The University of Western Ontario
Faculty of Information and Media Studies

Interdisciplinary Foundations of Media Theory

MEDIASTU 9100A 001 GF22 Course Outline – Fall 2022

Thursday, 9:00am – 11:50am, FNB 4110

Instructor: Prof. Tom Streeter, Faculty of Information & Media Studies, FNB 4091, Western University

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Office hours by appointment, in a location adapted to circumstances. By zoom if necessary.

(Click here to go straight to the schedule of readings.)

This course provides an introduction to scholarly theories of media and information, with a focus on *how to read, understand, and use* scholarly theories. It is organized more to help you develop your own capacities to make sense of theories than it is a comprehensive summary of all theories relevant to the field. Because Media Studies MA students are expected to conduct a research project under the supervision of a FIMS faculty member, many of the readings are by FIMS faculty members, and many of the theories discussed will be intended to help you better understand the scholarship of FIMS faculty.

Objectives: By the end of the course, students should be able to identify and use theories relevant to the field, usefully analyze and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of different theoretical approaches, and have a broad familiarity with approaches to scholarship in Media Studies in FIMS.

You'll notice that some of the readings are not the most current; that's on purpose. Scholarship emerges from and is responsible to its past, its historical context. I find it useful and sometimes necessary to read works that are decades old.

What will the class be like? This class is a seminar; I will occasionally lecture a bit, but most of what happens will involve discussion, and students will have some responsibility to help generate and sustain discussion. The current plan is that we'll be wearing masks. We're hoping that things will keep moving in the direction of a more open situation, but the pandemic remains a strange and challenging situation for all of us. It will take some patience, effort, flexibility, and mutual respect all around to make it work. We may have to make mid-course corrections and changes to adjust for unanticipated issues, small or large. But I will do my best to make this a rich, engaging, and rewarding exploration of an important crossroads in the world of ideas, and with a little help from you, I suspect it will work.

Assignments

Assignments will include an essay (20%), guiding class discussions (15%), class participation and weekly reading reactions (20%), and a term paper (45%). (More details are online.)

- **Essay**: In a roughly 1000 word essay, explicate the theory or theories, explicit and implicit, of one or more of the articles in the collection of FIMS faculty scholarship on the recommended reading list (and which is not one you are writing about in Prof. Grzyb's course on methods). Due on or before the date the article is listed on the syllabus. (Sign up before the second class.) 20%

- **Guide a class discussion**: a few times during the semester (the total number will depend on class size), you will guide a class discussion of one, or in a few cases if they are short, two of the required readings during the semester. We will sign up for these early in the semester. 15%
- **Participation and weekly reading reactions**: thoughtful participation in class discussion is an expectation, and to help with that, you will be required to post 8 short reading responses (approx. 250 words) to the discussion board on OWL by midnight the day before the relevant class. (These will not be graded individually, but will contribute to your overall discussion grade.) 20%
- **Term Paper**: All students will write a term paper of approximately 5000 words focused on a particular a theoretical dispute or problem area in a media studies sub-field. The paper will be presented to the class on the last day of class, and the final draft will be due no later than Dec. 16th. 45%

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the FIMS Media Studies MA program, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

Land Acknowledgement

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

Schedule of Readings

Readings should be accessible online via the OWL site. Please let me know in the case of broken links, etc.

