**Study Guide for Final Exam: Intro to Media Studies**

EACH ANSWER SHOULD BE 250-400 WORDS. FIVE OF THE TEN QUESTIONS BELOW WILL BE ON THE FINAL EXAM, AND YOU WILL HAVE TO ANSWER THREE OF THOSE FIVE.

1. Robert Albion thought the concept he formulated, “communication revolution” was awkward but useful. In fact, the concept became politically expedient in ways that he may not have anticipated, especially after WWII. How would you explain the spread and uptake across the world, of a term that responded to the unique situation of a settler colonial government occupying a vast and thinly populated territory?
2. James Carey has observed that while much of the discussion on ‘communication’ focused on questions of transmission and distribution of information, the ritual aspect of communication was usually ignored. Writing in a context (the U.S.) and at a time (the 1980s) when the separation of church and state (known as the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment) was taken for granted by most people, Carey did not explore how this ‘ritual’ aspect of communication could acquire a far greater significance in other countries. In fact, religion became influential in new ways with the spread of media. Discuss.
3. The U.S. media used to be held as an example for the rest of the world to follow. Some of the problems currently attending the United States, e.g., widespread distrust of the media as well as of political parties in general, and escalating social tensions, become more intelligible in light of the way the media industry has developed, together with the ideas promoting its growth. Drawing on class texts and class notes, describe some of the main characteristics of the U.S. media industry as a business, in contrast to other sectors of the economy, and explain how “media” turned from technologies of freedom into tools of division.

1. Norbert Wiener conceived of cybernetics as spanning both humans and technology. Drawing on St. Augustine, he argued that communication could counteract entropy on a limited basis, to limit disorder and increase order. Explain Wiener’s argument and discuss why Communication Studies, driven by Cold War ideology, idealized “communication” as if it could be imagined without “control.”
2. Shoshana Zuboff argues that “surveillance capitalism” is far more dangerous and far less understood than “information capitalism.” Explain her argument, referring both to the historical context of the post-Cold War period, and to the strategies of Big Tech companies.

1. How would you explain the rise of populism in the post-Cold War period, in relation to the growth of mass media. For your answer, you can draw on Fukuyama, Laclau, and any other texts from this class.

1. Islamic Jihad, according to Faisal Devji, reflected not so much the effects of religious fundamentalism as of a global, mass mediated marketplace lacking a governing structure – a lack that Jihad exploited but did not seek to remedy. Discuss Devji’s argument. Draw, in your answer, on Niklas Luhmann’s discussion of how mass media transform the basis of informed choice.
2. Zeynep Tufekci sees similarities in the role of social media from the Arab Spring to the insurgency around former President Trump. Explain her analysis and indicate what measures might be taken to mitigate the negative outcomes she details.

1. David Graeber argues that the rise of “bullshit jobs” responds to the fear of mass leisure and the possibility of popular democracy such as during the 1960s. Against such a tendency, he argues that popular democracy can lead to political happiness. Explain.
2. Michel Foucault witnessing Iran’s mass uprisings, argued that something called political spirituality was taking shape, that was unlike anything the West had experienced for a long time. Explain how the Iranian Revolution was possible in the Shah’s regime, and the significance of ‘political spirituality.’

THESE FIVE SHORT QUESTIONS WILL BE ON THE FINAL EXAM. YOU HAVE TO ANSWER THREE. APPROXIMATELY 200 WORDS EACH.

* 1. In the film ‘Persepolis,’ Marjane Satrapi shows how a critic of the Shah’s regime such as herself still ended up identifying as Iranian, growing up between Europe and Iran. Explain
  2. Blade Runner 2049 dwells on how technological development leads to the blurring of the line between human and machine (“replicant”) although the entire political system is organized around that distinction – replicants have to be kept in their place, made to work and terminated when they are not needed, etc. Discuss the film in relation to its treatment of this central theme.
  3. Cold War-era arguments for a communication revolution have seldom been tested with on-the-ground evidence from the Global South. How does the case of India, with its Hindu nationalist movement, confirm or complicate the kind of argument made by Daniel Lerner for investing in media technologies?
  4. Explain how publicity in Communist societies such as the Soviet Union and China (e.g., Kabakov’s art installation, Mao’s Little Red Book) contrasted with publicity in the United States (e.g., advertising).
  5. In discussing her work for the film *I Am Not Your Negro*, in our class on March 9, Prudence Arndt gave us an example of communication in the United States that had to navigate highly controversial issues of racial tension. Drawing on the film and on class notes, explain how you think the film negotiated those tensions.