WINTER 2017 MMJC 9200G

DOING DEMOCRACY RIGHT
OR
DOING RIGHT BY DEMOCRACY:
ETHICS, CRITICAL THEORY AND THE PUBLIC RIGHT TO KNOW

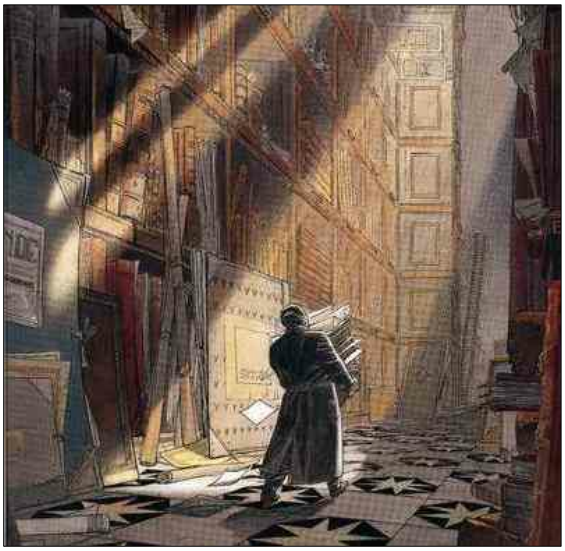
PROFESSOR: Tim Blackmore
OFFICE: FNB 4019
OFFICE HOURS (THEY'RE OPEN!): Monday 1:30-2:30
Wednesday 1:00-3:00 p.m.
EMAIL: tblackmo@uwo.ca (best way to get me, or come to office hours)

ABOUT THIS COURSE

Using theoretical frameworks borrowed from ethics, cultural studies and political economy, this course explores concepts of democracy and responsibility in story-telling practices and products. Because both journalists and communicators must gather, evaluate and disseminate information vital to a functioning democracy, it is essential that both groups understand what it means to operate in the public sphere. (FIMS web)

The central idea of this course is that we all consider together how information is proposed, created, remade, framed, mediated, abused, interpreted and recast. If you, as an information handler, interpreter and provider, are familiar with a variety of ways in which information can be formed and reformed, then you will be equipped to problem solve as flexibly as one can be—whether the problem is to persuade, coerce, communicate without "bias," educate or or or.

While this course examines different approaches to data, intelligence and story, it is your voice I am most concerned comes through with strength and persuasion. Some of these thinkers will help you, some may initially be puzzling but make sense later, but all are kindling for your own ideas and views. It's your voice, your take, your politics that is the most formative (and informative) for us as a class. Throughout I will support your voice, your ideas as they take shape while we work together.



Art by Schuiten

AND THE CONTEXT

I know that graduate school can be somewhat, er, "busy."[1] With that in mind and knowing that you have other courses and foci, I've kept the readings very light (this isn't hyperbole, or even hyperbole and a half). That means I expect everyone to have done the readings before each class. This is a seminar not a lecture, so it will only work if all of us work.

YOU WILL NEED

Durham, Meenakshi Gigi and Douglas Kellner, *Media and Cultural Studies Keyworks*, 2nd Edition. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. (**Please** not the wrong version of the .pdf)

EVALUATION

4 LOGS: written in your very own loose, informal I-voice style, of about 500 words each. 30%
1 APPLICATION: theory to a text (900 words), discussed briefly in class (more later). 20%
1 DEFINITION: Your choice from a panoply of terms. 300 words. 15%
1 IT'S ALL YOU: 1250 words. 20%
PARTICIPATION: 15%

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Please come and chat! Are you worried that someone will know more than you? Someone will certainly know more than *all of us,* surely! Why bother being here if it isn't to figure this stuff out with some other interested people? So relax, this isn't a competition. Participation runs like this: **80%:** thoughtful commentary, discussion, picking up on and pushing ideas to interesting destinations, lots of attendance; **70%:** moderate discussion, good attendance; **60%**: some discussion, steady attendance; **50%**: attendance; **F: Who are you?** (I've seen it happen.)

ELECTRONICS POLICY

Please turn your phones off during class. It's rude for everyone to get your phone call. Laptops—mostly going to be on social media, shopping, dating? Err…can it wait until class is over? No? Really? Really really? If you have to take a call, please step out for it. Need to send an email? Just excuse yourself and go do what you need and want to do, but laptop use only for "Hey look at this example on the interwebs" kind of thing. Many thanks.