Date	Topic	Required Readings	Recommended
Sept. 8	Introduction: what is theory, anyway?	• Jennifer Light, "When Computers were Women," *Technology and Culture* - Volume 40, Number 3, July 1999, pp. 455-483. (Guiding questions: what theories does Light use? What evidence? How does she relate theories to evidence?)	
Sept. 15	Theories of the middle range	• https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle-range_theory_(sociology) • Boudon, Raymond. "What Middle-Range Theories Are." Edited by Jon Clark, Celia Modgil, Sohan Modgil, I. Bernard Cohen, K. E. Duffin, Stuart Strickland, Rivka Feldhay, et al. *Contemporary Sociology* 20, no. 4 (1991): 519–22. https://doi.org/10.2307/2071781. • Quan-Haase, Anabel, and Alyson L. Young. "Uses and Gratifications of Social Media: A Comparison of Facebook and Instant Messaging." Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society 30, no. 5 (October 1, 2010): 350–61.	• Burkell, Jacquelyn; Regan, Priscilla M. (2019), Voter preferences, voter manipulation, voter analytics: policy options for less surveillance and more autonomy, *Internet Policy Review*, ISSN 2197-6775, Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society, Berlin, Vol. 8, Iss. 4, pp. 1-24, http://dx.doi.org/10.14763/2019.4.1438 • Rothbauer, Paulette and Nicole Dalmer. 2018. Reading as a lifeline among aging readers: Findings from a qualitative interview study with older adults. *Library & Information Science* 40 (3-4): 165-172. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2018.08.001

		https://doi.org/10.1177/027046761038 0009.	
Sept. 22	Culture 1	• Berger, Peter L., and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor, 1967. excerpts • Raymond Williams, "Culture is Ordinary," in Gray and McGuigan (eds.), *Studying Culture: An Introductory Reader* (New York: Edward Arnold, 1993), pp. 5-14 [originally published in 1958] • Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 412–54. HarperCollins Publishers. • Coates, Norma. "Teenyboppers, Groupies, and Other Grotesques: Girls and Women and Rock Culture in the 1960s and Early 1970s." *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 15, no. 1 (2003): 65–94. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-1598.2003.tb00115.x.	• Amanda Grzyb "Surviving Memory in Postwar El Salvador", a collaboration: https://www.elsalvadormemory.org/what-we-do, https://www.elsalvadormemory.org/research-and-documentation and https://www.elsalvadormemory.org/norberto-amaya-the-documentary • Smith, Sarah E.K. 2013/2014. Making sense of the 'endless play of signs' in the work of Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge. TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies, 30-31, 219-235.
Sept. 29	Political Economy and Grand Theory	• Hardy, J. (2014). "Introduction" from a *Critical political economy of the media : an introduction* . London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/978020313622 5	• Dyer-Witheford, Nick, "Riot Logistics": http://www.intotheblackbox.com/articoli/riot-logistics/ • Smeltzer, Sandra. "Interrogating Course-Related Public Interest Internships in

		• Chapter 1 of Dyer-Witheford, Nick. *Cyber-Marx: Cycles and Circuits of Struggle in High Technology Capitalism*. 1st Edition edition. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999. • Terranova, Tiziana. "Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Global Economy." *Social Text* 18, no. 2 (2000): 33–57.	Communications." TripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society 13, no. 2 (September 30, 2015): 509–25. https://doi.org/10.31269/triplec.v13i2.621.
Oct. 6	Culture 2	• Stuart Hall, Return of the Repressed, Ch. 3 of *Culture, Society and the Media*, edited by Tony Bennett, et al., Taylor & Francis Group, 1990. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/lib/west/detail.action?docID=242285. • [optional]: Haider, Asad. "Politics Without Guarantees." *The Point Magazine*, August 15, 2021. https://thepointmag.com/politics/politics-without-guarantees/ • Sara Ahmed, "Happy Objects," in Gregg, Melissa, and Gregory J. Seigworth. 2010. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Duke University Press. • Orgad, Shani. "The Sociological Imagination and Media Studies in Neoliberal Times." *Television & New Media* 21, no. 6 (September 1, 2020):	• McKenzie, Pamela J. "Informational Boundary Work in Everyday Life." In Sustainable Digital Communities, edited by Anneli Sundqvist, Gerd Berget, Jan Nolin, and Kjell Ivar Skjerdingstad, 96–103*. Lecture Notes in Computer Science*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-43687-2_8. • Sharon Sliwinski: http://luleabiennial.se/en/journalen/nr-4/an-ode-to-reverie • Hearn, Alison. "Confessions of a Radical Eclectic: Reality Television, Self-Branding, Social Media, and Autonomist Marxism." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 35, no. 4 (October 1, 2011): 313–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/0196859911417438

