

History of Media Studies Newsletter

August 2024

Welcome to the 41th edition of the *History of Media Studies Newsletter*. The monthly email, assembled by Dave Park, Jeff Pooley, and Pete Simonson, maintains a loose affiliation with the new *History of Media Studies* journal and the *Working Group on the History of Media Studies*. Please *contact us* with any questions, suggestions, or items.

1. Working Group on the History of Media Studies

Join us for the next remote session devoted to discussing working papers with authors. Hosted by the *Consortium for History of Science, Technology and Medicine* (CHSTM). Open to anyone interested in the history of the media studies fields. *Instructions to join are here.*

Wednesday, September 18

Wednesday, September 18, 14:00-15:00 UTC (10am-11am EDT)

Reading for discussion:

- Jülide Etem, “Physics Film Experiments in the United States and Turkey, 1956–1978” (working paper)

For the Zoom link and the reading download, visit the *Working Group page*. *Instructions for joining the group are here.* Questions? *Contact us*

2. Conferences, Calls & Announcements

If you have a call or announcement relevant to the history of media studies, please *contact us*.

1. *CFP: Reimagining Canadian Communication Thought*

- Almost 25 years after the publication of Robert Babe's *Canadian Communication Thought*, we propose a special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Communication* devoted to the reassessment of, and perhaps more importantly, reimagining of the intellectual project of "Canadian Communication Thought." This bilingual special issue will gather two types of contributions: 1) full-length research articles (7000-8000 words) that reflect on/problematicize epistemic and ontological features of Canadian communication thought and 2) shorter interventions (2500-3000 words) that offer a synthesis of a certain stream of theory or conceptual work, a "school of thought" or a specific approach that is representative of Canadian communication thought in its diversity.
- **Deadline:** 30 September 2024
- **More details**

2. *Cheiron Young Scholar Award*

- Since 2008, Cheiron has awarded a prize for the best paper or symposium presentation by a young scholar at its yearly conference. Applicants should submit a "slightly edited" version of the paper presented at this summer's conference in at The Cummings Center for the History of Psychology. This may include small changes or additions, but the finished polished paper should not exceed 5000 words (including footnotes). Applicants should use the style required by the *Journal of the History of the Behavioral and Social Sciences (JHBS)*.
- Submissions should be sent to Larry Stern (lstern@collin.edu), Cheiron's Executive Officer. Entries will be judged by members of this year's Program Committee and Cheiron's Review Committee. The winner will receive a certificate from Cheiron and will be encouraged to submit his or her paper to the *Journal of the History of Behavioral Sciences*.
- **Deadline:** 15 September 2024
- **More details**

3. *The Making of the Humanities XI, Lund 2024*

- The eleventh conference in this series on the history of the humanities will be hosted by the Lund Center for the History of Knowledge (LUCK), Lund University, Sweden between 9 and 11 October 2024. The MoH conferences are organized by the Society for the History of the Humanities and bring together scholars and historians interested in the history of a wide variety of

fields, including archaeology, art history, historiography, linguistics, literary studies, media studies, musicology, and philology, tracing these fields from their earliest developments to the modern day.

- Conference dates: 9–11 October 2024
- [More details](#)

3. The Journal

History of Media Studies recently published a special section on “**History of Communication Studies across the Americas**,” which features six articles tracing transnational vectors within and across North and South America. These are preceded by **an introduction** by the editors.

- “Coloniality and Resistance: The Revolutionary Moment in Communication Study in the Anglophone Caribbean,” by Nova Gordon-Bell
- “Elizabeth Fox: Intellectual Biography and History of a Field of Study,” by Yamila Hiram and Santiago Gándara
- “Borderline Cases: Crossing Borders in Canadian Communication Studies, 1960s-1980s,” by Michael Darroch
- “Notes for Historicizing the Disintegrated Internationalization of Communication Studies in Latin America,” by Raúl Fuentes-Navarro
- “‘Western Communication’: Eurocentrism and Modernity: Marks of the Predominant Theories in the Field,” by Erick R. Torrico Villanueva
- “Media, Intellectual, and Cultural Imperialism Today,” by Afonso Albuquerque

The **special section** is based on a 2022 **workshop** organized in cooperation with two leading Latin American journals, *MATRIZES* and *Comunicación y Sociedad*. We are honored to publish our special section alongside parallel sections from *MATRIZES* and *Comunicación y Sociedad*.

