

UNDERSTANDING MEDIA STUDIES

NMDS 5004 / CRN 4324
Mondays 6-7:50 pm (we'll aim to end by 7:30)
Tishman Auditorium, 66 West 12th Street

Shannon Mattern, Ph.D.
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2 West 13th St, 13th Floor
Office Hours: Tu 6-7, W 3:30-5:30 + by appt.

Understanding Media Studies is a required colloquium for all Media Studies students in their first semester of study. 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 that will serve them throughout their graduate studies and, ideally, in their professional careers.

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 a useful advising document.

Discussion Section

Instructors

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

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

Online: CRN 4326: **Aron Hsiao**: hsiao02@newschool.edu

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

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

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

How do I know what discussion section I'm in? Check your course schedule on MyNewSchool.

Technical

Associates

Lecture Video-recordings: **Lukas Brasiskis**: brasl543@newschool.edu

Ning Site: **Darrell McIndoe**: mcind532@newschool.edu

Whom do I contact for what? If you're having problem accessing Ning or your assigned group, or if you're experiencing Ning-related technical difficulties, contact the Ning Technical Associate. If you're having trouble with the lecture videos, contact the Video Technical Associate. For the sake of efficiency, we ask that you consider your Instructors your first points of contact for all *academic* matters; they can address 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.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND 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 much of your time will be spent exploring possible trajectories through the program or trying on various interests; it’s all but impossible (and not terribly helpful) to quantify “success” in exploration. 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.

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.¹

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-only 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 small-group activities and prepare for assignments. On some weeks – especially those weeks when assignments are due – your discussion sections will not meet. On some of those occasions, you’ll have an opportunity to meet with your Instructors one-on-one or in small groups to discuss your work-in-progress.

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

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. Morphey, Eds., *The Routledge International Handbook of Higher Education* (New York: Routledge, 2009): 218).

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 substantial² 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.**

Final Project: 30%

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

Your Instructors will specify how to submit your assignments.

You can use your assignments to explore or start working on an independent project, or to support your work in your other classes. If the latter, please remember that submitting identical work for more than one class constitutes plagiarism. Your UMS work should *reinforce* your other coursework – not duplicate it. Please speak with your Instructor about how to tailor your work for UMS.

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the University's academic honesty policy; see "[Academic Honesty](#)" on the Media Studies department website. 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.

² 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. Your posts should be collegial and professional – not necessarily hyper-formal, just respectful and well put-together.

OUR TOOLS

Our Ning Site

<http://umsspring2011.ning.com>

- A repository of all of our readings and resources and the recorded lectures and weekly presentation material.
- “Classroom” for the online discussion sections. Find the **Group** for the section in which you’re registered.
- “Annex” space for on-site discussion sections. You’ll use this space as your Instructors specify.

You’re welcome to propose additional ways that your group’s online space can be used to support your learning.

How do I gain access to Ning? At the start of the semester, you’ll receive an invitation to join the site. You will have been already granted membership into your discussion section’s group. If you have trouble accessing your group (which might be the case if you registered late or switched sections), please contact our Ning Technical Associate.

Required Texts

All required readings and resources will be posted to the **Readings** 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 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.³

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.

³ Semanza 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).

OUR SCHEDULE

January 24 **GETTING OUR BEARINGS**¹

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

DISCUSSION SECTION This week you'll introduce yourselves and talk about what brought you to grad school, and to Media Studies in particular. Online groups: Because we want to give everyone time to get settled in, this week's discussion won't start until *Wednesday morning*.

January 31 **MAPPING THE FIELD: The Cartography of Media Studies**²




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

GUEST Grace Hunt, Graduate Writing Center @ 6pm

READINGS ✓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 think about the relationships between verbal and visual literacies, between thinking and making, and how we learn them?

- Emily Apter, "O Seminar!" *Cabinet* 39 (Fall 2010): 97-104.
- Stuart Bailey, "[Towards a Critical Faculty](#)" Academic Workshop, Parsons School of 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): 4-5, 22-31.³

✓What specific pedagogical traditions have been cultivated at The New School?

- The New School for Social Research, Brochure, 1925 [Please pardon the occasional odd crop.]

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
READINGS

Paul Abruzzo, Instructional Services Librarian @ 6pm

✓The following address the creation of a research plan/agenda:

- “[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).

✓Academic agendas, like those in any other field of cultural production, are 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 within the field – via an online persona, publications, conferences, festivals, etc.?

RECOMMENDED 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.
- Giuliana Bruno, Prologue to *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (New York: Verso, 2002): 1-11.
- 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.

RECOMMENDED INDEPENDENT EXERCISE: Crafting Your Professional Public Persona

Do you have, or want, a “web presence?” If so, what kind? You might create a personal/professional website where you post your completed projects – or a blog where you not only share your finished work, but also your work-in-progress. You might even tailor your Facebook profile, or create a new one, to serve professional purposes. Or you could create a profile on academia.edu, MediaCommons, or any of a number of field-specific networking or publishing sites.

