

UNDERSTANDING MEDIA STUDIES

Shannon Mattern, Ph.D.

matterns@newschool.edu

Class Meeting: Mondays 6-7:50, Tishman Auditorium, 66 W 12th Street (1st Week: Room 510)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 6-7pm, Wednesdays 3:30 to 5:30pm, and by appointment

2 W 13th St, 13th floor

Discussion Section Instructors

Instructors are responsible for leading your discussion sections, serving as the primary point of contact for your work on assignments, and evaluating and providing feedback on your work.

Online: CRN 4325: **Sungchoon Park**: parks743@newschool.edu

Online: CRN 4326: **Aron Hsiao**: hsiaoa02@newschool.edu

Mon 8-9:50pm: CRN 4327 (Room A-615): **JonWan Baik**: baikj953@newschool.edu

Mon 8-9:50pm: CRN 6486 (Room A-602): **Tamsyn Gilbert**: gilbet14@newschool.edu

Tue 8-9:50pm: CRN 6488 (Room A-403): **Sanja Trpkovic**: trpkS432@newschool.edu

Thu 8-9:50pm: CRN 6490 (Room A-502): **Aron Hsiao**: hsiaoa02@newschool.edu

Understanding Media Studies is a required colloquium for all Media Studies students in their first semester of study. Students must register for the Monday night lecture and an online or on-site discussion section; online students register only for the online discussion section and access recorded lectures and lecture materials through our Ning site. Recordings will be posted by Wednesday at 9am.

Members of the Media Studies Principal Faculty and other invited guests from the University and the wider field of media studies and practice will share their own work and methods, thereby exposing students to the varied dimensions of research and practice in the field, and particularly in our Department. Over the course of the semester, students will meet the instructors, support staff, and colleagues with whom they will work throughout their graduate studies; become familiar with useful University resources; and develop skills and practices needed for graduate study.

Students will complete several reflective and exploratory exercises leading incrementally toward the completion of a mock thesis or grant proposal or comprehensive academic plan, which will help students to map their own paths through the program and will serve as an essential advising document.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Grading is **pass/fail**, but, as with all required courses in our program, students must have a **'B' average** in order to pass the course. Why is this class pass/fail? Because much of your time will be spent exploring possible trajectories through the program or trying on various interests; it's all but impossible to quantify "success" in exploration. Furthermore, in regard to the assignments you'll be completing: for most of you, this might be your first time writing an abstract or a literature review; we want to give you an opportunity to try your best, and to receive constructive feedback, without the fear of "failure." And even for those of you who might have experience with some of the skills addressed in the assignments: the work you complete in UMS will be only the first step in a semester-long development process, and will feed into work you complete throughout your entire Masters career; your work here is work-in-progress.

Lecture Attendance. Attendance at the weekly lectures is expected. On-site students are expected to attend in-person and sign in with their Instructors each week, and online students are expected to review all posted recordings (which will be posted by **9am on Wednesday** of each week) and support material. More than two excused absences, any unexcused absences, or excessive tardiness – or, for online students, failure to review the recorded lectures – will negatively impact your grade.

Discussion Section Participation: 25%. Your discussion sections will give you an opportunity to “digest” the week’s lecture, and to discuss the presentation in relation to the course readings and assignment. You’ll also occasionally participate in group activities and individual presentations. On some weeks – especially those weeks when assignments are due – your discussion sections will not meet. On occasion, you’ll have an opportunity to meet with your Instructors one-on-one or in small groups, to discuss your work-in-progress, in lieu of a class meeting.

Onsite: Please show up having completed the assignments and ready to engage in conversation. The agenda for each week’s discussion is listed on the syllabus, but individual Instructors will determine the specific activities for your group. Some Instructors may ask that you post material to your class’s Ning group in advance of your class meeting or might, in consultation with the class, identify other potential uses for your group’s dedicated online space. More than two excused absences to the on-site meetings, any unexcused absences, or excessive tardiness will negatively impact your grade.

