

Arts & Science 4CP3 – Media Inquiry

2015-16 (Term 2)

Instructor:	Dr. Beth Marquis Telephone: (905) 525-9140, ext 27667 Email: beth.marquis@mcmaster.ca	Office: Mills Library 519 (MIETL) Office Hours: M, 2:30-3:20pm (or by appt)
Class Times:	M, 1:30-2:20pm; W, 12:30-2:20pm	Location: ETB 228

Course Description:

In this course, we will explore a range of perspectives on the socio-political functioning of the media, with a particular focus on film and television. Drawing from key approaches within the interdisciplinary field of media studies (e.g., political economy, audience studies), we will consider the extent to which media texts and institutions shape public spheres and speak to structures of power, as well as the ways in which audiences navigate, respond to, and 'work with' the media. Throughout, these topics will be taken up and assessed with the assistance of historical and contemporary examples drawn from both the entertainment and news media sectors.

The course will take a seminar format. In most cases, Monday classes will be led by pairs of students, who will be responsible for collaboratively facilitating discussion of one of the week's readings. During the Wednesday meetings, I will introduce topics and objects of analysis, but students will also be expected to contribute questions and participate in discussions, to work in small groups, and to help shape the flow and direction of our work.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe, discuss, compare and evaluate a wide range of arguments about the socio-political functioning of film and television.
2. Apply methods used by media scholars to conduct productive analyses of the relationship(s) between media and society.
3. Develop, investigate, and respond effectively to compelling and researchable questions connected to the course focus.

Required Texts:

There are no texts to purchase for this course; all course readings will be accessible through online channels such as public websites and McMaster's eBook collections and journal databases. Links to these materials will be available on the course Avenue site. See the schedule below for initial reading assignments. Additional readings may be assigned as we move through the course.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Reading Analysis & Discussion Facilitation	Various (Jan. 25-March 28, 2016)	= 25%
Representation & Reception Assignment	Due February 22, 2016	= 25%
Capstone Project	Due April 8, 2016	= 35%
Participation	Throughout term	= 15%

Assignment Descriptions & Evaluation Criteria:

Reading Analysis & Discussion Facilitation (25%)

Working in pairs (or groups of 3 if necessary), students will be required to introduce one of the readings for a particular week and to facilitate class discussion around this material. The session should be based on a close and critical reading of the text, and should demonstrate a grasp of its key arguments/ideas and their relevance/applications. It should also engage the class productively in discussing, analyzing and applying the scholarly ideas under consideration. The facilitation should be structured such that all group members participate actively in some way, and should involve no more than 20 minutes of presentation, and 25 minutes for group discussion and activities.

Representation & Reception Assignment (25%)

For this assignment, you will be asked to engage in two common forms of media scholarship: textual analysis and interview-based audience research. You will be required to select a film/television text (either news or entertainment) and to apply ideas discussed in class to conduct a close reading of its representational strategies and politics. In addition, you will also need to apply audience research methodologies to conduct and analyse at least one interview with a viewer of that text, considering the ways in which audience response relates to your textual analysis and to existing theoretical approaches. Because the 'reception' portion of this assignment involves human participants research, we will spend time discussing research ethics together, and you will be required to follow closely a set of practices, protocols, and interview questions that will be approved by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. The representation and reception components of the assignment will be written up together, and submitted in a brief essay of 5-6 pages in length.

Capstone Project (35%)

This assignment asks you to develop, investigate, and respond to a researchable question about the socio-political functioning of film and/or television. You will be required to construct a research question of interest to you, to identify and obtain information relevant to answering the question, to evaluate the validity and appropriateness of the evidence, to draw reasoned conclusions, and to communicate a coherent and persuasive response in an appropriate format. The final submission could be an essay of 10-12pp in length, or it could be an alternative type of text (e.g., a brief video, a narrative, a podcast), accompanied by a 3-4 page written supplement that grounds the piece in your research and explains its relevance. While a formal proposal is not required, all students are expected to clear their research question and approach with me by **March 7, 2016**.

Participation (15%):

Participation in the class process is one of the key indicators of your understanding of the course material. The expectations include: regular attendance, reading the assigned materials, contributing to class discussion, helping to shape the course direction by suggesting questions, topics and areas of focus, completing in class activities, listening respectfully, and engaging with others' comments to further our understandings of the materials and thematics.

A grading rubric, which lists the criteria by which participation will be assessed, will be provided to students early in the term. Students will also be given an opportunity to engage in reasoned self-assessment of their participation over the duration of the course. This self-assessment (which will need to be explicitly justified) will count toward 5% of the final participation grade.

