

**DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL STUDIES
TRENT UNIVERSITY**

CUST 3132H: MASS MEDIA AND WAR

2020 W
Peterborough

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Course Description

This course explores analytic, historical, narrative and visual approaches to existing relationships between mass media and war. We examine this topic from a number of different angles: the impact of war photography and photojournalism on propaganda; the visual culture of genocide; the pre-emptive patterns of armed conflict in the 21st century; the technologies of asymmetric violence; the biopolitics of surveillance; the criminalization of blackness; online communities for the alt-right; platform activism; and issues of cybernetics, cyberwar and political revolution.

Calendar Description

Media coverage of war from the Mexican Revolution to the Iraq War with an emphasis on reportage and the field of journalism. Prerequisite: 4.0 university credits.

Course Format

Seminar 01: Wed 12:00PM-12:50PM, WH, Room 102
Seminar 02: Wed 1:00PM-1:50PM, WH, Room 102
Lecture: Fri 11:00AM-12:50PM, SH, Room 105

Texts and Materials

All required reading will appear as for free as PDFs on Blackboard, links through Bata Library, or web links.

Learning Objectives

Upon completing the class, you will be able to:

- Critically analyze the history of war through various media practices, platforms and theories.
 - Explore relationships between political systems, journalistic practices and media infrastructures.
 - Develop your writing skills by providing summaries and convincing arguments.
 - Develop your speaking and presentation skills.
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Evaluation

Your grade for this course will come from the following:

15%	Propaganda Paper	Feb 2, Midnight.
20%	Mini Pecha Kucha (x2)	One before Week 6; Two before Week 9.
25%	Tests (x2): Take home	First, Feb 16; Second, Apr. 5
10%	Term Paper Proposal	Mar. 20
20%	Term Paper	Apr. 10
10%	Participation	Ongoing

Propaganda paper

You will complete an analytical paper based on readings from your choice of Week 2, Diagnosis: Mediating the next war, or Week 3, Propaganda *in nuce* (if you want to substitute this material for Week 1, The wall as medium, let me know and I may make an exception). In this paper, you must provide a detailed analysis (not a description) of all readings in the list of your chosen week. Draw meaningful connections between the readings, and critically assess their implications and (predicted) outcomes. If you choose material listed in Week 2, you may use examples from the current news cycle. If you choose material listed in Week 3, you may use photographic and/or cinematic examples. This paper should be 2,000 words in length. You **MUST** submit this document as .doc or Word format on Blackboard before the due date. The paper **MUST** abide to MLA citation *and* formatting conventions as outlined on the *Owl at Purdue* citation website.

Mini Pecha Kucha (x2)

Pecha Kucha is a highly structured presentation format that requires presenters to deliver 20 slides at a rate of 20 seconds per slide. In this assignment, you will create a smaller version of this format, a Mini Pecha Kucha totaling 9 slides over 3 minutes. You will sign up to deliver your first Mini Pecha Kucha between Week 3 and 6. The second will take place between Week 7 and 9. Please do not summarize the text more than is needed for an audience who has completed the reading on their own. More specifically, find a theme, topic, or concept that you want to explore further, or dwell upon, and try to develop a unique perspective that will move the conversation into uncharted territory. You may draw from visual material that is listed in the syllabus and explored in lecture. If, for reasons of extreme weather, seminars are cancelled on the week you have signed up, I will request a video version of your Pecha Kucha. For an

example on how to prepare a Pecha Kucha, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wq1Jnx51pW0>

Tests (x2): Take home

These assignments act like mid-term and final exams. They will include definitional, short answer and long answer questions, and you will be expected to complete them within 48 hours. Please refrain from asking for extensions on this assignment.

Term Paper Proposal

You must complete a term paper proposal by Week 10. In this paper, you are given complete freedom to explore any aspect, big or small, that we have discussed or have scheduled to discuss in class, with the exception of material from Week 2 or Week 3. Choose a topic that you are passionate about. Find a unique and critical angle or perspective on the subject. Build your research based on a hypothesis or research question. Write a 300-word abstract that includes details of your proposed work. List up to two scholarly sources (in MLA format) and write short annotations for each (3-4 sentences). If you want to include artistic works or films, you may as additions, not substitutions, to the scholarly material. To complete the annotation, you must consult your source material and get a sense of what sort of information it delivers. But you must also give your reader a sense of *why* you have chosen that material. If any aspect of this criteria is not accounted for, your proposal will either be sent back to you or receive a Fail. If we agree on the path of your research and you have completed all aspects of this assignment, you will receive a Pass.