HMS encourages **submissions** (**en español**) on the history of research, education, and reflective knowledge about media and communication—as expressed through academic institutions; through commercial, governmental, and non-governmental organizations; and through “alter-traditions” of thought and practice often excluded from the academic mainstream.

4. New Publications

Works listed here are newly published, or new to the *bibliography*.

The *History of Communication Research Bibliography* is a project of the *Annenberg School for Communication Library Archives* (ASCLA) at the University of Pennsylvania.

1. Benson, Rodney, and Andrea Press. "Remembering Todd Gitlin: His Life and Legacy." *The Communication Review* 27, no. 2 (2024): 117--18.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2024.2353508>.

ABSTRACT: [first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] This special section, "Remembering Todd Gitlin: His Life and Legacy," honors Gitlin's contributions to the sociology of media, and media and communication studies writ large, as a scholar, public intellectual and writer, activist, teacher, mentor, and colleague. This special section builds on the presentations delivered at a packed memorial session held at the 2023 International Communication Association conference held in Toronto, cosponsored with the ICA Divisions of Philosophy, Theory, and Critique; Communication History; and Media Industries. The contributors to this section, who represent several generations of students, colleagues, and sympathetic scholars inspired by his writings and his life, comment on Gitlin's importance for their own work as well as for the academy and the broader public debate.

2. Benson, Rodney. "Todd Gitlin and the Exemplary Intellectual Life." *The Communication Review* 27, no. 2 (2024): 131--34.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2024.2344349>.

ABSTRACT: [first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] Beyond his written words, I first encountered Todd Gitlin as a voice on the telephone. He was calling me in the spring of 1992 to tell me that I had been accepted to the UC Berkeley Sociology PhD program. It was a call that changed my life. I don't remember exactly what he said, but I can still vividly hear in my mind his distinctive voice. Todd's writing powerfully resonated with my previous experience working in Washington, DC, as a speechwriter in the US House and Senate. I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the process of political meaning-making I had participated in. So, in the fall, I moved to Berkeley to study with Todd. I didn't realize at the time that I would be one of his last Berkeley students, and that after 1994 he would be

advising me from New York. Despite the physical distance, we kept in touch (he remained a member of my dissertation committee). After a decade, we ended up in the same city, where I was privileged to call Todd a colleague, as we served on several Columbia dissertation committees together.

3. Birdsall, Carolyn, and Viktoria Tkaczyk. "Hörspiel in the Lab: The Politics of Interdisciplinary Radio Research in Germany (1928--45)." *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media* 22, no. 1 (2024): 7--29. https://doi.org/10.1386/rjao_00088_1.

ABSTRACT: This article focuses on the establishment of new laboratories for radio research in Germany between 1928 and 1945, whereby the new discipline of radio studies and the collective work of artists, engineers and humanities scholars crucially advanced the development of the German Hörspiel (radio play). In turn, the embedding of the Hörspiel in these new 'radio labs' serves as an instructive prism for understanding the interdisciplinary and simultaneously highly political nature of these endeavours. Examining three case studies for radio research in this period, in Berlin, Leipzig and Freiburg, the article demonstrates how each adapted the laboratory culture of the engineering sciences to the needs of research in the humanities and their relationship to changing political conditions during the Weimar and National Socialist periods. It highlights a forgotten chapter in radio history and humanities research, particularly amidst the current enthusiasm for 'humanities labs' in the era of digital humanities.

4. Capener, David. "Bernard Stiegler and Urban Space." *Mediapolis: A Journal of Cities and Culture* 9, no. 1 (2024). <https://www.mediapolisjournal.com/2024/04/bernard-stiegler/>.

