COMM 691B, Fall 2022
Instructor: Burcu Baykurt
Tuesday 4-6:45 PM

MEDIA THEORIES

The purpose of this course is to provide a historical and critical framework for the field of media studies. We will start from the history of "mass society" as a concept in social thought and then examine media as institutions, technologies, systems of representation, and cultural objects. We will discuss the links between media, culture, and power from a number of perspectives, including political economy, media effects, cultural studies, racial capitalism, postcolonial studies, and technology studies.

Course Assignments

Attendance & participation (10%)
Your preparation and participation will play crucial roles in the success of this seminar. You are expected to come to class with the required readings in hand, having read the texts for the week and ready to discuss them. Participation will be evaluated on the basis of your presence in, preparation for, and energetic contribution to class discussions.

Weekly Memos (%50)

Weekly memos should be 1-2 double-spaced pages and focus on two things: 1) discussion of an argument or aspect of the readings that you found particularly interesting, and 2) compare/contrast the week's readings. Please post them on our Google Folder on Mondays by 5 pm. (If you're on rotation to present in class, skip that week's class memo).

Class Presentation (10%)

Students will lead seminar discussions each week on a rotating basis. This component of the course is meant to provide you with an opportunity to sharpen your analytical skills, formulate open-ended questions, and practice speaking in front of a group.

As discussion leader, your responsibilities will be:
- o Presenting a brief summary highlighting key arguments in the readings in class
- o Preparing and distributing 6-8 open-ended questions for discussion, to be distributed via email to all seminar participants on Monday by 5 pm
- o Writing and distributing a one-page summary of class discussion by 5pm on the Thursday following the class discussion that you lead

Book Club Presentation (10%)

Students will review and present a recent book in media studies on a rotating basis. The idea is to both introduce a new book to the rest of class and to offer thoughts on the theoretical framing of the book (especially focusing on the role media theory plays in crafting a research project). In addition to a 15-min presentation in class, each student will circulate a 2-page review of the book before class meeting.

Final Paper (20%)

The final paper will be treated as a comps paper and bring together the material into a holistic review. We will collectively work on a list of questions throughout the semester. It should not be more than 20 pages (5000 words) and will be due Dec 13.

Course Outline and Readings

9/6   **Week 1: Introduction**

Lisa Gitelman. 2006. Always Already New Media, History, and the Data of Culture [1-8]

9/13   **Week 2: Mass Society and the Media**

Lang, Kurt, and Gladys Engel Lang. 2009. "Mass Society, Mass Culture, and Mass Communication: The Meaning of Mass." *International Journal of Communication* 3: 998–1024.

Robert Darnton. (2000). "An Early Information Society: News and the Media in the Eighteenth-Century Paris," *American Historical Review* 105: 1-35.

C.Wright Mills. (1956). "The Mass Society." *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford University Press. 298-324.

Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere" in Mukerji and Schudson (eds). *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*. 398-404.

Nancy Fraser. (1990). "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." Social Text. 25/26: 56-80.

Recommended

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso. ["Cultural Roots."]

Jurgen Habermas (1989). The structural transformation of the public sphere. Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press.

Dewey, John. 1927. *The Public and Its Problems*. Chicago: Swallow Press. ["Search for the Great Community."]

Walter Lippmann, *The Phantom Public* (1925).

Warner, M. (2005). *Publics and counterpublics*. New York, NY, Zone Books.

Harold A. Innis. (1949). "The bias of communication." *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*. 457-476.

9/20   **Week 3: Media Influence and Effects**

Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton. (1948). "Mass Communication, Popular Taste, and Organized Social Action." in MCAST. 230-241.

Elihu Katz & Paul F. Lazarsfeld. (1955). Personal influence: The part played by people in the flow of mass communications. Glencoe, Ill: Free Press.
[Selections]

Todd Gitlin. (1978) "Media Sociology: The Dominant Paradigm," *Theory and Society* 6: 205-253.

Bennett, W. Lance, and Jarol B. Manheim. 2006. "The One-Step Flow of Communication." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 608: 213–32.

Elihu Katz and Ruth Katz. 2016. Revisiting the Origin of the Administrative versus Critical Research Debate.

Book Club: Francesca Tripodi. 2022. *The Propagandists' Playbook: How Conservative Elites Manipulate Search and Threaten Democracy*.

Recommended:

Katz, Elihu. 2001. "Lazarsfeld's Map of Media Effects." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 13 (3): 270–79.

Gillespie, Tarleton. 2018. *Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, Content Moderation, and the Hidden Decisions That Shape Social Media*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Chadwick, Andrew. 2017. *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Papacharissi, Zizi. 2015. *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology, and Politics*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

9/27   **Week 4: Ideology and Hegemony**

Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno. (1944) The culture industry: enlightenment as mass deception.

Antonio Gramsci. (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers.

Walter Benjamin. (1936) The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction.

Theodor W. Adorno. 1989 [1967]. "The Culture Industry Reconsidered."

