

COMM 750: Special Topics. The Rise of Western Journalism

North Dakota State University Department of Communication

Fall 2011

3 graduate-level credits

Instructor: Ross F. Collins, Ph.D., professor of communication, 202 Ehly Hall, ross.collins@ndsu.edu, 231-7295, www.rossfcollins.com. Note: instructor responds most quickly to emails.

Office hours: 9:30-11 Mondays and Wednesdays, or by appointment.

Class web site: www.ndsu.edu/communication. Choose the Classes link, scroll to COMM 750, Rise of Western Journalism. The class is also represented on the Blackboard class management web site.

Class meets 5-7:30 p.m. Thursdays.

Required text: Ross F. Collins and E.M. Palmegiano, *The Rise of Western Journalism 1815-1914* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007). (Note: The instructor will donate to a department scholarship fund any royalties based on the sale of this book to students in the class.)

About the class.

This graduate-level *seminar* (see below) will examine evolution of world journalism standards through the historical record of Western media growth in selected countries. Based on research essays in Collins and Palmegiano, eds., *The Rise of Western Journalism 1815-1914*, students will consider how journalism paradigms that developed in Western nations came to dominate world mass media standards. The class will define “Western” nations to be those of Western Europe, North America and Australia.

Class objectives.

- Explore the relationship between Western mass media origins, politics and global society.
- Gain insights into contemporary global media practices based on historical study of Western media development.
- Compare and contrast media development among those nations that grew to dominate world media practices.
- Gain basic knowledge of contemporary world media.
- Gain competency as a researcher using standard historical methods by producing original research on topics of global mass media.

Attendance.

As this is an graduate-level seminar, attendance is essential. Students need to come prepared to ask questions and discuss assigned material, as informed

discussion is vital to the vibrant experience of a seminar.

The instructor realizes students sometimes face unforeseen emergencies that may require them to miss a class. Course policy is to allow one “free skip” for any reason; this absence will not affect a student’s participation grade. Beyond this students must realize that their missing a discussion will result in a deduction of class participation points.

What is a seminar?

Students who enroll in a class may expect to receive a detailed syllabus specifically describing the material to be covered, how it will be covered, and activities throughout the semester. The class instructor will take primary responsibility for preparing and relaying this information to students, through lectures as well as films, trips and other activities, and specific assignments. Examinations will usually be administered to evaluate student progress and establish a final grade. A seminar, on the other hand, shares the educational experience among students and instructor. A professor facilitates discussion based on his or her own knowledge and study of a topic, but seldom offers long lectures or other formally structured lesson plans and assignments. Learning is instead based on participation of each student. Students will be expected to do their own research on topic ideas to be covered at class meetings, offer essays or other written work in support of those ideas, and lead or facilitate group discussions of those topics. In addition to facilitating class discussions, instructors may provide tutorials and evaluation of written work. But the knowledge and insight taken from a seminar relies on preparation and enthusiasm of everyone who takes part.

Because the seminar approach asks students to pursue research, writing and discussion of topics through their own initiative, enrollment is usually limited to motivated and mature participants. Ancient universities such as Cambridge (the instructor's alma mater!) and Oxford, as well as American “Ivy League” universities, favor the seminar as a pinnacle of higher education. Truly it is the bright and fortunate graduate student at NDSU who experiences the challenge—and fun!—of seminar-style learning.

Grading.

Grades will be based on class participation, written essays, and a collaborative research paper. As this is a graduate-level seminar, no formal examinations will be scheduled.

Please note written work must be typed, double-spaced, and reasonably free of spelling and grammar errors. Work must be submitted as hard copies; the instructor will normally not accept email attachments. Please do not submit first drafts; sloppy work will be graded accordingly.

* Essays. Students will be expected to produce and present an essay every other week, 25 pts. each=200 pts.

** Three self-assessment essays, 20 pts. each=60 pts.

*** Weekly participation, 140 pts.

**** Research paper, 200 pts.

Total: 600 pts. Note: This total may change slightly based on class progress and interests.

Grading will be based on a standard point-count percentage: 90-100 percent=A, 80-89.9=B, 70-79.9=C, 60-69.9=D, below 60=F.

* An essay for this class is a four- to five-page paper (double-spaced) covering specific topics for upcoming class discussions. Material must be based on instructor-generated reading lists, in addition to library resources and web-based sources.

** A self-assessment essay is a two- to three-page reflective paper relating to broader issues discussed in meeting sessions, and how they may relate to your other classes and/or personal life.

*** Class participation: students will receive a mid-semester evaluation of their class participation for reference. "Participation" means more than simply showing up; students will be expected to offer informed comments and insights.

**** The research paper will be equivalent of at least 20 double-spaced pages (10-12 pt. type), carefully edited and footnoted. Students will need to consult some primary sources, and will need to evaluate those sources using standard historical research methods. This collaborative research will become the basis of a future academic conference and/or journal article submission.

Tentative Schedule, Fall 2011

Week One, August 25.

Origins of Western media; news before news media.

Week Two, Sept. 1.

Historical impact of literacy and censorship.

Readings to prepare for this class: textbook preface, introduction, and as assigned.

Week Three, Sept. 8.

The United States. Readings to prepare for this class: textbook, "Coming of Age; the Growth of American Media in the Nineteenth Century," and as assigned.

Week Four, Sept. 15.

Britain. Readings to prepare for this class: textbook, "'The Fourth Estate': British Journalism in Britain's Century," and as assigned.

Week Five, Sept. 22.

France. Readings to prepare for this class: textbook, "Traitorous Collaboration: The Press in France 1815-1914," and as assigned.

Week Six, Sept. 29.

Germany. Readings to prepare for this class: textbook, "Mass-Circulation Newspapers Shaped by an Authoritarian Setting," and as assigned.

Week Seven, Oct. 6.

Class will not meet; instructor will be at a convention. Readings will be assigned.

Week Eight, Oct. 13.

Canada. Readings to prepare for this class: textbook, "Canada's Victorian Press:

Influences from Home and Abroad,” and as assigned.

Week Nine, Oct. 20.

Australia. Readings to prepare for this class: textbook, “Australia: Shaking Off the Shackles to Earn the Badge of Independence,” and as assigned.

Week 10, Oct. 27.

Methods of historical research for the mass media. Readings as assigned.

Week 11, Nov. 3.

Class will not meet; instructor will be at a convention. Students should use this time to work on research papers; Instructor strongly encourages students to meet individually with him regarding research paper progress.

Week 12, Nov. 10.

Global media: The end of the Western paradigm?

Week 13.

Student research-in-progress presentations, and special topic of students’ or instructor’s choice.

Week. 14, Nov. 24.

Student research-in-progress presentations, and special topic of students’ or instructor’s choice.

Week 15, Dec. 1.

Special topic of students’ or instructor’s choice.

Week 16, Dec. 8.

Wrap-up; last class. **Research paper is due Dec. 8.**

Official university notices.

American with Disabilities Act.

Any students with disabilities or other special needs, who need special accommodations in this course are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and contact the disability services office as soon as possible.

Academic honesty.

The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the Office of Registration and Records. Informational resources about academic honesty for students and instructional staff members can be found at www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty.

Veterans.

Veterans and student soldiers with special circumstances or who are activated are encouraged to notify the instructor in advance.