ABSTRACT: In this contribution to our Reading and Resource Lists series, David Capener introduces a selection of texts by the philosopher Bernard Stiegler.

5. Chen, Kaiping, Yingdan Lu, and Yiming Wang. "Unraveling China's Digital Traces: Evaluating Communication Scholarship through a Sociotechnical Lens." *Chinese Journal of Communication* 17, no. 2 (2024): 127--50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2023.2264406>.

ABSTRACT: In the growing trend of research using digital trace data to study human activities and opinions across different contexts, networked China has emerged as a prominent area of interest. However, research that critically examines the use, strengths, and weaknesses of existing digital trace methods, and the extent to which they can reveal the true landscape of digital China remains limited. To address these gaps, this study proposes a framework for examining and evaluating the knowledge production of digital trace research within a sociotechnical system comprising state actors, platform governance, digital civil society, and international forces. We then provide the first empirical

examination of the knowledge claims and epistemic approaches used in digital trace communication scholarship that has studied China across different phases in the past 30 years. Grounded in the resulting empirical evidence, we discuss two common practices in existing digital trace research on China, how these approaches and perspectives could affect the validity and reliability of offering diverse viewpoints for studying and understanding digital China, and directions for improving these practices.

6. Crothers, Charles. "The Postwar Columbia Tradition in Sociology: Its Cognitive Commonalities and Social Mechanisms." *Journal of Classical Sociology* 24, no. 3 (2024): 243--71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468795X241239297>.

ABSTRACT: *For a period of some three decades (1940s--1970s) the faculty and graduate students at the Department of Sociology at Columbia University, and its associated research unit (the Bureau of Applied Social Research: BASR), successfully produced a stream of innovative sociological studies which was particularly important in building on the foundations of classical sociology to establish modern sociology. Modern Sociology was produced as a theoretically sophisticated scientific enterprise firmly based on a solid empirical foundation produced by appropriate social research methods (as master-minded by Paul F. Lazarsfeld). The 'Columbia Tradition' is an approach, rather than being focussed on any particular subject matter, involved the development of 'middle-range theory', often broken-out from classic theory (as propounded by Robert K. Merton), and backed up by efforts at knowledge cumulation and institution building. But the School included a glittering array of important sociologists and hosts of others who extended the work of the two leaders, developing it in further directions, as is expected of any school. This school was sustained by the vision of a developing scientific sociology propounded by its founders, but it faltered as its founders retired from active leadership roles, in addition to being impacted by changes in Columbia University and broader Sociology environments.*

7. Delcey, Thomas, and Guillaume Noblet. "The Making of Informational Efficiency: Information Policy and Theory in Interwar Agricultural Economics." *History of Political Economy* 56, no. 4 (2024): 685--711. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00182702-11242749>.

ABSTRACT: *This article offers a historical analysis of American interwar agricultural economists and their interest in information. Believing that the main problem facing farmers was a lack of information, agricultural economists designed an information policy aiming to produce, format, and disseminate information. Using administrative archives, the article analyzes the motivations of these economists and the implementation of this policy. As the article shows, the*

policy was a prerequisite for theoretical discussions about information, and it established institutional tools that are still used today, such as the USDA market news service.

8. Dhona, Holy Rafika. "Islamic Communication as an Invention of Modern-Western Knowledge: Critical Analysis toward Islamic Communication in Indonesia." *Asian Journal of Communication* 34, no. 3 (2024): 381--98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2024.2320902>.

ABSTRACT: *This article questions the idea that Islamic communication is rooted purely in the religion itself. By studying the field of Islamic communication studies in Indonesia, it analyzes discourses which produce knowledge of Islamic communication. Foucauldian archaeological method is employed to examine literatures, textbooks, and other sources which form regulated statements about Islamic communication tradition in Indonesia, developed by both public university scholars and Islamic scholars in the nation. The author argues that Islamic communication traditions in Indonesia are the product of modern developmentalism discourse which dominated in the New Order era (1966-1998). As a consequence, Islamic communication tradition in Indonesia is currently unable to provide an alternative perspective in much broader communication studies. This article proposes revisiting the history of Islamic communication within certain local contexts and use of the Islamic discourse as a criticism toward every kind of domination, including the domination of knowledge termed Islamic.*

9. Douglas, Susan J. "How The Whole World Is Watching Made Us Think about the News More Critically." *The Communication Review* 27, no. 2 (2024): 123--26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2024.2354646>.

