For the past two years we've been transfixed by the news—but also by the way the news has been reported. Longstanding practices have been questioned or abandoned as our media have grappled with how to cover a changing political landscape. A similar situation unfolded in late and post-Soviet Russia, where it seemed that newspapers and TVs were not only reporting, but also carrying out, a regime change. This course will examine media regimes in both the U.S. and Russia (and the U.S.S.R.), with careful attention to historical and theoretical frameworks that will help us better understand current media events. On the Russian side we will examine how political and cultural regimes have systematically exploited the gap between experience and representation to create their own mediated worlds—from the tight censorship of the imperial and Soviet periods to the propaganda of the Soviet period and the recent use of media simulacra for strategic geopolitical advantage. We will compare this tradition with that of the United States, where freedom of expression has been privileged, but has also been shaped and distorted by the economic and cultural markets that constitute our media.
Assignments and assessment:

At the end of the term you will hand in a media journal—a digest of news you have absorbed as filtered through our readings. The length of these entries can vary from 140 characters to longer passages (in the form of a blog or as passages from a longer paper), and should reveal your systematic engagement with the material on the syllabus and with the media world we are examining. The goal of your writing should be critical analysis of both news media and the course readings.

In lieu of a midterm, you will hand in the journal at the beginning of the sixth week (Feb. 5), and will receive comments and a provisional grade at that point. The final grade on the journal will not be based on the midterm assessment, but on the final product—the journal that you hand in on March 14. This will constitute 75% of your grade for the course, and will be calculated largely on the basis of content, but will also take into account the scope of your reading, listening and viewing.

The length of the journal is not essential; pithy, substantive writing is more important. If you would like a guideline, aim for something between 3,000 and 4,000 words. Anything that involves citation of content or ideas should, of course, rigorously observe the University of Chicago’s principles of academic integrity (https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/Policies).

The remaining 25% of your grade will be based on attendance and participation, which includes involvement in classroom discussions. If you are reticent, speak with the course assistant or me about other ways of getting involved in the conversation, including posting material to the Canvas site (we will set up a board for this); this can be drawn from your journal writing, and can also serve as a way to develop a draft of material for the final journal.

Office Hours:

Alexander Herbert by appointment alexanderherbert45@gmail.com
William Nickell MWF 11:00 – 12:00 Foster 405
Reading Schedule

1. Introduction
   Wednesday, Jan. 3  From Plato to Pussy Riot

2. Fundamental Questions and Approaches
   Monday, Jan. 8  
   - John Stuart Mill, “Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion” (22 pp.)
   - Jürgen Habermas, from *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (20 pp.)
   - Michel Foucault, “We Other Victorians” (10 pp.)
   
   Wednesday, Jan. 10  
   - Raymond Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory” (9 pp.)
   - Walter J. Ong, “Some psychodynamics of orality” (46 pp.)
   - Marshall McLuhan, “The Medium Is the Message” (10 pp.)

3. Fourth Estates
   Monday, Jan. 15  *Martin Luther King holiday*
   
   Wednesday, Jan. 17  
   - Nikitenko - from *Diary of a Russian Censor* (26 pp.)
   - Konstantin Pobedonostsev – “The Falsehood of Democracy” (6 pp.)
   - Walter Lippman – “Liberty and the News” (9 pp.)
   - Timothy Cook – from * Governing with the News* (37 pp.)

4. Cultural capital / cultural tectonics
   Monday, Jan. 22  
   - Horkheimer & Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (17 pp.)
   - Raymond Williams, “The Technology and the Society” (10 pp.)
   - Debord, from *Society of Spectacle*
   - James W. Carey, “Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph” (19 pp.)
   - Carolyn Marvin, “Dazzling the Multitude: Original Media Spectacles” (15 pp.)
   
   Wednesday, Jan. 24  
   - Pierre Bourdieu, “The Production of Belief” (32 pp.)
   - Fredric Jameson, “Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture” (18 pp.)
   - Hannah Arendt, “Totalitarian Propaganda” (23 pp.)

5. Media Eco-Systems: The Soviet Model
   Monday, Jan. 29  
   - Lev Trotsky – “The Newspaper and its Readers” (8 pp.)
   - Antonio Gramsci, “Hegemony, Intellectuals and the State” (6 pp.)
   - Louise McReynolds, “Russian Newspapers in Revolution” (24 pp.)
   - Rossi & Bauer, “Some Patterns of Soviet Communications Behavior” (13 pp.)
   
   Wednesday, Jan. 31  
   - Dziga Vertov – from *Kino-Eye* (10 pp.)
   - Elizabeth Wood – “Fiction Becomes Indistinguishable from Reality” (14 pp.)
   - Roth-Ey – “Television and Authority in Soviet Culture (59 pp.)
Monday, Feb. 5  Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications.*
   Introduction (22 pp.)
   James Schwoch – “We Can Give the World a Vision of America” (14 pp.), “A New Idea Capable of Uniting the Thoughts of People All Over the Earth” (16 pp.)
   Stanley Fish, “There’s No Such thing as Free Speech” (17 pp.)
   Jack Fuller, “The Two Searchlights” (16 pp.)
Wednesday, Feb. 7  From *Red Channels* (15 pp.)
   Matthew Ehrlich, from *Radio Utopia: A Higher Destiny* (11 pp.), “One World” (22 pp.)
   Heather Hendershot, from *What’s Fair on the Air: Cold War Right-Wing Broadcasting and the Public Interest:* “A Strong Reek of the Not-Quite Crackpot.” (26-64)

7. New Powers
Monday, Feb. 12  Joshua Meyrowitz, from *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior* (40 pp.)
   Thomas Patterson, *Informing the News.* Introduction and Chapter 1 (30 pp.)
Wednesday, Feb. 14  Christine Evans, “Time and the Problem of Boredom” (34 pp.)
   Arkady Ostrovsky, “New Beginning or Dead End? (46 pp.), Bonnell & Freidin – “Televorot: the Role of Television Coverage in Russia’s August 1991 Coup” (28 pp.)

8. New Russian Networks
Monday, Feb. 19  Ellen Mickiewicz, “Detecting Channels” (20 pp.)
   Arkady Ostrovsky, “*Kommersant* or the Birth of Russian Capitalism” (26 pp.)
   Mikhail Epshtein – “Origins and Meaning of Russian Post-Modernism” (*Re-entering the Sign*, 17 pp.)
Wednesday, Feb. 21  Russia Today – class discussion of collective viewing
   Peter Pomerantsev, “Reality Show Russia” (73 pp.)

9. American Silos
Monday, Feb. 26  Class visit: ABC/PBS correspondent Nick Schifrin
   Alex Jones, “Objectivity’s Last Stand” (20 pp.)
   Thomas Patterson, from *Informing the News* (42 pp.)
Wednesday, Feb. 28  Berry & Sobieraj, from *The Outrage Industry* - “The Perfect Storm,” (28 pp.)
   Jonathan Ladd – “Why Does Everyone Hate the Mainstream Media?” (9 pp.)
   Matthew Levendusky, from *How Partisan Media Polarize America.* “The New Partisan Media Environment” (23 pp.), “How Partisan Media Matter for America” (23 pp.)

10. Silos
Monday, March 5  Open Day [curriculum based on current events]
Wednesday, Mar 7  Open Day [curriculum based on current events]