		635–41. https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476420919687.	
Oct. 13	Race, ethnicity, sexuality, identity	• Stuart Hall, Race the Floating Signifier: https://uwo.kanopy.com/product/stuart-hall-race-floating-signifier • Henderson, Lisa. 2015. "Queers and Class." *Key Words: A Journal of Cultural Materialism*, no. 13: 17–38. • Chakravartty, Paula, Rachel Kuo, Victoria Grubbs, and Charlton McIlwain. "#CommunicationSoWhite*." Journal of Communication* 68, no. 2 (April 1, 2018): 254–66. https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqy003. • Coulthard, Glen Sean*. Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2014. [excerpts]	• Knabe, Susan. "Taking Pictures B(l)Ack: The Work of Tracey Moffatt." In *Reverse Shots: Indigenous Film and Media in an International Context*, edited by Wendy Gay Pearson and Susan Knabe, 81–102. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2014. • Smith, Sarah E.K. and Carla Taunton. 2018. "Unsettling Canadian Heritage: Decolonial Aesthetics in Canadian Video and Performance Art," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 52 (1), 306-341.
Oct. 20	Feminism, gender, situated knowledges	• Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–99. • Judith Butler, excerpts from *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990): vii-34, 142-149.	• Nau, C., Zhang, J., Quan-Haase, A., & Mendes, K. (2022). Vernacular practices in digital feminist activism on twitter: deconstructing affect and emotion in the# MeToo movement. *Feminist Media Studies*, 1-17. PDF: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14680777.2022.2027496

		• Adam, Alison. "A Feminist Critique of Artificial Intelligence." European Journal of Women's Studies 2, no. 3 (August 1, 1995): 355–77. https://doi.org/10.1177/135050689500 200305	
Oct. 27	Media history, media industry studies	• Robinson, Daniel. "Marketing Gum, Making Meanings: Wrigley in North America, 1890–1930." *Enterprise & Society* 5, no. 1 (March 2004): 4–44. https://doi.org/10.1093/es/khh002. • Matt Stahl, "Privilege and Distinction in Production Worlds: Copyright, Collective Bargaining, and Working Conditions in Media Making", In Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks & John T. Caldwell (Eds.) (2009). *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries* (1st ed.) (pp. 54-67). New York: Routledge. • Streeter, Thomas. "The Cable Fable Revisited: Discourse, Policy, and the Making of Cable Television." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 4, no. 2 (1987): 174–200.	• Daniel J. Robinson, "Imperial Tobacco, Market Research, and Canadian Teens, 1960-1988," in Kyle Asquith, ed., *Advertising, Consumer Culture, and Canadian Society* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 53-70 • Comor, Edward. "Harold Innis and the Greek Tradition: An Essay Concerning His Ontological Transformation." University of Toronto Quarterly 89, no. 2 (July 1, 2020): 239–64. https://doi.org/10.3138/utq.89.2.04
Nov. 3	Fall reading week: no class		
Nov. 10	Discourse. Power, and Categories	• Campbell, D. Grant. "The Birth of the New Web: A Foucauldian Reading of the Semantic Web." Cataloging & Classification Quarterly 43, no. 3–4	• Banet-Weiser, Sarah; Alison Hearn. "The Beguiling: Glamour in/as Platformed Cultural Production - 2020." *Social Media + Society*, February 5, 2020.