Online. The agenda for each week’s discussion section is listed on the syllabus, but your own Instructor will determine how to structure your online activity each week. You are expected to post two or three substantial¹ comments during each discussion week. Comments posted after each week’s deadline will not count toward your participation requirement, and failure to post for two discussion weeks may compromise your ability to pass the class.

More than four absences total, between the lecture and discussion section, will result in failure of the course.

Abstracts: 20%. Described below. Due to your TA by **February 28 @ 6pm.**

Literature/Media Review: 25%. Described below. Due to your TA by April 25 @ 6pm.

Mock Thesis Proposal, Mock Grant Proposal, or Academic Plan: 30%. Described below. Due to your TA by May 16 @ 6pm.

Your Instructors will specify how to submit your assignments.

¹ By “substantial,” we mean synthetic (i.e., in that it reflects an attempt on your part to think “collectively” about the week’s themes and assigned texts – and, if appropriate, references these texts), critical, analytic, and reasonably lengthy (i.e., at least 100 words). Please read – or, at the very least, *skim* – all of the other posts, and, if you choose, respond to others’ comments in *your* post.

Nota Bene: Some online communication formats seem to give us license to speak or write more colloquially or unguardedly than we otherwise would. Remember that the writing style and content you’d use for/in a text message, an email to a close acquaintance, or an anonymous posting to an online discussion group aren’t the same as those you’d use for a class posting. Blackboard posts should be collegial and professional – not necessarily hyper-formal, just respectful and well put-together.

OUR TOOLS

Our Ning Site:

- A repository for all of our readings and resources and the recorded lectures and weekly presentation material.
- Home to your discussion sections. Even those discussion sections that take place on-site will have space on Ning for you to use as your Instructors specify. You're welcome to propose to your Instructors additional ways that your group's online space can be used to support your learning.

Required Texts:

- All required readings and resources will be posted to the **RESOURCES** area of Ning.

Recommended Texts:

- Alan Fletcher, *The Art of Looking Sideways* (New York: Phaidon, 2001): a provocative "guide to visual awareness" – the source of much personal inspiration
- 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 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 MA²
- John Swales & Christine Feak, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*, 2nd Ed. (Ann Arbor: university of Michigan Press, 2004): especially useful for students new to academic writing, or for whom English is a second language.

Whom to Contact for What: For the sake of efficiency, we ask that you consider your Instructors your first points of contact; they can address all issues regarding attendance and other class expectations, assignments, research skills, project development, and general course-related concerns. Shannon will assist the Instructors, 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 Instructors.

² Semanza also has a few things to say about the notorious "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. Such courses tend to be notorious among MA and Ph.D. students, both current and past, but be careful not to buy into *all* of the hype. 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 and, nearly as important, it will serve as the basis for how others in your program – both professors and colleagues – perceive you and your scholarly potential. 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 24: **GETTING OUR BEARINGS**¹

For this week only we'll be meeting in 66 W 12th Street, Room 510

- Shannon Mattern, "[Coda](#)" *Wordsinspace.net*.

DISCUSSION SECTION: This week you'll introduce yourselves and talk about what brought you here.

January 31: **MAPPING THE FIELD:** The Cartography of Media Studies²




Guest: Grace Hunt, Graduate Writing Center @ 6pm

Locating the field at the intersection of the humanities, the social sciences, and professional education

The following offer general advice for those beginning graduate school. The first is targeted toward full-time students, the second toward part-time students – although both posts have useful advice for both populations.

- 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).

While I'll be reviewing the history and mapping the terrain of media studies as a field in today's class, I'd like for you to think about the formats (institutional, pedagogical, etc.) in which media studies – particularly media studies as we do it, with theory and production tied together – is taught, and how these formats shape how we learn within the field. How did the seminar and the studio become such familiar formats for instruction? How has the history of design education informed how we teach and learn?

