CPCF1F25: Media and Culture: Texts and Practices

Brock University Department of Communication, Popular Culture and Film

Fall 2014 / Winter 2015

Instructor: Dr. Andrea Zeffiro Email: azeffiro2@Brocku.ca

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00 – 4:00 or by appointment SB 337

Lecture: Tuesday 17:00-20:00 TH247

Seminar: Online

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This introductory interdisciplinary course introduces students to key theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches to the study of communication, popular culture and film. Drawing on approaches from both the social sciences and humanities, students engage in critical analysis of how media texts and images are produced and consumed. A lecture/lab teaching pattern is designed to allow for weekly film screenings (where appropriate) and engagement with other media and popular culture forms. The course employs a blended learning model to involve students in collaborative work in place of seminars.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Students will learn to:

- Identify simple theoretical concepts and methodological approaches in communication, popular culture and film.
- Understand principles of interdisciplinarity and recognize the complementary strengths of social sciences and humanities approaches to media and culture.
- Develop critical thinking and analytical skills in relation to media texts, images and practices.
- Apply basic methods of textual analysis to the study of media content.
- Apply basic methods of social inquiry to the study of production and consumption practices in communication, popular culture and film.
- Develop arguments about, and interpret the meaning of, media texts and practices in their socio-historical contexts.
- Develop written communication skills through essays and research projects on media texts, images and practices.
- Develop on-line communication and collaborative skills through contributions to discussion forums.

COURSE READINGS

Course readings are available via Sakai.

GRADING SCHEME

Fall Term

Sakai Forum Participation	10%
Assignment #1	5%
Assignment #2	10%
Term 1 Final Exam	<u>25%</u>
	50%

Winter Term

Saki Forum Participation	10%
Assignment #3	10%
Assignment #4	10%
Term 2 Final Exam	20%
	50%

SAKAI FORUM PARTICIPATION (20%)

In place of face-to-face seminars, we will be using a discussion forum (see the 'Seminar Forums' tab) on Saki. You will be assigned to a discussion group (see the 'Seminar Forum Groups' tab to find your group) and you will participate in a weekly discussion thread. The discussion thread will center on a series of questions and you will be expected to offer a response (75 word minimum) to the questions and reply to the responses offered by your group members. You will have one week to comment and/or respond. Once the thread closes, you will not be able to participate or receive a mark. No exceptions will be made. Twenty percent of your final grade will be based on your participation in the forums. The key is to participate consistently and thoroughly.

WEEK	START DATE/TIME	END DATE/TIME
Week 2	Wed. Sept. 17 @ 12pm	Mon. Sept. 22 @ 12 pm
Week 3	Wed. Sept. 24 @ 12 pm	Mon. Sept. 29 @ 12 pm
Week 4	Wed. Oct. 1 @ 12 pm	Mon. Oct. 6 @ 12 pm
Week 5	Wed. Oct. 8 @ 9 am	Fri. Oct. 10 @ 11:45 pm
Week 7	Wed. Oct. 22 @ 12 pm	Mon. Oct. 27 @ 12 pm
Week 8	Wed. Oct. 29 @ 12 pm	Mon. Nov. 3 @ 12 pm
Week 9	Wed. Nov. 5 @ 12 pm	Mon. Nov. 10 @ 12pm
Week 10	Wed. Nov. 12 @ 12 pm	Mon. Nov. 17 @ 12 pm
Week 11	Wed. Nov. 19 @ 12 pm	Mon. Nov. 24 @ 12 pm
Week 12	Wed. Nov. 26 @ 12 pm	Mon. Dec. 1 @ 12 pm
Week 15	Wed. Jan. 14 @ 12 pm	Mon. Jan. 19 @ 12 pm
Week 16	Wed. Jan. 21 @ 12 pm	Mon. Jan. 26 @ 12 pm
Week 17	Wed. Jan. 28 @ 12 pm	Mon. Feb. 2 @ 12 pm
Week 18	Wed. Feb. 4 @ 12 pm	Mon. Feb. 9 @ 12 pm
Week 19	Wed. Feb. 11 @ 9 am	Fri. Feb. 13 @ 11:45 pm
Week 21	Wed. Feb. 25 @ 12 pm	Mon. March. 2 @ 12 pm
Week 22	Wed. March 4 @ 12 pm	Mon. March. 9 @ 12 pm
Week 23	Wed. March 11 @ 12 pm	Mon. March 16 @ 12 pm
Week 24	Wed. March 18 @ 12 pm	Mon. March 23 @ 12 pm
Week 25	Wed. March 25 @ 12 pm	Mon. March 30 @ 12 pm

