# UNDERSTANDING MEDIA STUDIES
## Spring 2017

NMDS 5004 | CRN 2379 | Mondays 6-7:50 pm | 63 5th Ave, L104 (lower level)
Shannon Mattern, Ph.D.  | matterns@newschool.edu | 79 5th Ave, 16th floor |
　　　office hours by appointment (write me!)

Course Assistants
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Understanding Media Studies is a required course for all first-semester Media Studies MA students. It is a weekly seminar series that functions not only as a communal orientation experience for the first-semester UMS cohort, but also as an intellectual and creative hub for the entire School. We welcome several guest presenters from the academy, industry, and a variety of creative fields that represent the breadth of what Media Studies is and can be. We also welcome several New School Media Studies alumni and advanced current students, who speak with us about issues regarding professionalization and socialization within the field. The course is offered in a hybrid on-site/on-line format to accommodate all first-semester students.

UMS students are organized into small groups that are responsible for researching the various guests and preparing questions to kick off the Q&A period following each lecture; and for creating a critical response to our guests' presentations.


## Whom do I contact for what?
Students will be organized into groups, led by Teaching Assistants, within the first two weeks of the semester. For the sake of efficiency, we ask that you please consider your Teaching Assistants your first points of contact for issues regarding attendance, other class housekeeping, and general course-related concerns. They're also able to serve as peer advisors. Shannon will assist the TAs, and she is happy to speak with you about general academic issues and any course- or discussion section-related concerns that you do not feel comfortable addressing with your TAs.

For concerns regarding the course website, contact Shannon. For issues regarding the lecture videos, please politely relay your concerns, questions, and suggestions to your TAs, and we'll forward them to the appropriate tech support staff.

# COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

## ATTENDANCE

We expect that you'll feel inclined to take part in this lecture and workshop series, which constitutes the creative and intellectual "hub" of the School of Media Studies and serves to represent the breadth of what Media Studies, as a field, is and can be. Your presence and engagement will help to foster a sense of community, which benefits us all internally, and to cultivate a reputation for SMS as a vibrant site for intellectual and creative production, which helps us to foster relationships with other institutions and enhances the reputation of the school.

New York-based students will be expected to **attend and sign in** at the beginning of all scheduled Monday night meetings. Online students will be expected to **watch the lecture online**; you can either join us live, via Zoom, or watch a recording of the class, which will be posted to our website within 24 hours of the on-site meeting. See the "Attendance for Online Students" page on our class website for more instructions.

During *most* sessions, we'll pose a **reflection question**, which will invite you to connect the week's discussion to your own goals and practices. On-site students are expected to record their **two- to three-sentence responses** on an index card (provided in class), and to submit their cards to their TAs at the end of the class meeting. Online students are expected to email their weekly responses to their TAs by Friday at 5pm EST.

Students are permitted **two excused absences** over the course of the semester.

> Digital Etiquette. Laptops, iPads, and phones can serve as important learning tools. Therefore, we do not want to preclude their use in class. All we ask is that you use this technology *courteously* and *appropriately*, to help you *engage* with the class, not to check out. Burying your face in a screen throughout our class meetings demonstrates disrespect toward our guests and reflects poorly on you and us.

## READINGS

**All students are expected to review all readings/screenings/etc. listed on the syllabus** for each class meeting. Even if you are not assigned to particular guest presenters, you are still expected to review the texts related to their areas of specialization, so you can familiarize yourself with the areas of research and practice that they represent (thus enabling you to develop a broad understanding of what's happening in our field), and so you can prepare yourself to participate in our discussions preceding and following the guests' visits. Any one of you might be **called on randomly** during these discussions and asked to share your own informed responses to our readings and our presenters' work.

## GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES

Students will be organized into groups and asked to work collaboratively to frame *one* presentation week, which typically comprises two presenters: a pair of scholars, artists, or practitioners who demonstrate the myriad outlets for media study: traditional scholarship, activism, public intellectualism, media production, artwork, entrepreneurship, etc.

Individual groups, which may include both on-site and online students, can determine which platforms — e.g., email, Skype, appear.in, Slack, Google Docs, in-person meetings — will best allow them to communicate and collaborate with one another. On-site students should make special effort to include their online classmates, and online students should be proactive in reaching out to their on-site classmates. See the Helsinki Design Lab's *Creative Collaborations* handbook, Sacramento State University's tips for writing in groups (pp. 52-55), and UNC-Chapel Hill's list of recommendations for negotiating collaborative work. Your TAs can also help you develop collaborative strategies.

