

ASCJ 420: Digging Deep: Close Textual Reading

Fall 2015 (August 26-October 7)

2 units

Professor: Jonathan D. Aronson
Email: aronson@usc.edu
Office: KER 206
Office Hours: Thursdays, 3:30-5:00p.m. and by appointment
Class: Wednesdays, 2:00-4:50p.m. ANN 305

Course Description

Background and Rationale. Many classes provide broad literature surveys. This experimental class takes the opposite approach. Students will learn to dig deeply into a single important book (Paul Starr's *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications*) and develop an in depth understanding of its arguments and ideas; its strengths and weaknesses. The book is a fundamental building block for any students studying journalism or communication.

Requirements. This is a 2-unit credit/non-credit course. To receive credit students must complete a series of in-class analytic presentations and participate in class discussions. The reading is not very long, but consistent failure to come to class prepared could lead to no credit for the class. Attendance and participation are required. This class is built around developing deep analytic capabilities that will serve students in their lives and careers. An analytical research paper of about 2,000 to 2,500 words that focuses on *no more than ten pages* of one chapter of the Starr volume is due at the last class session.

Class Policies and Resources

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates,

including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Schedule of Classes

Week 1 (Aug 26): Introduction, Analytics, and Assignments. The goals and the assignments of the class will be laid out. The session will discuss two chapters of the same book each week. Unless the class overwhelmingly favors a different book, we will focus on: Paul Starr's magnificent *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications* (Basic Books, 2004). We will read in class and discuss in depth the introduction of Paul Starr's book – pp. 1-19. (If you are able to read the introduction before class, that would be helpful but not essential.)

Week 2 (Sep 2): The Opening of the Public Sphere, 1600-1860 (I). Discuss Paul Starr, Chapter 1 (“Early Modern Origins”) and Chapter 2 (“New Foundations”), pp. 23-82.

Week 3 (Sep 9): The Opening of the Public Sphere, 1600-1860 (II). Discuss Paul Starr, Chapter 3 (“America’s First Information Revolution”) and Chapter 4 (“Capitalism and Democracy in Print”), pp. 83-150.

Week 4 (Sep 16): The Rise of Technological Networks, 1840-1930. Discuss Paul Starr, Chapter 5 (“The First Wire”) and Chapter 4 (“New Connections: Telephone Cable, and Wireless”), pp. 153-230.

Week 5 (Sep 23): The Making of the Modern Media (I). Discuss Paul Starr, Chapter 7 (“Great Transformations: The Early Mass Media and the Diversity Dynamic”) and Chapter 8 (“The Rediscovery of the First Amendment”), pp. 233-294.

Week 6 (Sep 30): The Making of the Modern Media (II). Discuss Paul Starr, Chapter 9 (“The Framing of the Movies”) and Chapter 10 (“The Constitution of the Air (1): The Origins of Broadcasting”), pp. 295-346

Week 7 (Oct 7): The Making of the Modern Media (III). Discuss Paul Starr, Chapter 11 (“The Constitution of the Air (2): Creating the New Public Sphere”) and Chapter 12 (“Coda: The Advent of the Media”), pp. 347-402. ****The analytic paper will be due today.*