

**University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film**

COMS 381 (L01): Communications History

WINTER 2023: January 9, 2023 to April 12, 2023 (excluding February 19-25, April 7, April 10, 2023)

Lecture: TR 11:00-11:50

Lab 1: M 09:00-09:50, Lab 2: M 10:00-10:50,

Lab 3: M 11:00-11:50, Lab 4: M 12:00-12:50,

Lab 5: M 13:00-13:50, Lab 6: M 14:00-14:50

All lectures and labs in this course are in-person.

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| Instructor: | Dr. Linda Vennard |
| Email: | vennard@ucalgary.ca |
| Web Page: | access via MyUofC portal |
| Office Hours: | Wednesdays 9:00-11:00 via Zoom, or in person by appointment |

Course Description

This course is a general study of how various communication systems and practices developed through history, and of the social contexts within which they emerged, transformed, and adapted through time. Within this framework, the course examines major technological developments in the history of human communication and uses theory to understand their origins and impacts on social organization and everyday life.

To encourage a critical approach to accounts of historical developments in communications students will be introduced to the historiography of communication. Students will engage in structured and disciplined reflection of communication past and present by examining the historical development of ideas about and practices of communication, articulated within broader processes of social change, such as democracy, nation-building, colonization, and globalization. Students will also consider major technological developments in communications history, with emphasis on the tensions and interplay of technologies and practices.

This Communications History course examines the mutual shaping of technology and social practices from prehistory and New Stone Age artifacts, to include media in Ancient Empires, writing, paper, printing, the telegraph, telephone, photography, radio, tv and new media. Looking at how and why humans communicated in the past contextualizes and positions new media and its roots within a rich and complex communications history.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of Readings and Assignments can be found at the end of this outline and on D2L. A full schedule of lecture topics and class activities will be provided on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify and understand a range of theoretical interpretations of communications history.
2. Demonstrate skill in historiographical analysis and research.
3. Articulate relationships among communications, technological development and social dynamics in an historical context.
4. Construct well-reasoned arguments about the relationship between historical developments and contemporary practices.
5. Approach and understand the media of the present moment in a critical, historically literate way.

Textbooks and Readings

Required Textbook: Paul Heyer and Peter Urquhart (Eds.) (2019). *Communication in History: Stone Age Symbols to Social Media Seventh Edition*. New York and London: Routledge.

Both print and digital formats are available through the University of Calgary Bookstore.

Supplementary Readings may be posted on D2L.

Please note required readings should be read prior to labs and lectures.

Additional Online References:

American Psychological Association. (2020). Style and grammar guidelines. APA Style. <https://apastyle.apa.org>

Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection, and a current and updated web browser;
- A webcam (built-in or external), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone (for zoom office hours).

If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

If you have technical difficulties, contact IT support services. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

Laptops, tablets, and mobile phones may be used in class and tutorials only:

- for course-related purposes;
- if their use is not distracting others;
- if their use does not negatively impact the learning environment.

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

No audio or video recording of lectures or labs is permitted without the instructor's and/or TA's explicit permission.

Email

When corresponding with the Instructor and TA's via email please include the course name and number (Coms 381) and your Lab number in the subject line, along with your full name as registered. If you do not include these your message may be overlooked and go unread.

Please do not send emails requesting information easily found on course documents.

The instructor will usually respond to emails within 24 hours during the week, but if you have not received a reply in 48 hours please check to make sure you included the course name and number and your full name and resend. Emails sent in the evening or on weekends will not be read or replied to until the next working day.

T.A.s will advise you of their individual email guidelines in Labs.

Assignments and Evaluation

| Weight | Assessed Components | Due |
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| | <p>Tests (3x10% each, total 30%)</p> <p>There are 3 (online) multiple choice tests, each available for 24 hours on D2L. Class time is allotted for students to do the test in the classroom if they wish. All tests are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• open book.• to be done individually.• timed, and once open must be completed in one attempt. <p>Please allow yourself distraction free time to do the tests. If unforeseen circumstances arise after you have started the test which impact your ability to complete it within the specified time, please contact me as soon as possible to arrange for an alternate time.</p> | |