Your group will be responsible for:

1. **Framing the discussion during the "prep week"** dedicated to your assigned presenters' visit.
   - These "prep weeks" typically happen a few weeks before your guests' visits and serve to prepare you – and the entire class – to situate our guests' work within the larger field, and to engage in an intelligent discussion around their work.
   - All guests were invited to recommend readings and other media for students to review in advance of their visits. Your group should summarize the main themes in these resources, identify particular areas of resonance and discord among the texts and our guests' practice, highlight issues of particular interest to individual group members, flag areas of confusion or contention, and pose two or three questions for our in-class discussion.
   - Each group will have a total of **20 minutes** for their in-class framing discussion. *Every* group member must contribute in some way; online students might ask on-site students to speak on their behalves or make a short audio- or video-recording we can play in class.

2. Creating an **annotated bibliography / mediagraphy**, due **by 6pm one week after the prep week** dedicated to your assigned presenters' visit.
   - Building upon our "prep week" discussion (during which you'll likely have received many reference recommendations), your group must supplement your list of assigned readings by conducting an environmental scan of other related resources in the field:
     - resources that expand the scope of our guests' work, by situating it within broader discourses and deeper historical context, and by drawing parallels to related work in other fields and in other modalities (e.g., articles, books, documentaries, podcasts);
     - resources that help us to better understand the macro-scale contours of our presenters' oeuvres or the trajectories of their work;
     - resources that identify similar work by other scholars and practitioners;
     - resources that acknowledge historical or contemporary applications for the type of work our guests are doing;
   - Your bibliography / mediagraphy should include **at least five contributions from each group member**, including a mix of scholarly and popular texts and, if applicable, media in diverse formats.

- To demonstrate that you know how to situate our discussion within an *academic* discourse, **at least two of each student's contributions should be scholarly** books and articles.
- Your group should adopt a consistent bibliographic format: MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.
- Your annotation for each resource should be between 100 and 150 words. See "Finding Sources," "Reading Effectively," and "Abstracts + Annotated Bibliographies" for more guidance.
- Each entry should be tagged by its contributor (e.g., you might include a short byline – "Contributed by Jane Doe" – at the end of each entry).
- Your final submitted list should be proofread and organized according to some logic, with headings identifying **groupings** of different kinds of resources (e.g., "historical context," "international applications," "similar artists," etc).
- Please create your bibliography on **Google Docs and share it with Shannon and your TA.**

3. On the day of your assigned presenter's visit, **kicking off the Q&A** by asking two or three questions to our guests.
   - Of course it's impossible to predict what, precisely, our presenters will share with us – but based on your research on their past work, and the broader reading you've done for your environmental scan, you and your group members should consult with one another in advance of your assigned lecture to identify what aspects of your presenter's work most interest you, most trouble you, most inspire you, etc. And through this discussion you can identify issues that you'll want to raise in the lecture Q&A. Your questions might address not only the *content* of the guests' presentation, but also their methodology and creative processes, research and production resources and tools, sources of funding, etc.
   - At the very end of the lecture, you'll kick off the Q&A. You can choose how to delegate this responsibility; one of you could be your group's inquisitor, or you could take turns. You *will* have to improvise, to some degree.
   - Please see our tips for "Engaging with Presentations and Asking Questions."

4. Submitting a **collaboratively-created descriptive and critical response** to the presentation.
   - These responses might take a variety of forms: a 1,500- to 1,800-word jointly-written text; a 1,500- to 1,800-word round-robin Q&A amongst the group members, in which each explores how the presentation informed his/her own thinking and practice; a creative response, perhaps in the form of a video or podcast (five minutes max!), visual notes, an information map, etc. You could even design multiple sections in hybrid forms.
   - Make an effort to work in the readings and material from your annotated bibliographies. And please include proper citations where appropriate!
   - Groups must send Shannon — either via email in the form of a Word Doc, or via Google Drive (I'll need to be able to insert editorial margin comments) — complete, *edited, proofread* drafts* or rough cuts of their responses, including embedded media or links to all media, **no later than 6pm on the Monday *following* the lecture**.
     - *Nota bene*: Many of the "drafts" I've received over the past few years have been rife with typos, grammatical errors, repetition, non sequiturs, obfuscatory language, etc. This messiness doubles the amount of time it takes me to make sense of and respond to the work — which, in turn, limits the amount of time I have to

offer *substantive*, non-mechanical feedback to *you*. This is not to say that your drafts need to be *perfect* (the whole point of submitting drafts is to get feedback and improve!); rather, I'm asking simply that you make sure your draft is as structurally sound, clean, intelligible, as possible, so I can offer feedback on the *content*, rather than merely the format and mechanics.