- Emily Apter, "O Seminar!" *Cabinet* 39 (Fall 2010): 97-104.
- Stuart Bailey, "[Towards a Critical Faculty](#)" Academic Workshop, Parsons School for Design, Winter 2006/7.
- J. Abbott Miller, "Elementary School" and Ellen Lupton, "Visual Dictionary" In Ellen Lupton and J. Abbott Miller, Eds., *The ABCs of   : The Bauhaus and Design Theory* (Princeton Architectural Press, 1993): 4-33.³

What specific media studies tradition has been cultivated at The New School?

- [The New School for Social Research, Brochure, 1925](#)

DISCUSSION SECTION: This week you'll discuss the past, present, and future evolution of the field in relation to its historical, socio-political, and cultural contexts. What new sub-fields have emerged, or are emerging, and what factors, both within the academy and without, might have inspired their emergence? What new fields of inquiry and creation do you see growing within the academy, and in media studies in particular? What new modes of instruction and pedagogical formats can best support this work?

February 7: ORIENTING YOURSELF WITHIN THE FIELD

Guest: Librarian?

- Shannon Mattern, “[Identifying Your Interests and Establishing a Research Plan](#)” + [the following may cover terrain that’s familiar to some of you; if that’s the case, skim] “[Finding Sources](#)” [guides] *Wordsinspace.net*.

- Justin Reedy & Madhavi Murty, “[Creating a Research Agenda](#)” *Inside Higher Ed* (May 20, 2009).

Academia, like any other field of cultural production, is subject to fashion:

- James S. Lambert, “[Heteronormativity is Hot Right Now](#)” *The Chronicle Review* (September 28, 2009). [yes, this is a parody!]

How do you establish a public academic/creative/professional persona and become engaged in the field?

- Henry Jenkins, “[Public Intellectuals in the New-Media Landscape](#)” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 54:30 (April 4, 2008).
- Margaret Kimball, “[Your Blog is Not Your Resume \(and 7 Other Tips\)](#)” [Blog Post] (June 9, 2010).
- “[Conference Tips](#)” [guide] *Wordsinspace.net*.

DISCUSSION SECTION: This week you’ll consider some of the questions posed in the Intellectual Autobiography, below. How do they inform how you orient yourself within the field? How can you then publicly situate yourself in the field – via an online persona, publications, conferences, festivals, etc.?

INDEPENDENT EXERCISE: Intellectual Autobiography:

You may have already considered many of the following questions when you wrote the statement of purpose that accompanied your application. Regardless, it’s a good idea to pose these questions to yourself *again* as you decide how you’d plot your course through the program – and how you’d like to use your work in this class to help you get started on your journey.

Before you commit yourself to a research or creative project, it’s a good idea to reflect on what brought you here, to graduate school, in order to better understand how your personal history shaped the paradigms and perspectives that you bring to media studies. At the same time, it is important to project yourself into the future, to ask yourself where you want to be five, ten, twenty years from now. What are your intellectual and professional histories, and how have those intertwined histories led you to grad school? What intellectual, creative, or professional models have most profoundly impacted your development? Think about favorite authors, media creators, teachers, classes, schools of thought, etc. What are your intellectual and creative interests within the field? What media-related questions and problems excite you? How do you define research questions or problems, or develop project ideas? What do you want to study, what would you like to learn, to enable you to follow those intellectual, creative, and professional interests? What theories, learning models, and modes of presentation (written, auditory, visual, etc.) do you feel most comfortable with? What are your work patterns? What aspects or stages of research or project development come easily to you, and which do you struggle with? Do you commonly reflect on your own thinking processes and creative practices, and if so, how? What contribution – intellectual, political, creative, professional, etc. – do you want to make to the field? An intellectual autobiography is the history of your brain, of yourself as a thinking, creative being; as a student of media studies.

