

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL STUDIES
TRENT UNIVERSITY

CUST 4136H: WORKSHOP: MEDIATED REALITIES

2019 F
Peterborough

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Calendar Description

Examines diverse spatial media experiences with a focus on documentary, narrative and visual culture. Engaging through experimentation with mapping and GIS tools, location-based media, Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality, students will participate in a major project using the digital imaging resources at The Moore Innovation and Research Hub.

Course Description

The term “reality” is increasingly contested and precarious. Historically, assumptions about reality were justified or “proven” by means of representation, which is based on a relation of equivalence between image and reality. While the regime of representation appears in the earliest mappings of the world, it is further reflected by artistic realism, and by recording technologies such as photography and film. Today, we have entered a phase in which the foundations of this reality are being eroded by the onset of simulations. “The territory no longer precedes the map,” as Jean Baudrillard famously wrote back in the 1980s. Whatever this “new” reality has become, it is clear that it raises unique social, ethical and practical questions. *Mediated Realities* responds to these by exploring the dialectic between reality and simulation through mapping, the mediations of everyday life - from fitbits to “deep fakes” - mobile media, and VR experiences.

Course Format

Three contact hours per week. Some additional work in Bata’s visualization lab may be needed toward the end of term. Generally, though we will follow a traditional upper-level seminar format, there will be multiple in-class workshop supplements. There are two field trips corresponding with the group projects in Mobile Media and VR documentary.

Texts and Materials

All required readings are available for free on Blackboard, online, or through Trent Library's online resources, as indicated.

Learning Objectives

Upon completing the class, you will be able to:

- Develop applied methods in visual studies and media studies.
 - Learn the value of hands-on, practical applications of media.
 - Develop skills in VR imaging and post-production.
 - Learn more about media from historical, critical and theoretical perspectives.
 - Build your skills working collaboratively in a group setting.
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Evaluation

Your grade for this course will come from the following:

1. Weekly reflections (x5)	Sep. 11-Oct. 16	15%
2. ArcGIS: Story maps	Oct. 2	10%
3. ArcGIS: Crits	Oct. 2-Oct. 9	10%
4. Proximity project	Oct. 9-Oct. 16	10%
5. VR project	Nov. 20-Dec. 4	20%
6. VR reflection paper	End of term	15%
7. Participation	Ongoing	20%

1. Weekly reflections (x5)

You are expected to provide a strong analysis of the required readings each week for the duration of this assignment. In preparing your reflections, less emphasis should be placed on providing summaries of the text, or on simply interpreting one text adjacent to the other. Instead, try to get the main gist of the works from the point of view of the weekly theme. Create a bridge by finding meaningful and insightful connections *between* the readings, and avoid direct quotations, whenever possible.

Your reflections should be approximately 300 words each. However, in 2 of your 5 reflections, you must choose to analyze ALL the recommended readings for that week in addition to those that are required, for a total of approximately 500 words. You may choose any 2 weekly topics for these expanded works.

Each week during seminar discussions prior to Reading Break, you will be called upon to *briefly* share your findings in conversation with others. Please note: Your reflections **MUST** be completed **BEFORE** coming to class and submitted in physical form, i.e. paper. There will be a penalty of 2/3 if you do not complete the reflection prior to class and/or if you submit the reflection but are absent from class.

2. ArcGIS story maps

The ArcGIS story maps assignment delves into questions of narrative at the limits of representation. Practically speaking, this is an individual project that involves creating multimedia narratives using maps, images and other digital content. Following class discussions on mapping as representation, view(s) from above, and narrative cartography, you are expected to create a story map of your choosing using the templates offered by ArcGIS. The theme of your map will depend on your interests, the kind of material that you want to work with (i.e. new vs. archived images), and the limitations on the time of execution. You will receive a free account with ArcGIS to complete this assignment.

3. ArcGIS crits

On Oct. 2 and Oct. 9, time will be given in seminar to presenting your map to others, and receiving productive feedback and conversation from your peers. Once the process has completed, you will have an opportunity to re-submit your story map for a final evaluation.

4. Proximity project

This assignment is both individual and group-oriented. Our class theme turns to questions of mediated embodiment, the mobile interface, and relations between proximity and distance, public space and private space. To begin this assignment, choose a site on campus to analyze. Spend some time in this space outside of class. Record what happens there: are people studying? Talking? Waiting? Passing through? Make a listing of these activities. Note the architectural and spatial dimensions of the site. Consider the purposes intended by the designers of the space in relation to the activities that occur there. Once this work has been completed, we will join in a group and observe relations between the chosen sites on campus, and devise a strategy for accurately representing these relations through diverse media: GPS, gaming media, audio and visual recording.