		(April 30, 2007): 9–20. https://doi.org/10.1300/J104v43n03_01 • Centivany, Alissa. "The Dark History of HathiTrust." Proceedings of the 50th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, January 1, 2017, 1–10. • Adler, Melissa. Cruising the Library: Perversities in the Organization of Knowledge. Fordham University Press, 2017, Introduction https://muse.jhu.edu/book/51030?fbclid=IwAR1aea-tx0I948DcNu6bUHL-ArwUgl4X9oS4pj72-UDqM7zhwRmP4VDFWXs	http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2056305119898779. • McKenzie, Pamela J. "How Do You Solve a Problem like the Whole User? The Construction of Worthy and Problematic Users in Online Discussions of the Public Library." *Journal of the Australian Library and Information Association* 68, no. 4 (October 2, 2019): 371–96. https://doi.org/10.1080/24750158.2019.1670775. • Blackmore, Tim. 2021. "War and Posthumanism." In *War and American Literature*, 330–44. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108654883.027.
Nov. 17	Data, society, and subjectivities	• Redden, Joanna. "Predictive Analytics and Child Welfare: Toward Data Justice." *Canadian Journal of Communication* 45, no. 1 (February 21, 2020). https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2020v45n1a3479 • Stark, Luke. "Algorithmic Psychometrics and the Scalable Subject - Luke Stark, 2018." Social Studies of Science, May 4, 2018. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0306312718772094	• Joanna Redden, Lina Dencik & Harry Warne (2020): Datafied child welfare services: unpacking politics, economics and power, Policy Studies: https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2020.1724928 • "Introduction," Lewis, Jason Edward, Angie Abdilla, Noelani Arista, Kaipulaumakaniolono Baker, Scott Benesiinaabandan, Michelle Brown, Melanie Cheung, et al. "Indigenous Protocol and Artificial Intelligence Position Paper." Monograph. Honolulu, HI: Indigenous Protocol and Artificial Intelligence Working Group and the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research,

		• Rettberg, Jill Walker. "Situated Data Analysis: A New Method for Analysing Encoded Power Relationships in Social Media Platforms and Apps." Humanities and Social Sciences Communications 7, no. 1 (June 17, 2020): 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-0495-3.	2020. https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/986506/.
Nov. 24	Media Materialities 1	• Parks, Lisa. "Field Mapping: What Is the 'Media' of Media Studies?" Television & New Media 21, no. 6 (September 1, 2020): 642–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476420919701. • E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," Past and Present, No. 38, 1967, pp. 56-97 • Michael Buckland (1997), "What is a Document?" *Jnl of the American Society for Information Science* 48 (9): 804-809 10) March 18 • Davis, Jenny L. "Chapter 1: Introduction." In *How Artifacts Afford: The Power and Politics of Everyday Things*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2020.	• Peters, John Durham, Florian Sprenger, and Christina Vagt. *Action at a Distance*. Minneapolis : Lüneburg, Germany: Meson Press, 2020.

| Dec. 1 | Media Materialities 2 | Jonathan Sterne, "The mp3 as cultural artifact," *New Media & Society*, 2006; 8; 825. Leah Lievrouw, Chapter 2 of Gillespie, Tarleton, Boczkowski, Pablo J., and Foot, Kirsten A., eds. *Media Technologies : Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014. Accessed August 22, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central. Introduction to Peters, John Durham. *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media*. 1 edition. Chicago London: University of Chicago Press, 2016. Couldry, Nick. "Recovering Critique in an Age of Datafication." *New Media & Society* 22, no. 7 (July 1, 2020): 1135–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820912536. | |
| Dec. 8 | Paper Presentations | | |

In the unlikely case I use plagiarism detection software: 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).

Useful Links: the registrar's website (http://www.registrar.uwo.ca), and student support and development services can be found here: http://westernusc.ca/services/.

Notes from the Dean's Office: graduate course version F2022

SGPS and Senate regulations require graduate course outlines to include the following information:

Health/Wellness Services

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

Accessible Education Western (AEW)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

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_grad.pdf The following is also useful: https://grad.uwo.ca/administration/regulations/13.html