SAC 620/COMM 827: Analyzing Media Industries
Winter 2017

Seminar: Monday, 9am-12 noon, 2265 NQ
Instructor: Daniel Herbert
Office: 6413 NQ
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 2-3pm
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This seminar provides an overview of the methods and theories supporting the critical study of media industries through a survey of cultural studies, political economy, sociology, and film studies literature. We also examine case studies drawn from these traditions. The course thus offers a theoretical foundation in the key ideas that have driven the study of media industries, a methodological foundation in the central methods used, and a consideration of current debates in the field.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Required Texts:


All other readings will be available as PDF files on Canvas

Grade Breakdown:

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
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<td>Discussion leader assignments</td>
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<td>Book Review</td>
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<td>3/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Archive/Exhibit Project</td>
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Participation

Much of the learning process of a graduate seminar takes place in class. Students are expected to come to class each week fully prepared and to participate in the discussion. You are expected to have completed each week’s reading assignments by the time of class that week.
NOTE – Nearly every Thursday at 1pm, there is a Media Studies Research Workshop, typically held in NQ 5450. I highly recommend attending as many of these as possible throughout the semester. I will gather your email addresses and put you on the “list” so that you get the announcements regarding the schedule.

Discussion Leader Assignments
At least twice during the semester, you will lead the discussion of a particular article, chapter, or bundle of readings. You should come to class prepared to outline the reading(s), situate them within the context of our other readings, answer questions, and pose questions about the readings to the rest of the class. What was this reading’s argument? Support for the argument? Method of analysis? How does the reading impact our understanding of the overall field of media industry studies? Etc. It could be helpful for you (and certainly helpful to the rest of the class) to prepare a 1-2 page typed outline and response.

Assignments:

Roundtable Book Report
You will choose a book on the media industries from a list provided by me, or you may select another—although you should confirm that it is acceptable. Write a book review that conforms to the guidelines for a journal such as Cinema Journal, Film Quarterly, Television & New Media, etc. Book reviews can vary in length from 1000-3500 words, so be sure to check the guidelines for your target publication before writing your review. Ideally, upon completion, you should be able to submit this for publication to the journal you have targeted.

Film Industry Archive Research/Exhibit
The capstone assignment for this course will entail the production of materials to be used for an exhibit and public event celebrating the University of Michigan’s acquisition of the papers of Ira Deutchman, who has been involved in the independent film industry from the 1970s until today. These papers are held in Special Collections, and our seminar will have 4-5 lab sessions, likely taking place on Friday afternoons, during which we will examine this archive and select individual pieces to be showcased as part of the exhibit, which will be put on in the Hatcher Library.

Each student will be responsible for selecting material for 3-4 different exhibit boards. Additionally, each student will be responsible for writing commentary or annotations to these materials, each of which will be about 200-400 words in length. Rough drafts of these materials are due on 4/3. I will read these and provide feedback on 4/10. Final drafts are due on the last day of class.

Additionally, you will write a short reflection paper, 1000-2000 words long, about how this project contributed to your understanding of media industries research. For example: How did working with personal paper archives offer something that could not be gleaned through interviews or trade press materials? How did writing for a general public, rather than an academic audience, shape your work?
Finally, you are invited to participate in two events related to this work:
- There will be a public “opening” of the exhibit in mid-May (exact date TBD). You will have opportunities to discuss your working process at this event.
- There will be a celebration of the collection and colloquium about Deutchman on June 5-6. There is a chance you all could have your own panel, act as interlocutors, provide introductions, or else be involved in the event in some capacity. This really depends on your interest and availability, but the Library and I are eager to have you involved.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

WEEK ONE (1/9): Introduction to the course

(1/16) Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

WEEK TWO (1/23): Mapping the Field

1. Hesmondhalgh, *The Cultural Industries*, 3rd edition, Chapter 1
2. Holt and Perren, “Does the World Really Need One More Field of Study?”
3. Banks, Mayer, and Caldwell, “Production Studies: Roots and Routes”
4. Freeman, Introduction

WEEK THREE (1/30): Contemporary Cultural Industries

1. Robert Babe, “Genealogy of Political Economy” and “Genealogy of Cultural Studies”
5. Julie D’Acci, “Cultural studies, television studies, and the crisis in the humanities.”

WEEK FOUR (2/6): Political Economy of Media Industries

1. Graham Murdock & Peter Golding, “Culture, communications and political economy”
2. Andrew Calabrese: “Toward a Political Economy of Culture”

WEEK FIVE (2/13): Methods

2. Stokes, “Researching Industries: Studying the Institutions and Producers of Media and Culture”
4. Freeman, Chapter 2
5. Connor, “Data and Decision in the Contemporary Studio”
6. Herbert, “The Media Industry is a Waste Management Industry”
WEEK SIX (2/20): Indie Cinema 1
LAB – unless students plan to leave for break by this time

(2/25-3/5) Winter Break

WEEK SEVEN (3/6): Methods 2: Production Cultures
1. Elana Levine, “Toward a paradigm for media production research: Behind the scenes at General Hospital.”
3. Newcomb and Lotz, “The Production of Media Fiction”
5. Herbert, “Video Rental in Small Town America”
(Guest: Ira Deutchman at 11am)
BOOK REVIEWS DUE
LAB on 3/10

WEEK EIGHT (3/13): What is Television?
(Guest: Amanda Lotz at 11am)
LAB on 3/17

WEEK NINE (3/20): The Contemporary Music Industry
(Guest: Jeremy Morris via Skype at 11am)
LAB on 3/24 (unless we’re all off the SCMS…)

WEEK TEN (3/27): Indie Cinema 2
(Guest: Alisa Perren via Skype at 9:45-10:45)
LAB – including final evaluation

WEEK ELEVEN (4/3): Institutions and Individuals: The WGA
(Guest: Miranda Banks via Skype at 11am)
EXHIBIT TEXT DRAFTS DUE

WEEK TWELVE (4/10): Historical Research/Adult Movie Industry
(Guest: Peter Alilunas via Skype at 11am)
1. Peter Alilunas, *Smutty Little Movies: The Creation and Regulation of Adult Video*

WEEK THIRTEEN (4/17): Conclusions and Review, Proposal Presentations
EXHIBIT FINAL DRAFTS DUE