5. VR group project

In this group assignment, you are expected to participate in creating a VR documentary from concept to execution. Following our discussions on VR as visual culture, VR experience and Expanded Narratives, we will collectively decide on a topic for the film. On Nov. 20, we will create image and sound recordings using the Vuze camera. During the last two weeks, we will meet in the visualization lab to complete post-production editing for the film using Adobe Premiere. The film will then be archived in Bata Library.

6. VR reflection paper

In this final paper for the class, you are required to reflect upon the documentary project, and on VR media in general, which will be guided by your reading or interpretation of **THREE** texts from the following list: Evans, Li, Huhtamo, Parisi, Manovich, and Nash.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from failure on an assignment to expulsion from the University. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in Trent University's *Academic Integrity Policy*. You have a responsibility to educate yourself – unfamiliarity with the policy is not an excuse. You are strongly encouraged to visit Trent's Academic Integrity website to learn more: www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity.

Access to Instruction

It is Trent University's intent to create an inclusive learning environment. If a student has a disability and documentation from a regulated health care practitioner and feels that he/she may need accommodations to succeed in a course, the student should contact the Student Accessibility Services Office (SAS) at the respective campus as soon as possible.

Devices

No mobile devices or laptops during screenings. No talking or disruptive behaviour during screenings.

Late Penalties

I will deduct marks at a rate of 5% per day (not including weekends) for late assignments, barring instances of verifiable illness or family emergencies. Each assignment is due at the beginning of class on the day specified in the section below. Except where otherwise noted, please bring hard copies.

Schedule and Readings

Week 1: Mapping as Representation

Sep. 11

Required: Pickles, J. (2004) "The Cartographic Gaze, Global Visions and Modalities of Visual Culture," *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping and the Geo-Coded World*, New York: Routledge, pp. 75-92. [BLACKBOARD]

Stoler, A. (2010) "Writing and Its Imperial Mutations," *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 1-8. [BLACKBOARD]

Recommended: Gregory, D. (1994) "Geography and the Cartographic Anxiety," *Geographical Imaginations*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 70-77. [BLACKBOARD]

Harley, D. (1989) "Deconstructing the Map," *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization*, 26(2): 1-20. [BLACKBOARD]

In Class: Barnaby, F. (1988) *The GALIA Peace Atlas*, New York: Doubleday.
Map drawing activity.
Tour of Visualization Lab and Trent's maps archive with Barbara Znamirowski.

Week 2: View(s) from Above

Sep. 18

Required: Graham, S. (2016) "Satellite: Enigmatic Presence," *Vertical: The City from Satellites to Bunkers*, London: Verso, pp. xx-xx. [BLACKBOARD]

Recommended: Kurgan, L. (2013) "Mapping Considered as a Problem of Theory and Practice," *Close Up at a Distance: Mapping, Technology, Politics*, Brooklyn: Zone Books: 9-19. [BLACKBOARD]

Parks, L. (2005) "Satellite Witnessing," *Cultures in Orbit: Satellites and the Televisual*, Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 77-109. [BLACKBOARD]

In Class: Fast, O. (Dir.) (2011) *5000 Feet is Best*, 30 minutes [Excerpt].

Lab Demonstration: ArcGIS Story Maps.

Week 3: After Representation: Narrative Cartography

Sep. 25

Required: Caquard, S. (2011) "Cartography I: Mapping narrative cartography," *Progress in Human Geography*, 37(1): pp. 135-144. [BLACKBOARD]

Crampton, J. (2010) "Maps 2.0: Map Mashups and New Spatial Media," *Mapping: A Critical Introduction to Cartography and GIS*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 25-39. [BLACKBOARD]

Recommended: Kitchin et al. (2017) "Understanding Spatial Media," *Understanding Spatial Media*. London: Sage, pp. 1-25. [BLACKBOARD]

Shields, R. (2018) "Bergson's GIS: Experience, Time and Memory in Geographical Information Systems," *Media Theory* 2(1): pp. 316-322. [BLACKBOARD]

In Class: Radical Cartography <<http://www.radicalcartography.net/>>, Torn Apart / Separados <<http://xpmethod.plaintext.in/torn-apart/volume/2/>>, Queering the Map <<https://www.queeringthemap.com/>>.