Sample intellectual autobiographies include:

- Carol Becker, "Interdisciplinarity" *Symploke* 12:1-2 (2004): 191-208.
- Stuart Ewen, Preface to *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (New York: McGraw-Hill, [1976]2001).
- L. H. Gann, "Ex Africa: An Africanist's Intellectual Autobiography" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 31:3 (September 1993): 477-498.
- Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, "Personal Voice / Feminist Voice" *Arethusa* 34 (2001): 191-210.

INDEPENDENT EXERCISE: Professional Website

When I say professional, I don't mean you have to employ a professional web designer. I'm referring instead to a website that focuses on your professional/academic/creative self, rather than the self who likes to document his playlists or post photos of the dog wearing sunglasses. If you don't already have your own website, you're encouraged to create one. If you're new to design, try iWeb or a simple blog. This site can serve a number of roles: it can function as your academic and professional portfolio – which might one day help get you a promotion, a job, or an acceptance into a PhD program. It can serve as a research "journal" or database. And if you use this site as the "hub" for all of your work, across all of your classes, you can also use it to chronicle your progress through the program; it'll help you find connections between your classes, remember what you've learned – and someday, it'll allow you to reflect on your graduate experience. We'll talk this semester about the value and uses of your website.

February 14: **THE ORDER OF THINGS**

Introduce Abstracts Assignment

Collecting, annotating, organizing, and processing research materials and opportunities for presentation and publication:

- C. Wright Mills, “On Intellectual Craftsmanship,” Appendix to *The Sociological Imagination*, 40th Anniversary Ed. (New York: Oxford, [1959]2000): 195-226.
- Shannon Mattern, “[Reading Effectively](#)” + “[Note-Taking and Abstracting](#)” [guides] *Wordsinspace.net*.
- Shannon Mattern, [Introduction](#) “Notes, Lists, and Everyday Inscriptions” Special Issue *The New Everyday* (Fall 2010) [+ read any other articles you might be interested in]⁴
- Joseph M. Moxley, “How to Write Informative Abstracts” In *Publish, Don’t Perish: The Scholar’s Guide to Academic Writing and Publishing* (Westport, CT: Praeger 1992): 61-4.

DISCUSSION SECTION: This week you’ll work collaboratively to abstract a few sample articles, chapters, or essays from various “genres” of academic publishing, and you’ll talk about citation formats and the importance of maintaining a complete and accurate bibliography.

ASSIGNMENT: Abstracts: Due February 28.

Your work in your discussion sections should prepare you to try your hand at writing abstracts of texts you’re reading either in your independent research, or for your other classes (in which case they’d ideally bear some relevance to your own research interests). Write **one 300-word abstract of an academic journal article or essay, and one 600-word abstract of an academic book**. You’ll undoubtedly find that some essays and articles – especially those in scholarly journals – already contain abstracts. And of course books feature blurbs on their dust jackets and their Amazon profiles. Your challenge is to write *new* abstracts that not only crystallize the primary arguments, key concepts, methods, etc., of the texts, but also address their value in relation to your *own particular projects* and general research interests.

These abstracts should be the kinds of documents that you’d want to keep in your “file” (Mills) – your research database – for future reference. When you want to refresh your memory about a particular text and your impression of it, it’ll be much easier to review a one-page abstract than to skim through the entire text.

Abstracts are also commonly written *before* the full text takes shape. You’ll likely be asked to submit a brief abstract or your paper/presentation/production as part of your proposal for a conference or a publication. If your proposal is accepted, you can then transform that abstract into a fleshed-out paper or production. **Search for CFPs** (calls for papers/proposals) **for publications and conferences** that correspond to your research interests. Select two CFPs that require brief abstracts, and **create proposals** in accordance with the organizers’ submission guidelines. When you submit these proposals, please make sure to include copies of the CFPs so your Instructors can provide constructive criticism.

February 21: **PRESIDENT'S DAY: NO LECTURE OR DISCUSSION SECTIONS**

February 28: **WHAT MEDIA STUDIES MAKES: FORMS OF SCHOLARSHIP**

Guests: Amir Husak?