ABSTRACT: *[first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] On February 7, 2022, many of us got an awful gut punch: we learned that the activist, writer, and scholar Todd Gitlin had died. The memorials and encomia poured forth, reminding readers that he was elected president of Students for a Democratic Society in 1962 when he was only twenty; that in 1965 he helped organize the first national demonstration against the war in Vietnam as well as against apartheid in South Africa; that, much more recently, he organized writers and activists to oppose Republicans' efforts to subvert free and fair elections. And so much more. What I'd like to commemorate about him, is that he absolutely revolutionized how many of us thought about (and then taught about) the impact of the mainstream media, especially on progressive social movements. The crucial text here is his pathbreaking fourth book, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Gitlin, 1980). In the 1950s and 1960s, there were, in the academy, two dominant conceptions of the media. One was that nearly all of it was so vapid, banal, crass, and evanescent, that studying anything*

in the media was ridiculous, beneath contempt. The other was that, compared to the personal influence people had on each other's values, attitudes, and behaviors, the media had only limited effects. In his Molotov cocktail of an essay, "Media Sociology: The Dominant Paradigm" (Gitlin, 1978), Todd eviscerated the "limited effects" school, charging that it ignored "the power of the media to define normal and abnormal social and political activity, to say what is politically real and legitimate and what is not; to justify the two-party political system;" to endorse "certain political agendas [and to] exclude others; and to shape the images of opposition movements."

10. Fuller, Max. "A Socially Responsible Trade: An Analysis of Ethical Discourse in Editor & Publisher, 1930--1934." *American Journalism* 41, no. 2 (2024): 231-53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08821127.2024.2340677>.

ABSTRACT: *In the 1930s, the pages of Editor & Publisher were filled with nuanced stories revealing the many ethical challenges facing journalism amid the economic woes of the Great Depression, increased public scrutiny over news, and the influence of New Deal policies on journalistic practices in the US. Industry insiders discussed everything from how to best report criminal activities and sports to how to best write about the nation's economic plight all while keeping the public's interest in mind. Analysis of 265 E&P issues, published between 1930 and 1934, found that reporters of the day were highly concerned about ethics in the professional practice of journalism during a time when the newspaper industry faced challenges such as outside scrutiny, governmental critique, and diminished public support. It will be argued that these ethical conversations among journalists promoted functions of a press system outlined by the Social Responsibility Theory of the Press more than a decade before its adoption by the Hutchins Commission in 1947.*

11. Henson, Bryce. "Unruly Traditions of Critical/Cultural Studies." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (2024): 198--208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2024.2343872>.

ABSTRACT: *Much of critical/cultural studies in communication has fallen into a comfortable disciplinarity. This is due in part to its reliance on media studies and the "encoding/decoding" model. This essay renews calls for a more expansive, transgressive, and unruly critical/ cultural studies that tackles the complexities of culture, contexts, effects, and power. It focuses on three key points. The first is expanding critical/cultural studies beyond Euroamerican traditions. The next turns to modes of being and consciousness beyond Western history and culture. The final point emphasizes exercising our political imaginations in service of radical world-building.*

12. Madenga, Florence Zivaishe. "The Whole World Is Still Watching: Critical and Personal Reflections on/from Todd Gitlin." *The Communication Review* 27, no. 2 (2024): 141--45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2024.2338645>.