STRONG RECOMMEND: Stuart Hall. 1983. For A Marxism Without Guarantees https://salvage.zone/for-a-marxism-without-guarantees/

Book Club: Melissa Aronczyk and Maria I Espinoza. 2021. *A strategic nature: Public relations and the politics of American environmentalism.*

Recommended

Christian Sandvig. 2015. "The Social Industry." *Social Media + Society*: 1-4.

Sarah Banet-Weiser. 2012. *AuthenticTM: The Politics of Ambivalence in a Brand Culture*. New York: NYU Press.

Tiziana Terranova. 2000. "Free labor: Producing culture for the digital economy." *Social Text* 18(2): 33-58.

10/04   **Week 5: Media and Technology 1**

Marshall McLuhan. 1994 [1964]. *Understanding Media* Cambridge: The MIT Press. Selections.

Sarah Sharma and Rianka Singh. 2022. *Re-understanding Media: Feminist Extensions of Marshall McLuhan*. [Selections]

Bruno Latour. 2005. Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory. [Pages 1-21; 247-262]

Langdon Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor*, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?"

Optional: Hannah Zeavin; Hot and Cool Mothers. *differences* 1 December 2021; 32 (3): 53–84.

Book Club: Hatim El-Hibri. 2021. *Visions of Beirut: The Urban Life of Media Infrastructure.*

10/11 **Week 6: Media and Technology 2**

Raymond Williams. 2003 [1973]. *Television: Technology and Cultural Form.*

Lynn Spigel. 2001. Media homes: Then and now. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, *4*(4), pp.385-411

Michèle Martin. 1991. "The Culture of the Telephone," In:
"Hello, Central?" Gender, Technology, and Culture in the Formation of Telephone Systems (140-150)

Optional: Claude S. Fischer. 1992. "Technology and Modern Life." Pp. 1-21 in *America Calling: A Social History of the Telephone*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Book Club: André Brock, Jr. 2020.Distributed Blackness: African American Cybercultures.

10/18 **Week 7: The Political Economy of Media**

Oscar Gandy (1992). "The political economy approach: A critical challenge," *Journal of Media Economics,* Summer, 23-42.

Janet Wasko (2013). The IAMCR political economy section: A retrospective.
The Political Economy of Communication, (1), 4–8.

Aouragh, Miriyam, and Paula Chakravartty. 2016. "Infrastructures of Empire: Towards a Critical Geopolitics of Media and Information Studies." *Media, Culture & Society* 38 (4): 559–75. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443716643007.

Nicole S. Cohen (2008). The valorization of surveillance: Towards a political economy of Facebook. *Democratic Communiqué 22*, No. 1, Spring, 5-22

Safiya Noble (2018). *Algorithms of Oppression*, Introduction: the power of algorithms and Chapter 6: The future of information culture.

Tressie McMillan Cottom. 2020. "Where Platform Capitalism and Racial Capitalism Meet: The Sociology of Race and Racism in the Digital Society." Sociology of Race and Ethnicity 6(4): 441–49.

Optional: Vincent Mosco (2009, 2nd edition). *The Political Economy of Communication*. Pages 2-11; 21-64.

Book Club: Matthew Crain. 2021. *Profit over Privacy: How Surveillance Advertising Conquered the Internet*.

10/25   Week 8: Media Consumption and Circulation

Parameswaran, R. (2002). Reading fictions of romance: Gender, Sexuality, and Nationalism in Postcolonial India. *Journal of Communication*, 52(4): 832-851.

Deborah Spitulnick. (2002). "Mobile Machines and Fluid Audiences: Rethinking Reception Through Zambian Radio Culture," in Media Worlds, pp. 337-354.
Jack Bratich. 2008. "Activating the Multitude: Audience Power and Cultural Studies."
Pp. 33-55 in P. Goldstein and J.L. Machor, eds.,
New Directions in American Reception Study. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Livingstone, Sonia, and Das, Ranjana (2013) The end of audiences?: theoretical echoes of reception amid the uncertainties of use. In: Hartley, John, Burgess, Jean, and Bruns, Axel, (eds.) A Companion to New Media Dynamics. Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, UK, pp. 104-121.

Lopez, Lori Kido. 2017. "Asian America Gone Viral: A Genealogy of Asian American YouTubers and Memes," In *The Routledge Companion to Asian American Media.* Lori Kido Lpez and Vincent N. Pham, eds. New York: Routledge, pp. 157-169.

Optional
John Fiske. 1989. "Moments of television: Neither the text nor the audience.: In: E. Seiter et al. (eds.), Remote Control: Television, Audiences and Cultural Power
(pp. 56-78). London: Routledge.

Janice Radway. 1991. "Interpretive Communities and Variable Literacies: The Functions of Romance Reading." In C. Mukerji and M. Schudson, eds., *Rethinking Popular Culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Book Club: Emily West. 2022. Buy Now: How Amazon Branded Convenience and Normalized Monopoly.

