

**Media Studies: Ideas 3650 - NMDS 5006 - B**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**Instructor: Eduardo Navas, navase@newschool.edu**  
**Media Studies Department, The New School University**  
**Tuesdays 4 – 5:50 PM**  
**Fall 2012**

**Course Description (as defined by the Media Studies Department)**

This course is required of all first-year Media Studies students; students may be advised to take the course either concurrently with or in the semester after Understanding Media Studies. Media Studies: Ideas overviews the major schools of academic thought that have had an influence on the field of Media Studies, as they pertain to three central themes: Media and Power, Media and Technology, and Media and Aesthetics. The historical and philosophical roots of the discipline are emphasized through a wide variety of readings, discussions, and academic writing assignments. This course is required for all students, to be taken in the first year of study.

**Specific Focus of Seminar**

Given the pervasiveness and growing ubiquity of computing, this section of Media Studies: Ideas will focus on the historical importance of media at large as well as new media in relation to the aesthetics of emerging technologies. Participants will be expected to evaluate selected readings along with actual media production, available online, which includes video, music, film, and gaming. This approach should provide participants with a well-rounded introduction to the complexity of media in contemporary culture.

**Class Structure**

Class sessions consist of discussions of assigned texts. Each participant will select at least one reading from a list and will come prepared to lead the discussion together with the professor for the specific week. Students are not expected to do a thorough presentation of the selected text, but rather have an overall understanding of the argument in order to pose questions on areas that need clarification. Other students will be expected to participate by considering the questions while sharing their own views on the texts.

Students will also be expected to post at least one reflective comment online about the texts for each week. This will be considered part of participation.

**Student Evaluation**

Participants will be evaluated based on a written midterm, a final as well as a short essay on two theoretical texts which is due at the end of the term.

The midterm and final will both consist of five questions. The exams will be taken in-class. The questions will be specific to the texts discussed up to the time of the exam. The final will not be cumulative, meaning that it will not ask students to consider texts prior to the midterm.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Conceptually map and critique specific theoretical frameworks of media criticism in relation to contemporary culture.

2. Organize and present thoughts in a clear, systematic, and convincing manner through weekly discussions as well as written assignments.
3. Focus on the development of an informed critical opinion.

### **A Note on Plagiarism**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. A student who commits plagiarism will be reported to the office of the Media Studies. The student's behavior will be taken very seriously and dealt with according to the guidelines provided by The New School. To avoid plagiarism, please cite your sources when appropriate.

### **THE NEW SCHOOL ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY POLICY (excerpt)**

The New School views "academic honesty and integrity" as the duty of every member of an academic community to claim authorship for his or her own work and only for that work, and to recognize the contributions of others accurately and completely. This obligation is fundamental to the integrity of intellectual debate, and creative and academic pursuits. Academic honesty and integrity includes accurate use of quotations, as well as appropriate and explicit citation of sources in instances of paraphrasing and describing ideas, or reporting on research findings or any aspect of the work of others (including that of faculty members and other students). Academic dishonesty results from infractions of this "accurate use". The standards of academic honesty and integrity, and citation of sources, apply to all forms of academic work, including submissions of drafts of final papers or projects. All members of the University community are expected to conduct themselves in accord with the standards of academic honesty and integrity.

### **Definitions and Examples of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating on examinations, either by copying another student's work or by utilizing unauthorized materials
- using work of others as one's own original work and submitting such work to the university or to scholarly journals, magazines, or similar publications
- submission of another students' work obtained by theft or purchase as one's own original work
- submission of work downloaded from paid or unpaid sources on the internet as one's own original work, or including the information in a submitted work without proper citation
- submitting the same work for more than one course without the knowledge and explicit approval of all of the faculty members involved
- destruction or defacement of the work of others
- aiding or abetting any act of academic dishonesty
- any attempt to gain academic advantage by presenting misleading information, making deceptive statements or falsifying documents, including documents related to internships
- engaging in other forms of academic misconduct that violate principles of integrity.

*Please download the complete document, available on Blackboard along with this syllabus.*

## Required Readings

Meenakshi Gigi Durham, Douglas Kellner (Ed.); *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Blackwell Publishers, 2005.