ASSIGNMENTS (35%)

ASSIGNMENT #1 (5%)

DUE: Wednesday, October 1st at 9:00 a.m.

Assignment #1 (350-500 words) will ask you to reflect on the study of culture. Further details will be given in class on Tuesday, September 16th.

ASSIGNMENT #2 (10%)

DUE: Wednesday, October 29th at 9:00 a.m.

Assignment #2 (850 - 1000 words) will ask you to complete a semiotic analysis of a visual (print based) artifact. Further details will be given in class on Tuesday, October 7^{th} .

ASSIGNMENT #3 (10%)

DUE: Wednesday, February 25th at 9:00 a.m.

Assignment #3 (500-750 words) will ask you to reflect on your practices and patterns of media use. Further details will be given in class on Tuesday, February 3rd.

ASSIGNMENT #4 (10%)

DUE: Wednesday, April 1st at 9:00 a.m.

Assignment #4 (1000-1200 words) will ask you to engage in a sequence analysis of a film. Further details will be given in class on Tuesday, March 10th.

EXAMINATIONS (45%)

Part of your evaluation in this course will be based on two written examinations:

- 1. The TERM 1 EXAM (25%) will be written during the final examination period at the end of the fall semester and during the university's final examination period; sometime between Friday, December 5th to Wednesday, December 16th. It will cover material from the entire 1st semester. Further details about the structure and content of the exams will be given later in class.
- 2. The TERM 2 EXAM (20%) will be written during the final examination period at the end of the winter semester and during the university's final examination period; sometime between Thursday, April 9th Wednesday, April 22nd. It will cover material from the entire 2nd semester. Further details about the structure and content of the exams will be given later in class.

COURSE POLICIES

Course Syllabus

The course syllabus (available on Sakai) provides pertinent course information, including official course policies, a schedule of all the required readings for the course, a Saki forum schedule and assignment schedule with firm due dates. It is your responsibility to be aware of the requirements and expectations of the course.

Course Readings

Course material is to be read prior to lecture. Please bring a copy (digital, printed) of the readings to class each week.

Course Assignments

Assignments will be discussed at length during lecture and far in advance of the deadline. Be proactive: understand the assignment requirements and clarify any grey areas with the instructor. Read assignment instructions carefully and ask questions in class or in office hours. If you can't make office hours, please e-mail the instructor to set up a mutually agreeable time.

Assignment Due Dates

Late assignments will receive a grade of zero unless accompanied by appropriate documentation. No exceptions will be made.

Submitting Assignments

Assignments for the course will be submitted through the online submission form on Sakai. Grades and comments will also be available through Sakai. Please allow a two-week turn around for assignment grading.

Grading

This course has 8 grading assistants to facilitate the grading of assignments and exams. Should you have any questions, please contact the instructor to schedule a meeting. Issues or questions concerning grades will not be discussed via email. Remember: One does not start out with a perfect score. Marks are not lost because points are taken off. Grading begins at zero and marks are allotted based on the quality of the assignment.

Class Discussions

The lecture hall and online discussion forums are collaborative spaces of learning. These are spaces where ideas and experiences are shared in confidence. When we enter into dialogue with one another and in these spaces, we will do so with sensitivity and mutual respect. Disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated.

