

**SYLLABUS**  
**DEI 615: New Perspectives: Media History and Analysis**  
**University of Waterloo**  
**Masters in Digital Experience Innovation**  
**Fall Term 2011**

**Professor:** Dr. Christine McWebb  
**Phone:** 519-888-4567, ext. 32465 or 23008  
**E-mail:** cmcwebb@uwaterloo.ca  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 1-3.30pm or by appointment

*Description:*

In this course, students will first be introduced to key moments in the building of networks, where knowledge and information are interlinked on a large scale, such as the printing press of Renaissance Europe, early cinema and photography at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, and the internet, social media, and digital imagery of the 21st century. Secondly, students will receive training in the critical analysis of these media through the use of conceptual tools such as semiotics, cultural criticism, discourse analysis, visual anthropology and others. The objectives of this course are twofold:

1. to provide students with historical and cultural grounding in the interaction between technological developments and the shaping and transfer of knowledge
2. to equip students with critical and conceptual tools to effectively analyse cultural representations in a variety of media.

Students will acquire these skills through lectures, individual and team assignments, and two case studies. The two case studies will be tied to a 10-day research trip to three locations in Israel (Jerusalem, Haifa, Tel Aviv) in November.<sup>1</sup>

*Evaluation:*

Participation	10%
1 Individual Assignment	15%
a. Article Review	
2 Team assignments	35%
a. Preparation and Leading of a Discussion	(15%)
b. Video/Sound recording	(20%)
Final Team-project assignment	40%
TOTAL	100%

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<sup>1</sup> Students may be asked to contribute a one-time cost of \$500 each to cover travel expenses.

*Deliverables:*

1. The Article Review should consist of a succinct summary and a critical review. Arguments must be supported by quotes from or references to the article itself. Arguments should also point to other secondary sources. Length: five double-spaced pages + bibliography. The review can be handed in at any time during the semester but no later than November 10, 2011.
2. Team assignment 1; teams of 4: Preparation and Leading of a Discussion: the day before the discussion, the team must hand in a succinct summary (written in prose) of the assigned article or film, a list of questions/topics to be discussed, anticipated outcomes. Length: max. two double-spaced pages. During the discussion, it is the team's responsibility to effectively lead and guide the discussion by asking relevant questions, (re)directing the discussion, keeping speakers on track and attaining the stipulated outcomes.
3. Team assignment 2: in teams of 4, students will a) submit a one-page proposal outlining their project which will be a semiotic reading of an architectural site in and around Stratford and region. The question to be answered is how has a historical site been repurposed for contemporary use? Components: explain the original purpose and historical context, explain the contemporary use, explain how the original architecture plays a symbolic or other role in the new function of the architectural site. Students may use imagery in the form of photography, videography. Students may also use sound but no verbal or textual explanations. Max. length of video: 4 min.
4. Final assignment: In teams of 4, students will a) submit a one-page proposal outlining their project b) produce a video or slideshow of maximum 8 minutes in length again using imagery in the form of videography, photography, as well as sound but no verbal or textual explanations. The project will be based on an aspect of the research trip to Israel (a museum, a site, a city, a landscape, people, architectural site, monument etc. or a combination thereof). C) Complementing the video, teams will submit a 10 page double-spaced essay where the production process (choosing the material, developing the storytelling, storyboarding, semiotic interpretation of images produced, selection of images, colors, image sequence, conclusion) will be outlined in prose.

*Reading List:*

Courseware package (available at the UW Bookstore)

Online reading

**Tentative Programme:**

September 13

**Introduction : Three Information Revolutions**

Reading : a) Eisenstein, Elizabeth. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*. Introduction (pp.3-40).

b) *Media and Cultural Studies. KeyWorks*. Revised Edition. Eds.

Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner. Hoboken, NJ, USA:

Wiley, 2005.

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/oculwaterloo/Doc?id=10213590&ppg=3>

1. "The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas." Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.
2. (i) "History of the Subaltern Classes; (ii) The Concept of 'Ideology'; (iii) "Cultural Themes: Ideological Material." Antonio Gramsci.
3. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Walter Benjamin.
4. "The Medium is the Message." Marshall McLuhan.

September 20      **Guest lecture** by Jasmin Habib, Department of Anthropology, UW  
"Israel, Diaspora and Roots of National Belonging" (title tbc)

September 27      **Introduction to Semiotics**

- Readings: a) "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs." Charles S. Peirce  
b) "The Linguistic Sign." Ferdinand de Saussure

October 4            **Introduction to Visual Rhetoric; Team Discussion 1**

- Readings : a) *Semiotics : An Introductory Anthology*. Ed. Robert E. Innis.  
Bloomington : Indiana UP, 1985.  
1. "Rhetoric of the Image." Roland Barthes. *NB: available on e-reserve*  
b) *Reading Images. The Grammar of Visual Design*. Ed. Gunther Kress and  
Theo van Leeuwen. New York : Routledge, 2006.  
1. "Introduction."  
2. "The Semiotic Landscape : Language and Visual Communication."

October 11          **Early Film and Photography; Team Discussion 2**

***Due date for Team Assignment 2***

- Readings : a) *Reading Images*  
1. "Representation and Interaction : Designing the Position of the  
Viewer." *NB: available on e-reserve.*  
b) *Selected Works. Vol.1 Writings, 1922-1934*. Sergej M. Eisenstein.  
Introduction, chapters 1-3.  
c) *Camera Lucida. Reflections on Photography*. Roland Barthes, pp. tbd

October 18          **Film and its propagandistic use : Case Study 1 : Hitler's rise to power;  
Team Discussion 3**

- Readings : a) *Film Propaganda. Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany*. Taylor, Richard.  
London : I.B.Tauris, 1998 :  
1. Part I : 2. Propaganda and Film  
2. Part III : chapters 10, 11, 12, 13, 14

October 25          **Guest Lecture** by Jean-Jacques van Vasselaer: Israel and the Holocaust  
Presentations of Team Assignments 1

- November 1 Viewing: "The Eternal Jew": <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-6229070629122885245>  
 "Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt" (Adolf Hitler gives a city to the Jews) (extant excerpts)
- Readings:  
<http://www.tandfonline.com.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/doi/pdf/10.1080/0143968032000184461>; pages 3-4; 5-34; 143-54  
**Team Discussion 4**
- November 8 **Film and Propaganda – cont'd**  
**Guest lecture:** Social relations and regimes of the Middle East - tbc
- November 10 **Deadline for Article Review**
- November 15 **Research Trip to Israel**
- November 22 **Case Study 2 : The Arab Spring and the Role of Social Media**  
 Readings : tbc
- November 29 **Due date for Final Assignment**  
 Presentation of Final Assignments and Review

#### NOTE ON AVOIDANCE OF ACADEMIC OFFENSES

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check [www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/) for more information.]

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity [check [www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/)] to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm).

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) (other than a petition) or Policy 71 (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm).

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm). When in doubt please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Avoiding Academic Offences:** [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic\\_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)