- Shannon will then provide feedback within two days (groups will receive only *one round* of edits, so these drafts should be in good shape!), and groups will revise accordingly and re-submit their **completed responses** to Shannon no later than **6pm on the Monday two weeks after the lecture**.
- Useful Resources:
    - You can review past students' (poorly archived) responses here.
    - Here are a few other examples of event responses: Shannon's response, published in *Nautilus* magazine, to the 2013 "New|Media Archives" discussion @ NYU; Liz Losh's more informal response to the 2013 Feminist Information Tech conference; Austin Kleon's visual notes on the 2010 TedX PennQuarter conference. You needn't emulate these examples; I provide them merely to give you a sense of how *others* productively recap academic events for public audiences or for their personal benefit.

5. Submit a **group assessment**: one from each group member to your TA.
    - As your group submits your final, revised critical response, each of you should complete **this short online form** assessing your group's collective work and your individual group members' contributions.
    - These assessments are due by **6pm two weeks after your assigned presenters' visit**.

**TO RECAP:**
- **On your assigned presenters' prep week:** 20-minute framing of our discussion
- **One week after prep week:** 20-item annotated bibliography / mediagraphy, shared with Shannon and your TA
- **On your assigned presenters' lecture evening:** two or three questions to kick off Q&A
- **One week after presenters' lecture:** draft of critical response due to Shannon
- **Two weeks after presenters' lecture:** final draft of critical response due to Shannon and group assessment due to your TA

### *What are you learning?*

- You're exposing yourself to a variety of emerging communities of thought and practice within Media Studies.
- You're learning how to orient yourself within a new field of study and how to engage with topics that might be outside your immediate areas of personal interest, but are *still* relevant to your discipline.
- You're learning how to find connections between seemingly disparate ideas and projects, and developing the skills necessary to conduct a literature review or environmental scan – a integral component of any thesis or grant proposal or business plan.
- What's more, this background research, and the on-the-fly thinking you'll have to practice during the Q&A, are necessary for *any* interview situation: maybe you're interviewing job candidates at work; interviewing notable figures for your academic research, or for a podcast or video; hosting a speaker series of industry leaders at your office, etc. Thus, you're cultivating intellectual generosity and learning how to be a good host.
- You're negotiating the differences among group members, and figuring out how to exploit the variety of intelligences and skills present in a group.
- You're learning how to work with an editor, how to proceed through the iterative process of revision.
- You're relying on collective intelligence and critical feedback in order to improve your own work.

### *Why have we broken you into groups?*
Not to torture you. I promise. Instead, we've done this primarily because:

- We want you to *talk with one another* about the lectures; what you take away from this experience will likely be much richer and more meaningful if you've rehearsed and revised your ideas through dialogue, rather than blindly upholding your own immediate, unchallenged, self-centered response.
- We can more richly document and reflect on our in-class events if your responses exploit the diversity of skills your classmates bring to the table; if someone's a skilled audio producer, illustrator, or producer, your group's response could incorporate – and be strengthened by – those modes of expression.
- So much work in the "real world" involves collaboration in small groups, so this class activity offers good practice in negotiation, collaborative production, etc.; and
- To aid with course logistics: most semesters, UMS is a large class, and we want to find the best way to "filter" your collective intelligence into our class meetings. We're essentially following the principles of representative democracy, with small congresses and elected representatives.

## GRADING
Grading is **pass/fail**, but, as with all required courses in our program, students must complete **'B'-level work** in order to pass the course.

### *Why is this course pass/fail?*
Because this course is about exploration and trial: of possible trajectories within Media Studies, of various academic conventions and modes of expression, of collaborative practices. It's all but impossible (and not terribly helpful) to quantify "success" in exploration. The skills you develop in UMS are meant to serve you throughout your graduate study, and throughout your career. Thus, your work here is necessarily work-in-progress.[1]

In addition, we expect that you, as graduate students, don't always require external motivation to put in your best effort, especially when the potential rewards are proportional to the effort you expend.

