This course earns three semester credits. In the BALS curriculum at Georgetown, this course counts toward the Communication concentration. Students in other BALS concentrations may use the course for elective credit.

**Overview**
This course provides an historical overview of American mass media beginning with the advent of the colonial newspaper, and then surveying the rise of radio, television and film through the 20th century. There will be an emphasis on the early roots of journalism, and technological and social developments of communications systems and their impact on American culture. Students will also consider contemporary trends and conflicts, particularly those that concern the press.

**Learning Objectives**
A student who has mastered the content of this course will be able to:
- Describe the roots of the American media in the colonial era
- Assess how the news media influenced, and was influenced by, the American Revolution
- Relate the growth of U.S. media in early years of the United States
- Describe the characteristics of the media industry during the Jacksonian era
- Evaluate media performance during the Civil War
- Relate the roots and impacts of the yellow press
- Describe the relationship between muckraking and public relations
- Describe the history of the motion picture, radio and television industries
- Assess the impact of the advertising industry on U.S. society
- Evaluate media behavior during national crises
- Describe the impact of the Internet on the U.S. media industry
Course structure
This is a fully online course. Using the university’s Blackboard site, you will watch videos, engage in discussions with your instructor and fellow students, and submit assignments.

That means that much of your learning will rely on materials from the Web site and your textbook, from your interactions with me and your fellow students, and from your assignments. Some people sign up for a Web-based course out of the impression that it will be easier compared to a traditional, face-to-face course. **This is not true,** and laboring under that misconception can cause some heartache as the semester draws on.

It is true that this course is more flexible than a traditional class. You can log on at any hour of the day or night to complete your assignments and participate in discussion. But that flexibility means that you will need better study discipline and organization than in a traditional class. Do not allow yourself to fall behind.

All in all, I hope that you find this to be a stimulating, enjoyable learning experience. Please let me know if you have any feedback or suggestions about the course.

Textbooks

Copies will be available at the bookstore at 640 Massachusetts Avenue NW; a copy also will be placed on 2-hour reserve at Mass Ave library. The publisher also sells access to electronic versions. You are free to purchase the book wherever you wish, but be sure to get the correct edition. You must have access to the textbook by the first week of class; extensions to assignments will not be granted because you do not have access to the textbook.


Additional readings will be distributed via Blackboard.

Supplementary materials
The course requires viewing of several videos through the course’s Blackboard site. In some cases, you also can arrange to borrow the videos from either Lauinger Library’s Gelardin New Media Center or another source such as your local public library or a video-rental store. Plan accordingly. Extensions to assignments will not be offered because of difficulty in viewing the videos. Technical problems with watching online videos should be directed to University Information Services.
How the course will work
This course is organized by weeks. **This is not a self-paced course; you are expected to complete assignments by set deadlines.** This approach allows the class as a group to work through material together and will help prevent you from falling behind.

The class week starts on Monday and concludes on Sunday. Each week, you will be asked to read portions of your text book or other materials, to watch specific videos, and to visit relevant Web sites.

Each week also includes one or two online discussion questions related to the current week’s topic. You are expected to make one posting to each question by **midnight Wednesday.** Then you should read your classmates’ postings, and make follow-up postings by noon Saturday.

When written assignments are due in a given week, these are due by **midnight Sunday.**

Office hours
Feel free to call or email me at any time. But I also will hold office hours every Thursday from 1-2 p.m. You can meet me at my office or contact me via online videoconferencing at https://georgetown.zoom.us/j/2026875145

Response time
This course uses amazing online technology, but it still includes a flesh-and-blood instructor. This means:
- Your written assignments are not graded by the computer. They are graded by me, and I cannot do that instantly. You can expect to receive grades on a written assignment within a week after the assignment’s due date.
- I am online frequently but not 24/7. That means you will not get instant responses to email inquiries. I will answer e-mails, questions posted to the discussion board and telephone messages as quickly as I can -- within one business day after I received it.

Grading
The final grade will be determined as follows:
- 93% to 100% = A
- 90% to 92% = A minus
- 87% to 89% = B plus
- 83% to 86% = B
- 80% to 82% = B minus
- 77% to 79% = C plus
- 73% to 76% = C
- 70% to 72% = C minus
- 67% to 69% = D plus
- 63% to 66% = D
- 62% and below = F

This grade will be computed based on your performance on the course’s assignments. The final percentage computed by Blackboard will be rounded to the nearest integer.
The course includes several types of assignments. Grades for assignments will be reduced in light of poor grammar, spelling errors, or unclear writing. The graded assignments are:

1. **Weekly online discussion.** Each discussion is worth 1.5 percent of your final grade. Your week’s discussion grade will take into account both whether you meet the deadlines for discussion postings and the substantiveness of your postings. When responding to someone else’s posting a substantial posting is one that says more than “Me too” or “I disagree.” A substantial response will explain why you agree or disagree and will provide evidence or examples to support your position.

