

MIT 2200G

MAPPING MEDIA THEORY AND CRITICISM

Winter 2023

Lectures: Mondays 2:30 – 4:30, SSC 2050 Synchronous, unless notified otherwise

Tutorials: Synchronous

Instructor Information:

Joanna Redden

(jredden2@uwo.ca)

519-661-2111 x88476

Office Hours: Wednesdays 11 am -12 pm or by appointment

Course Information:

- Lectures are synchronous, unless notified otherwise.
- Participation in Tutorials as outlined by your Teaching Assistant

Course delivery with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Students will be expected to wear triple layer non-medical masks at all times in the classroom as per university policy and public health directives. Students who are unable to wear a mask for medical reasons should seek accommodation through [Accessible Education](#).

Course Description

This course is designed to provide MIT students with a background in the theoretical traditions that inform scholarship in media and cultural studies. These traditions include: critical theory, structuralism, semiotics, post-structuralism, Marxism, medium theory, feminism, critical race studies, queer theory, posthumanism and socio-technical analysis. We will engage key theoretical topics, including the meaning of culture, the nature of language and the sign, ideology, subjectivity, gender, sexuality, race, and the implications of digital technology. Throughout, we will attempt to capture the excitement and commitment of scholars and others engaging these various approaches to understanding culture, media, technology and everyday life.

Course Objectives

This course will:

- Familiarize you with many of the major intellectual developments in the humanities and social sciences of the past century
- Give you the tools to understand the intersection of these ideas with scholarship in media and cultural studies
- Sharpen your skills in reading and thinking critically
- Sharpen your skills in communicating your ideas verbally and in writing
- Encourage you to become an active participant in ongoing theoretical debates

Required Texts:

Readings will be posted on the course website.

Requirements

Midterm take-home examination (30%): A take-home examination is **due on March 6**. The exam will consist of a combination of short answer and essay questions. The midterm take-home examination will be posted a week before it is due.

Three writing assignments (20% each) are **due on Jan. 30, Feb. 17 and March 29**.

1) Writing assignment 1: Annotated bibliography (due Jan. 30)

For this assignment you will be asked to produce an annotated bibliography. An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, book chapters, articles, reviews, etc. Each citation is followed by 150 words that summarize and evaluate the source cited. You will be asked to choose from a range of key concepts or theories and develop an annotated bibliography that includes at least 5 sources that help you understand the theory / concept. Developing a good understanding of a theory or key concept will help you better engage with course content, develop your essay outline and your final essay. Guidelines will be provided in the first week of class and posted in OWL.

2) Writing assignment 2: Essay outline (due Feb. 17, 1,000 words)

The essay outline presents a plan to address one of the essay questions / topics provided in the first week of class. The essay outline must make clear the topic you plan to pursue and include a thesis statement. (A viable thesis statement makes plain what your topic is and your position on it and must be subject to nuanced and extended debate.) A strong essay outline is one that is able to provide a clear overview of what the central argument will be for your final essay and the sub-arguments and evidence you plan to use to support your claims and make your case. Note that it is expected that you will do research for your essay outline. Research into your topic will involve exploring the

scholarly debates surrounding your topic. Guidelines will be provided, via OWL, in the weeks leading up to the assignment due date.

3) Writing assignment 3: Essay (due March 29, 1500 words)

The essay will be produced by choosing from a list of prompts and questions, which will be provided. It should respond to these prompts/questions by presenting a coherent argument that is sustained, narrowed, and well supported by evidence and thereby demonstrates research, engagement, and critical reflection. It is important to be able to locate your arguments, research, and ideas in relation to the debates and previous research that has been done on your topic and area of focus. It is also important to make clear why your research matters. Why is this area of study important? What are the implications of your findings? Ultimately, the goals for the essay are for you to pursue an independent area of research, to conduct that research, to think critically and reflectively about what you find, to develop a coherent argument, and to be able to assess and detail the significance of your findings / observations. Guidelines will be provided in the weeks leading up to the due date for the assignment.

Participation and Attendance at Tutorial (10%): This grade is determined by your faithful attendance at tutorial and the level of your engagement and involvement while in the class. Your T.A. will explain his/her expectations around tutorial participation in your first meeting.

Submission of Assignments: All assignments must be submitted electronically on OWL.

Late penalties of 2% per day will begin for assignments that are submitted after the deadline.

Attendance:

You are expected to attend lectures, to read and watch the required material posted in OWL and to participate in tutorials as outlined by your T.A.

My Role in the course: My role is to make decisions about what we will and will not cover, design the assessments used in the course, supervise the TAs, and deliver the lectures. Please address questions about the design and overall administration of the course directly to me, either over email or in office hours. ***In addition, I am happy to meet with you to discuss course material you are having trouble with.*** Please do not email me about late or missed assignments, grades or extensions; due to the size of this course, these emails must be addressed to your teaching assistant.