The following examine traditional and alternative forms of academic writing⁵:

- First, I have to ask: do you have a style guide? MLA, Chicago, Harvard, APA...? If not, get one. Which format is for you? Consider the formats used in the publications you find most useful. (Yes, a lot of the citation formatting info is available online, and yes, there's now lots of software that will format your citations for you, but the printed style guides have useful writing tips).
- If you're new to writing academic essays, I recommend Joseph M. Moxley, *Publish, Don't Perish: The Scholar's Guide to Academic Writing and Publishing* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992). Another recommendation – especially if English is not your native language – is John Swales & Christine Feak, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*, 2nd Ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).
- Rachel Toor, "[Bad Writing and Bad Thinking](#)" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (15 April 2010). [I recommend many of Toor's article in *The Chronicle*]
- William Zinsser, "Simplicity," "Clutter," "Style" *On Writing Well*, 5th Ed. (New York: HarperPerennial, 1976]1994): 7-25.
- **Skim** through [In Media Res](#), read about [MediaCommons](#), and browse through [Flow](#).
- **Skim** through the archives of the [Nettime](#) and [iDC](#) mailing lists.

What about multi-mediated forms of scholarship? How can new media technologies allow us not only to present our research "results" in new ways, but to actually reshape our research agendas and methods?⁶

- Tara McPherson, "Introduction: Media Studies and the Digital Humanities" *Cinema Journal* 48:2 (Winter 2009): 119-123.
- Review the following examples of multimodal projects:
 - Eric Faden, "[A Manifesto for Critical Media](#)" *Mediascape* (Spring 2008).
 - Susan H. Delagrang, "[Wunkerdammer, Cornell, and the Visual Canon of Arrangement](#)" *Kairos* 13:2 (Spring 2009).

Yet these new forms of scholarship raise new ethical questions⁷:

- **Skim** Society for Cinema and Media Studies, "[Society for Cinema and Media Studies' Statement of Fair Use Best Practices for Media Studies Publishing](#)" (2009).
- Center for Education Technology, Middlebury, Colby, Bates & Bowdoin Colleges, "[Plagiarism Resource Site](#)" [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 failure of a course – or even expulsion from the program.]

DISCUSSION SECTION: This week in your discussion section you'll talk about various forms of academic writing, and you'll look at some examples of non-textual scholarship and discuss what *makes* them "scholarly."

March 7: TOOLS & METHODS⁸

Overview of Methods Course Offerings

Introduce Literature Review Assignment

What methodological and technological tools do we have at our disposal, and how do we critically assess their affordances and limitations – and choose the right tools for the job?

- Shannon Mattern, “[Tools & Material Consciousness](#)” *Wordsinspace.net*.
- Methods Charts & Lists: John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* 2nd Ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003): 186-7; Carole Gray & Julian Malins, *Visualizing Research: A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004): 103-20.
- Klaus Bruhn Jensen, “The Qualitative Research Process” In KBJ, Ed., *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies* (New York: Routledge, 2002): 235-53.
- Stephen A. R. Scrivener, “The Roles of Art and Design Process and Object In Research” In Nithikul Nimkulrat & Tim O’Riley, *Reflections and Connections: On the Relationship Between Creative Production and Academic Research* (Helsinki: University of Art and Design, 2009): 69-79.
- **Skim** through the Media Studies [Thesis Handbook](#)

DISCUSSION SECTION: This week in your discussion section you’ll talk about traditional and “multimodal” methods that would suit your individual research projects. And you’ll briefly discuss the process and value of writing a literature/media review; you’ll continue to discuss this assignment over the following weeks.

ASSIGNMENT: Literature Review: Due April 25

See Shannon Mattern, “[The Literature Review / Mediagraphy](#)” [guide] *Wordsinspace.net*.

