

## Media, Culture, and Society

Instructor : Kevin Dowler  
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Office Hours: Wednesday 12.00 - 14.00  
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LECTURE: Monday 12:30 - 14:30, Vari Hall A

### Description:

This is the gateway course for the Media and Culture stream, and required for students interested in pursuing upper level studies in this area. The course will equip students with sets of key terms and concepts as well as methodological and theoretical approaches which will build on ideas presented in the introductory course and provide the basis for students to engage with more focussed analyses at the 3000 and 4000 levels in this stream.

The course is divided into five sections. The first section looks at experiences deriving from media consumption, and the issues that an analysis of these experiences raises. The second section introduces the key concepts upon which the remainder of the course is based. The third section examines different kinds of material encounters with different media at various scales and degrees of proximity to the self. Section four returns us to questions of context and ways of thinking about media from different points of view, as well as raising issues of method in media research from social and cultural perspectives. The final section addresses issues of currency in the contemporary context, such as changes to culture and society through media globalisation, and effects emerging from the production and consumption of new electronic communication media.

### Aims:

This course seeks to engage the students in an examination and analysis of their relationship to media in everyday life. Working outward from immediate, individual experience and common sense, the course encourages students to situate their own experience in the broader social and cultural contexts that communication media inhabit, as well as examine how that experience is shaped by those contexts. The course provides tools with which we can explain how media have the social and cultural role they occupy, and begin to ask questions about the extent to which we control the media or the media have control over us.

The principle aim of the course is to have students develop a critical awareness of what role media play in their lives, and that media themselves, and media usage, are shaped by forces that are not necessarily self-evident, nor subject to our will. Through exposure to, and discussion of, various approaches for thinking about communication media offered here, students will be in a position to understand and evaluate media structures and artefacts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.

*NB: As this course is part of the Foundations Program, lectures and assignments are designed to help students develop their reading, writing, and analytic skills. Students taking this course for 9 credits are advised that the workload is proportionately greater than that of a 6 credit course.*

The lectures will be supplemented with both video materials and in-class assignments to illustrate the relationships between your personal experiences of the media and the theoretical and critical perspectives discussed in class.

#### REQUIRED TEXTS:

Silverstone, Roger. Why Study the Media? Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1999.

Hartley, John, et al. Communication, Cultural and Media Studies : The Key Concepts. Routledge Key Guides. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2002.

Additional readings for the course will be available as a kit for purchase at the York Bookstore, and on reserve at the Scott Library.

#### EVALUATION:

6.0	9.0
Précis: 10%	Précis: 10%
First term essay: 15%	Library Tutorials: 10%
First term test: 20%	Library Assignment: 10%
Second term essay: 25%	First term essay: 15%
Second term test: 20%	First term test: 20%
Attendance/participation: 10%	Second term essay: 25%
	Second term test: 20%
	Tutorial presentation: 10%
	Media Journal: 20%
	Attendance/participation: 10%
100%	150%

#### GRADING SCALE:

A+ 90-100; A 80-89; B+ 75-79; B 70-74; C+ 65-69; C 60-64; D+ 55-59; D 50-54; E 40-49; F 0-40.

(NB: The University does not use minus grades for undergraduates)

**EXAMS:**

There will be exams at the end of each of the two terms. The exams will be comprised of both multiple choice and short answer questions covering material from the texts, readings, lectures, and audiovisual presentations.

**Rewrites or make-up exams are NOT permitted. IF YOU ARE TOO SICK TO MAKE THE EXAM, YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO FURNISH A DETAILED DOCTOR'S NOTE stating why you were unable to write the exam on the scheduled day.**

**If you miss the exam, leave a voice message on my office phone ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM, including the name of your tutorial leader and a phone number where you can be contacted. If you are too ill, have a parent, guardian, or friend place the call.**

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

Do not leave written assignments under the door of either the course director or tutorial leader. Hand assignments directly to your tutorial leader or in the assignment drop-boxes by arrangement with the tutorial leader.

Assignments must be handed in on the day they are due. Late assignments will have one-percent (1%) deducted per day from the final grade for every day they are late, with a minimum deduction of five percent (5%). Assignments not received within fourteen (14) days of due date will be given a grade of zero percent (0%).

Assignments must be submitted in hard copy form only. No electronic submissions will be accepted.

Please read carefully the attached handout on Academic Honesty. Please note: **PLAGIARISM ON ANY WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT IS PUNISHABLE BY FAILURE OF THE COURSE.**

**\*\*Remember to keep copies of all assignments in case of dispute or *force majeure*\*\***

**Teaching Assistants:**

Nicholas Balaisis [nikkbala@yorku.ca](mailto:nikkbala@yorku.ca)  
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**TUTORIAL SCHEDULE**

## 2314 6.0

Tutorial	T.A.	Day	Time	Duration (mins)	Location
TUTR 01	Brady Curlew	M	2:30 pm	60	VC 104
TUTR 02	Ijosé Chow	M	3:30 pm	60	TEL 0009
TUTR 03	Ijosé Chow	M	4:30 pm	60	R S105
TUTR 04	Xiaoyan Xiang	W	10:30 am	60	FC 109
TUTR 05	Brady Curlew	W	11:30 am	60	TEL 0015
TUTR 06	Xiaoyan Xiang	F	10:30 am	60	R S174

## 2314 9.0

Tutorial	T.A.	Day	Time	Duration (mins)	Location
TUTR 01	Ravindra Mohabeer	M	2:30 pm	120	MC 109
TUTR 02	Nicholas Balaisis	R	4:30 pm	120	MC 111
TUTR 03	Ruthann Lee	W	12:30 pm	120	BC 323

## Schedule

Sept 13: INTRODUCTION  
Media and Common Sense: Appearances Can Be Deceiving

## SECTION I: STRUCTURES OF FEELING

Sept 20: Forms of Experience  
Silverstone, Roger. "Mediation." In Why Study the Media? Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1999  
Plato, The Republic, trans. Tom Griffith, ed. G.R.F. Ferrari (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ., 2000), 220-224 [514a-518b].