E-mail

When you send e-mail, please identify the course number (CPCF 1F25) in the subject heading and include your full name and student number. If questions concerning course content and/or assignments are too complicated to address via email, you will be asked to set up a meeting either during office hours or at another mutually agreeable time to discuss matters further. Please allow 24 hours for email responses during the week and 72 hours on the weekend.

Cell Phones

Out of respect for the shared learning environment phones are to be kept tucked away during lectures, screenings and discussion periods.

Laptops

If you choose to take notes using a laptop or tablet, it is expected that the device will be used for taking lecture notes and lecture notes only. Checking e-mail and/or social media during lecture is disruptive both to the instructor and to the rest of the class. Challenge yourself to remain focused during lecture. The more active you are – listening, participating, thinking through ideas – the less work you will have to do after class. Out of respect for the shared viewing environment, laptop and tablet screens are to be off during screenings.

FALL 2014 TERM

Tuesday, September 9, 2014.

WEEK 1: WELCOME TO THE COURSE

Read the syllabus and understand the structure of the class and your responsibilities as a student.

Tuesday, September 16, 2014.

WEEK 2: THE STUDY OF CULTURE

Keywords: Culture, Cultural Capital, Taste, Culture as Ordinary, Popular Culture, Commodity Fetishism

O'Brien, S., & Szeman, I. (2004). Introducing Popular Culture. *Popular Culture: A User's Guide* (pp. 1-31). Toronto: Nelson Education.

Blume Malley, S., & Hawkins, A. (2012). Examining Culture as Text. *Engaging Communities:* Writing Ethnographic Research. Retrieved from http://www.engagingcommunities.org/proposing-the-ethnographic-research-project/3a-examining-culture-as-text/

Tuesday, September 23, 2014.

WEEK 3: PUBLIC CULTURE

Keywords: Public Culture, Public Sphere, Counterpublics, Authenticity

Zeffiro, A. (2014). The Street is in Play: A Reading of Banksy's Better Out Than In. *Media Fields Journal*. Retrieved from http://www.mediafieldsjournal.org/the-street-is-in-play/

Tuesday, September 30, 2014.

WEEK 4: IDEOLOGY / HEGEMONY / POWER / DISCOURSE

Keywords: ideology, hegemony, discourse, power

Strinati, Dominic. (2004). Marx and ideology & Gramsci's concept of hegemony. *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, 2nd edition, (pp. 120-121, 153-157). London & New York: Routledge.

Singh, Jakeet. (2014, Aug 26). The ideological roots of Stephen Harper's vendetta against sociology. *The Toronto Start*. Retrieved from http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2014/08/26/the_ideological_roots_of_stephen_harpers_vendetta_against_sociology.html

Den Tandt, Michael. (2014, Aug 25). Harper uses mystery surrounding Sir John Franklin as symbol of Arctic development. *National Post*. Retrieved from http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2014/08/25/michael-den-tandt-harper-uses-mystery-surrounding-sir-john-franklin-as-symbol-of-arctic-development/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter

Tuesday, October 7, 2014.

WEEK 5: VISUAL CULTURE & SEMIOTICS

Keywords: visual culture, sign, signifier, signified, denotation, connotation, myth, polysemy, dominant code, negotiated code, oppositional code.

Storey, J. (2008). Structuralism and Post-structuralism. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 5th edition. (pp. 111-133). Toronto: Pearson.

Recommended:

Rodley, C. (2014, Aug 30). Post-Structuralism Explained with Hipster Beards: Part 1. *Buzzfeed.* Retrieved from http://www.buzzfeed.com/chrisr414d8a71a/post-structuralism-explained-with-hipster-beards-xwfz

Rodley, C. (2014, Aug 31). Post-Structuralism Explained with Hipster Beards 2. *Buzzfeed.* Retrieved from http://www.buzzfeed.com/chrisr414d8a71a/post-structuralism-explained-with-hipster-beards-2-xwfz Tuesday, October 14, 2014.

WEEK 6: FALL READING WEEK

Tuesday, October 21, 2014.

