INTERDISCIPLINARY CAPSTONE COURSE:
TELEVISION NEWS INNOVATORS

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This course surveys the most prominent figures in the history of television news and the
most important events and movements in modern American history, which they reported
and often helped shape.

Part of our focus will be communication and media studies. We will study producers,
executives, anchors, and correspondents – taking a close look at their careers and their
legacies. The goal is to study those individuals who built television to see how television
news became a uniquely powerful – if somewhat flawed – instrument of journalism. How
did these innovators take a totally blank slate and build television into what it is today?
Who made a significant change to the way news was done? Whose legacy still stands
today? From time to time we will also take a step back to ask more theoretical questions
about how television news works best.

And part of our focus will be history. The innovators we study covered the most
important historical events of recent times. Their work provides an excellent prism
through which to examine the main events of modern America. This was a time of great
change, as the nation fought wars abroad and underwent major social transformations at
home. We will ask how historical events and social movements helped shape the United
States in the post-war era.

And part of the focus of the course will be the interaction between the media and the
historical events they cover. In particular, the course will focus on the key moments in
American history when media coverage affected the course of history. For instance, our
discussions of the Vietnam War will start with an analysis of how and why America became involved. We will then examine how the coverage of the war – most notably Walter Cronkite’s pronouncement in 1968 that the US should pull out – helped alter the course of the war. Every episode examined in this course will offer a chance for students to think critically about the underlying events and the role of the media in shaping history.

All of the historical episodes presented in this course will be examined by students through two different methodologies: as historians and as media scholars. For instance, when examining the coverage of the Red Scare of the Early Cold War, students will both analyze the historical significance of the work of Senator Joseph McCarthy and also the game-changing role played by Edward R. Murrow in covering him. In this way, this course will truly be an interdisciplinary look at politics, social movements, and the press in contemporary society.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

You will leave this class with a better understanding of journalism, particularly broadcast journalism. This course has a Journalism designator, and we will cover how journalism works and why it is so critically important to our society.

You will leave this class knowing about the work of some of the masters of television news. You will understand why their work is important and leave with the background to think more critically about the present and the future of television news.

You will also be versed in the main currents of modern US history, not only the politics but also the social and cultural history. After all, the period we will be examining was one of significant change for the nation, including periods of growth and prosperity such as the 1950s, as well as times of upheaval like the 1960s. This understanding of history will provide richer context to your understanding of contemporary America.

Students will also explore the interaction between media and history. You will see how journalists helped shape Americans’ views of their history and politics, and how politicians and activists have used the media to try to change the course of history.

Students should develop a better understanding of and be more sensitive to issues of American pluralism. In this course, we will be discussing race, gender and class—all of which are crucial to an understanding the fullness of American society.

COURSE MATERIALS

BOOKS: These are the two main books for our course, which you should buy used:


All other assigned and optional readings will be in a GOOGLE DRIVE FILE shared with you. They will be drawn from these books and articles, as well as new ones that may come to my attention during the term:


VIDEO: Some of the assigned videos are on reserve at the Walsh Family Library’s Electronic Information Center. Others are on the Internet, and I will provide links as a separate document emailed to you and in our shared Google Drive.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. **Attend.** Show up to class, and care enough to be on time. You are allowed two absences according to Fordham rules. After that, you risk failing the course. Please email me every time you miss class to let me know why. I’ll want to make sure you get caught up.
2. **Excel.** Be your best self in class and on your assignments. Do the reading. Watch the videos before class, too. Turn in your work on time or if necessary request an extension early. Work hard and you will be rewarded.

3. **Focus.** Try to be really present in class. I’ll make sure we get a break every hour or so. Unless you have a disability, there will be no use of computers in class. Texting or using smart phones during class is not allowed either. Violate these rules one time and you’ll get an email from me. After that you’ll be called out in class. Surfing the net or texting is rude and seriously impedes learning. Studies also show students retain more information when they take notes by hand.

4. **Respect.** Our class will be a safe, nurturing place to express opinions and thoughtful critiques. We will be discussing politics, race, gender and other issues that can be polarizing. Be polite and open to the views of others.