This platform 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 reflect on your graduate experience.

February 14 **THE ORDER OF THINGS**

AGENDA ITEMS **Introduce Abstracts Assignment**

READINGS ✓ 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.
- “[Reading Effectively](#)” + “[Note-Taking and Abstracting](#)” Guides, *Wordsinspace.net*.
- Shannon Mattern, [Introduction](#) to “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 diligence in maintaining a 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 still, 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** (Don’t know what constitutes an “academic” publication? There are plenty of web resources that will help you figure it out – and if you still don’t get it, ask your Instructor). 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 what *you* regard as 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 – or even a festival or exhibition. 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 or conferences** that correspond to your research interests. You needn’t hand anything in; we just want you to take some time to look at what opportunities are out there – and to ask yourself how you might craft an abstract that proposes your own participation in these events. There are plenty of “sample conference proposals” available online.

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

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

GUEST [Amir Husak](#), Part-Time Faculty, Media Studies

READINGS Yes, this looks like a lot of reading – but they're all short pieces, some are optional, and some you need only skim!

✓The following examine traditional forms of academic writing⁵:

- First, I have to ask: do you have a style guide? MLA, Chicago, Harvard, APA...? If not, I recommend getting 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 useful resource – 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 articles in *The Chronicle*.]
- William Zinsser, “Simplicity,” “Clutter,” “Style” *On Writing Well*, 5th Ed. (New York: HarperPerennial, [1976]1994): 7-25. [This book is not without its critics; you can debate the merits and limitations of Zinsser's advice in your disc. sections.]

✓What about alternative, and emerging, forms of academic writing?⁶

- **Skim** through [In Media Res](#), read about [MediaCommons](#), and browse through [Flow](#).
- New School's [Academic Honesty Policy](#) and the 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.]

✓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 also to actually reshape our research agendas and methods?⁷

- 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 questions⁸:

- **Skim** Society for Cinema and Media Studies, “[Society for Cinema and Media Studies' Statement of Fair Use Best Practices for Media Studies Publishing](#)” (2009).

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 & METHODS**⁹
AGENDA ITEMS Overview of Methods Course Offerings
Introduce Literature Review Assignment

READINGS ✓ 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.

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 “[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 a small number of popular periodicals, documentaries, and other non-scholarly resources if your specific topic isn’t addressed in the scholarly press. Now, distill these sources 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 work, 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 their own work, their tools and methods, their research and production processes – and 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.

March 21 **MEDIA MANAGEMENT**

GUEST Paul Hardart, Principal Faculty, Media Studies

READINGS ✓ Rather than assigning texts that presume you have a business background, Paul has chosen readings that focus on current events. His presentation will focus on how Media Management can help us make sense of these ongoing transformations in media business.

- Michelle Slatalla, "Get Movie Popcorn, Then Check the Mail" *New York Times* (February 22, 2001).
- Darcy Travlos, "Google Buying Netflix Just Makes Sense" *Forbes.com* (November 4, 2010).
- April Dykman, "Redbox vs. iTunes vs. Netflix vs. Blockbuster" *MSN Money Partner* (February 28, 2011).

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 address questions regarding the literature review.

March 28 **FILM FORM**

GUESTS Sam Ishii Gonzales, Principal Faculty, Media Studies + Students Ryan Garretson, Courtney Krantz, and Matt Simon

READINGS Jean-Pierre Geuens, "The Film School" In *Film Production Theory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000): 55-80.

DISCUSSION SECTION No meetings this week.

April 4 DOCUMENTARY STUDIES

GUESTS Thomas Allen Harris, Documentary Filmmaker + Michelle Materre, Principal Faculty, Media Studies

READINGS ✓The following will offer some background information about this week's guest:

- Mr. Harris's production company: [Chimpanzee Productions](#)
- "[Mining the Family Photo Archive](#)" *DFFR.tv* (January 26, 2011).
- Laura A. Harris and Thomas Allen Harris, "[Black Feminism and Queer Families: A Conversation with Thomas Allen Harris](#)" *African American Review* 36:2 (Summer 2002): 273-282.
- Twelve Disciplines of Nelson Mandela: **Link TBD**
- Eric Stange, "[Digital History Review: Get Our Your Photographs!](#)" *American Heritage.com* (October 7, 2009).

DISCUSSION SECTION This week you'll talk about the previous two weeks' Focus Area presentations. We'll also look forward to next week's lecture, when you'll have an opportunity to ask general questions and provide constructive feedback on the class. To prepare, you'll spend some time in this week's discussion section identifying shared issues and possible discussion topics.