Policy Statements

Assignment Deadlines & Missed/Late Work:

Students are expected to hand in all assignments on the specified due dates. Late submissions will be subject to a penalty of **3%** per day (including weekend days). Assignments submitted after the beginning of class on the due date will be counted as one day late. No assignments will be accepted after April 10, 2016. Facilitated discussions **MUST** take place on the scheduled dates. If you are unable to lead the discussion for which you have been scheduled, you will receive a mark of zero for the assignment unless appropriate documentation is provided. Given that some course assignments require electronic submission, you should familiarize yourself with the Avenue to Learn dropbox in advance of the deadlines, and ask for assistance as necessary. Problems with electronic submission **WILL NOT** be accepted as an excuse for lateness.

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF):

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work." Please also see the MSAF statement on our website (<http://artsci.mcmaster.ca/>) and direct any questions or concerns to Shelley Anderson or Rebecca Bishop in the Arts & Science Program Office as appropriate.

McMaster Policy on Academic Integrity:

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences—e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>. The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: 1) Plagiarism—e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained. 2) Improper collaboration in group work. 3) Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities:

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or email sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

Sustainable Written Work Submission Guidelines

The written work submission guidelines for this course have been chosen to support the more sustainable use of paper, energy and toner. Four levels of criteria have been developed by the Office of Sustainability and encouraged for adoption by professors and faculties. The submission guidelines for this course meet the **Platinum** standard. All written work must be submitted in the following format: double-sided pages, reduced line spacing (1.5 lines), exclusion of title page, sans-serif font. Most work will also be submitted and returned online. For more information about criteria for sustainable written work submissions, visit the Office of Sustainability website: www.mcmaster.ca/sustainability

Course Modifications & Email Contact

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of students to check **their McMaster email** and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes. Announcements will be made in class and by using the course email distribution list.

Course Schedule

Note: all readings should be completed **PRIOR** to the M class on the week for which they are assigned

Week 1 (W January 6): Introduction – Analysing Media

A. Reading & Responding to Film & TV Texts

Week 2 (M Jan 11, W Jan 13): Text & Spectator – Representation & Reception

- **Required Readings:**

- Comolli, J. & Narboni, J. (1969/2009). Cinema, ideology, criticism. In L. Braudy & M. Cohen (Eds), *Film Theory & Criticism* (7th ed.), (pp. 686-693), New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hall, S. (1973/1996). Encoding/decoding. In P. Marris & S. Thornham (Eds.), *Media Studies – A Reader* (pp. 41-49), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

- Diawara, M. (1988). Black spectatorship: Problems of identification and resistance. *Screen* 29(4), 66-79.

Week 3 (M Jan 18, W Jan 20): Navigating Gender in/through 'Quality Television'

○ **Required Readings:**

- Bruun Vaage, M. (2014). Blinded by familiarity: Partiality, morality, and engagement with television series. In T. Nannicelli & P. Taberham (eds.), *Cognitive Media Theory* (pp. 268-284). New York: Routledge.
- Clark, J.S. (2014). Postfeminist masculinity and the complex politics of time: Contemporary quality television imagines a pre-feminist world. *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, 12(4), 445-462.
- Click, M.A., Willson Holladay, H., Lee, H., & Kristiansen, L.J. (2015). 'Let's hug it out, bitch': HBO's *Entourage*, masculinity in crisis, and the value of audience studies. *Television & New Media*, 16(5), 403-421.

Week 4 (M Jan 25, W Jan 27): 'I Am Canadian': Media and Articulations of National Identity

○ **Required Readings:**

- Leach, J. (2010). The landscapes of Canada's features: Articulating nation and nature. In G. Harper & J. Rayner (Eds.), *Cinema and Landscape* (pp. 269-280). Bristol/Chicago: Intellect.
- Craig, A. (2015). We've got beaver! Women as a national resource in Canadian beer commercials. In L. Mannik & K. McGarry (eds.), *Reclaiming Canadian Bodies: Visual Media and Representation* (pp. 33-59). Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Easton, L. & Hewson, K. (2010). Reflections on the interplay of race, whiteness, and Canadian identity in a film studies classroom. *Reception: Texts, Readers, Audiences, History*, 2(2), 116-148.

Week 5 (M Feb 1, W Feb 3): Mediating Terror

○ **Required Readings:**

- Plantinga, C. (2009). The rhetoric of emotion. Disgust and beyond. In *Moving Viewers: American Film and the Spectator's Experience* (pp. 198-220). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Baker, R.G. (2013). 'Catnip for cranks': Depictions of Canadian threat in US conservative news commentary. *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 43(3), 358-376.
- Brereton, P. & Culloty, E. (2012). Post-9/11 counterterrorism in popular culture: The spectacle and reception of *The Bourne Ultimatum* and *24*. *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 5(3), 483-497.

Week 6 (M Feb 8, W Feb 10): Media Witnessing

○ **Required Readings:**

- Tait, S. (2011). Bearing witness, journalism and moral responsibility. *Media, Culture & Society*, 33(8), 1220-1235.
- Scott, M. (2014). The mediation of distant suffering: An empirical contribution beyond television news texts. *Media, Culture & Society*, 36(1), 3-19.
- Kyriakidou, M. (2015). Media witnessing: Exploring the audience of distant suffering. *Media, Culture & Society*, 37(2), 215-231.