Term Paper

This is the final assignment in the course and the most important. In this paper, you will deliver on your proposed research, and account for any comments or changes that arise in consultation with me. This paper must be 3,000 words in length, delivered on Blackboard by Apr. 10. Extensions will be considered, but they may not always be provided. You **MUST** submit this document as .doc or Word format on Blackboard before the due date. The paper **MUST** abide to MLA citation *and* formatting conventions as outlined on the *Owl at Purdue* citation website.

Participation

Due Date: Ongoing

Weight: 10%

We all acknowledge that people learn differently. Some are more verbal than others. Some feel more entitled to speak than others. Having said that, discussion is a very important aspect of this course, and its success is determined in large part by the everyone's participation. Each week, you will be invited to make comments on each seminar on a sheet that will be provided to you. This will be your opportunity for you to assess the role you played in our discussion, and to express ways of improving the class/feel included/feel safe. If you show a clear lack of investment in the course, have spotty attendance, or spend any amount of time during lecture or seminar on your phone, your mid-term participation grade will clearly and unambiguously identify this problem with an aim to improve your participation before the end of term.

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 at any time. No laptops during screenings. No talking or disruptive behaviour.

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.

Schedule and Readings

Week 1: Introduction: The wall is a medium

Jan 10

Recommended: Brown, W. (2010) *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 7-43. (Blackboard).

Mezzadra, S., and Neilson, B. (2013) "The Proliferation of Borders" *Border as Method: Or, The Multiplication of Labour*, Durham: Duke UP, 1-19.

In class: Begley, J. (2016) *Best of Luck with the Wall* (Excerpt)

Interview with Eyal Weizman on *Forensic Architectures*.

PART 1: PROPAGANDA IN THE AGE OF FAKE NEWS

Week 2: Diagnosis: Mediating the next war

Jan 17

Required: Adorno, T. (1994) "Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda," *The Stars Down to Earth and Other Essays on the Irrational in Culture*. Stephen Cook, Ed., London and New York: Routledge, 218-233.

Chomsky, N., and Herman, E. (1988) "A Propaganda Model," from *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Pantheon: <https://chomsky.info/consent01/>

Steensen, S. (2019) "Journalism's epistemic crisis and its solution: Disinformation, datafication and source criticism," *Journalism*, 20(1): 185-189 (Blackboard)

In Class: Moore, M. (2018) *Fahrenheit 11/9* (Excerpt)

Week 3: Propaganda *in nuce*

Jan 24

Required: Griffin, M. (2009) "The Great War Photographs: Constructing Myths of History and Photojournalism." In *Picturing the Past: Media, History, and Photography*, Ed. Bonnie Brennen and Hanno Hardt, Urbana and Chicago: Illinois University Press, pp. 122-158. (Blackboard)

Smith, J. (2014) "A Bifocal View of Hollywood during the Blacklist Period: Film as Propaganda and Allegory." In *Film Criticism, the Cold War, and the Blacklist: Reading the Hollywood Reds*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 17-37. (Blackboard)

In class: Anti-Communist cinema.

PART 2: THE HISTORY AND MEMORY OF WAR IN VISUAL CULTURE

Week 4: Archiving violence: Hiroshima, Auschwitz, Vietnam, Iraq

Jan 31

Required: Hoskins, A. (2004) "From Vietnam to the Gulf." In *Televising War: From Vietnam to Iraq*, London and New York: Continuum, pp. 13-45. (Blackboard)

Didi-Huberman, G. (2003) "Four Pieces of Film Snatched from Hell," *Images In Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz*, University of Chicago Press, pp. 3-30 (Blackboard)

Zarzycka, M. (2016) "Lingering Questions After Nick Ut v. Facebook." <https://goo.gl/QYbYCa>

In class: Herzog, W. (dir.), *Lessons of Darkness* (1992). (Excerpt)

Masaki, M. (1983) *Barefoot Gen* [はだしのゲン] (Excerpt)

Week 5: War on images: Postmodern war

Feb 7

Required reading: Baudrillard, J. (1995) *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, Trans. Paul Patton, Bloomington and Indiana: University of Indiana Press.
<http://halliejones.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Baudrillard-The-Gulf-War-did-not-Take-Place.pdf>

Recommended: Der Derian, J. (2009) "Prologue," *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial-Entertainment Network*, New York: Routledge, pp. xxvii-xxxvii (Blackboard)

Weber, C. (1995) "Symbolic Exchange and the State." In *Simulating Sovereignty: Intervention, The State, and Symbolic Exchange*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 123-130. (Blackboard)

PART 3: TECHNOLOGY AND WAR

Week 6: Asymmetric power

Feb 14

Required: Chamayou, G. (2013) "Prelude," *A Theory of the Drone*, Trans. Janet Lloyd, New York: The New Press, pp. 1-14. (Blackboard)

Graham, S. (2016) "Drone: Robot Imperium," *Vertical: The City from Satellites to Bunkers*, London: Verso, 67-95.