Review no fewer than 15 sources, in a variety of media (the majority should be scholarly books, journals, and multimedia resources, but you’re also welcome to incorporate popular periodicals, documentaries, and other non-scholarly resources). Now, distill their foci, methodologies, conclusions, etc., in an **eight- to ten-page double-spaced literature review**. Focus on finding patterns and drawing conclusions instead of providing a laundry list of research projects. Your goal is to find the “holes,” the omissions in the literature or shortcomings in previous research, that your work promises to fill.

March 14: **SPRING BREAK: NO LECTURE OR DISCUSSION SECTION**

FOCUS AREA PRESENTATIONS / PANEL DISCUSSIONS

For the remainder of the semester, each week will be dedicated to one of our program's seven focus areas. We'll hear from faculty and guests who work within each of these areas, and we'll talk with them about ways you might pursue your *own* interests in these areas at The New School, throughout the city, in the academy at large, and in the wider professional field.

FOCUS AREAS YET TO BE SCHEDULED:

- Media & The Urban Environment
- Social Media & Social Change
- Film Form & Practice
- Sound Studies & Acoustic Environments

AVAILABLE DATES: March 28, April 18, May 2, May 9

March 21: **MEDIA MANAGEMENT**

Guests: Faculty Member Paul Hardart + ???

- Readings TBD

DISCUSSION SECTION: This week you'll discuss the faculty presentation in relation to the assigned readings, and identify other ways you can explore Media Management at TNS and throughout the city. You'll also begin planning for your discussion section's "report," which you (well, not necessarily *you* – but some representative from your section) will share during the lecture on April 11. This "report" could take the form of a creative response – a recording of one-minute interviews with each student, an issue/Lulu interactive publication, a mind map of everyone's interests, a collage of students' personal websites, etc. It's intended to reflect and document the collective and individual work you've been completing in your discussion sections up to this point in the semester.

March 28: **FOCUS AREA 2**

Guest: Faculty Member ???

- Readings TBD

DISCUSSION SECTION: No on-site meetings this week. Instead, you'll converse online about your discussion section "report" and post brief reflections on **the Focus Area presenter**.

April 4: DOCUMENTARY STUDIES

Guests: Faculty Member Michelle Materre + ???

- Readings TBD

DISCUSSION SECTION: In next week's lecture, we'll hear from each of the discussion sections. This week, *in* your discussion sections, you'll finalize the plans for, and prepare, your report. You'll also briefly reflect on the week's Focus Area presentation.

April 11: RECAP OF FIRST 3 FOCUS AREA PRESENTATIONS

Reports from the Discussion Sections

Introduce Final Assignment

- NSSR's "[External Funding](#)" Website.
- Shannon Mattern, "[Media Arts & Research Funding Sources](#)" *Wordsinspace.net* [This is an archived page from my old website; if you find dead links, you can Google the resource to find its current web address.]
- Adam Przeworski & Frank Salomon, "[The Art of Writing Proposals: Some Candid Suggestion for Applicants to Social Science Research Council Competitions](#)" Reprinted from the Social Science Research Council ([1988]1995).
- Lisa Patrick Bentley, "[Grant-Writing Tips for Graduate Students](#)" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (November 11, 2010) [This piece is written primarily for science and social science students – but the advice also applies to students in humanities and arts fields.]

DISCUSSION SECTION: This week you'll reflect on the other discussion reports, and discuss the mechanics and logistics of your final projects.

ASSIGNMENT: Mock Thesis Proposal, Mock Grant Proposal, or Academic Plan: Due May 16

Choose one of the following three options:

MOCK THESIS PROPOSAL: Integrate the work you've done on your abstracts, your literature review, and your rudimentary exploration of methods options to complete a 12- to 15-page mock thesis proposal, following the guidelines laid out in our program's *Thesis Handbook*. Feel free to identify, through margin notes or foot/endnotes, areas where you are aware that development is needed, and explain your plan of action for developing those areas – e.g., by taking particular courses, studying a particular body of literature, getting involved in particular professional organizations, etc.