Week 7 (M Feb 15, W Feb 17): Reading Week – No classes

Week 8 (M Feb 22, W Feb 24): Ritual and Ideological Approaches to Genre

○ **Required Readings:**

- Grant, B.K. (2007). Genre and society. In *Film Genre from Iconography to Ideology* (pp. 29-55). London: Wallflower Press.

- Grindon (2011). Thinking seriously about laughter and romance. In *The Hollywood Romantic Comedy* (pp. 67-83). Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Kalviknes Bore, I. (2011). Reviewing romcom: (100) IMDb users and (500) Days of Summer. *Participations: Journal of Audience & Reception Studies*, 8(2), 144-164.

Representation & Reception assignment due before class on Monday, February 22

B. Looking Beyond Text & Response

Week 9 (M Feb 29, W March 1): Political Economy & Considerations of Industry

○ **Required Readings:**

- Horkheimer, M. & Adorno, T.W. (1944/2001). The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (pp. 120-167). New York: Continuum.
- Herman, E.S. & Chomsky, N. (2002). Introduction. In *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (pp. xi-xxiv). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Biltereyst, D. & Meers, P. (2011). The political economy of audiences. In J. Wasko, G. Murdock, & H. Sousa (eds.), *The Handbook of Political Economy of Communications* (pp. 415-435), Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

Week 10 (M March 7, W March 9): Media and/as Social Practice

○ **Required Readings: (48)**

- Jancovich, M. & Faire, L. (2003). From spectatorship to film consumption. In *The Place of the Audience* (pp. 3-15). London: BFI.
- Kortti, J. (2011). Multidimensional social history of television: Social uses of Finnish television from the 1950s to the 2000s. *Television & New Media*, 12(4), 293-313.
- Metykova, M. (2010). Only a mouse click away from home: Transnational practices of European migrants in the United Kingdom. *Social Identities*, 16(3), 325-338.

Week 11 (M March 14, W March 16): Cinemagoing and the Resonance of Venues

○ **Required Readings:**

- Snelson, T & Jancovich, M. (2011). 'No hits, no runs, just terrors.' Exhibition, cultural distinctions and cult audiences at the Rialto Cinema in the 1930s and 1940s. In R. Maltby, D. Biltereyst, & P. Meers (Eds.), *Explorations in New Cinema History: Approaches & Case Studies* (pp.199-211). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Corbett, K. (2008). Bad sound and sticky floors: An ethnographic look at the symbolic value of historic small-town movie theaters. In K.H. Fuller-Seeley (Ed.), *Hollywood in the Neighbourhood: Historical Case Studies of Local Moviegoing* (pp. 233-249). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Boyle, K. (2010). Watch with baby: Cinema, parenting and community. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 13(3), 275-290.

Week 12 (M March 21, W March 23): Media Memory

○ **Required Readings:**

- Kuhn, A. (2011). What to do with cinema memory? In R. Maltby, D. Biltereyst, & P. Meers (Eds.), *Explorations in New Cinema History: Approaches & Case Studies* (pp.85-97). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Anderson, L. (2013). The porous boundaries of newsreel memory research. In A. Moran & K. Aveyard (Eds.), *Watching Films: New Perspectives on Movie-going, Exhibition and Reception* (pp. 70-86), Bristol: Intellect.
- Bourdon, J. & Kligler-Vilenchik, N. (2011). Together, nevertheless? Television memories in mainstream Jewish Israel. *European Journal of Communication*, 26(1), 33-47.

Week 13 (M March 28, W March 30): Fandom

○ **Required Readings:**

- Jenkins, H. (1988). *Star Trek* rerun, reread, rewritten: Fan writing as textual poaching. *Critical Studies in Mass Communications* 5(2), 85-107.

- Johnson, D. (2007). Fan-tagonism, factions, institutions, and constitutive hegemonies of fandom. In J. Gray, C. Sandvoss, C.L. Harrington (Eds.), *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World*, (pp. 285-300). New York: New York University Press.
- Scott, S. (2015). The moral economy of crowdfunding and the transformative capacity of fan-ancing. *New Media & Society*, 17(2), 167-182.

Week 14 (M April 4, W April 6): Stardom & Celebrity

○ **Required Readings:**

- McDonald, P. (1998). Stars and audiences. In R. Dyer. *Stars* (2nd ed.), (pp. 187-193). London: BFI.
- Fuqua, J.V. (2011). Brand Pitt: Celebrity activism and the Make it Right Foundation in post-Katrina New Orleans. *Celebrity Studies*, 2(2), 192-208.
- Ralph, S. (2015). Using stars, not just 'reading' them: The roles and functions of film stars in mother-daughter relations. *Celebrity Studies*, 6(1), 23-38.

Capstone Project due by 11:59pm on Friday, April 8