2. **Weekly open-book online quizzes.** These quizzes will test your understanding of the readings for the week. Each quiz is worth 2 percent of your final grade.

3. **Documentation.** You have completed three brief exercises in skills needed to submit content to Wikipedia. Each is worth 1 percent of your final grade.

4. **Three open-book essay exams.** These take-home exams will each assess your understanding of one-third of the course’s material. Each is worth 9 percent of your final grade.

5. **The equivalent of 2,500 words of new content for Wikipedia on a topic in media history.** This can be a single article of 2,500 words or a total of 2,500 words added to one existing article in Wikipedia. (References are required, but the references are excluded from the 2,500 word minimum.) This assignment is worth 14 percent of your final grade.

6. **After you have submitted your Wikipedia paper to Wikipedia, you are to monitor its reception by the Wikipedia community: Was it edited? By whom? Did it trigger any controversy or conflict? If so, how were they resolved? You are to submit a 500-word reflection paper recounting your Wikipedia experience.** This assignment is worth 1 percent of your final grade.

**Extra credit**

You may earn 1 percentage point extra credit by attending the B.A.L.S. Writing Boot Camp in September 2015. You must attend and actively participate in the entire event, as certified to the instructor by Dr. Kathryn Temple, who is leading the event. (Note: You may use the boot camp for extra credit for only one B.A.L.S. class.)

You may earn 1 percentage point extra credit by meeting with a tutor from Georgetown’s Writing Center for coaching on your Wikipedia project. Get a note from the tutor certifying your attendance and upload it to Blackboard by the due date for the Wikipedia project.

There may be other opportunities to earn extra credit by submitting extra writing assignments. Details will be posted in the Announcements section of Blackboard.

**Incompletes**

Incompletes are not available in this course. Plan accordingly.

**Late assignments**

**Important: No credit will be given for any assignment that is submitted late without the instructor’s prior approval.** “Prior approval” means that the student must communicate with the instructor before the assignment’s deadline. An assignment that is submitted late with the instructor’s prior approval will have its grade reduced by 10 percent for every day it is late.
Absences
The instructor will count a student as “absent” in any week in which the student fails to submit any of the assignments due that week, including discussion postings, quizzes, or take-home examinations.

After the student accumulates two such “absent” weeks, the student will receive a failing grade in the course, regardless of the student’s grade in other assignments.

Accuracy
Your writing must be factually accurate. Errors, even seemingly minor ones, will have a heavy impact on your grade.

Turnitin.com
All written assignments also must be submitted to Turnitin.com. *An assignment will not count as submitted until it has been submitted to both Blackboard and Turnitin.com.*

All papers will be subjected to a Textuality Similarity Review by Turnitin.com. All submitted papers will be added as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers in the future. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

To submit your assignments to Turnitin.com, you first will have to create an account at www.turnitin.com. Click on the new user link and create a user profile. You will need the following information:
Class ID: 6858634
Password: (will be distributed on Blackboard)

Then you can log in and click on the link for this class. Click on the assignment link and upload your paper.

Plagiarism
The presentation of someone else’s ideas or work as your own, or without proper acknowledgment, is a serious academic offense.

It is plagiarism to copy information from another source without acknowledging it. It also is plagiarism to use someone’s exact words without both placing quotation marks around the words and providing a reference. Citations must follow the style rules of the American Psychological Association.

Without fail, work that appears to be plagiarized or to have violated the Honor Code in some other fashion will be reported to Georgetown’s Honor Council (see below). If the council finds that the work has been plagiarized or in some other way violates the Honor Code, the student will receive a failing grade for the course, in addition to any sanctions that the Honor Council may recommend.
Georgetown Honor System
All students are expected to follow Georgetown’s honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:
*In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

Disabilities
If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 or arc@georgetown.edu. Be aware that accommodations are not retroactive.

Inclement weather and other emergencies
Due dates for assignments for this course will not be changed due to inclement weather.