WEEK 7: GLOBALIZATION & MASS CULTURE

Keywords: Globalization, Transnational Corporation, Vertical Integration, Horizontal Integration, Synergy, Mass Culture

During, S. (2005). Thinking Globalisation. *Cultural Studies: A Critical Introduction*. (pp. 81-106). Routledge Press.

Turner, G., and Alexander, C. (2014, Sept 2). Limits to Growth was right. New research shows we're nearing collapse. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/02/limits-to-growth-was-right-new-research-shows-were-nearing-collapse

Tuesday, October 28, 2014.

WEEK 8: SUBCULTURES & COUNTER CULTURES

Keywords: mass culture, subculture, counterculture, bricolage, moral panic, subcultural capital, counterpublic

Hebdige, D. (1979; 2007). Style. In M. Barnard. *Fashion Theory: A Reader* (pp. 256-257). New York: Routledge.

Masters, Marc. (2008, Jan 15). NO!: The Origins of No Wave. *Pitchfork*. Retrieved from http://pitchfork.com/features/articles/6764-no-the-origins-of-no-wave/

Tuesday, November 4, 2014.

WEEK 9: AUDIENCE CULTURES

Keywords: mass audience, inscribed reader, niche audience, hypodermic need model, uses and gratification model, encoding/decoding

Sturken, M., & Cartwright, L. (2009). Viewers Make Meaning. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, 2nd edition. (pp. 45-71). New York. Oxford University Press.

Tuesday, November 11, 2014.

WEEK 10: GENDER & POPULAR CULTURE

Keywords: representation, biological sex, gender, biological essentialism, social construction, gender as performance, gender expression, gender identity, #GamerGate, misogyny

Lewis, H. (2012, July 6). This is what online harassment looks like. *New Statesman*. Retrieved from www.newstatesman.com/blogs/internet/2012/07/what-online-harassment-looks

Liss-Schultz, N. (2014a, May 30). How Sexist is Your Favourite Video Game? *Mother Jones*. Retrieved from http://www.motherjones.com/mixed-media/2014/05/sexist-video-game-film-tv-tropes-anita-sarkeesian

Liss-Schultz, N. (2014b, May 30). This Woman was threatened with rape after calling out sexist video games – Then something inspiring happened. *Mother Jones*. Retrieved from http://www.motherjones.com/media/2014/05/pop-culture-anita-sarkeesian-video-games-sexism-tropes-online-harassement-feminist

Roy, J. (2014, Sept 1). The celebrity nude photo leak is just another form of online harassment of women. *New York Magazine*. Retrieved from http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2014/09/nude-celeb-leak-online-harassment-of-women.html

Tuesday, November 18, 2014.

WEEK 11: RACE & PUBLIC CULTURE

Keywords: real vs symbolic violence, multiculturalism, representation, essentialism vs constructionism, race, ethnicity, racism, white privilege, intersectionality, difference, whiteness, stereotypes, tokenism

Borsa, T. (2014, 25 Aug). While Ferguson mourns Michael Brown, Canada shrugs off Tina Fontaine's death. *Canada.com*. Retrieved from http://o.canada.com/news/michael-brown-tina-fontaine-mmiw-inquiry-504033

Coyne, A. (2014, Aug 25). Problems behind aboriginal murders won't be solved with a public inquiry. *National Post*. Retrieved from http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2014/08/25/andrew-coyne-problems-behind-aboriginal-murders-wont-be-solved-with-a-public-inquiry/

Hugill, D. Once We Become Aware. *Missing Women, Missing News: Covering Crisis in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside*. (pp. 9-23.).Toronto: Fernwood Publishing.

Tuesday, November 25, 2014.