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| <p>10%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>10%</p> | <p>On each day a test is open I will closely monitor my email to answer questions about the test.</p> <p>For each test I will be in the classroom during regular class hours for students wishing to bring their computer and do the test there.</p> <p>Test #1 (10%) on January 26:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has 25 multiple choice questions. • Covers Ch. 1-8 inclusive and lectures. • Is timed for 50 minutes (includes 50% more time in case of technical difficulties). • Will be open on D2L for 24 hours (from 11:00 am on January 26 to 11:00 am January 27). <p>Test #2 (10%) on March 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has 25 multiple choice questions. • Covers Ch. 9-22 inclusive and lectures. • Is timed for 50 minutes (includes 50% more time in case of technical difficulties). • Will be open on D2L for 24 hours (from 11:00 am on March 2 to 11:00 am March 3). <p>Test #3 (10%) on March 23:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has 25 multiple choice questions. • Covers Ch. 23-38 inclusive and lectures. • Is timed for 50 minutes (includes 50% more time in case of technical difficulties). • Will be open on D2L for 24 hours (from 11:00 am on March 23 to 11:00 am March 24) | <p>Jan 26 (open from 11:00 am Jan 26 to 11:00 am Jan 27)</p> <p>March 2 (open from 11:00 am March 2 to 11:00 am March 3)</p> <p>March 23 (open from 11:00 am March 23 to 11:00 am March 24)</p> |
| <p>20%</p> | <p>Reflection Journal (4 submissions worth 5% each, total 20%)</p> <p>Throughout the course students will create an individual Reflection Journal containing their personal and intellectual insights and connections with course material (book, notes, lectures, themes, response questions). Students are expected to make entries for each of the chapters in the eight communication history moments studied in the course. Examples will be provided in class.</p> <p>The Reflection Journal serves two purposes:</p> <p>(1) As a personal learning repository, so the length, depth, nature and number of entries will vary among students and reflect their engagement with and understanding of course material.</p> | |

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| | <p>(2) As the basis for individual student contribution to the final group Historical Research Paper (details below).</p> <p>Students will submit their entire Reflection Journal four (4) times during the course, along with one separate Specified Journal Entry (of maximum 250 words) of their choice for marking.</p> <p>The four due dates for submission of the entire Reflection Journal and one separate Specified Journal Entry (of maximum 200 words) are:</p> <p>Submission #1 (5%) due: January 26, 2023 (Ch1-8) Submission #2 (5%) due: February 9, 2023 (Ch9-17) Submission #3 (5%) due: March 9, 2023 (Ch18-28) Submission #4 (5%) due: March 23, 2023 (Ch 29-38)</p> <p>Further details will be provided in class and posted on D2L.</p> <p>Entire Reflection Journals and the four Specified Journal Entries are to be deposited to the D2L dropbox by 11:59 p.m. on their respective due dates.</p> | <p>All are due at 11:59 pm D2L</p> <p>#1 Jan 26 #2 Feb 9 #3 March 9 #4 March 23</p> |
| 10% | <p>Lab Participation (10%)</p> <p>Consistent attendance at weekly labs and active and informed involvement in lab discussions and activities is required. Participation grades will be assessed on both frequency and quality of contributions. Attendance will be taken in labs, so students either unable or not intending to consistently attend labs should reconsider enrolling in this course. Infrequent attendance and/or participation will result in a lower grade and can also be expected to impact performance on tests and assignments.</p> | ongoing |
| 10% | <p>Chapter Synopsis (10%)</p> <p>Working in pairs, students will choose one chapter of the textbook and, using the template provided, prepare a Chapter Synopsis which will inter alia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize the theme and main points of the chapter, • Specify the perspective used in the chapter (e.g. social, political, economic, technical, etc.), and any relevant theories, • Make one direct connection to current social media platforms (e.g. style, language, content, social practice or use, political, economic, etc.), • Pose one discussion question. <p>Synopses will be posted on D2L for all students to view.</p> <p>Pairs to be formed, chapter chosen and sign-up by January 12, 2023.</p> | |