5. **Communicate.** Read my emails. Let me know if you’re running into trouble. Tell me if you need help. Please send **ALL MESSAGES TO KNOBEL@FORDHAM.EDU. SEND ALL ASSIGNMENTS AND ONLY ASSIGNMENTS (NOT MESSAGES) TO JOUR4766@GMAIL.COM.**

6. **Follow the News.** If you are not familiar with television news, please start watching now. You need to watch all three broadcast networks’ evening broadcasts during the first week of class (ABC, CBS and NBC), as well as a sample of all three main cable news networks (CNN, Fox News, MSNBC). I would also like you to read the *New York Times* every day. You don’t have to read cover to cover, but you should look over the front page of the print paper or check the home page daily. We will be discussing contemporary events throughout the course, drawing links from history to today, and your so you will need to know what’s going on to get the most from this course. It is important for your future that you get in the news habit. I can give you a free NY Times pass.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Please submit all assignments in electronic form only. **Please send me only documents in MS Word, not in PDFs, Google docs or other formats,** so I can embed my edits and comments. You may download Microsoft Word for free as a Fordham student through the university portal.

There will be three assignments (for which you will need to write approximately 1,250 words) analyzing the class material and readings. These will be assigned on Thursdays during the first three weeks of the class (May 30, June 6 and June 13) and due the following Monday at 5 pm. **These assignments will each constitute 20 percent of your final grade, for a total 60 percent.**

There will also be a **take-home final exam, which constitutes 20 percent of the final grade.** The assignment will be handed out on the next-to-last Thursday meeting (June 20), and you will have until 5 pm on our last class day, Thursday June 27 to submit it. It will be a bit longer than the other papers, about 1,500 words.

Your class participation grade will count for **20 percent of your final grade.**
# CLASS SCHEDULE