Gregory, D. (2015) "Little Boys and Blue Skies." *Geographical Imaginations Blog*: <http://goo.gl/jvFg6M>

In class: Fast, O. (Dir.) (2011) *5000 Feet is Best* (Excerpt)

Kennebeck, S. (Dir.) (2016) *National Bird* (Excerpt)

Reading Week

Feb 17-24

Week 7: Cybernetics, speed & cyberwar

Feb 28

Required: Dyer-Witheford, N., and Matviyenko, S. (2019) "You may not be interested in cyberwar..." *Cyberwar and Revolution: Digital Subterfuge in Global Capitalism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 1-33.

Peters, B. (2016) "A Global History of Cybernetics," *How Not to Network a Nation: The Uneasy History of the Soviet Internet*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 15-57.

Virilio, P. (1977/2006) "The State of Emergency," *Speed and Politics*, Trans. Mark Polizzotti, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 149-167.

In class: Interview with McKenzie Wark on technologies of war.

PART 4: SURVEILLANCE CULTURES

Week 8: Surveillance cultures

Mar. 6

Required: Foucault, M. (1991/1975) "Panopticism," *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Vintage, 195-230.

David Lyon (2009) "Surveillance, Power, and Everyday Life," *The Oxford Handbook of Information and Communication Technologies*, Avgerou et al., eds. Oxford: Oxford UP, 440-472.

In class: Simon, B. (2005) "The Return of Panopticism: Supervision, Subjection and the New Surveillance," *Surveillance & Society* 3(1): 1-20.

Lovink, G. (2010) "Twelve Theses on Wikileaks," *Le Monde*. (Online)

Week 9: Surveillance infrastructures

Mar. 13

Required: Hogan, M. (2015) "Data Flows and Water Woes: The Utah Data Center," *Big Data & Society*, 1-12. (Blackboard)

Garret, B. and Fish, A. (2019) "Resurrection from Bunkers and Data Centers," *Culture Machine* 18, 1-14. <https://culturemachine.net/vol-18-the-nature-of-data-centers/resurrection-from-bunkers/>

Recommended: Graham, S. (2016) "Bunker/Tunnel: Subsurface Sanctuaries," *Vertical: The City from Satellites to Bunkers*, London: Verso, 340-365. (Blackboard)

In class: Poitras, L. (2014) *Citizenfour* (Excerpt).

Week 10: Surveillance of blackness

Mar. 20

Required: Browne, S. (2015) "B@anding Blackness: Biometric Technology and the Surveillance of Blackness," *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, Durham: Duke University Press, 89-131. (Blackboard)

Noble, S. (2016) "The Future of Information Culture," *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*, New York: NYU Press, 134-153.

Recommended: Mbembé, J-A., and Meintjes, L. (2003) "Necropolitics," *Public Culture*, 15(1), pp. 11-40:
https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/postgraduate/masters/modules/postcol_theory/mbembe_22necropolitics22.pdf

In class: Broomfield, N. (2014) *Tales of the Grim Sleeper* (Excerpt).

Peele, J. (2017) *Get Out* (Excerpt).

PART 5: ONLINE CULTURE WARS

Week 11: Incels: War on women

Mar 27

- Required: Srinivasan, A. (2018) "Does anyone have the right to sex?" *London Review of Books* 40:6: <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v40/n06/amia-srinivasan/does-anyone-have-the-right-to-sex>
- Nagle, A. (2017) *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4Chan to and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*, Winchester: Zero Books, pp. 14-28 and 75-86:
https://culturapolitica2018.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/kill-all-normies_-_online-culture-wars-from-4chan-and-tumblr-to-trump-and-th.pdf

Week 12: Platform activisms

Apr 3

- Required: Tufecki, Z. (2016) "Technology and People" and "Platforms and Algorithms," *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*, New Haven and London: Yale UP, 115-162.
- Brooking, E. T., and Singer, P.W. (2016) "War Goes Viral," *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/11/war-goes-viral/501125/>
- In class: Interview with Tarleton Gillespie on *Custodians of the Internet*.
- Interview with Roger McNamee on *Zucked*.