Week 4: Contested Realities: AI Avatars, Influencers & Fakes

Oct. 2

- Required: Levitt, D. (2018) “Animatic Pop: Body-as-Image, Image-as-Body,” *The Animatic Apparatus: Animation, Vitality, and the Futures of the Image*, Zero Books: 83-109. [BLACKBOARD]
- Pullen, T. M. (2016) “Skawennati’s-Timetraveller™: Deconstructing the Colonial Matrix in Virtual Reality,” *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 12(3): 236-249. [BLACKBOARD]
- Recommended: Inde, D. (2002) “Bodies, Virtual Bodies, and Technology,” *Bodies in Technology*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 3-15.
- In Class: Lil Miquela, Skawennati, Hatsune Miku, and others.
- Hilary Bergen on Hatsune Miku and the kinetic trace.
- This Person Does Not Exist. <<https://thispersondoesnotexist.com/>>

Week 5: Quantified Self: Mediating Everyday Life

Oct. 9

- Required: Encheva, L. and Pedersen, I. (2013): “‘One Day...’: Google’s Project Glass, Integral Reality and Predictive Advertising,” *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 28(2): 235-246. [BLACKBOARD]
- Hemment, D. (2006) “Locative Arts,” *Leonardo*, 39(4): 348-355.
<http://locative.articule.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Hemment_Locativearts.pdf>
- Recommended: Humphreys, L. (2018) “Sharing the Everyday,” *The Qualified Self: Social Media and the Accounting of Everyday Life*, Cambridge: The MIT Press: 29-50. [BLACKBOARD]
- McQuire, S. (2016) “Googling the City,” *Geomedia: Networked Cities and the Future of Public Space*, London: Polity. [BLACKBOARD]
- In Class: Activity: From fitbits to mobile gaming (e.g. Pokémon Go).

Week 6: Proximity and Place

Oct. 16

- Required: Behrendt, F. (2015) “Locative Media as Sonic Interaction Design: Walking through Placed Sounds,” *WI: Journal of Mobile Media*, 9(2): <http://wi.mobilities.ca/frauke-behrendt-locative-media-as-sonic-interaction-design-walking-through-placed-sounds/>
- Farman, J. (2012) “Embodiment and the Mobile Interface,” *Mobile Interface Theory: Embodied Spaces and Locative Media*, New York and London: Routledge, pp. 16-35. [BLACKBOARD]

Licoppe, C. (2016) “Mobilities and Urban Encounters in Public Places in the Age of Locative Media. Seams, Folds, and Encounters with ‘Pseudonymous Strangers,’” *Mobilities*, 11(1): 99-116. [BLACKBOARD]

Recommended: De Certeau, M. (2011/1980) “Walking in the City,” *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Rendall, S., Trans., Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 91-111. [BLACKBOARD]

Wilken, R., and Goggin, G. (2012) “Mobilizing Place: Conceptual Currents and Controversies,” *Mobile Technology and Place*, New York and London: Routledge, pp. 3-25. [BLACKBOARD]

In Class: Activity: Proximity Project (Outing).

Reading Week

Oct. 23

Week 7: VR as Visual Culture

Oct. 30

Required: Evans, L. (2018) “A (Brief) Cultural History of VR,” *The Re-Emergence of Virtual Reality*, Routledge. [BLACKBOARD]

Li, J. (2018) “The Virtual Walls,” Working paper (with permission). [BLACKBOARD]

Kenderline, S (2007) “Speaking in Rama: Panoramic Vision in Cultural Heritage Visualization,” Cameron, F., and Kenderline, S., Eds., *Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage*, Cambridge: The MIT Press: 301-333. [BLACKBOARD]

In Class: VR experience with Barbara Znamirovski and Dwayne Collins (1).

Week 8: VR Experiences

Nov. 6

Required: Huhtamo, E.(1995) “Encapsulated Bodies in Motion: Simulators and the Quest for Total Immersion,” *Critical Issues in Electronic Media*, ed. Simon Penny, State University of New York Press: 159-186. [BLACKBOARD]

Parisi, D. (2018) “The Cultural Construction of Technologized Touch,” in *Archaeologies of Touch: Interfacing with Haptics from Electricity to Computing*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. [BLACKBOARD]

In Class: Ji, H. and Wakefield, G. *Artificial Nature* <artificialnature.net>.

VR experience with Barbara Znamirovski and Dwayne Collins (2).

Lab Demonstration: Working with Unity software.

Week 9: Expanded Narratives

Nov. 13

Required: Manovich, L. (1999) "Database as Symbolic Form," *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 5(2): 80-99. [BLACKBOARD]

Nash, K. (2018) "Virtual Reality Witness: Exploring the Ethics of Mediated Presence," *Studies in Documentary Film*, 12(2): 119-131. [BLACKBOARD]

In Class: A selection of i-Docs and VR experiences, including: *Offshore: A Feature-length Interactive Documentary*; *Refugee Republic*; *Biidaaban: First Light*; and others.

Lab Demonstration: Working with the Vuze camera and Adobe Premiere.

Week 10: VR Filmmaking

Nov. 20

In Class: Activity: Filming for VR Group Project (outing)

Week 11: Post-production Day 1

Nov. 27

In Class: Activity: Lab work using Adobe Premiere

Week 12: Post-production Day 2

Dec. 4

In Class: Activity: Lab work using Adobe Premiere