11/1   **Week 9: The Politics of Media Representation**

Stuart Hall "The Work of Representation" Pp. 13-75 in his (Ed.) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (Sage 2003)

Campbell, Christopher P. 2017. "Representation: Stuart Hall and the 'Politics of Signification.'" In The Routledge Companion to Media and Race. New York: Routledge.

Racquel Gates. (2018) *Double Negative: The Black Image and Popular Culture.* pp. 1-34.

Serlin, D. (2006). Disabling the flâneur. *Journal of Visual Culture*, *5*(2), 193-208.

Gamson, J. (1998). *Freaks talk back: Tabloid talk shows and sexual nonconformity*. University of Chicago Press. pp. 208-226.

Christian, Aymar Jean, and Khadijah Costley White. 2020. "Organic Representation as Cultural Reparation." JCMS: Journal of Cinema and Media Studies 60 (1): 143–47.

Book Club: Darieck Scott. 2022. *Keeping It Unreal: Black Queer Fantasy and Superhero Comics*

11/8   **Week 10: Beyond Representation**

Haraway, D. 1985. A Manifesto for Cyborgs: science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980s, *Socialist Review*, vol. 80, 65–108

Wajcman, J. (2010). Feminist theories of technology. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 34(1), 143–152

Doty, Alexander. 2000. *Flaming Classics: Queering the Film Cannon*. 1-22

Chun, Wendy Hui Kyong. 2009. "Race and/as Technology; or, How to Do Things to Race." *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies* 24 (1): 7–35. https://doi.org/10.1215/02705346-2008-013.

Keeling, Kara. 2014. "Queer OS." *Cinema Journal* 53 (2): 152–57. https://doi.org/10.1353/cj.2014.0004.

Ellcessor, Elizabeth, and Bill Kirkpatrick. 2019. "Studying Disability for a Better Cinema and Media Studies." *JCMS: Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* 58 (4): 139–44.

Haimson, Oliver L., Avery Dame-Griff, Elias Capello, and Zahari Richter. 2019. "Tumblr Was a Trans Technology: The Meaning, Importance, History, and Future of

Trans Technologies." *Feminist Media Studies* 21 (3): 345–61.
https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2019.1678505.

Book Club: Catherine Knight Steele. 2021. *Digital Black Feminism*.

11/15   Week 11: Global Media Studies

Arjun Appadurai. 1990. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." *Theory, Culture & Society, 7(2), 295–310.*

Joseph D. Straubhaar (1991) Beyond media imperialism: Asymmetrical interdependence and cultural proximity, Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 8:1, 39-59.

Marwan Kraidy. 2005. *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. Pages 1-45.

Raka Shome, When Postcolonial Studies Interrupts Media Studies, *Communication, Culture and Critique*, Volume 12, Issue 3, September 2019, Pages 305–322.

Philip, K., Irani, L., & Dourish, P. (2012). Postcolonial Computing: A Tactical Survey. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, *37*(1), 3–29.

Raewyn Connell. 2007. *Southern Theory*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. Pp:193-232

Book Club: Camilla Fojas. 2021. *Border Optics: Surveillance Cultures on the US-Mexico Frontier.*

11/29   Week 12: Media Infrastructures/Ecology

Lisa Parks and Nicole Starosielski (eds). 2015. *Signal Traffic: Critical Studies of Media Infrastructures*, Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press. Pages: 1-30.

David Hesmondhalgh. 2021. "The infrastructural turn in media and internet research" In: McDonald, P. (Ed.). (2021). The Routledge Companion to Media Industries (1st ed.). Routledge. Pp. 132-140.

Plantin, J.-C., Lagoze, C., Edwards, P. N., & Sandvig, C. 2016. Infrastructure studies meet platform studies in the age of Google and Facebook. *New Media & Society*. 293-310.

Helga Tawil-Souri. 2015. "Cellular Borders: Dis/Connecting Phone Calls

in Israel-Palestine" In: Lisa Parks and Nicole Starosielski (eds). 2015. *Signal Traffic: Critical Studies of Media Infrastructures*, Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press. Pages: 157-182.

Nemer, David and Chirumamilla, Padma. "Living in the broken city: infrastructural inequity, uncertainty, and the materiality of the digital in Brazil." In *digitalSTS: A Field Guide for Science and Technology Studies*, eds. Janet A. Vertesi and David Ribes. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019.

Optional

Susan Leigh Star, The Ethnography of Infrastructure, *American Behavioral Scientist* 43 (3), 1999: 377-391.

Brian Larkin, "The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42 (2013): 327-343.

Gray, J., Bounegru, L., & Venturini, T. (2020). 'Fake news' as infrastructural uncanny. *New Media & Society*, 22(2), 317- 341.

Book Club: Blake Atwood. 2021. *The Secret Life of Videocassettes in Iran.*

Book Club: Whitney Phillips and Ryan M. Milner. 2021. *You Are Here: A Field Guide for Navigating Polarized Speech, Conspiracy Theories, and Our Polluted Media Landscape.*

12/06   **Week 13: Bringing it all together**