ABSTRACT: *[first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] I never met with Todd Gitlin in person. The timing was never right. I first became familiar with his work as an undergraduate student at New York University, deciding if I wanted to be a practicing journalist or a scholar who wrote about practicing journalists. After a few years of freelance writing, I applied to the PhD program at Columbia School of Journalism, where Todd invited me to sit in one of his courses. I instead ended up in a different doctoral program in communication because I fell in love with Philadelphia and was sick of New York. When, as a graduate student, I emailed him to inquire if he could be the subject of a project about news framing, we entered a global pandemic and could only communicate through Zoom screens, e-mails and phone calls. I called Todd in the early months of 2020. The term "fake news" had been at the core of (then) President Donald Trump's attack on mainstream media. It initially seemed like there wasn't much journalism scholars could and/or would do about it. Throughout the Trump presidency, Todd was one of various journalism professors, academics and practitioners speaking out against the administration's attacks on mainstream media as well as its role in spreading misinformation. In April 2020, Todd, with other colleagues, published open letters and circulated petitions urging both liberal and right wing news outlets to base the information they were disseminating to the public on facts and decency, and to stop airing unedited, live White House Task Force briefings. Todd's evolving perspective on news framing, how we know what we know, and how to continue critiquing not just conservative but left-wing movements still has much to teach us about the state of communication scholarship and activism today.*

13. Montenegro, Vicente. "Stuart Hall and the Introduction of Althusser in Cultural Studies: A Thinker of Difference." *Theory, Culture & Society* 41, no. 3 (2024): 105--22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764231203183>.

ABSTRACT: *This article focuses on Stuart Hall's reading of Louis Althusser's main theoretical works. Since the early 1970s, Hall has undertaken a critical confrontation with Althusser's 'structural Marxism', rescuing those useful concepts to think cultural difference and identity, without failing to criticize his 'superstructuralist' interpretation of Marx. However, what Hall will retain as Althusser's most important contribution is, above all, his theory of ideology. In this context, I follow an idea formulated by Hall that could be read as summarizing the theoretical and political scope of Althusser's contribution to Cultural Studies: 'he enabled me to live in and with difference'. By complicating classical*

interpretations schemes in the Marxist tradition, Hall's Althusser may be read as a 'thinker of difference' who opens up a whole research program to reconsider class conflicts as traversed (or 'overdetermined') by gender, racial or colonial conflicts.

14. Nadal, Lluís de. "Gitlin's Lessons for Effective Activism." *The Communication Review* 27, no. 2 (2024): 135--40.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2024.2344350>.

ABSTRACT: *[first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] I had the privilege of being one of Todd Gitlin's last doctoral students. Over nearly eight years, we shared countless hours in one-on-one meetings, first in his office in the basement of Pulitzer Hall at Columbia University and later via Skype during my fieldwork. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the progress of my dissertation. Yet, more often than not, we found ourselves drifting into his activist years during the sixties, the political issues of the day, and the challenges facing left-wing politics. But even if not always directly related to my academic work, these conversations still found their way into my dissertation and beyond. In fact, few things have had as big an influence on my academic and personal life as our meetings, not least our spontaneous digressions along with the sharp insights he offered and the probing questions he posed. Since Michael Schudson will be speaking to Todd's legacy as a teacher and a mentor, I will not dwell on the privilege of being his student. The memories from fellow students Michael will share could have come from any of us, though perhaps not expressed quite as eloquently. My focus, instead, will be on Todd's insights into a key question in my dissertation: the challenges faced by social movements as they strive to balance expressive action, driven by deeply held values or moral principles, and strategic action, focused on achieving tangible results. With the rise of the internet, there was hope that these two conflicting aspects of activism could be more readily reconciled. The expectation was that digital platforms would facilitate the creation of horizontal organizational structures within social movements, reflecting their participatory values, while also helping them achieve real-world impact.*

15. O'Gorman, Ned. "How Liberals Lost the Public: Walter Lippmann, John Dewey, and the Critique of 'Traditional Democratic Theory.'" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 110, no. 3 (2024): 419--41.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2024.2319119>.

