

NYU Paris

MCC-UE 9454 C01

Global Media Seminar – Media and Cultural Globalization in France

Instructor Information

- S. Romi Mukherjee
- Tu/Thurs, 11:00 – 12:30
- Rm176@nyu.edu

Course Information

- Global Media Seminar – Media and Cultural Globalization in France]
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- This class examines the role of French media in reflecting, refracting, and shaping French political and cultural life. We focus on how growing “mediatisation” and mass communications have served to mold French attitudes, subjectivities, and mentalities in a context-sensitive nexus of power-desire-consumption-reification. Drawing on critical theory, anthropology, semiotics, and sociology, we attempt to explore how the media interpolate French experience in both historical and quotidian terms through processes of anchorage, stereotyping, inter-textual signification, mystification, and the narrativisation and naturalization of ideology. Moreover, recognizing France to be embedded in a larger regime of global mediatisation, this seminar also attempts to comparatively reflect on France’s position in the media-scapes of the hyper-modern. Hence, we also look at how the codes of global media are appropriated and refashioned in the French context while also examining how French media is perceived beyond France itself. From a methodological perspective this seminar transposes the key insights of contemporary media studies on to the French context in hopes of illuminating the French media field as both heterogenous and paradigmatic. We will also read key French media theorists and examine how their arguments function as responses to the national climate. While examining “media” in the normative sense of the term (film, radio, TV, advertising, newspapers, digital media, institutions) we also critically interrogate the circulation of French cultural artefacts, icons, representations, political images, cartoons, and spectacle that form the substrate of French social life. Courses will also have regular “media analyses” where concrete media examples will be studied in relation to the critical texts read.
- General Background in Media Studies and Cultural Theory [Class meeting days and times]
- Tu/Thurs. 11:00 -12:30/Room TBC

Course Overview and Goals

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

- This seminar is intended to develop critical “reading practices” in relationship to global and French mediaspheres (media being broadly construed as film, radio, TV and also spectacle, scene, technology, and visual fields). It aspires to, moreover, engender rigorous cross-cultural perspectives on media that foreground the dissonances and semblances found in how both American and France “represent” themselves and tarry with the forces of globalization. Eliding conventional art historical paradigms, it stresses empirical approaches to media culture which apprehend the reception and experience of the media object and then go on to form critical theoretical approaches on the basis of such empiricism. Intensive in scope, students keep media-logs which recount their encounter with French mediology, culminating in a final research project where their observations are systematized and synthesized into a larger scholarly and scientific framework.

Course Requirements

- **Class Participation:** this is a discussion course. Much of each class session will consist of moderated discussion of the texts/images, following an introductory, thematic lecture. It is therefore imperative that students read and think about the assigned reading material so as to be able to participate meaningfully in class discussions.
- **Mid-Term and Final Paper :** There will be a Mid-term Paper and a Final Research Exam
- **Student Films:** Students will be invited to break out into groups and create a 5-7 minute “Political Film” with their telephones...

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade
[Example: Class participation]	[25%]
[Mid-Term Paper]	[25%]
[Final Paper]	[25%]
[Final Project]	[25%]

Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Points	Description
A	16-20	Outstanding
A-	15	Excellent
B+	14	Very Good
B	13	Good
B-	12	Satisfactory
C+	11	Above Average
C	10	Average
C-	9	Below Average
D+	8	Unsatisfactory
D	7	Low Pass
D-	6	Low Pass
F	5	Fail

Course Schedule

Week 1. Introduction and Methodological Issues

Contextualizing Media in the French Experience

- Michael Kelly, "French Cultural Identities," in Jill Forbes and Michael Kelly, *French Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, pp. 1-9
- Raymond Kuhn, Selections from *The Media in France*
- Phillip Gordon and Sophie Meunier, "Globalization and French Cultural Identity"

Week 2. Republican Iconography: In Search of Marianne

- Bronwyn Winter, "Marianne Goes Multicultural"
- June Hargrove and Neil McWilliam, "Nationalism, and Representation, in Theory" in *Nationalism and French Visual Culture, 1870 – 1914*
- Media Analysis: Exposé of Nationalist and Republican Iconography in Contemporary Political Propaganda and Media

Celticism, Celtitude, and Celticity: From Vercingétorix to Astérix and Obélix

- Michael Dietler, "Celticism, Celtitude, and Celticity: The Consumption of the Past in the Age of Globalisation" pp. 237-246, in ed. Sabine Rieckhoff, *Celtes et Gauloise, l'archéologie face à l'histoire*
- Eliza Bourque Dandridge, Selections from *Producing Popularity: The Success in France of the Comics Series "Astérix le Gaulois"*
- Media Analysis: Clips from cartoon and film-series of *Astérix and Obélix*, and exposé of Celtic imagery in French popular media.