Nick Montfort, Noah Wardrip-Fruin (Ed.); *The New Media Reader*, MIT Press, 2003.

Habermas, Jurgen; *The Future of Human Nature*, Polity, 2003.

Check Blackboard for readings. You may acquire the *main readers* at any major online store.

## Course Requirements

Please note that final grades are dependent upon consistent performance in all course requirements.

- **Read all assigned material on time and participate in class discussion between Monday mornings and Thursday evenings of each week.**
- **Midterm:** Answer five questions in essay form on material covered to date.
- **Final:** Answer five questions in essay form on material covered after the second half of semester.
- **Short Essay:** Write an essay no longer than 1000 words comparing two texts of your choice. Guidelines will be available around the middle of the term.
- **There are no make-ups.** Please check with me for possible exceptions. Not consulting with me prior to the dates when assignments are due will lead to an automatic F. **Midterm and Final cannot be late—no exceptions.**

## Grading

- Participation 25%
- Midterm 25%
- Final 25%
- Short Essay 25%

Total 100%

## Grade Scale

Letter grade assignments are as follows:

- 94-100 = A
- 90-93 = A-
- 87-89 = B+
- 84-86 = B
- 80-83 = B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 74-76 = C
- 70-73 = C-
- 60-69 = D
- 0-59 = F

## Attendance

- Three weeks of absence = F

- One week is worth 8.5% of overall grade.
- There is no excuse for being absent unless it is an extreme case. Please check with me for exceptions.

**Office hours: Contact via e-mail**

**Semester Schedule**

Note: MCS = Media and Cultural Studies, NMR = New Media Reader. Each lecture will be complemented with online media material.

**INTRODUCTION**

**Week 1**

August 28, 2012

Introduction to Class

View online material and discuss

**FOCUS: Media and Technology**

**Week 2**

September 4, 2012

“The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” 18

Walter Benjamin (MCS)

“What is An Appartus?”

Giorgio Agamben (PDF)

**Week 3**

September 11, 2012

“The Medium is the Message” 107

Marshall McLuhan (MCS)

“From Culture to Hegemony” 144

Dick Hebdige (MCS)

**Week 4**

September 18, 2012

“The Materiality of Informatics,” excerpt from *How We Became Post Human*

Katherine Hayles (PDF)

Excerpts from *The Future of Human Nature*

Jurgen Habermas (Book)

**Week 5**

September 25, 2012

“The GNU Manifesto” 543

Richard Stallman (NMR)

“The World Wide Web” 791

Tim Berners-Lee et. al. (NMR)

**FOCUS: Media and Power**

**Week 6**

October 2, 2012

"The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas" 9  
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (MCS)  
"Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory" 130  
Raymond Williams (MCS)

**Week 7**

October 9, 2012  
Review week for Midterm

**Week 8**

**October 16, 2012**  
**Midterm taken in class**  
**Details on short essay released.**

**Week 9**

October 23, 2012  
"Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)" 79  
Louis Althusser (MCS)  
"The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" 41  
Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno (MCS)

**Week 10 & 11**

October 30 – November 6, 2012  
**\*\*Adjustment due to Hurricane Sandy\*\***  
"Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" 342  
Laura Mulvey (MCS)  
"Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance" 366  
bell hooks (MCS)

**Week 12**

November 13, 2012  
"The Commodity as Spectacle" 117  
Guy Debord (MCS)  
"The Precession of Simulacra" 453  
Jean Baudrillard (MCS)

**FOCUS: Media and Aesthetics**

**Week 13**

**Thanksgiving week**

**Week 14**

November 27, 2012  
"A Cyborg Manifesto" 543  
Donna Haraway (NMR)  
"The Fantasy Beyond Control" (644)  
Lynn Hershman (NMR)

**Week 15**

December 4, 2012

"Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, 482"

Fredric Jameson (MCS)

"Beyond Eurocentrism"

Enrique Dussel (PDF)

**Week 16**

December 11

"Listening"

Jacques Attali (PDF)

Review of material (study guidelines released)

**Paper due**

Final Exam: Released on December 13

**Week 17**

December 18

**Final Exam Due**