Sept 27: Enjoyment  
Silverstone, Roger. "Erotics" and "Poetics." In Why Study the Media?

## SECTION II: CONTEXTS FOR PRACTICE

Oct 4: Key Concepts I: Culture  
Williams, Raymond. "Culture." In Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society, Rev. ed. Glasgow: Fontana Press, 1989, 76-82.  
Hartley, John, et al. "Culture." In Communication, Cultural and Media Studies: The Key Concepts. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2002, 51-3.

Oct 11: THANKSGIVING

Oct 18: Key Concepts II: Society  
Lull, James. "Hegemony." Gender, Race, and Class in Media : A Text-Reader. Eds. Gail Dines and Jean McMahon Humez. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1995. 61-66.  
Williams, Raymond, "Society," 243-46.

Oct 25: Key Concepts III: Media  
Williams, Raymond. "Media," 169-70.  
Hartley, et al. "Medium/Media," 142-3.

## SECTION III: ENCOUNTERS WITH MEDIA

Nov 1: Early Encounters  
Seiter, Ellen. "Lay Theories of Media Effects: Power Rangers at Preschool." Gender, Race, and Class in Media, 367-84.

Nov 8: Family Drama  
Silverstone, Roger. "House and Home." In Why Study the Media?  
Spigel, Lynn. Make Room for Tv: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992, 11-35.

Nov 15: Larger Frames  
Silverstone, Roger. "Community" and "Globe." In Why Study the Media?  
Stald, Gitte, and Thomas Tufte, eds. Global Encounters: Media and Cultural Transformation. Luton, U.K.: University of Luton Press, 2002.

- Nov 22: Media are Everywhere  
McCarthy, Anna. Ambient Television: Visual Culture and Public Space. Durham: Duke University, 2001, 1-20.
- Nov 29: Media are Everywhere II  
Holding, Eric. Mark Fisher: Staged Architecture; Architectural Monographs No. 52. Chichester: Wiley-Academic, 2000, 87-121.
- Dec 6: Reframing and Rethinking

## SECTION IV: ALTERNATIVE THINKING

- Jan 3: Thinking About Media  
Steinert, Heinz. "On Method: Look Carefully, Think Thoroughly, and Do Not Let Yourself Be Taken In." In Culture Industry. Malden, MA: Polity, 2003, 54-62.  
Jensen, Klaus. "The State of Convergence in Media and Communication Research." In A Handbook of Media and Communications Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies. London: Routledge, 2002, 1-11.
- Jan 10: Media are Old  
Ian Steele, The English Atlantic, 1675-1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community (New York: Oxford Univ., 1986), 78-93.
- Jan 17: Old Media  
Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- Jan 24: Broadcasting Culture  
Hardt, Hanno. "Radio and Kultur: On the Social Uses of German Broadcasting." In In the Company of Media, 89-100.
- Jan 31: Media as Art as Media  
Marcuse, Herbert, One-Dimensional Man. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964, 56-71
- Feb 2: Taste and Social Structure  
Gripsrud, Jostein. "Distinctions: Social Difference, Lifestyles, and Taste." In Understanding Media Culture. London: Oxford Press, 2002, 60-96.
- Feb 14-18: READING WEEK

## SECTION V: FRACTURES AND FISSURES

- Feb 21: RE: Locating Culture  
Eagleton, Terry. "Culture in Crisis." In The Idea of Culture. Blackwell Manifestos. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, 32-50.
- Feb 28: Global Culture  
Crane, Diana. "Culture and Globalisation: Theoretical Models and Emerging Trends." In Crane, Diana, Nobuko Kawashima, and Kenichi Kawasaki, eds. Global Culture: Media, Arts, Policy, and Globalization. New York: Routledge, 2002, 1-28.

- Mar 7: Youth and Subjection  
Rogers, Mary F. "Hetero Barbie." In Dines, Gail, and Jean McMahon Humez, eds. Gender, Race, and Class in Media, 94-97.  
McGillis, Roderick. "Coprophilia For Kids: The Culture of Grossness." In Mallan, Kerry, and Sharyn Pearce, eds. Youth Cultures: Texts, Images, and Identities. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003.
- Mar 14: New Media?  
Marshall, P. David. "The New Intertextual Commodity." In Harries, Dan, ed. The New Media Book. London: BFI Pub., 2002, 69-81.
- Mar 21: Media Without Boundaries  
McRobbie, Angela. "Clubs to Companies: Notes on the Decline of Political Culture in Speeded up Creative Worlds." Cultural Studies 16, 4 (2002): 516-531.
- Mar 28: Arguments, Conclusions, Tensions, Openings