MOCK GRANT PROPOSAL: Integrating the work you've already done on your abstracts, your literature review, and your rudimentary exploration of methods options and technological tools to create a mock grant proposal. The readings for this week should point you toward some potential funding sources. You're encouraged to choose a grant that requires you to submit a proposal that is no longer than 15 pages, and that requires a research component grounding your project within the academic field of media studies.

ACADEMIC PLAN: Consider some of the following questions:

- What have you learned from the previous assignments in this course?
- Has your work on the literature review helped you to create a future reading or viewing list? Have any exercises revealed strengths or areas of weakness that you'll need to develop? What resources are available that will assist you in that development?
- What are your existing talents? How will you draw on those talents, or use your time here to cultivate new ones?
- What are you here for? What do you hope to achieve by the time you've completed the MA program, and immediately after? What courses will you need to take in pursuit of those goals?
- What logic(s) will guide the selection of your courses? What pragmatic concerns, or financial or time limitations, will influence your course selection?
- Are there particular faculty with whom you'd like to take a class, from whom you'll seek advising, or who might serve as an independent study/project or thesis advisor? For what kinds of issues, and how often, do you think you'll need advising?
- How do you plan to establish connections within the program – with fellow students, with support staff, with faculty?
- What's your timeline? Will you be taking a full, nine-credit course load every semester? Will you be working, or do you plan to do an internship, volunteer, or get involved in student activities that might require a significant time commitment? How might these activities inform your course selections?
- Examine the course offerings in other graduate programs throughout the university. Do any of these programs offer courses – courses that aren't offered in Media Studies – that speak to your interests?
- Do you plan to complete a thesis? If so, what topics or projects are you considering? What courses would allow you to better explore those topics and/or develop the skills or methods you'll need to employ in the execution of your thesis? How might you use your coursework to advance your work on your thesis? And how will your thesis impact your degree completion timeline?
- Consider which methods seem best suited to your proposed projects, and identify some methodology courses – either within or outside our program – that might serve you well.

Now, consider your responses to these questions in mapping your projected course through the Media Studies MA program. Your academic plan can take a textual or multimedia form – but it should, at the very least, include text that addresses: (1) Goals; (2) Strategies: course choice; thesis/non-thesis; etc.; and (3) a tentative Timeline, identifying when you'd like to take particular courses, internships, independent coursework, etc.

April 18: **FOCUS AREA 4**

Guest: ??

- Readings TBD

DISCUSSION SECTION: Your Literature Reviews are due next week. Rather than meeting as a group this week, you'll have the opportunity to meet individually or in small groups with your Instructor to discuss your work on the assignment.

April 25: **MEDIA AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

Guest: Faculty Member Sumita Chakravarty

- Readings TBD

DISCUSSION SECTION: No meeting this week.

May 2: **FOCUS AREA 6**

Guest: ??

- Readings TBD

DISCUSSION SECTION: This week you'll discuss the previous three Focus Area presentations and consider ways that you might pursue your own potential interest in these areas.

May 9: **FOCUS AREA 7**

Guest: ??

- Readings TBD

DISCUSSION SECTION: This week you'll discuss the final **Focus Area presentation**, address any questions you might have about your final assignments, reflect on the entire semester, and discuss how you might apply your experiences from UMS in future semesters and beyond your graduate school careers.

May 16: **REMAPPING**

DISCUSSION SECTION: No meetings this week.

¹ Precedents of Grad Students Calling for an "Orientation" Class: Virginia Crisco, Chris W. Gallagher, Deborah Minter, Katie Hupp Stahlnecker & John Talbird, "Graduate Education As Education: The Pedagogical Arts of Institutional Critique" *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 3:3 (2003): 359-376; Michael D. Gunzenhauser & Cynthia I. Gerstl-Pepin, "Engaging Graduate Education: A Pedagogy for Epistemological and Theoretical Diversity" *The Review of Higher Education* 29:3 (Spring 2006): 319-346. **[stop at 337]**; Nancy Lesko, Jacqueline A. Simmons, Antoinette Quarshie, "The Pedagogy of Monsters: Scary Disturbances in a Doctoral Research Preparation Course" *Teacher's College Record* 110:8 (2008): 1541-1573.