April 11 REFLECTING & LOOKING FORWARD

AGENDA ITEMS **Discuss General Course Issues + Final Assignment**

READINGS ✓The following will help to prepare you for your final assignments. Depending upon which assignment you choose, some readings will be more or less relevant at this time -- but it's still a good idea to at least *skim all* the readings so you're *familiar* with the thesis process, grantseeking/writing, and the value of contemplating your academic plan.

- Skim through the Media Studies [Thesis Handbook](#)
- Skim NSSR's "[External Funding](#)" Website.
- Skim "[Media Arts & Research Funding Sources](#)" Guide, *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.]
- Skim 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).
- Skim 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 general course discussion from the lecture and talk about 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. Keep in mind that shorter assignments are not necessarily *easier*; it's often much more difficult to be succinct than to be prolix.

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-(double-spaced)page (or 3500- to 4500-word) 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, consulting with particular faculty or experts outside the academy, 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, but you might have to do some extra research on your own to identify a funder who's a good fit for your type of work. You're encouraged to choose a grant that requires you to submit a **proposal that is between 8 and 12 double-spaced pages (2400 to 3600 words)**, and that requires a research component grounding your project within the academic field of media studies. If your specific grant requires you to submit a budget, you can skip that for now. Please make sure to submit a copy of the grant guidelines with your proposal so your Instructor is better able to provide constructive, targeted criticism.

ACADEMIC PLAN: Consider some of the following questions:

- 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 are your existing talents? How will you draw on those talents, or use your time here to cultivate new ones?
- 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 logic(s) will guide the selection of your courses? What pragmatic concerns, or financial or time limitations, will influence your course selection?
- 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?
- 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?

- 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.

Please also make time to **meet with a Media Studies faculty member** whose work resonates for you, and discuss your interests and academic plan. Keep in mind that faculty are limited in their availability – especially during the busy end-of-semester. Plan ahead and make an appointment early.

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 a **3000- to 3600-word text** that addresses (not necessarily in this order or form): (1) your short- and long-term academic and professional goals; (2) your strategies for achieving those goals: course choice; thesis/non-thesis; etc.; (3) a tentative timeline, identifying when you'd like to take particular courses, internships, independent coursework, etc.; and (4) feedback from faculty with whom you've conversed about your plan.

April 18 **SOUND STUDIES AND ACOUSTIC ENVIRONMENTS**

GUESTS Barry Salmon, Chair & Principal Faculty; Jim Briggs, Part-Time Faculty; Melissa Grey, Part-Time Faculty; Chris Mann, Part-Time Faculty – all from Media Studies

- READINGS** ✓ The following address the rise of sound studies within media studies and its history at The New School
- Shannon Mattern and Barry Salmon, "[Sound Studies: Framing Noise](#)," *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 2:2 (Autumn 2008): 139-44.
 - From Jim Briggs: Gregory Whitehead, "Radio Play Is No Place: A Conversation Between Jérôme Noetinger and Gregory Whitehead" In Allen S. Weiss, Ed., *Experimental Sound and Radio* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001): 89-94 + Listen to something on [newschoolradio.org](#) and another public radio program (RadioLab, On the Media, Studio360, etc.)

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. These meetings are highly recommended, but not required.

April 25 **MEDIA AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

GUESTS
READINGS

Sumita Chakravarty, Principal Faculty, Media Studies + Eugene Lang College

- Sumita Chakravarty, "Globalization" In Marcel Danesi, Ed., *The Encyclopedia of Media and Communications* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).
- Sumita has also asked that you watch first half of *My Name Is Khan* (Dir. Karan Johan, 2010), which is available for instant play on Netflix; if you don't subscribe to Netflix, please try to track down a copy somehow.

DISCUSSION SECTION No meeting this week.

May 2 **SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

GUESTS
READINGS

Josephine Dorado, Part-Time Faculty, Media Studies; Trebor Scholz, Associate Professor, Eugene Lang College; and Nicholas Fortugno, Part-Time Faculty, Design and Technology

- Trebor Scholz, "[Facebook as Playground and Factory](#)" In D. E. Wittkower, Ed., *Facebook and Philosophy* (Chicago: Open Court, 2010): 241-52.
- Jane McGonigal, "[Jane McGonigal: Gaming Can Make a Better World](#)" *TED.com* (February 2010) [video]
- Bonnie Nardi & Justin Harris, "[Strangers and Friends: Collaborative Play in a World of Warcraft](#)" Proceedings of the 2006 20th Anniversary Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work, University of California, Irvine, 2006: **read parts 4, 5, 6 -- pp. 3-7.**
- About Nick [Posted 4/25]: "[Nicholas Fortugno](#)" on Wikipedia + Lora Kolodny, "[Playmatics Raises \\$1 Million to Make Reality-Based Social Games](#)" *Green Tech* (April 21, 2011).