## Academic Honesty
All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the University's [Academic Honesty policy]. Any acts of academic dishonesty will result in *automatic failure of the course*.

## Deadlines
All assignment deadlines are listed on the syllabus. Late work will be penalized, and extensions will be granted only rarely, and only after consulting with your instructor well in advance of the assignment deadline.

A student who has not submitted all assigned work by the end of the semester does not receive an "Incomplete" by default. "Incompletes" are assigned only in extreme circumstances, and require that the student consult with his or her Instructor before the end of the semester and sign a contract obligating him or her to complete all outstanding work by a date that we agree upon.

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[1] These skills that develop over time – outside the timeframe of a single semester's coursework – are what educational researcher Peter Knight calls "wicked competencies." As Tight et. al. explain:

> "Wicked" competencies have quite a lot in common with the so-called "soft skills" that are valued by employers (such as the application of emotional intelligence in teamworking and other situations). Knight (2007) described them as:
>> achievements that cannot be neatly pre-specified, take time to develop and resist measurement-based approaches to assessment.
>
> Such achievements often take longer than an individual module of study to develop, and may more appropriately be assessed over a complete study programme. …Assessments are…judgments rather than measurements (which, in reality, are no more than quasi-measurements at best). In Knight's (2006) terms such judgments are "local," and hence cannot be force-fitted into a specified list of assessment criteria. Grades can signal in only broad terms the strengths and weaknesses of such multi-faceted achievements, and an overall grade might obscure a significant weakness. A pass/fail approach to grading, supported by a commentary on strengths and weaknesses, may be more appropriate" (Malcolm Tight, Ka Ho Mok, Jeroen Huisman, Christopher G. Morphew, Eds., *The Routledge International Handbook of Higher Education* (New York: Routledge, 2009): 218).

# OUR TOOLS

**Class Website**
http://www.wordsinspace.net/UMS/

**Required Texts**
All required readings and supplemental resources will be posted on the class website. Most are available on the open web, and you should be able to link directly to them, yet some resources are copyrighted; these are hosted behind a password-protected firewall. To access them, you'll be prompted to enter a username and password: "**student**" and "**seecritfilez**".

**Recommended Texts**
Alan Fletcher, *The Art of Looking Sideways* (New York: Phaidon, 2001): a provocative and inspiring "guide to visual awareness"

Robert L. Peters, Ph.D., *Getting What You Came For: The Smart Student's Guide to Earning a Master's or Ph.D.*, Rev. Ed. (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1992/1997): Roughly a third of the book is dedicated to the application process; the remainder addresses such issue as time management, program politics, the thesis process, stress and depression, social skills, and the special concerns of women, minorities, and international students.

Gregory Colón Semenza, *Graduate Study for the 21st Century: How to Build an Academic Career in the Humanities*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): Although, as the subtitle suggests, this book is especially helpful for students who plan to pursue a PhD and an academic career, the early chapters of the book offer advice (on grad school "culture," organization and time management, the graduate seminar and seminar paper) that has proven very useful even to those students who plan to stop at the MA.[2]

John Swales & Christine Feak, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*, 2nd Ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004): This text is especially useful for students new to academic writing, or for whom English is a second language.

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[2] Semenza also has a few things to say about the "intro to grad studies" class, of which UMS is a derivative:
    Many graduate programs in the humanities require that students pass the equivalent of an 'Introduction to Graduate Studies' course in their first semester….While it's true that introductory courses often were (and still can be) intimidating,…they have always been defined by their practical approach to graduate studies in a particular field…. The key to contending with such a requirement is in using the highly practical emphasis of the class as a counterbalance to the stress and anxiety it may temporarily cause you.
        …[W]hat may seem most tedious and difficult…about these introductory courses is also what makes them most useful; the Introduction to Graduate Studies course is often the only opportunity for graduate students to study their discipline on the meta-professional level and perhaps the only class designed to train students in the tools and methods they will need throughout their graduate careers. Whether the introductory course in place at your institution happens to be run as a boot camp, a regular seminar, or a friendly forum, never underestimate its importance at the beginning of your career. The course not only will provide you with invaluable skills and information, but it also will help you establish the work habits you'll employ throughout your lifetime…. Recognize that you are lucky to be in a program that offers such a course, and don't pass up the opportunity to make the most of it" (32-3).