LATE POLICY, ERRORS POLICY (FOR FORMAL WORK, NOT LOGS)

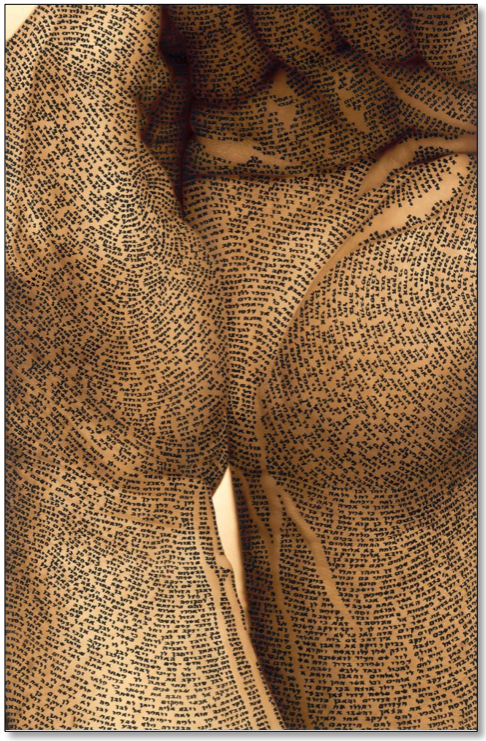
5% per day missed, including weekends. Late papers must be submitted to the MIT office (not under my door), and time stamped. Material received after 4:30 p.m. Friday will be time stamped as Monday and penalized accordingly (10% penalty). The mark keeps dropping until it hits zero. Extension? tell me in writing one week ahead. The best thing to do is just to tell me what the problem is: I'll listen much more sympathetically that way, I promise. Typos, grammar problems, formatting mistakes, each is worth 1% of the mark. **So proof read, right?**

[1] Hectic, absurdly hellish, obscenely hyper—descriptors and mileage may vary by week and stress level.

ABOUT THOSE LOGS…Logs are all about relaxation and thought. I will send out thoughts and ideas, places you might start, use them or toss them, think about the text, then just start writing. Let your writing go for about 500 words (it can be more). Your direction is fine—the log suggestions aren't to be answered or "proven."

A LOG IS NOT AN ESSAY. No formal structure is needed. I don't correct grammar or spelling, although I would like to see clean documents. Get used to rereading the final paper so you've checked it over for spelling and obvious problems.

THE WHOLE THING ABOUT LOGS is not to conserve time or engage in word or sound bites, but to let time out, let the clock wind down, let the language and thoughts flow, let the connections make connections. People often note "I'm on a tangent now," but as far as I'm concerned, in logs there are no tangents. Follow the tangents, and then the tangents that spring from them.



Art by Ronit Bigal

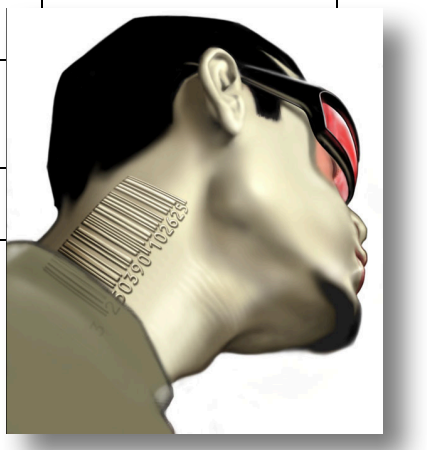
SO NOW YOU'RE GOING TO BE ALL NERVOUS about trying to give me what you think I want; it's such a game to figure out what the professor wants, eh? How tiresome! Let's see if we can avoid that. Remember that the logs will only ever have two readers: you, and me. So you can address me directly, write to me as if you were writing a letter: "Well Tim, I saw ____ and it made me think of____ that reminded me of…."

IN THE LOGS, IT'S YOU. There's no proving anything here. In the logs, you decide what's right and wrong. It doesn't matter what I think about it, or whether I agree. These aren't my logs, they're yours. Instead, it's about you getting out your voice, getting hold of the way you write, the way you think, and then going as deeply as possible with those thoughts, following them to their underground labyrinths.