WEEK 12: QUEERING POPULAR CULTURE

Keywords: gender identity, gender expression, transgender, sexual orientation, queer theory, queer positioning, heteronormativity, queer reading, reading against the grain, stereotypes/stereotyping, coming out narratives, reinscription

Raymond, D. (2001). Popular Culture and Queer Representation: A Critical Perspective. In Elyce Rae Helford & McMahon Humez (Eds.), *Gender, Race & Class in Media* (pp. 98-110). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rogers, K. (2014, Feb 19). With Looking, Rule Paul and Modern Family, is LGBT life now mainstream? *The Guardian*. Retrieved from http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2014/feb/19/looking-rupaul-modern-family-lgbt-gay-culture

Tuesday, December 2, 2014.

WEEK 13: WRAP-UP and EXAM REVIEW

WINTER 2015 TERM

Tuesday, January 6, 2015.

WEEK 14: MEDIA LANDSCAPES

Review the syllabus, understand the structure of the second semester and your responsibilities as a student.

Our first class of the term will introduce the second semester, and provide a formal introduction to media and communication studies.

Read/Study:

"World Wide Web Timeline." *PewResearch Internet Project*. 11 March 2014. http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/03/11/world-wide-web-timeline/

"History of Social Media Graph." (2014). Retrieved from http://api.ning.com/files/6vphgOtNu348dEvFTvcCf3bsTjkbvOVVYThMp*mpYKdSmYhotHWr* 2FAScxnLRoWmkWo43wuSP71fz0hZ4SzsW72SoHo3TeZ/10socialMediaTL 05.png

Tuesday, January 13, 2015.

WEEK 15: MEDIA OWNERSHIP AND MONOPOLIES OF KNOWLEDGE

Keywords: political economy, ownership (public/private), invisible hand, horizontal & vertical integration, convergence, monopoly of knowledge

Faguy, S. (2014). *Media Ownership Chart*. Fagstein. Retrieved from http://blog.fagstein.com/media-ownership-chart/

(2014 Oct. 6). Postmedia to Acquire Sun Media's English Language Newspapers and Digital Properties. *Postmedia*. Retrieved from http://www.postmedia.com/2014/10/06/postmedia-to-acquire-sun-medias-english-language-newspapers-and-digital-properties/

Greenslade, Roy. (2014 Oct 7). Canadian newspaper deal will transform its media landscape. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from http://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2014/oct/07/mediabusiness-canada

Tuesday, January 20, 2015.

WEEK 16: TELEVISION AND THE DIGITAL TRANSITION

Keywords: cultural form, golden era, television and space, flow, time shifting, Netflix, addressable audience

Wu, Tim. (2013, Dec. 4). Netflix's War on Mass Culture. *New Republic*. Retrieved from http://www.newrepublic.com/article/115687/netflixs-war-mass-culture

Leonard, Andrew. (2013, Feb. 1). How Netflix is turning viewers into puppets. *Salon*. Retrieved from

http://www.salon.com/2013/02/01/how netflix is turning viewers into puppets/

Thomas, Steve. (2014, Jan. 14). Trends2watchin2014: Streaming Television Revolution. *The Hub*. Retrieved from http://www.swmediagroup.com/trends2watchin2014-television-re-invention-and-original-programming/

Dawes, Terry. (2014 Oct. 3). What The CRTC-Netflix Tussle Says About The Canadian Media Inferiority Complex. *Cantech Letter*. Retrieved from http://www.cantechletter.com/2014/10/crtc-netflix-tussle-says-canadian-media-inferiority-complex/

Tuesday, January 27, 2015.

WEEK 17: SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE POLITICS OF PLATFORMS

Keywords: social media, social network(ing), platform, participation, participatory culture, user-generated content, free labour, commodification

Fuchs, Christian. (2014). "What is a Critical Introduction to Social Media." Social Media: A Critical Introduction. London: Sage. pp. 1-24

Fred Cavazza. (2013). "Social Media Landscape." Retrieved from http://irinachoi.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/social_media_landscape_2013.jpg

Tuesday, February 3, 2015.