Week 3. Les Années Folles, Exoticism, and the Birth of Mass Communications

- Selections from Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*
- "Paris, the Capital of Art," "Science, Technology, and the Growth of the Mass Market," "The Eroticization of the Public Domain," and "Leisure, Consumption, and Public, Culture," in *French Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, pp. 18-47

Jazz, Africa, and Josephine Baker

- Karen C.C. Dalton and Henry Louis Gates, "Josephine Baker and Paul Colin: African-American Dance Seen Through American Eyes," in *Critical Inquiry* 24:4, 1998, pp. 903 – 934
- Optional: Bernadette Wegenstein, "Body," in eds. W.J.T Mitchell and Mark Hansen, *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, pp. 19-35
- Media Analysis: Images from "the roaring 20s" and Paul Colin, *Le Tumulte Noir*.

Week 4. Mythologies

- Roland Barthes, "Myth Today," from *Mythologies*, pp. 1-26
- Selections from Barthes, *Mythologies*
- Optional: Edward Welsh, "Commitment, commercialism and the dawning of image culture: the first years of *L'Express*," *Journal of French Media Studies*, Volume 4, No. 1, 2001, pp. 1-14
- Media Analysis: "New Mythologies"

Colonial Mediatisations

- Mallek Alloula, Selections from *The Colonial Harem*.
- Gregory K. Betts: "Wanted Woman, Woman's Wants: The Colonial Harem and Post-Colonial Discourse," in *Canadian Revue of Comparative Literature*, December 1995, pp. 527-549)
- Media Analysis: Colonial Post-Cards and Contemporary media representations of the colonized subject.

Week 5. Week 6. Memory, Media, and the Construction of the Past

- Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," in *Histories: French Constructions of the Past: Postwar French Thought, vol. I*
- Selections from: Jo McCormack, "The Media: Reporting the War Forty Years On" in *Collective Memory: France and the Algerian War*,

Media and Malaise

- Zygmunt Bauman, Selections from "Liquid Life"
- Peter Sloterdijk, "On Cynical Reason"
- Benjamin Barber, from "Consumed"

Week 7. Film Screening "Breathless"

New Waves

- Michael Kelly, Tony Jones, Jill Forbes, "Modernization and Avant-Gardes," Jill Forbes and Michael Kelly, *French Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, pp. 140 – 178
- Geneviève Sellier, Selections from *Masculine Singular: French New Wave Cinema*
- Media Analysis: Film Screening – Jean Luc Godard, *Breathless*, (1960)

Week 8. MID-TERM

Media Ethics

Selections from Régis Debray, *Media Manifestoes*

Week 9. Media, Marketing, and Commodity Fetishism

- Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*

Media and May '68

- Marc Rohan, Selections from *Paris '68: Graffiti, Posters, Newspapers, and Poems from the Events of May '68*
- Media Analysis: Revolutionary Posters, Press, and Graffiti from May '68

Week 10. Special UNESCO Session on the Ethics of the Information Society

-Readings TBD

NBIC Technologies: Post-Humanism and “Informatic Man”

- Neil Badmington, “Theorizing Posthumanism,” pp. 10-27
- N. Katherine Hayles, “The Human in the Post-Human,” pp. 143-147

Week 12. Theorising Television

- Pierre Bourdieu, *On Television*
- Media Analysis: Bourdieu watches the Olympics

MediaScapes, EthnoScapes, GlobalScapes

- Arjun Appadurai: Disjunction and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy
- Steven Field, “A Sweet Lullaby for World Music”