THIS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. UPDATES WILL BE SHARED WITH YOU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date, Topic and Assignments</th>
<th>Readings and Videos to Prepare before Class</th>
<th>Discussion Questions to Prepare Before Class</th>
<th>In-Class Videos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUES 5/28</strong></td>
<td>INTRO, SARNOFF, PALEY, BIRTH OF BROADCAST NEWS, WWII, ELEMENTS OF JOURNALISM</td>
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<td>Television, Window to the World</td>
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<td><strong>WED 5/29</strong></td>
<td><strong>MURROW I—WWII TO TV.</strong></td>
<td>Chafe 6-16 (in shared drive if you haven't received book); Halberstam two excerpts on Murrow. Excerpts of Murrow Radio Scripts, in Drive Video: <em>This Reporter</em>, Edward R. Murrow DVD collection (120 mins).</td>
<td>Video: See It Now episode, “Christmas in Korea” and other See It Now episodes, From the Edward R. Murrow DVD collection</td>
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<td><strong>TUES 6/4</strong></td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS MEETING</strong> ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE MONDAY, 6/3 AT 5 PM</td>
<td><strong>Instead: Read</strong> Matusow, Chapters 2 and 3, (in shared drive if you haven’t received book); Arledge reading about David Brinkley</td>
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<td>DAY</td>
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<td>READING/VIDEO INFORMATION</td>
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<td>Wed 6/5</td>
<td><strong>David Brinkley, The Civil Rights Movement</strong></td>
<td>Chafe 115-150</td>
<td>What did separate but equal really mean? Why was segregation so persistent in America? What are public accommodations, and why are they so important? What held the Civil Rights movement together? What caused it to splinter? What did it achieve? Why did Huntley and Brinkley take off? Why did a more objective reporting style become the norm for television news? What does Brinkley's longevity tell us about the news business?</td>
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<td>Thurs 6/6</td>
<td><strong>The Great Society, Coverage of the Great Society</strong></td>
<td>Chafe 68-77, 94-113, Excerpt from “Equal Time: Television and the Civil Rights Movement” SKIM: Schaefer, “Reconsidering Harvest of Shame,” on Blackboard</td>
<td>What is the “American Dream?” How did the “Great Society” aim to expand access to the “American Dream?” How did television news coverage affect the evolution of the Civil Rights movement? What classic Murrow techniques can you see in <em>Harvest of Shame</em>? What effect did <em>Harvest</em> have?</td>
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<td>Tues 6/11</td>
<td><strong>Vietnam: Walter Cronkite</strong></td>
<td>Chafe 226-260 Matusow, Ch. 4; Cronkite reading from Halberstam Cronkite readings (strengths and Vietnam), on Blackboard Video: <em>American Masters, Walter Cronkite</em>, a video in two parts. This video is about 2 hours long in total.</td>
<td>What should an American man of draft age have done during Vietnam? Why did America lose the Vietnam War? Why did it matter that Cronkite was considered “the most trusted man in America?” Why did Cronkite suspend decades of objective reporting to speak out about the Vietnam War?</td>
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<td>DAY</td>
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<td>Chafe, Matusow, Video/Excerpts</td>
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<td>WED 6/12</td>
<td>THE WOMEN’S LIBERATION/RIGHTS MOVEMENT. BARBARA WALTERS</td>
<td>Chafe 166-200, Matusow, Ch. 6 2 Excerpts from Walters, Audition, On Blackboard</td>
<td>How did gender and sex define Americans, and how did it change in the 1960s and ’70s? Why would people resist changing gender and sex roles? In what ways did Barbara Walters’ career reflect women’s larger fight for equal rights? What family issues did she need to overcome? Is it right that we notice what she wears and how she looks on camera?</td>
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<td>THURS 6/13</td>
<td>WATCHDOG JOURNALISM 60 MINUTES—DON HEWITT, MIKE WALLACE, ED BRADLEY</td>
<td>Read: Excerpt from Blum, “Tick...Tick...Tick...” on Blackboard Excerpts from Don Hewitt autobiography Tell Me a Story, on Blackboard Jones, p. 1-8, on Blackboard</td>
<td>What was Hewitt’s role in making 60 Minutes this nation’s leading television newsmagazine? Why is 60 Minutes enduring? How did Mike Wallace change the nature of television journalism with his ambushes and his tough questioning? Why would people give Wallace an interview instead of going with someone easier? How did Bradley overcome prejudice and poverty to reach the pinnacle of TV journalism? What were his gifts and how did he use them What is the “iron core” of journalism?</td>
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<td>TUES 6/18</td>
<td>WATERGATE, NIXON AND CRONKITE ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE MONDAY 6/17 AT 5 PM</td>
<td>Chafe, 287-311, Excerpt on Watergate from Brinkley, Cronkite, on Blackboard</td>
<td>How did TV make and break Richard Nixon? What was the long-term impact of Watergate? How did CBS News contribute to the coverage of the Watergate scandal? What were the challenges of covering Watergate for television?</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>Readings</td>
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<td>Wed 6/19</td>
<td>Age of Anxiety, Ted Koppel, Roone Arledge</td>
<td>Chafe 312-330, Matusow, Ch. 8; Koppel readings (2 parts), on Blackboard; Arledge reading, on Blackboard</td>
<td>Did TV news help or hurt the US during this transition era? Why were the 1970s a time of great anxiety in the US? What was Jimmy Carter’s leadership style? How did Roone Arledge turn ABC Sports into a powerhouse and then do the same thing for ABC News? How did the setup of Nightline give Koppel the upper hand?</td>
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<td>Thurs 6/20</td>
<td>Bush I, Gulf War 1, Ted Turner Final Exam Given Out</td>
<td>Chafe 355-370, 385-389 Excerpt from Collins Chs 3 &amp; 4, Crazy Like a Fox, on Blackboard SKIM: Denton, TV as an Instrument of War Video: 60 Minutes story on Turner (13 mins)</td>
<td>Why did conservatism rise in the US in the 1970s? How was this a continuation of trends from the 1960s? How is television now used as an “instrument of war”? How did Ted Turner turn CNN into the first truly global network? What was his vision for CNN? Why was CNN’s coverage of the first Gulf War so much better than its competitors?</td>
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<td>Tues 6/25</td>
<td>Clinton, Election 2000, Post-Broadcast Democracy and Roger Ailes</td>
<td>Excerpt from Collins' Crazy Like a Fox, Chs. 2, 10 &amp; 11; Excerpt from Sherman’s The Loudest Voice in the Room—Ch. 11 &amp; 15; and Sherman piece in New York Magazine</td>
<td>How did Fox News use the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal to build audience? Was FNC ethical to call the election of 2000 as it did? In which way do the Internet and partisan cable news channels affect politics today? What was Roger Ailes’ vision for a third cable news network? How does FNC reflect its founder? How does it differ from CNN and MSNBC? Is it right to consider sexual harassment when evaluating Ailes’ career?</td>
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<td>Wed 6/26</td>
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<td>Review for final</td>
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<td>Thurs 6/27</td>
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<td>Final Exam Due</td>
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Plagiarism and Academic Integrity
One way to fail this course would be to violate Fordham’s academic integrity policy. Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an honest, truthful, and responsible manner. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, falsification, unapproved collaboration, and destruction of library materials. For more information on what specifically constitutes violations of academic integrity and the university’s policy toward violations of academic integrity, see this link: http://www.fordham.edu/undergraduateacademicintegrity.