# January 23: Intro + Overview

# January 30: Overview of Team Project + Team Formation

- Before **5pm EST on January 29**: please post to this shared Google Doc (you'll be prompted to enter your New School login info) a **150-word bio** – and, if you like, a photo – introducing yourself to us: your academic and professional background and goals, your intellectual and creative interests, etc. Online students, you're also welcome (but not required!) to send us a video or audio self-introduction that we can play in class. The TAs and Shannon will use these bios to organize you into groups.
- Brian Croxall, "An Open Letter to New Graduate Students," *ProfHacker, The Chronicle of Higher Education* (August 19, 2010).
- Mark Sample, "An Open Letter to Part-Time Graduate Students," *ProfHacker, The Chronicle of Higher Education* (September 29, 2010)
- Rachel Herrmann, "A Letter to Past Graduate-Student Me," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 22, 2016).
- Justin Reedy & Madhavi Murty, "Creating a Research Agenda," *Inside Higher Ed* (May 20, 2009).
- Review this set of guides: "Reading Effectively," "Abstracts + Annotated Bibliographies," "Engaging with Presentations + Asking Questions," and "Forms of Scholarship: Multimodal."
  - o These guides will not only help to prepare you for your UMS group project, but will also ideally prove relevant to and useful for the work you complete throughout your academic and professional careers.
- Please review The New School's Academic Honesty Policy.
  - o See also the Center for Education Technology, Middlebury, Colby, Bates & Bowdoin Colleges, Plagiarism Resource Site
  - o Yes, I'm sure you've heard plenty of lectures on plagiarism, yet it continues to be a problem even among graduate students. I recommend that you make sure you're perfectly clear on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, because any infractions can result in the failure of a course – or even expulsion from the program.

*Supplemental Resources:*
- Shannon Mattern, "Finding Sources," "Resource Management + Note-Taking," "The Literature Review / Mediagraphy," *Words in Space.*
- Kathleen Fitzpatrick, "Generous Thinking," Talk @ University of Richmond, Spring 2016.
- Neil Postman, "Bullshit and the Art of Crap Detection," National Convention for the Teachers of English, Washington, D.C., November 28, 1969.
- Carl T. Bergstrom's and Jevin West's "Calling Bullshit in the Age of Big Data," a syllabus for a hypothetical class
- Juliette Cezzar, "Why Is So Much of Design School a Waste of Time?" *Dear Design Student* (November 10, 2015).

# February 6: Contours of the Field

**DEAN CAROL WILDER**

- John Culkin, "A Schoolman's Guide to Marshall McLuhan," *The Saturday Review* (March 18, 1967): 51-2, 70-2.
- John Culkin, "Doing the Truth" in *Introduction to Media Studies* (?): 3-6.
- Kit Laybourne, "A Definition for Media Studies," Working Paper, 1972.
- To get a sense of what's currently happening in the field, browse through a few conference programs and publisher catalogues:
  - The 2017 Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference (starting on p. 4)
  - The 2017 Transmediale conference
  - New film/TV and media books by Duke University Press; internet studies and new media titles from MIT Press; film + media books from Minnesota
  - Calls for proposals on the H-Film listserv
  - This is just a small sample. Search to see what kinds of conferences, festivals, publication series, listservs, etc., exist in *your* particular areas of interest.

*And to help you think about processes of collaboration as you embark on your group projects:*

- Marc Downie, Shelley Eshkar & Paul Kaiser, *Creative Collaborations* (Helsinki Design Lab / Sitra).

*Supplemental Resources:*

- On the genealogy of Media Studies: W.J.T. Mitchell and Mark B. N. Hansen, Introduction to *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, eds. Mitchell and Hansen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010): vii-xxii.
- On the history and breadth of the field: check out the table of contents for the *International Encyclopedia of Media Studies* (Wiley Blackwell, 2013).
- On the history of our School of Media Studies: "The Medium is the Message; Media Studies Celebrates 40 Years," *New School News* (September 15, 2015).
- On the state of the field: Renee Hobbs, "The State of Media Studies Scholarship" [presentation]
- On the importance of developing tech skills within a broader liberal arts context: Sarah McBride, "Want a Job in Silicon Valley? Keep Away From Coding Schools," *Bloomberg* (December 6, 2016).

