This seminar is designed to introduce graduate students in Comm Studies and related fields such as Information, Business, Political Science, Sociology, Economics, Public Policy and Law to an institutional perspective in the study of mass communication. There is a traditional division in the study of communication between the historical/qualitative and the behavioral perspectives. This seminar bridges that division in an interesting way -- by exploring the historically grounded study of the behavior of institutions. Since institutions don’t adapt well to participating in experiments and surveys, we fall back on case studies and the systematic analysis of institutional outputs under different conditions. Since different conditions exist under the policy regimes of different nation states, much of this work draws on international comparative research. Other work draws on the before-and-after analysis of an institutional or regulatory change within a particular national context.

It is often said that the opportune time to study behavior is at times of crisis -- to examine the behavioral response to particularly strong stimuli. Well, you’ve come to the study of media institutions in an era of dramatic change and reorganization, so your timing is excellent. The source of the institutional revolution in communications media is not the triumph of some new idea about how to organize the public sphere (wouldn’t that have been interesting?) No, it is the largely unwelcome (by the established industries) pressure of digital convergence that forces existing industrial sectors to compete among themselves and with each other in new ways.

The mass media institutions of the modern industrial West are largely privately owned. So much of what we’ll review is the complex and evolving dance between public regulators who may or may not have the public interest in mind and private profit-maximizing businesses. Getting a feel for the world-view and rarified jargon of the prominent media industries will be one of our goals. In that vein we’ll review one of the industry trades on a weekly basis, probably Broadcasting and Cable, and discuss how the latest developments are playing in the corporate boardrooms.
The academic reading assignments are relatively burdensome, running at a book (or equivalent) a week. But I think you’ll find it a good exercise to learn to extract the key insights from a book even when you don’t have time to read and study every page.

The seminar is organized around a term paper due the last day of class. Topics will likely vary widely in response to student interests. Students will be asked to prepare a brief topic description for discussion with the instructor the third or fourth week of class.
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<th>Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 9</td>
<td>Introductory Lecture &amp; Discussion</td>
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<td>Dates</td>
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<td>Mar 19</td>
<td>Looking at the Case Studies</td>
<td>web.si.umich.edu/tprc/archive-search.cfm</td>
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<td>(look over the recent titles and search on topics of interest in the archives)</td>
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## Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

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<th>Dates</th>
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