-
- ² Rick Altman “Wither Film Studies (in a Post-Film Studies World)” *Cinema Journal* 49: 1 (Fall 2009): 131-135; Dudley Andrew, “The Core and Flow of Film Studies” *Critical Inquiry* 35 (Summer 2009): 879-915; James Carey, “The Chicago School and the History of Mass Communication Research” In Eve Stryker Munson & Catherine A. Warren, Eds., *James Carey: A Critical Reader* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997): 19, 24; Peter Decherney, “Inventing Film Study and Its Object at Columbia University, 1915-1938” *Film History* 12:4 (2000): 443-460; Jonathan Dovey, “Dinosaurs and Butterflies – Media Practice Research in New Media Ecologies” *Journal of Media Practice* 9:3 (2008): 243-56; Lee Grieveson, “Discipline and Publish: The Birth of Cinematology” *Cinema Journal* 49:1 (Fall 2009): 168-175; John Guillory, “Genesis of the Media Concept” *Critical Inquiry* 36 (Winter 2010): 321-362; Edgar Huang, “Teaching Button-Pushing versus Teaching Thinking: The State of New Media Education in US Universities” *Convergence* 15:2 (2009): 233-247; William Merrin, “Media Studies 2.0: Upgrading and Open-Sourcing the Discipline” *Interactions: Studies in Communication and Culture* 1:1 (2009): 17-34; Virginia Wright Wexman, “Media Studies and the Academy: A Tangled Tale” *Cinema Journal* 49:1 (Fall 2009): 140-146.
- ³ Johannes Itten, *Design and Form: The Basic Course at the Bauhaus and Later*, Rev. Ed. (New York: Wiley, 1975).
- ⁴ Stan Brakhage [Notebooks](#); Jessica Helfand and Rebecca Johnson Melvin, “[Scrapbooks and Self-Works](#)” *Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum* (April 28, 2009).
- ⁵ Gerald Graff, “Scholars and Sound Bites: The Myth of Academic Difficulty” *PMLA* 115:5 (October 2000): 1041-1052; Gail A. Hornstein, “Prune That Prose” *The Chronicle Review* (September 7, 2009); Lee Konstantinou, “[On the Origins of Bad Writing](#)” *Arcade* [Blog Post] (May 16, 2010); James Miller, “[Is Bad Writing Necessary?](#)” *Lingua Franca* 9:9 (December/January 2000); Deborah Tannen, “Agonism in Academic Discourse” *Journal of Pragmatics* 34 (2002): 1651-1669; [Write Your Own Academic Sentence](#).
- ⁶ [HASTAC](#); Shannon Mattern, “[Evaluating Multimodal Student Work](#)” *Wordsinspace.net* [Blog Post] (August 11, 2010); EXAMPLES: [Vectors: Journal of Culture and Technology in a Dynamic Vernacular](#); [American Transit](#); Dayton Express: <http://www.daytonexpress.org/>
- ⁷ Ewa McGrail, “[Copying Right and Copying Wrong with Web 2.0 Tools...](#)” *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education* 10:3 (2010); Center for Social Media, “[Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Online Video](#).”
- ⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Chamboredon & Jean-Claude Passeron, “**Introduction—Epistemology and Methodology**” *The Craft of Sociology: Epistemological Preliminaries* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, [1968]1991): 1-12; Joy Frechtling & Laure Sharp Westate, [User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed Methods Evaluations](#) (National Science Foundation, 1997); Sharleye Nagy Hesse-Biber & Patricia Leavy, *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: 2006); Barry J. Mauer, “The Epistemology of Cindy Sherman: A Research Method for Media and Cultural Studies” *Mosaic* 31:1 (2005): 93-113; Raymond A. Morrow & David D. Brown, “Deconstructing the Conventional Discourse on Methods” *Critical Theory and Methodology* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994);