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| | <p>Further details and the Chapter Synopsis template will be provided in class and posted on D2L.</p> <p>The Chapter Synopsis is due at 11:59 pm Thursday of the week prior to the chapter's scheduled discussion in lectures and tutorials, and is to be deposited to the D2L dropbox by 11:59 p.m. on its respective due date.</p> | <p>Thursdays All are due at 11:59 pm D2L</p> |
| <p>Group Project (total 30%)</p> | | |
| <p>30%</p> | <p>Historiographical Research Essay (25%) and Outline (5%)</p> <p>Students will work in self-selected groups of four (4) to produce an Historiographical Research Essay tracing and articulating technical and/or social roots of a current social media platform from each of the eight moments in the communications history timeline studied in the course.</p> <p>Each group will choose one current social media platform (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Tiktok, Instagram, YouTube) and draw on the content of their Reflection Journals for insights and connections chronicled throughout the course to collaboratively develop a 2000-2500 word (8-10 double spaced pages) paper. The purpose of the Historiographical Research Essay is to identify and articulate roots of the chosen social media platform in each of the eight historical communication moments studied in the course, and create a comprehensive narrative based on their insights. Students are also required to do secondary research to position their work in the academic literature and provide 1-2 academic references for each historical moment (total 8-16 references).</p> <p>An historiographical approach will be used throughout the course, and students are given wide latitude to incorporate a variety of viewpoints and perspectives in their Historiographical Research Essay. Students are encouraged to see this paper as an opportunity to share and use their voices, advance their perspectives, and demonstrate skill in historical communications research.</p> <p>Each group is required to submit an Outline (5%) of their project on March 9, in class – printed copy only, NO D2L submission.</p> <p>Further details will be discussed in class and posted on D2L.</p> <p>A printed copy of the group's The Historical Research Paper is due in class the final day of classes, i.e. April 11, 2023 – NO D2L submission of final paper – printed only.</p> <p>Groups formed by January 19, 2023.</p> | <p>Outline due March 9 in class (printed copy)</p> <p>Essay due April 11 in class (printed copy)</p> |

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| | <p><i>“Group members will receive the same grade on assignments; however, the instructor reserves the right to award differential grades based on group peer reviews or information indicating significantly uneven contributions by group members.”</i></p> | |
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Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You do not have to complete all the assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in this course.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit assignments in class or by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox, **EXCEPT the final Historiographical Research Essay, which is to be printed and submitted in the final class on April 11.**

Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recording for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of 5% or a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors.

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course percentage grades will be used for all assignments.

| Grade Point Value | Description | Grade | Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents* | Letter grade % equivalent for calculations* |
|-------------------|--|------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 4.00 | Outstanding performance | A+ | 96 - 100% | 98.0% |
| 4.00 | Excellent performance | A | 90 - 95.99% | 93.0% |
| 3.70 | Approaching excellent performance | A - | 85 - 89.99% | 87.5% |
| 3.30 | Exceeding good performance | B+ | 80 - 84.99% | 82.5% |
| 3.00 | Good performance | B | 75 - 79.99% | 77.5% |
| 2.70 | Approaching good performance | B- | 70 - 74.99% | 72.5% |
| 2.30 | Exceeding satisfactory performance | C+ | 65 - 69.99% | 67.5% |
| 2.00 | Satisfactory performance | C | 60 - 64.99% | 62.5% |
| 1.70 | Approaching satisfactory performance | C- | 55 - 59.99% | 57.5% |
| 1.30 | Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject | D+ | 53 - 54.99% | 54.0% |
| 1.00 | Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject | D | 50 - 52.99% | 51.5% |
| 0.00 | Failure. Did not meet course requirements. | F | 0 - 49.99% | 0% |

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. **In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin.** Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed, or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the *University of Calgary Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferral of term work, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk. For resources on D2L, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/resources-for-students/>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

Schedule of Readings and Assignment Due Dates: (A full schedule of lecture topics and class activities will be provided on D2L)

| Week | Assigned Reading Chapters | Assignments | Due Dates |
|------|---|--|--|
| 1 | <p>January 9-13</p> <p>Assigned Readings:</p> <p>PART ONE: The Media of Early Civilization</p> <p>Ch 1: The Earliest Precursor of Writing</p> <p>Ch 2: Media in Ancient Empires</p> <p>Ch 3: Civilization Without Writing – The Incas and the Quipu</p> <p>Ch 4: The Origins of Writing</p> | <p>Chapter Synopses for Parts 1&2: Ch5-8 due</p> | <p>Pairs formed for Chapter Synopsis, and chapter signup by Jan 12</p> <p>Due Jan 12 at 11:59 pm D2L</p> |
| 2 | <p>January 16-20</p> | | |

