – Syndication: the Corporeal Character of Circulation

- Michael Stamm, "Underwriting the ether: newspapers and the origins of American broadcasting," *Sound Business: Newspapers, Radio and the Politics of New Media* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011: 1-28.
- Ian Gordon, "From caricature to comic strip: The shaping of comic art as commodity," *Comic strips and consumer culture, 189-1945*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1998: 13-36.
- Josh Lambert, "Wait for the Next Pictures: Intertextuality and Cliffhanger Continuity in Early Cinema and Comic Strips," *Cinema Journal* 48.2 (2009): 3-25.

Class 5 – July 10 – Appreciation: the Materiality of Aesthetic Forms

- Walter Benjamin, "Paris: Capital of the Nineteenth Century," any version.
- Matthew Schneirov, "The Victorian reader and the political economy of the magazine" *The dream of a new social order: Popular magazines in America, 1893-1914*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994: 48-71.
- Charles Johanningsmeier, "Understanding Readers of Fiction in American Periodicals, 1880-1914," in Christine Bold, ed., *U.S. Popular Print Culture, 1860-1920, Volume 6 of the Oxford History of Popular Print Culture*. Oxford University Press, 2012: 591-609.
- Anne MacLennan. "Reading Radio: The intersection between radio and newspaper for the Canadian radio listener in the 1930s" in Matt Mollgaard, ed. *Radio and Society: New thinking for an old media*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012: 16-29.

Class 6 – July 12 – Animation: the Intermedial Ideals of Modernity

- Carolyn Marvin, "Annihilating Space, Time, Difference," in *When Old Technologies Were New: Thinking about Electric Communication in the 19th Century*. Oxford, 1988: 191-230.
- Dick Higgins, "Intermedia" *Leonardo* 34.1 (2001): 49-54.
- Jay David Bolter & Richard Grusin, "Networks of Remediation" *Remediation: Understanding new media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000: 64-84.
- Paul S. Moore, "Everybody's Going! City Newspapers and the Early Mass Market for Movies." *City & Community* 4.4 (2005): 339-357.

Class 7 – July 17 – Distinctions with Television and Broadcast Publics

- Anna McCarthy, "Governing by Television," in Barbie Zelizer, ed., *Explorations in Communication and History*. New York: Routledge: 2008: 119-135.
- Noah Arseneaux, "Radio Facsimile Newspapers of the 1930s and 40s: Electronic Publishing in the Pre-Digital Era" *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 55.3 (2011): 344-359.
- Michelle Hilmes, "Film Industry alternatives to the networks: Subscription television, 1949-1962," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 10.3 (1985): 213-223.
- Paul Heyer, "Live from the Met: Medium Theory and Digital Broadcast Cinema," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 33.4 (2008): 591-604.

Class 8 – July 19 – Dematerialization of the News Feed

- Pablo J. Boczkowski, "Exploring and Settling: Alternatives to Print in the 1980s and the Early 1990s," in *Digitizing the News: Innovation in Online Newspapers*. MIT Press, 2004: 19-50.
- An Nguyen, "The interaction between technologies and society: lessons learnt from 160 evolutionary years of online news services" *First Monday* 12.3 (2007): online.

Class 9 – July 24 – Dematerialization of the Archive and the Document

- Laurel Brake, "The longevity of 'ephemera': Library editions of nineteenth-century periodicals and newspapers" *Media History* 18.1 (2012): 7-20.
- James Mussell, "The passing of print: Digitising ephemera and the ephemerality of print" *Media History* 18.1 (2012): 77-92.

Class 10 – July 26 – Mass Reading Publics today?

- Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature," *New Left Review* 1 (2000): 54-68.
- Alan Liu, "Transcendental Data: Toward a Cultural History and Aesthetics of the New Encoded Discourse," *Critical Inquiry* 31.1 (2004): 49-84.
- Johanna Drucker, "Humanities approaches to interface theory" *Culture Machine* 12 (2011).

Class 11 – July 31 – Presentations of Essays-in-progress (up to 10 students)

Class 12 – August 2 – Presentations of Essays-in-progress (up to 10 students)

Essays are due the following week, strictly by 5 PM, via e-mail, on Friday August 10.