ABSTRACT: *Since the 1990s, rhetorical and communication studies have taken a strong turn toward multiplicity in public scholarship. This turn has generally been understood as representing both a political and theoretical advancement. Yet, in an age of hyperpolarization and social fragmentation it may be time to at least note the ironies entailed in rhetorical theory's multiplying publics and ask what might be lost in the gains. The great irony, I argue, is that multiplicity has been the dominant liberal commitment in the United States for over a century now, and an*

important precondition for the advent of neoliberalism as a discrete political-economic ideology. As I detail in this historical study, in the 1920s and 1930s a severe critique of “the public” would take hold of U.S. elites under the auspices of liberalism. Two central figures in this repudiation were Walter Lippmann and John Dewey. In this article, I offer a detailed historical study of the Lippmann-Dewey critique of “the public” to query what is undercut in the turn toward multiplicity in public scholarship, then and now.

16. Press, Andrea. “Remembering Todd Gitlin as PhD Advisor and Mentor.” *The Communication Review* 27, no. 2 (2024): 127--30.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2024.2338646>.

ABSTRACT: [first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] I met Todd in his first year at UC Berkeley, when he started as an assistant professor of sociology and mass communication -- the new program he started -- so many years ago that I almost don't want to reveal the year. As a second-year graduate student, I had not yet honed in on a dissertation topic, nor an emphasis. Then, enter Todd. There was generalized excitement amongst the graduate students when Todd Gitlin joined the faculty at Berkeley, which to my recollection happened in the fall of 1979, when I believe he had just finished his dissertation working with William Kornhauser. That moment inaugurated what was then a new field of study for us pedestrian sociology students. We had not had media or culture as an area of sociology, there was no “sociology of culture” subsection, it was not yet an actual field within sociology. Todd's students were passionate media fans, as was I, and we had a weekly group to discuss media and readings about it (and to make each other dinner). That year our group took Todd to a Bruce Springsteen concert, which was quite an event. I remember that when joints were passed Todd refused to smoke, which was so remarkable -- no one refused to smoke at that cultural moment, so it was odd. And I remember thinking, “OK, he's going to be president someday,” or something. He just seemed to know something the rest of us didn't, but that was always true.

17. Schudson, Michael. “Remembering Todd Gitlin as Teacher.” *The Communication Review* 27, no. 2 (2024): 146--47.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2024.2338647>.

ABSTRACT: [first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] A few days before Todd Gitlin died, I taught a session of his class, the “dissertation seminar” that he had taught every year since at least 2009 when I became a full-time professor at Columbia. Richard John and Andie Tucher coordinated the class (this was spring semester, 2022) and called on many of our PhD graduates to come in and discuss life as a doctoral student at Columbia. For the session I taught, I assigned “On Intellectual Craftsmanship,” C. Wright Mills' (1999) celebrated appendix to *The Sociological Imagination*, as well as Todd's own afterword to the 1999 re-issued volume. There

Todd wrote that Mills was “a restless, engaged, engaging moralist, asking the big questions, keeping open the sense of what an intellectual's life might be.” That could have been an epitaph for Todd himself and the role he played in the PhD program.

18. Towns, Armond R. “Communication Hesitant': An Introduction.” *Communication and Race* 1, no. 1 (2024): 1--11.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/28346955.2024.2308864>.

ABSTRACT: [first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] *Communication and Race* is a journal associated with the National Communication Association, one of the discipline's oldest professional organizations. In terms of the history of the NCA, the study of race has been largely neglected; it would not be until the late-twentieth century that studies of race would begin to increase in communication studies.¹ *Communication and Race* builds off this increase with the understanding that there is more work to do: the 2024 publication of this new journal is a response to a call long made by scholars of color for a more critical trajectory on the study of race in the discipline. As inaugural editor, and a member of the committee that wrote the proposal for the establishment of this new journal, I concur with these calls, while seeking to go further than where we are in the study of race thus far. In other words, the founding impulse for *Communication and Race*, at least for me, comes from what I call my own hesitation with accepting the direction of contemporary communication studies of race. To move forward, then, I propose a momentary look backward.

Thanks for reading! The History of Media Studies Newsletter, a monthly email assembled by Dave Park, Jeff Pooley, and Pete Simonson, maintains a loose affiliation with the *History of Media Studies* journal and the **Working Group on the History of Media Studies**. Please **contact us** with any questions, suggestions, or items.

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