To help ensure that you are not in violation of our standards, papers for this course will be put through a plagiarism detection program. I have input papers written for the class in the past into the plagiarism detection system as well, to make sure that no one can crib off someone else who took the course earlier. The age of the Internet makes plagiarism even easier than ever, so be warned. Most of you are seniors whose graduation would be delayed by an incident of plagiarism or other violation of the academic integrity standards. I will be expecting you to attribute ideas in your papers—not just the facts but also the interpretations and analyses that are not your own.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of Fordham University. If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule an appointment to speak with someone at the Office of Disability Services (RH - O’Hare Hall, Lower Level, x0655 or LC, x6282). Registration with their office is the first step in requesting accommodations. I am sensitive to the needs of Fordham students with learning issues and other disabilities, so please let me know about issues so that we can work together to find accommodations.

WEATHER

The decision to cancel classes due to weather conditions will be made by the Administrative Vice President and will be announced on WFUV (90.7 FM) every 15 minutes. The University will also provide a recorded message on (212) 636-7777, and 1-800-280-SNOW. If classes are cancelled, I may videotape a lecture and post it for you to watch so we do not fall behind. Our schedule is quite tight.

SO THAT WE ALL THRIVE

Some members of the Fordham community are known by a name that is different from their legal name. I will be asking that you identify the name you wish to use in class and preferred pronoun in the student information sheet that I will be giving you shortly. I myself use the pronoun she/her/hers. Our department is committed to using the pronouns and names preferred by students.
Any student who faces difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a stable place to live is urged to contact your class dean for support. I also urge you to contact me or our dept chair, Dr. Jacqueline Reich (jreich8@fordham.edu) about these or other hardships you may be going through so that we can try to be of assistance.

I will hold office hours every day before class and can meet you after class as well. I consider my office to be a safe space where you are welcome to discuss anything that’s on your mind, whether it is related to our class or not. Office hours are not just to discuss class material, but are a time for cura personalis.

Don’t forget that we also have all kinds of support services available on campus to assist students, from Student Psychological Services to the Writing Center. I urge you to take full advantage of them. Please don’t hesitate to come see me if you would like to discuss any of ways our department and college can offer support.

THE PROFESSOR

I am an Associate Professor of Communication and Media Studies at Fordham, teaching courses in journalism, broadcast history and press-politics. Before I came to Fordham in 2007, I was the Moscow Bureau Chief for CBS News. In nine years at CBS, I was an on-air correspondent as well as an Emmy-award winning producer. I spent 14 years living in Moscow, where I worked for The Los Angeles Times and the television news agency “Worldwide Television News,” before joining CBS. I still freelance for CBS News as an expert on Russian affairs.

My first book, co-written with CBS news legend and “TV News Innovator” Mike Wallace, came out in 2010. It is called Heat and Light: Advice for the Next Generation of Journalists, and it is an anecdote-filled guidebook for young journalists on how to do reporting right. The book grew directly out of this course, and so that means that “TV News Innovators” is particularly close to my heart. You can read more about the book at www.heatandlight.org. (Or better yet...buy a copy and read it if you’re interested in journalism). My second book about how watchdog reporting has changed over the past 20 years came out last March. It is entitled The Watchdog Still Barks: How Accountability Reporting Evolved for the Digital Age and was published by Fordham University Press.

