

Radio's Golden Age

The genres, the programs, the people, and the impact

Purpose: The purpose of this seminar is to explore the variety and impact of America's first electronic mass medium, radio, during its Golden Age, from about 1920 through 1950.

Moderator:	Neil Novik
Co-moderator:	Tyll van Geel
Date and Time:	Tuesday afternoon, 1:30-3:30 10 weeks, starting September 25
Format:	Seminar
Location:	Smith College, Dewey Hall Common

Description: In the early 1920's, a mere twenty years after its invention, radio exploded into the most dominant form of entertainment and mass communication the world had ever seen. The next 25-30 years, until about 1950, were known as the Golden Age of Radio, and would forever change the way Americans were entertained, informed and inspired. Through readings, discussion, listening to excerpts of the programs themselves, and perhaps even some reminiscing, this seminar will consider the most important genres of the Golden Age of Radio, such as comedy, westerns, sports, drama, suspense, mystery, public affairs, science fiction and more. Each session of the seminar will be devoted to a specific genre, and two shows representing that genre will be considered. Our focus will be not only on the shows and the performers, writers and producers behind radio's meteoric rise, but also the impact that the Golden Age of Radio had on American life during that era and beyond.

Role of participants: Each participant will play an excerpt from a radio show representative of a major genre of Golden Age radio, provide a brief commentary (10 minutes) about the show including format, stars, etc., to be followed by a discussion, led by the presenter, of the show's significance and impact.

Resources: Optional books: *On the Air*, John Dunning; *The Great American Broadcast*, Leonard Maltin. These books and others are available at libraries and as used books. The moderators may also distribute copies of readings to augment the discussions. Much more information, as well as recordings of old-time radio shows, can also be found on the internet.

About the Moderators: Neil Novik has been in 5CLIR for four years, and has moderated several seminars, including one on the history of radio. Tyll van Geel is a listener of old-time radio when originally broadcast (especially the Lone Ranger), a 10-year member of 5CLIR, and the moderator of a number of seminars.

Maximum number of participants: 18

Auditors accepted: yes, up to 2

Course # 18FRA