# February 13: Prep for Panel 1 (March 6: Documentary And Difference) + Academic Skills Workshop 1: Graduate Research + Writing

**6PM: BRITA SERVAES, NEW SCHOOL LIBRARIES, + REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE UNIVERSITY LEARNING CENTER**

- Genevieve Yue, "The China Girls on the Margins of Film," *October* 153 (Summer 2015): 96-116.
- See Genevieve's website
- Allan Sekula, Introduction and "Aerospace Folktales" in *Photography Against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works 1973-1983* (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1984): ix-xv, 106-64.
- Maria Lind and Hito Steyerl, "Introduction: Reconsidering the Documentary and Contemporary Art" in Lind and Steyerl, eds., *The Greenroom: Reconsidering the Documentary and Contemporary Art* 1 (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2008): 10-26 [note from Genevieve: don't worry if you don't recognize many of the works referenced in the essay's second half!]
- Effie's Vimeo Page: focus in particular on "American Hunger" and "Many Thousands Gone"

*To prep for our library workshop:*

- Browse through the New School Library website (also accessible through the "Apps" menu, in the upper-right-hand corner of MyNewSchool) and skim through this "Finding Resources" guide.

*Supplemental Resources:*

- Claire Lehmann, "Color Goes Electric," *Triple Canopy* (2016).
- "Forms of Scholarship: Writing," *Words in Space*.
- Check out the University Learning Center's website.
- Howard S. Becker, Excerpts from "Freshman English for Graduate Students" and "Persona and Authority" In *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*, 2$^{nd}$ Ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007): 1-20, 26-40. [Don't let the title fool you; this book isn't applicable only to social scientists or those writing theses or articles. Becker's advice applies to *all* graduate-level writing, even non-traditionally academic writing.]

# February 20: **NO CLASS**

## February 27: Prep for Panel 2 (March 27: Power Plays With Data) + Group Meeting Time

- Zara Rahman, "2016: A Year of Data-Driven Confusion," *Model View Culture* (December 12, 2016).
- Zara Rahman, "Dangerous Data: The Role of Data Collection in Genocides," *The Engine Room* (November 16, 2016).
- Mimi Onuoha, "The Point of Collection," *Points* (February 10, 2016).
- Responsible Data Forum, "Building a Tech Tool for Sensitive Data," Responsible Data Reflection Stories 6.
- Mimi Onuoha, "Broadway Won't Document Its Dramatic Race Problem, So a Group of Actors Spent Five Years Quietly Gathering This Data Themselves," *Quartz* (December 4, 2016).
- Sam Levin, "A Beauty Contest Was Judged by AI and the Robots Didn't Like Dark Skin," *The Guardian* (September 8, 2016).
- Browse the Responsible Data List Archives (and you're welcome to join the list, too!)
- Joseph Cox, "70,000 OkCupid Users Just Had Their Data Published," *Motherboard* (May 12, 2016).

## March 6: Panel 1: Documentary and Difference

**GENEVIEVE YUE**, Assistant Professor of Culture and Media, Eugene Lang College

**Genevieve Yue** is an assistant professor of culture and media at Eugene Lang College, and co-editor of *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture.* Her writing has appeared in *October, Grey Room, Film Comment,* and *Film Quarterly.* She is currently completing a book on feminism, materiality, and film theory.

**EPHRAIM ASILI**, Full Time Artist in Residence, Bard College

**Ephraim Asili** is an African American Artist, Filmmaker, and Deejay. One of the points of focus in Asili's work is the African Diaspora as a cultural force. His work often weaves together the near and the far as a way of revealing linkages across history and geography. Thus far Asili's work has been filmed in locations including  Ghana, Brazil, Jamaica, and Ethiopia as well as in Philadelphia, Harlem, and Detroit. His films have screened in festivals and venues all over the world, including the New York Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, Ann Arbor Film Festival, San Francisco International Film Festival, Milano Film Festival, Trinidad and Tobago International Film Festival, MOMA PS1, LAMOCA, and The Boston Museum of Fine Art.