DISCUSSION SECTION This week two advanced current student "Ambassadors" will be visiting each discussion section to talk about their own paths through the program, to offer advice, and to answer your questions.

May 9 **MEDIA AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

GUESTS Damon Rich, Urban Designer and Waterfront Planner for the City of Newark, New Jersey; Founder, the [Center for Urban Pedagogy](#); former Loeb Fellow in Advanced Environmental Studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and an Artist-in-Residence at the MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies

READINGS

- Browse through [DamonRich.net](#)
- Brian Sholis, "[Damon Rich](#)" *Artforum* (May 29, 2009).
- Patricia Cohen, "[Mapping a Bird's-Eye View of Foreclosure Misery](#)" *New York Times* (July 7, 2009).
- Damon Rich, "[Spread the Word](#)" *Residential Architect* (November-December 2006).
- Damon Rich & Olympia Kazi, "[Red Lines](#)" *Arch*.

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**

Course Evaluations

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

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; Minna Aslama, Kalle Siira, Ronald Rice, Pekka Aula, "Mapping Communication and Media Research in the U.S." Communication Research Centre, University of Helsinki, Research Report (February 2007); James Beniger, "Communication – Embrace the Subject, not the Field" *Journal of Communication* 43:3 (Summer 1993): 18+; 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; John Cullin, "Why Study the Media" excerpt from doctoral dissertation, Harvard Graduate School of Education (1964): http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article430.html; Peter Decherney, "**Inventing Film Study and Its Object at Columbia University, 1915-1938**" *Film History* 12:4 (2000): 443-460; Brenda Dervin and Mei Song, "Communication as a Field – Historical Origins, Diversity as Strength/Weakness, Orientation Toward Research in the Public Interest: 54 Brief Ruminations from Field Grandparents, Parents, and a Few Feisty Grandchildren" *International Communication Association Annual Meeting* May 27-31, 2004, New Orleans, LA; 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; Joanne Hershfield & Anna McCarthy, "Media Practice: Notes Toward a Critical Production Studies" *Cinema Journal* 36:3 (Spring 1997): 108-112; Edgar Huang, "**Teaching Button-Pushing versus Teaching Thinking:** The State of New Media Education in US Universities" *Convergence* 15:2 (2009): 233-247; Henry Jenkins, "Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media

Education for the 21st Century” [white paper] *Building the Field of Digital Media and Learning* (MacArthur Foundation, 2006): <http://tinyurl.com/2teggj>; Klaus Bruhn Jensen, “The Humanities in Media and Communication Research” In Klaus Bruhn Jensen, Ed., *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies* (New York: Routledge, 2002): 16-39; Klaus Bruhn Jensen, “Media Reception” In Klaus Bruhn Jensen, Ed., *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies* (New York: Routledge, 2002): 156-170; Douglas Kellner, “Media Communications vs. Cultural Studies: Overcoming the Divide” *Communication Theory* 5:2 (1995): 162-177; Shearon A. Lowery and Melvin L. DeFleur, *Milestones in Mass Communication Research: Media Effects*, 3rd Ed. (White Plains, Longman, 1995); Robert McChesney, “Critical Communication Research at the Crossroads” *Journal of Communication* 43:4 (Autumn 1993): 98+; 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; Graham Murdock, “Media, Culture and Modern Times: Social Science Investigations” In Klaus Bruhn Jensen, Ed., *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies* (New York: Routledge, 2002): 40-57; Gerald O’Grady, “The Preparation of Teachers of Media,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 3:3 Special Issue: Film, New Media, and Aesthetic Education (July 1969): 113-134; John Durham Peters, “Genealogical Notes on ‘The Field’” *Journal of Communication* 43:4 (Autumn 1993): 132+; Grace Roosevelt, “The Triumph of the Market and the Decline of Liberal Education: Implications for Civic Life” *Teachers College Record* (2006): <http://www.tcrecord.org/>; Gregory Shepherd, “Building a Discipline of Communication” *Journal of Communication* 43:3 (Summer 1993): 83+; Pamela J. Shoemaker, “Communication in Crisis: Theory, Curricula, and Power” *Journal of Communication* 43:4 (Autumn 1993); William David Sloan, *Makers of the Media Mind: Journalism Educators and Their Ideas* (Lawrence Earlbaum, 1990); William Uricchio, “Historicizing Media in Transition” In David Thorburn & Henry Jenkins, Eds., *Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003): 23-38; Kevin Williams, *Understanding Media Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

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](#); archives of the [Nettime](#) and [iDC](#) mailing lists.

⁶ 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](#); archives of the [Nettime](#) and [iDC](#) mailing lists.

⁷ [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/>

⁸ 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.](#)”

⁹ Desmond Bell, “Creative Film and Media Practice as Research: In Pursuit of That Obscure Object of Knowledge” *Journal of Media Practice* 7:2 (2006): 85-100; 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).