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| | Assigned Readings: PART TWO: The Tradition of Western Literacy Ch 5: The Greek Legacy Ch 6: Writing and the Alphabet Effect Ch 7: Writing Restructures Consciousness Ch 8: Communication and Faith in the Middle Ages | | Groups formed for group project by Jan 19 |
| 3 | January 23-27 Review of Parts One and Two | Test #1 (10%) (on Parts 1&2: Ch1-8 inclusive and lecture material) Journal Submission #1 (5%): Entire Reflection Journal and Specified Journal Entry #1 due (for Parts 1&2: Ch1-8) Chapter Synopses for Part 3: Ch10-12 due | Test #1 - Jan 26 (open from 11:00 am Jan 26 to 11:00 am Jan 27) D2L Due Jan 26 at 11:59 pm D2L Due Jan 26 at 11:59 pm D2L |
| 4 | January 30-February 3 Assigned Readings: PART THREE: The Print Revolution Ch 9: Paper and Block Printing – From China to Europe Ch 10: The Invention of Printing Ch 11: Early Modern Literacies Ch 12: Sensationalism and News | Chapter Synopses for Part 4: Ch13-17 due | Due Feb 2 at 11:59 pm D2L |
| 5 | Assigned Readings: PART FOUR: Electricity Creates the Wired World Ch 13: Time, Space and the Telegraph Ch 14: The New Journalism Ch 15: The Telephone Takes Command | Journal Submission #2 (5%): Entire Reflection Journal and Specified Journal Entry #2 due (for Parts 3&4: Ch9-17) | Due Feb 9 at 11:59 pm D2L |

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| | Ch 16: Dream Worlds of Consumption Ch 17: Wireless World | Chapter Synopses for Part 5: Ch18-22 due | Due Feb 9 at 11:59 pm D2L |
| 6 | February 13-17 Assigned Readings: PART FIVE: Image and Sound Ch 18: Early Photojournalism Ch 19: Inscribing Sound Ch 20: The Making of the Phonograph Ch 21: Early Motion Pictures Ch 22: Movies Talk | | |
| 7 | February 20-24 Reading Week – no Classes | | |
| 8 | February 27-March 3 Review and Paper Writing Workshop | Test #2 (10%) (on Parts 3,4,5: Ch9-22 inclusive and lecture material) Chapter Synopses for Part 6: Ch23-28 due | Test #2 – March 2 (open from 11:00 am March 3 to 11:00 am Feb 3) Due March 2 at 11:59 pm D2L |
| 9 | March 6-10 Assigned Readings: PART SIX: Radio Days Ch 23: The Public Voice of Radio Ch 24: Early Radio Ch 25: The Golden Age of Programming Ch 26: Orson Welles' War of the Worlds Broadcast Ch 27: Radio Voices Ch 28: Radio in the Television Age | Journal Submission #3 (5%): Entire Reflection Journal and Specified Journal Entry #3 due (for Parts 5&6: Ch18-28) Outline – for Historiographical Research Essay (5%) due – printed copy only | Due March 9 at 11:59 pm D2L Due in class March 9 – |

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| | | Chapter Synopses for Part 7: Ch29-32 due | Due March 9 at 11:59 pm D2L |
| 10 | <p>March 13-17</p> <p>Assigned Readings:</p> <p>PART SEVEN: TV Times</p> <p>Ch 29: Television Begins Ch 30: The New Languages Ch 31: Making Room for TV Ch 32: From Turmoil to Tranquility Ch 33: Boob Tubes, Fans, and Addicts</p> | Chapter Synopses for Part 8: Ch34-38 due | Due March 16 at 11:59 pm D2L |
| 11 | <p>March 20-24</p> <p>Assigned Readings:</p> <p>PART EIGHT: New Media and Old in the Digital Age</p> <p>Ch 34: How Media Became New Ch 35: Popularizing the Internet Ch 36: The World Wide Web Ch 37: A Cultural History of Web 2.0 Ch 38: Social Media Retweets History</p> | <p>Test #3 (10%) (Parts 6,7,8 - Ch23-38 inclusive and lecture material)</p> <p>Journal Submission #4 (5%): Entire Reflection Journal and Specified Journal Entry #4 due (Parts 7&8 - Ch29-38)</p> | <p>Test #3 – March 23 (open from 11:00 am March 23 to 11:00 am March 24)</p> <p>Due March 23 at 11:59 pm D2L</p> |
| 12 | <p>March 27-31</p> <p>No new Assigned Readings.</p> | | |
| 13 | <p>April 3-7</p> <p>No new Assigned Readings.</p> | | |
| 14 | <p>April 10-14</p> <p>No new Assigned Readings.</p> <p>Last Class April 11, 2023</p> | <p>Historiographical Research Essay (25%) due in class – printed copy only</p> | <p>Due in last class April 11, 2023</p> |