# March 13: Prep for Panel 3 (April 17: Media and Thermodynamics) + Academic Skills Workshop 2: Thesis

**7PM: MEDIA STUDIES ALUMS DARYL MEADOR + NELESI RODRIGUEZ**

- Nicole Starosielski, "Thermocultures of Geological Media," *Cultural Politics* 12:3 (2016): 293-309.
- **By Friday, April 7, @ 5pm EST**, please email Professor Starosielski (ns119@nyu.edu) **three thermal images** (Google them!) that strike you, along with super-brief captions explaining why you find each compelling. Please write "Thermal Images for Shannon's Class" in your subject line!
- Tega Brain's Website
- Tega Brain, "Being Radiotropic" (2016)
- John Durham Peters, "The Fire Sermon" in *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (Chicag: University of Chicago Press, 2015): 115-64.
- For local opportunities to work with elemental media, check out Re-Lab.

# March 20: **NO CLASS**

# March 27: Panel 2: Power Plays with Data

**ZARA RAHMAN**, Fellow, Data & Society

**Zara** is a researcher, writer, and linguist who is interested in the intersection of power, culture and technology. She has travelled and worked in over twenty-five countries in the field of information accessibility and data use among civil society. She was the first employee at OpenOil, looking into open data in the extractive industries, then worked for Open Knowledge, working with School of Data on data literacy for journalists and civil society. Now, she is a fellow at Data & Society Research Institute in New York City, and Research Lead at The Engine Room where she leads their Responsible Data Program, looking into the practical and ethical challenges around using data in social change and activism.

**MIMI ONUOHA**, Artist & Research Resident, Eyebeam

**Mimi Onuoha** is a Brooklyn-based artist and researcher using code and writing to explore the process, results, and implications of data collection. Recently she has been in residence at Data & Society Research Institute and the Royal College of Art. Onuoha has spoken at and exhibited at events internationally, and in 2014 was selected to be in the inaugural class of Fulbright-National Geographic Digital Storytelling Fellows. Currently she teaches at NYU's Interactive Telecommunications Program and is a Research Resident at Eyebeam, where she is programmatically and interpersonally investigating data collection, missing datasets, and strategies for intervention and response.

# April 3: Prep for Panel 4 (April 24: Expanding Soundscape) + Academic Skills Workshop 3: Resumes, CVs + Cover Letters

**6PM: JENNIFER MACDONALD OR MICHAEL WITT FROM CAREER SERVICES**

- R. Murray Schafer, "The Industrial Revolution" in *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Destiny 1977): 71-87.
- Jonathan Sterne, "Hearing" in David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny, Eds., *Keywords in Sound* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015): 65-77.
- Maile Colbert, "Wayback Sound Machine: Sound Through Time, Space and Place," *Soundscape* 31:1 (Winter/Spring 2013-14): 21-4.
- Maile Colbert, "Sounding the Archives: Sounding the Past Towards a Future Living Archive," *Found Footage Magazine* (forthcoming 2017)
- Kevin T. Allen and Jen Heuson, "Asynchronicity: Rethinking the Relation Between Ear and Eye In Ethnographic Practice" in Arnd Schneider and Caterina Pasqualino, Eds., *Experimental Film and Anthropology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014)
- Maile Colbert's Website
- Kevin Allen's Website

## April 10: Prep for Panel 5 (May 1: Everyday Innovation: Africa) + Academic Skills Workshop 4: TBD

- Sean Jacobs, "Big Brother, Africa Is Watching," *Media, Culture & Society* 29:6 (2007): 851-68.
- Sean Jacobs, "Instagramming Africa," *Journal of African Media Studies* 8:1 (March 2016) (13 pp).
- Sean Jacobs, "Emergent African Digital Identities: The Story Behind 'Africa is a Country,'" *Journal of African Media Studies* 7:3 (September 2015) (15 pp).
- Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write About Africa," *Granta* 92 (January 19, 2016).
- Africa is a Country (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube)
- Clapperton Mavhunga, "The Coming of the Gun" and "The Professoriate of the Hunt" in *Transient Workspaces: Technologies of Everyday Innovation in Zimbabwe* (MIT Press, 2014): 71-98, 125-49 [you'll find an electronic copy through The New School Library's website].
- Clapperton Mavhunga, "Guerrilla Healthcare Innovation: Creative Resilience in Zimbabwe's Chimurenga, 1971 – 1980," *History and Technology* 31:3 (2015): 295-323.
- Clapperton Mavhunga, "Organic Vehicles and Passengers: The Tsetse Fly as Transient Analytical Workspace," *Transfers* 6:2 (2016): 74-93.