THE HARDEST THING ABOUT LOGS IS the backspace key. You sit there and start writing, and then look at it, wonder if it's okay, and the deleting begins. But why? Write a couple of pages, be generous! Words are cheap (they say—whoever "they" are). So spend some. Don't look back and don't delete. And if you can't keep your hand off the delete key, then write by hand. Some people love the process of writing with pen on rich paper.

THE LOGS AREN'T INDIVIDUALLY WORTH A GRADE. Somewhere in the term I collect all the logs and grade them. **PLEASE KEEP ALL THOSE LOGS I HAND BACK!** What I'm looking for is not a particular thing—it'll be the whole arc you've drawn from the first logs, which may be tentative and worried, to the last, more comfortably written logs.

WEEK	PLEASE READ…	WHAT'S DUE
1 January 11		
2 January 18 **WHAT PUBLIC?** **FRAMING THE PROBLEM I**	Habermas (75-80), Herman & Chomsky (204-231)	**Rolling start on Theory Application**
3 January 25 **FRAMING II: IS THERE NO HOPE?**	Schiller (231-241)	LOG 1
4 February 1 **TOOLKIT I: SEEING HOW TO SEE**	Barthes (95-100), Debord (107-110)	
5 February 8 **MAPS TO THE STA(I)RS**	Jameson (407-433)	LOG 2
6 February 15 **SURFACE EXISTENCE**	Baudrillard (388-407)	DUELING THEORISTS
READING WEEK (February 20–24) ideal for napping		
7 March 1 **TOOLKIT II: READER POWER**	Hall (137-145), hooks (308-318)	LOG 3
8 March 8 **TOOLKIT III: ALTERNATE MODES**	Mohanty (347-365)	
9 March 15 **GLOBAL INSECURITY**	Appadurai (511-524)	LOG 4
10 March 22 **TOOLKIT IV: OTHER PUBLICS**	Poster (442-452), Sreberny (524-539)	IT'S ALL YOU
11 March 29 **NEW WWWORLD(S)**	Lieverouw (471-491), boyd & Ellison (491-504)	
12 April 5 **TOOLKIT V: USER POWER**	Khan & Kellner (597-613)	
13 CLICK "DONE"		



NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

Academic Accommodation Medical Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or **assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation in the form of a Student Medical Certificate. It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

For **work worth less than 10% of the final grade**, the instructor will consider requests for academic accommodation on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or by appointment in office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may, however, decide to require documentation be submitted to the appropriate Academic Counselling office.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

For Western University policy on accommodation for medical illness, see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Student Medical Certificate (SMC): http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Compassionate Accommodation

Academic accommodation (extensions, makeup tests and exams, additional assignments etc.) may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.) or emergency situations. Documentation is required.

If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Counsellor. If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire or some other exceptional crises, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request. Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation. For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation. Students seeking additional bereavement leave for religious or other reasons should contact their Academic Counsellors, and provide valid documentation.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Academic Calendar. http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo.

FIMS Grading Policy

The MIT program now has the following class average policy:

- ❑ All 1000-level MIT **required** courses (i.e., 1020E; 1025F/G; 1050A/B) will have a class average of between 67 and 72%.
- ❑ All 2000-level MIT **required** courses (i.e. 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) will have a class average of between 70 and 75%.
- ❑ All 3000-level MIT **required** courses (i.e. 3000, 3100) will have a class average of between 72 and 77%. **Elective courses and 4th year seminar courses have no class average requirement.**

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/

SUPPORT SERVICES -- LINKS

Office of the Registrar: www.registrar.uwo.ca
Student Development Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca
Psychological Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych
Services for Students with Disabilities: www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd
Accessibility Information: www.accessibility.uwo.ca/
Writing Support Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing
Learning Skills Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning
Indigenous Services: indigenous.uwo.ca/
International and Exchange Student Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/int
Career Centre at Western: www.success.uwo.ca/careers/

Appendix A: Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)
The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)
The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)
The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

70-74 (Good, B)
The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

60-69 (Competent, C)
The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

50-59 (Marginal, D)
The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)
The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

(http://www.fims.uwo.ca/current/counselling/undergrad-counselling/appeals.htm)

Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

Stages in the Appeals Process:

The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor. For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee. Appeals of final grades must be within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendars. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.
If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:
1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2..if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.
The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.
Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.