# History of the Media (including a module on International Media Systems)

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***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

This course has the aim of providing students with the main introductory methods for the study of the media of mass communication, both from an historical perspective as well as via the main theoretical approaches that characterise *Media Studies*. After a general part focusing on history – both Italian and international – and media theories, the course will examine the processes of digitisation in the media industry and the evolution of the global markets in various national contexts (particularly Europe and the US). The course includes a single-subject part designed to illustrate the topics and problems related to the developmental dynamics of the media system in Italy, and of the national culture industry, with a particular focus on the development of television (from the dawn on the medium to the age of convergence) and public service broadcasting.

At the end of the course, students will be able to explain the key concepts at the basis of the historical analysis of media systems, especially television, both from a national and international perspective. They will also be able to independently complete the critical analysis of a media product and share this with the group in the form of a class presentation, short essay of “video essay”.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is organised into four modules.

1. *Introduction to Media Studies and the historical study of communication media*

– Towards a definition of medium: the dimensions of the media.

– The concept of “media system”.

– The media from a historical perspective: institutional, technological, social and cultural history.

– Cultural industry.

2. *The history and theory of media*

– Media theorists: prophets, empiricists and critics.

– Historical and historiographical questions in media studies.

– The international history of the media, from the printing press to the Internet.

– Inventions of the 19th century and the origins of mass communication.

– The printing press and the typographical revolution.

– From radiotelegraphy to broadcasting radio.

– The birth of cinema and the evolution of the film industry.

– The advent of the Internet and digital media.

– The digitisation of analogue media.

– The age of convergence.

3. *International media systems*

– Global markets and national systems.

– Case studies: the media in the USA and the main European nations.

– Translation, adaptation and “Italianisation”.

4. *Considerations related to the history of the media and television in Italy: historical perspectives and contemporary developments in media convergence* (single-subject course)

– Media history in Italy: themes and unique features.

– Perspectives in the study of the history of the media in Italy.

– Dawn and development of the national culture industry.

– The developmental dynamics of the national media system.

– Developmental strategies of the Italian publishing industry.

– The history, development and genres of radio in Italy.

– The development of cinematography in Italy: the roles of auteurism and the industry.

– The Italian information system.

– The media and consumer societies in Italy.

– Television in Italy: the historical context, from the dawn of the medium to the age of convergence.

– Television in Europe and the concept of public service broadcasting.

– The history of television through its genre system.

– International television models and their specificities.

– Television and media convergence: towards the “multiTV”

– The evolution of TV consumption in Italy.

***READING LIST***

Lecture notes.

Material available on the lecturer's webpage and the Blackboard platform.

The specific sections of the texts on this reading list that constitute course material will be indicated in lectures, on the lecturer’s webpage and on Blackboard.

For points 1, 2 and 3

L. Gorman-D. McLean, *Media e società nel mondo contemporaneo,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2011 (**To prepare** the following chapters:: Introduzione, I, II, III, VII, VIII, X, Conclusioni; chaps. 4-6, 9 and 11 are for reading only).

G. Balbi - P. Magaudda, *Media digitali. La storia, i contesti sociali, le narrazioni*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2021 (**To prepare** the following chapters: Introduzione, 1, 5, 6; chaps 2, 3 and 4 need only be read).

For point 4

C. Bernardi-E. Mosconi (a cura di), *Storia della comunicazione e dello spettacolo in Italia. Volume I (1900-1944)*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2018 (**Students must prepare the following essays**: C. Bernardi, “Rivoluzioni…”: G. Gozzini, “L’informazione…”; M. Stefanelli, “L’editoria illustrata…”; R. De Berti, “Il rotocalco…”; F. Colombo, “L’editoria italiana…”; M. Stefanelli, “La nascita del fumetto popolare”; R. De Berti, “L’impresa cinematografica…”; P. Villa, “Il divismo”; M. F. Piredda, “L’arma più forte…”; F. Di Chio, “Il cinema americano in Italia…”; P. Abbiezzi, “Eiar Eiar alalà…”; G. Valenti, “I generi della radio…”; S. Facci, “La canzone…”; E. Mosconi, “Dalla folla al pubblico”).

F. Colombo-R. Eugeni (a cura di), *Storia della comunicazione e dello spettacolo in Italia.* *Volume II (dal 1945 al 1978)*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2015 (**Students must prepare the following essays**: F. Colombo, “L’industria culturale in Italia nella prima…”; G. Gozzini, “La lunga anomalia…”; M. Scaglioni, “Il tg nella storia…”; M. Stefanelli, “Il fumetto tra cultura alta…”; P. Abbiezzi, “Dalle radio liberate...”; A. Grasso, C. Penati, “Una storia bifronte”; M. Scaglioni, “La storia in gioco…”; G. Lanotte, “La canzone tricolore...”; V. Codeluppi, “Dal nazionale all’internazionale...”).

A. Grasso (a cura di), *Storia della comunicazione e dello spettacolo in Italia. I media alla sfida della convergenza. Volume III (1979-2012)*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2017 (**Students must prepare the following essays**: L. Barra, “I percorsi della convergenza…”; C. Penati, “LA TV italiana alla prova della modernità”; A. Fiacco, “Global TV: l’invasione dei format”; L. Barra, “Una televisione da ridere…”; P. Carelli, “Resistenze e trasformazioni dello sport in TV”; S. Carlo, “Dal beat al byte. L’evoluzione della radio”; M. Tarantino, S. Tosoni, “Il videogioco in Italia”).

M. Scaglioni, *Il servizio pubblico televisivo. Morte o rinascita della RAI?,* Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2016 (**in full**).

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will be delivered by means of frontal lectures, which will include the analysis and discussion of media material. Participation in lectures is therefore strongly encouraged.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

During the course, students participating in lectures will be asked to produce two different analyses of media products, to be prepared, discussed and presented during the semester in the form of a video essay (or a PowerPoint presentation) as a group and an individual paper. At the end of the course (during the January/February exam dates), students who have already completed both the group video-essay (or presentation) and the individual paper will sit a written exam. The written exam consists of a test with fifteen multiple-choice questions of equal weight, randomly selected from large pools, each of which will be marked from 0 (wrong answer or no answer) to 2 (correct answer). In the written test, students will have to demonstrate knowledge of the key theories and concepts learned on the course and a firm grasp of the themes and the issues addressed.

The overall mark will also consider the possible results of the analytical tasks completed during the course, corrected and discussed in class. Specifically, the final mark will be based on the mark awarded for the written examination (50%), for the presentation of the individual paper (30%) and for the group video-essay or presentation (20%).

Students who have not submitted the two analytical tasks during lectures or who have not been able to take the written exam may present themselves for oral examination on any exam date. Through open questions, the oral examination will assess students on the competences learned during lectures and from the texts on the reading list, their use of specific terminology and their ability to identify conceptual links and open issues.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course. However, students should ideally show a certain curiosity towards the historical analysis of mass media and media communication.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.