WEEK 18: DIGITAL MEDIA IL(LITERACIES)

Keywords: big data, media literacy, digital literacy, transparency, metadata, privacy, Bill C-51

Press, Gill. (2013, Sept. 5). "A Very Short History of Big Data." *Forbes* http://www.forbes.com/sites/gilpress/2013/05/09/a-very-short-history-of-big-data/

The New Yorker. (2013, Dec 16) "Infographic: What You Look Like to a Social Network." The New Yorker. Retrieved from

http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/elements/2013/12/infographic-what-you-look-like-to-a-social-network.html

Resnick, Sarah. (2013, June). "Leave Your Cellphone at Home." n + 1. Retrieved from https://nplusonemag.com/online-only/online-only/leave-your-cellphone-at-home/

Van Buren, Peter. (2014, Jan. 13). "You Can't Opt Out: 10 NSA Myths Debunked." *Truthdig*. Retrieved from

http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/you cant opt out 10 nsa myths debunked 20140113

Tuesday, February 10, 2015.

WEEK 19: TECHNO TRASH

Keywords: planned obsolescence, conspicuous consumption, e-waste, conflict minerals, the cloud, data centers

Glanz, James. (2012, Sept. 22). "Power, Pollution and the Internet." *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/23/technology/data-centers-waste-vast-amounts-of-energy-belying-industry-image.html?ref=technology& r=0

Blum, Andrew. (2013, May 25). "A Dive Into the Digital Deep." *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from

http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304840904577422370903409342

CNN Labs. (2014, March 4). "This is what the Internet actually looks like: The undersea cables wiring the Earth." Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2014/03/04/tech/gallery/internet-undersea-cables/

Trautman, Ted. (2014, April 29). "Excavating the Video-Game Industry's Past." *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/currency/2014/04/atari-video-game-industry-crash-of-1983.html

Phone Story: http://www.phonestory.org/

Tuesday, February 17, 2015.

WEEK 20: WINTER READING WEEK

Tuesday, February 24, 2015.

WEEK 21: An Introduction to Film Studies

Keywords:

Petrie, D., & Boggs, J.M. (2012). The Art of Watching Films. *The Art of Watching Films*, 8th Edition (pp.2-16). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Abrams, N., Bell, I., & Udris, J. (2010). The Language of Film. *Studying Film*, 2nd Edition (pp. 163-192). London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Screening: Rear Window. (1954). Dir: Alfred Hitchcock.

Tuesday, March 3, 2015.

WEEK 22: Classical Hollywood Film

Keywords:

Kuhn, A. (2007). The Classic Narrative System. In P. Cook (Ed.), *The Cinema Book*, 3rd edition (pp. 45-46). London: British Film Institute.

Schatz, T., and Perren, A. (2004). Hollywood. In J. Downing (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Media Studies* (pp. 495-516). London: SAGE Publications.

Screening: It Happened One Night. (1934). Dir: Frank Capra.

Tuesday, March 10, 2015.

WEEK 23: Film Genres

Keywords:

Bordwell, D., & Thompson, K. (2010). Film Genres. *Film Art: An Introduction, 9th Edition* (pp.328-348). New York: McGRaw-Hill.

Screening: *Halloween.* (1978). Dir: John Carpenter.

Tuesday, March 17, 2015.

WEEK 24: Documentary

Keywords:

Giannetti, L., and Leach, J. (2011). Nonfiction Films. *Understanding Movies*, 5th Canadian Edition (pp.283-307). Toronto: Pearson Canada.

Screening: Assorted clips.

Tuesday, March 24, 2015.

WEEK 25: National Cinema

Keywords:

Crofts, S. (2009). Reconceptualizing National Cinema(s). In G. Mast, M. Cohen and L. Braudy (Eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism*, 7th *Edition* (pp.853-864). London: Oxford University Press.

Carrell, S. (2013, April 23). Scottish independence: the essential guide. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from http://www.theguardian.com/politics/scottish-independence-essential-guide

Yes: Scotland's Future in Scotland's Hands - http://www.yesscotland.net/

Screening: Trainspotting. (1996). Danny Boyle.

Tuesday, March 31, 2015.

WEEK 26: WRAP-UP and EXAM REVIEW