The university sends send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up at https://myaccess.georgetown.edu.

Policy Accommodating Students’ Religious Observances
The following is university policy:

- Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.

In accordance with this policy, students for whom the schedule of this course will cause conflicts with a religious observance should notify Dr. Kiernan in writing (e-mail is acceptable) no later than September 11, 2015. Dr. Kiernan will make reasonable accommodations for all conflicts identified by this date. In line with this policy, requests for accommodations submitted after September 11, 2015, will not be considered, and oral requests will not be considered at any time.
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<td><strong>Weeks 1 and 2</strong> September 2 through September 13&lt;br&gt;Colonial period: Early printers; the roots of press freedom; the Zenger case&lt;br&gt;Read Fellow: Introduction and Chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Read Broughton: Chapter 3. Complete the exercises on pages 50-52 and 57-58.&lt;br&gt;Watch Zenger video on Blackboard&lt;br&gt;Discussion postings due Wednesday night and Saturday noon&lt;br&gt;Online quiz on readings/video due Sunday night</td>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong> September 14 through September 20&lt;br&gt;American Revolution: The Stamp Act, the press in the Revolution; the Declaration of Independence&lt;br&gt;In Fellow, read Chapter 2&lt;br&gt;Read Chapter 1 in Broughton. Complete the exercise on pages 5-11.&lt;br&gt;Watch Library of Congress video on Blackboard.&lt;br&gt;Discussion postings due Wednesday night and Saturday noon&lt;br&gt;Online quiz on readings/video due Sunday night</td>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong> September 21 through September 27&lt;br&gt;Early years of the republic: The Bill of Rights; the Federalist Papers; relationships between the media and Founding fathers; the Alien and Sedition Acts; rise of party newspapers&lt;br&gt;In Fellow, read Chapter 3&lt;br&gt;Read Chapter 2 in Broughton. Complete the exercise on pages 34-35.&lt;br&gt;Read Neimeyer chapter.&lt;br&gt;Watch Eric Burns video on Blackboard&lt;br&gt;Discussion postings due Wednesday night and Saturday noon&lt;br&gt;Online quiz on readings/video due Sunday night</td>
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| Week 8                           | Muckraking: The rise and death of muckraking; the development of corporate public relations | In Fellow, read Chapter 7
Read Chapter 10 in Broughton.
Watch video on Edward Bernays in Blackboard
Discussion postings due Wednesday night and Saturday noon
Online quiz on readings/video due Sunday night |
| Week 9                           | Film: Development of motion picture technology, its economic roots; expansion and challenges to the industry | In Fellow, read Chapter 8
Watch Why We Fight on Blackboard
Discussion postings due Wednesday night and Saturday noon
Online quiz on readings/video due Sunday night
Take-home examination on weeks 6-10 is due Sunday night |
| Week 10                          | Radio: Development of the technology; battles over intellectual property; creation of networks; regulatory trends | In Fellow, read Chapter 9
Listen to War of the Worlds on Blackboard
Discussion postings due Wednesday night and Saturday noon
Online quiz on readings/video due Sunday night |
| Week 11                          | Television: Development of the technology; development of networks; quiz-show scandals; the McCarthy era | In Fellow, read Chapter 10
Watch Good Night and Good Luck
Discussion postings due Wednesday night and Saturday noon
Online quiz on readings/video due Sunday night |
| Week 12                          | Advertising: Historical development of advertising; regulatory trends                | In Fellow, read Chapter 11
Discussion postings due Wednesday night and Saturday noon
Watch video on Blackboard
Online quiz on readings/video due Sunday night |
| Week 13                          | The press and Richard Nixon Journalists in the Vietnam war; Watergate; the Pentagon Papers; | In Fellow, read Chapter 12
Watch All the President’s Men
Discussion postings due Wednesday night and Saturday noon
Online quiz on readings/video due Sunday night |
| Week 14                          | National crises: Middle East Lewinsky scandal 9/11                                 | In Fellow, read Chapter 13
Discussion postings due Wednesday night and Saturday noon
Online quiz on readings/video due Sunday night
Wikipedia submission is due by Sunday night |
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Internet: Development of the technology; emergence of personal computing and networking; social networking</td>
<td>In Fellow, read Chapter 14 Watch Andrew Lih video on Blackboard No discussion postings due Online quiz on readings/video due Sunday night</td>
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Reflection paper on Wikipedia experience and third take-home examination are both due by 11:59 p.m. on December 14.