Week 13. GMS FIM FESTIVAL

Week 14. Charlie Hebdo

- Talal Asad, from *Is Critique Secular: Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech*, pp. 64-100
- Media Analysis: Danish Cartoons of Mohammed and Caricatures from French newspaper *Charlie-Hebdo*

Film Screening of La Haine

Week 15. Discussion of La Haine and Depictions of the French Banlieue

- Alan Hargreaves, “A Deviant Construction: The French Media and the Banlieue,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 1996, pp. 607-618
- Adrienne Russel, “Digital Communication Networks and the Journalistic Field: The 2005 French Riots,” in *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Vol. 24, No. 4., 2007, pp. 285-302

Week 16. Terror, Radicalization, and Media

- Jean Baudrillard, “The Spirit of Terrorism,” pp. 1-15
- Omur Harmansah, “ISIS, Heritage, and Spectacles of Destruction in Global Media,” *Near Eastern Archaeology*, Vol. 78, No. 3, pp. 170-178

The French Reception of American Media

- Jean Baudrillard, Selections from *America*

Wrap Up TBC.

Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials

- Readings will be circulated in PDF form.

Resources

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](https://nyu.edu/its/classes) (nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](https://library.nyu.edu) (library.nyu.edu)
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](https://nyu.mywconline.com) (nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** [IT Help Desk](https://nyu.edu/it/servicedesk) (nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

Course Policies

Attendance and Tardiness

- Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in harsher penalties including failure.
- Unexcused absences affect students' grades: unexcused absences will be penalized with a 2% deduction from the students' final course grade.
- Absences are excused only for illness, religious observance, and emergencies.

Illness: For a single absence, students may be required to provide a doctor's note, at the discretion of the Associate Director of Academics. In the case of two consecutive absences, students must provide a doctor's note. Exams, quizzes, and presentations will not be made up without a doctor's note.

Religious Observance: Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their instructor and the Academic Office in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose. If exams, quizzes, and presentations are scheduled on a holiday a student will observe, the Associate Director, in coordination with the instructor, will reschedule them.

Please note: if you are unable to attend class, you are required to email your professors directly to notify them.

Late Assignment

Late submission or work will be accepted only with justifiable reasons of health or family emergency.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community.

Plagiarism: presenting others' work without adequate acknowledgement of its source, as though it were one's own. Plagiarism is a form of fraud. We all stand on the shoulders of others, and we must give credit to the creators of the works that we incorporate into products that we call our own. Some examples of plagiarism:

- a sequence of words incorporated without quotation marks
- an unacknowledged passage paraphrased from another's work
- the use of ideas, sound recordings, computer data or images created by others as though it were one's own
- submitting evaluations of group members' work for an assigned group project which misrepresent the work that was performed by another group member
- altering or forging academic documents, including but not limited to admissions materials, academic records, grade reports, add/drop forms, course registration forms, etc.

For further information, students are encouraged to check www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Instructor Bio

S. Romi Mukherjee received his B.A., M.A, and Ph.d from the University of Chicago where his thesis, in the sociology and history of religions, examined the politics of the sacred in inter-war France. He is currently Assistant Professor in religion and politics at SciencesPo-Paris and co-editor of the English edition of *La Revue de Synthèse*. He is also lecturer at New York University in Paris. Between 2006 and 2009, he was a researcher at the Interdisciplinary Center for Comparative Research in the Social Sciences (CIR-Paris) where he worked on a series of European Commission research projects (Framework 7) concerning *inter alia* the French Republic and pluralism, secularism and the return of religion, and collective memory. Since 2009, he has been affiliated with UNESCO in various capacities, most recently as associate researcher in the Social and Human Sciences Sector where he works on issues pertaining to the ethics and anthropology of technology and the question of humanism in the age of the anthropocene. He has published widely, mostly in political theory and the history of religions. Recent monographs and edited volumes include: *Durkheim and Violence* (Blackwell, 2010) *The Political Anthropology of the Global* (Blackwell, 2011) and *Social Memory and Hypermodernity* (Blackwell, 2012, with Éric Brian et Marie Jaisson), and *Nouveaux Visages du Religieux dans un Monde Sécularisé* (with Lionel

Obadia, Karthala, 2016). His current research project is entitled “The Trials of Marianne: The French Republic and the Sacred.”