*Supplemental Resources:*
- Sean Jacobs, "What Muhammad Ali Believed," *Jacobin* (June 18, 2016).
- Sean Jacobs, "Mr. Big Bucks and the Mamelodi Sundowns," *Road and Kingdoms* (2014).
- Sean Jacobs, "To So Many Africans, Fidel Castro is a Hero. Here's Why," *The Guardian* (November 30, 2016).
- Search YouTube for "Clapperton Mavhunga"

# April 17: Panel 3: Media and Thermodynamics

**TEGA BRAIN**, Assistant Professor, SUNY Purchase; Fellow, Data & Society

Tega Brain is an artist making eccentric engineering, work that intersects art, ecology & engineering. Eccentric engineering reimagines technologies to address their scope and politics, with a focus on externalities and unintended consequences. She has exhibited at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, the Science Gallery Dublin, Eyebeam in New York City and the Australian Centre for Design, Sydney. Tega is a fellow at Data & Society NYC and is an Assistant Professor of New Media at SUNY Purchase.

**NICOLE STAROSIELSKI**, Assistant Professor, Media, Culture, and Communication, NYU

Nicole Starosielski is Assistant Professor in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University. She is author of *The Undersea Network* (2015), which charts the development of transoceanic cable systems, beginning with the nineteenth century telegraph network and extending to today's fiber-optic infrastructure. She is also co-editor of *Signal Traffic: Critical Studies of Media Infrastructure* (2015), *Sustainable Media: Critical Approaches to Media and Environment* (2016), and the "Elements" book series at Duke University Press. Her current project, Media Hot and Cold, traces the relationship between media technologies, embodied perception, and thermal conditions.

# April 24: Panel 4: Expanding Soundscape: Experiments In Field Recording

**KEVIN T. ALLEN**, filmmaker and sound artist

**Kevin T. Allen** is a filmmaker and sound artist who makes ethnographically imbued "sound-films" in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, India, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, the Wild West, and the migrant farm worker community of Immokalee, Florida. Recent research leads him to find culture not exclusively in human forms, but also inherent within physical landscapes and material objects. His work is featured internationally at museums and festivals and is funded through the Jerome Foundation. He is a part-time assistant professor of sound and filmmaking at The New School.

**MAILE COLBERT**, Doctoral Research Fellow at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Collaborator in the research group on Cinema and Philosophy, IFILNOVA

**Maile Colbert** is an intermedia artist and educator with a concentration on sound and video. She holds a BFA in The Studio for Interrelated Media from Massachusetts College of Art, an MFA in Integrated Media/Film and Video from the California Institute of the Arts, and is currently a Research Fellow towards a PhD in the Estudos Artísticos program in the College of Social and Human Sciences at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa. She has had multiple screenings and exhibits, and has performed and screened widely in Japan, Europe, Mexico, and the States.

# May 1: Panel 5: Everyday Forms of Innovation: Africa Contemporary

**SEAN JACOBS**, Associate Professor, International Affairs, The New School; Founder and Editor, Africa is a Country

> **Sean Jacobs** is on the international affairs faculty of The New School. A native of Cape Town, South Africa, he studied there, at Northwestern University and the University of London. He has held fellowships at The New School, Harvard University and NYU. His writings on African politics, reality television, the internet and soccer, have appeared in/on *The New York Times*, *Jacobin*, *The Guardian*, *Volkskrant* and *Chimurenga Chronic*.

**CLAPPERTON CHAKANETSA MAVHUNGA**, Associate Professor, Program in Science, Technology, and Society, MIT

> **Professor Mavhunga** is an associate professor of science, technology, and society at MIT. His professional interests lie in the history, theory, and practice of science, technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship in the international context, with a focus on Africa. He is the author of *Transient Workspaces: Technologies of Everyday Innovation in Zimbabwe* (MIT Press, 2014), and has just finished editing a volume entitled *What Do Science, Technology, and Innovation Mean from Africa?* which explores STI in Africa from an archaeological, historical, philosophical, anthropological, STS, engineering, development, and policymaking perspective. Mavhunga's second monograph—on tsetse fly as a site of African knowledge production—is finally finished after extensive further research and is expected late 2017 or early 2018.

# May 8: Recap

# May 15: Pizza + Prattle (Optional)