

MODULE: History of the Media (course code BAJH-HM)

Griffith College Dublin – Journalism and Visual Media

Fall Semester

This module has no pre-requisites.

Introduction

Humans communicate and share information in an ever growing range of media, from telegraph to text, from billboards to blogs. The module offers analysis of the evolution of human communication.

It introduces students to the key events and epochs in the history of human communications. Students analyse the impact of key changes in communications media, starting from the earliest known forms of media, through to the invention of the printing press, the emergence of a literate reading public, the development of newspapers, the inventions of radio, film and television, and into the digital age.

Module Aims

This module aims to enable the student to:

- Have an overview of the historical development of key media.
- Understand the wider historical contexts within which these media originated.
- Grasp the impact that media technologies have had on the wider world.
- Understand the relationships between technological invention, societal demand and economic viability of media technologies
- Apply the relevance of this knowledge to the contemporary media industry.

Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of the historical context within which various media technologies emerged.
- Analyse how media inventions, and adoption, have impacted on the wider society.
- Understand from an historical perspective how particular media structures have emerged in contemporary society.
- Display comprehension of the relationships and historical processes between relevant political conditions, technological innovation, business entrepreneurship and social demand that gave rise to the communications structures in society today.

Indicative Module Content

Writing and the rise of civilisation:

An overview of the changes involved in the development of civilisation for human societies and the role that writing played in that process.

Renaissance change - painting and printing:

A look at how changes in painting and the rise of printing were linked together in the Renaissance era; the impact of both.

Newspapers and the birth of democracy:

The origins and development of newspapers and the role they played in the emergence of democracy; Benedict Anderson's theory of newspapers and the emergence of nationality.

Radio and mass society:

How radio developed and how it came to be a force in the creation of 'mass societies' from the US to the Third Reich.

Cinema - the first globalised medium:

How cinema developed, the power of the moving image. The emergence of Hollywood and its strides towards global dominance.

Television and consumer society:

Television's rise and its links to the development of consumer societies; the erosion of barriers between advertising and entertainment (and increasingly news). How television has transformed the perception of politics.

Music:

Music is the oldest communications medium, except (arguably) for speech. A look at how it has been transformed by technologies and how this in turn has given it an important role in changing political and social attitudes.

Internet and the 21st century:

The origins of the internet and how it is rapidly becoming the most important medium. Is the internet making other media, especially newspapers, redundant? A look at arguments about the coming of a 'global village' and their limitations.

Assessment

This module will be assessed by two assignments (Continuous Assessment 50%) being two research-led essays based on module content, and by a written exam (50%).