The Teaching Assistants' role in the course: In addition to running the tutorials, TAs will handle all marking and issues regarding late or missed assignments. Your TA will also handle concerns about preparing for and writing exams and assignments. In addition, they will help you understand course material and lectures. Finally, they will provide information on using the course website, though the ultimate responsibility for learning to use OWL rests with you. Please address questions about any of these matters directly to your TA. Your TA will explain how best

to reach her/him, and when and where s/he will hold office hours during the first tutorial meeting.

Students will receive graded work worth no less than 15% at least 3 days prior to the deadline for withdrawal without academic penalty. Students can find details about this academic policy here: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/evaluation_undergraduate.pdf. Please note, students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the grades they have received in their courses.

Professionalism and Privacy:

- Western students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course:
- Students are expected to follow online etiquette expectations provided on OWL
- All course materials created by the instructor(s) are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared
- Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission
- Permitted recordings are not to be distributed
- Students may be expected to take an academic integrity pledge before some assessments
- All recorded sessions will remain within the course site or unlisted if streamed

General considerations of online “netiquette” and in person etiquette:

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
- Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings.
- The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment. “Flaming” is never appropriate.
- Be professional and scholarly in all online postings. Cite the ideas of others appropriately. Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

How to be successful in this class:

Students enrolled in this class should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.

1. Invest in a planner or application to keep track of your courses. Populate all your deadlines at the start of the term and schedule time at the start of each week to get **organized and**

manage your time.

2. Make it a weekly habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.
3. Follow weekly checklists created on OWL or create your own to help you stay on track.
4. Take notes as you go through the lesson material. Keeping handwritten notes or even notes on a regular Word document will help you learn more effectively.
5. Connect with others. Try forming a study group and try meeting on a weekly basis for study and peer support.
6. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, contact your instructor(s) and or teaching assistant(s).
7. Reward yourself for successes. It seems easier to motivate ourselves knowing that there is something waiting for us at the end of the task.
8. FIMS Undergraduate Services (fims@uwo.ca) and [Western Student Experience](#) are resources to help students succeed.

Weekly schedule and readings to be posted in OWL.

Schedule at a Glance

* Note that the specific details of each class may change depending on timing and circumstances

Date	Topic
Week 1 (Jan. 9)	Introduction
Week 2 (Jan. 16)	Marx and Media Studies: Key Ideas
Week 3 (Jan. 23)	Mass Culture Debates and the Frankfurt School
Week 4 (Jan.30)	Semiotics
Week 5 (Feb. 6)	Cultural Studies – The Birmingham School
Week 6 (Feb. 13)	Power, Governmentality and Media Studies
Week 7 (Feb. 20)	Reading Week – No Class
Week 8 (Feb. 27)	Online Panel: Using Theory (Asynchronous class – no in person lecture) Tutorials – Prep for Midterm
Week 9 (Mar. 6)	Gender / Sexuality
Week 10 (Mar. 13)	Decolonization

Week 11 (Mar. 20)	Intersectionality
Week 12 (Mar. 27)	Media Technology and Media Ecology
Week 13 (Apr. 3)	Critical Data Studies
Week 14 (Apr. 10)	Course Review: Online / No in person class

NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2023

Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html

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 Turnitin 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.

Accommodation Policies

Academic Accommodation

Students with disabilities work with [Accessible Education \(AE\)](#) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.

Medical Consideration

Students who have medical grounds for academic consideration 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 (for FIMS students this is [Undergraduate Student Services](#)).

Students are required to provided

documentation in the form of a [Student Medical Certificate](#). It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if consideration is warranted.

For work worth less than 10% of the final grade, the instructor will consider requests for academic consideration on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or during office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may 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 consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

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 crisis, 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 should contact their Academic Counsellors with 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 Advisor. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). The gender-based violence and survivor support case managers are located in Thames Hall (3114-3127 office suite.) To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Health and Wellness](#) for a complete list of supports.

SUPPORT SERVICES - LINKS

[FIMS UGSS](#): academic advising; career services

[Psychological Services](#): Information about accessing mental health supports

[Medical Services](#): Student health related services

[Office of the Registrar](#): Financial Information, Timetable, Exam Schedules, Academic Calendar Information

[Academic Support and Engagement](#): Central Academic Supports, including [Writing Centre](#), [Learning Development](#), [Transition and Leadership Supports](#), and [Careers and Experience](#)

[Accessible Education](#): Assessment and recommendations for students with disabilities

[Accessibility Information](#): Information to help support barrier free access, including floor plans, accessible washroom locations, service disruptions etc.

[Indigenous Student Services](#): Includes information about financial support, indigenous self-identification, orientation, and tutor support

[Western International](#): Information and support for international students and students seeking to go on exchange

FIMS Grading Policy

FIMS Undergraduate programs now have the following class average policy:

First year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.

Second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2025, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%. The third year required (MIT 3100) is expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

Elective courses and 4th year seminars have no recommended course averages.

Appendix A: Suggested 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

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 Calendar**. 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.