I am a native New Yorker who hails from Queens. I earned my A.B. in Political Science here in New York at Barnard College. I then earned Masters and Doctoral degrees from Harvard in Public Policy, where my specialty was Press, Politics and Public Policy. In my spare time, I am studying for my third degree black belt in the martial art of taekwondo. I’m also proud to be an official LGBTQ+ Ally of Support.

Welcome to the course! I look forward to sharing an amazing summer session with you.
**Pt. 1 America Becomes a World Power 1**
World War II and the Destruction of the Old Order 6
The Necessity for Containment (1946) 17
The Cuban Missile Crisis: President Kennedy's Address to the Nation (1962) 23
President Eisenhower's Farewell Address (1961) 31
A Frightening Message for a Thanksgiving Issue (1958) 37
HUAC Investigates Hollywood (1947) 41
The Internal Communist Menace (1950) 50
The Verona Project and Atomic Espionage 53

**Pt. 2 The Politics and Culture of the Affluent Society 65**
The Luckiest Generation 68
Trends in Postwar American Culture and Society 75
The Myers Move to Levittown 78
The Port Huron Statement (1962) 81
The Sharon Statement (1960) 87
Inaugural Address (1961) 90
“The Great Society”: Remarks at the University of Michigan (1964) 94
Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism 99

**Pt. 3 Civil Rights and Racial Justice 115**
Brown v. Board of Education (1954) 119
Declaration of Constitutional Principles: The Southern Manifesto (1956) 124
A Lunch-Counter Sit-In in Jackson, Mississippi (1968) 128
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: A Voice of Radical Courage and Love 133
From Protest to Politics (1965) 137
What We Want, What We Believe, (1966) 147
Chicano! 151
Proclamation (1969) 159

**Pt. 4 Struggles Over Gender and Sexual Liberation 163**
The Creation of a Feminist Consciousness 166
Statement of Purpose (1966) 173
No More Miss America (1968) 179
Soy Chicana Primero (1971) 183
What's Wrong with "Equal Rights" for Women? (1972) 187
Roe v. Wade (1973) 197
Gay Is Good (1970) 201
Sexual Revolution(s) 206

**Pt. 5 The Vietnam War 223**
We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young 226
March on Washington: The War Must Be Stopped (1965) 236
"Dump Johnson" 239
Vietnam Veterans against the War (1971) 251
Letter to the Draftboard (1969) 256
In Retrospect 261
The Genuine Lessons of the Vietnam War 267

**Pt. 6 Confrontation and New Limits 273**
Trip without a Ticket (1968) 277
You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows (1969) 283
The Forgotten American (1969) 287
Watergate 300
Taken Hostage 312
The “Crisis of Confidence” Speech: President Carter’s Address to the Nation (1979) 325
Misery Index 331

**Pt. 7 A New Era of Conservatism 333**
Piety and Property: Conservatism and Right-Wing Movements in the Twentieth Century 355
The Religious Right and the New Republican Party 371
America’s Right Turn 379
“The Second American Revolution”: President Reagan’s State of the Union Address (1985) 385
The Republican Contract with America (1994) 390

**Pt. 8 The United States and the World in the Post-Cold War Era 393**
From Gulf War I to Gulf War II: Confronting the Post-Cold War World 397
9/11 418
“Axis of Evil” Speech: President Bush’s State of the Union Address (2002) 429
Image of the United States (2005) 439
“Why the World is Flat”: Interview with Thomas Friedman 448
Top Ten Reasons to Oppose the World Trade Organization (2004) 455
Pt. 9 The Changing Shape of American Society 461
Our Gigantic Experiment with Planet Earth 464
The New Immigration 469
A Racialist’s Census (2000) 475
Why We Must Promote Proper Science in Science Classes (2005) 482
Great Expectations (2004) 485
Red or Blue- Which Are You? (2004) 488
The American People in the Early Twenty-first Century 496