Television and New Media  
MTWR 2:00pm-4:00pm  
Instructor: Mashinka Firunts (mashinka@sas.upenn.edu)  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 4-6PM

Course Description

“I went to sleep one day a cultural critic and woke the next metamorphosed into a data processor.” In the wake of digital media, what does it mean to find oneself transformed into the data processor Alan Liu describes? As smartphones and always-on devices dot the contemporary landscape, each micro-moment involves sorting through digital data streams. How are users transformed by these encounters with media technologies? How are identities coded across platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, and Grindr? What does it mean to digitize the coordinates of race, gender, sexuality, ability, and class? What are the effects of (“new”) media on television, cinema, and visual art? Finally, what possibilities for user agency and resistance do digital networks afford? CIMS 103 is an introductory survey course that approaches these questions by examining social media; new media and net art; digital activism; distribution platforms; mobile phone cultures; and related technologies.

The course will be structured as a laboratory, wherein students produce both critical writing and a creative media project in dialogue with their peers. The final project could take the form of a new media artwork; a text composed on Twitter in 140 character increments; a data mapping initiative; a performance; a blueprint for a game; a thematic Instagram account; etc. Final projects will be accompanied by a critical essay of 1250 words (5 pages). Students will present their projects in an exhibition staged at the end of the course.

Grade Breakdown

Attendance and Active Participation: 20%  
Tumblr Posts: 15%  
One In-Class Presentation: 10%  
Midterm Essay (Take Home): 25%  
Project Proposal and Final Project: 30%

Attendance and Participation

Daily, active participation in course discussions is a crucial aspect of this course, and will comprise 20% of your final grade. Unexcused absences will affect your grade. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to inform me of your absence before class. Habitual tardiness may be counted as an unexcused absence. Please note that all screenings will be conducted in class.
In-Class Presentation
Each student will deliver one ten-minute presentation. Presentations will summarize that day’s readings with visual illustrations, and reflect on how the readings might relate to our own daily media consumption. Each presentation should conclude with a set of discussion questions for class conversation.

Tumblr Posts
Students will make two informal posts on our private course Tumblr, reflecting on previous readings and synthesizing the authors’ claims. Posts should be two-three paragraphs and include references to at least two recent readings. References can be either direct quotes or paraphrases, and should indicate the page number where the citation was found.

Midterm Essay
The midterm will be a critical essay responding to a question prompt distributed in-class. Essays will be 3 pages (750 words) in length, and reference at least five course readings. Essays should have a clear thesis statement and support their claims with evidence.

Project Proposal
The proposal will be 1-2 pages in length and outline the student’s final project. It should indicate: the goals of the project; the questions it will pose; the form it will take; the media platforms and artworks it engages; and the course readings and topics it addresses. Further details and guidance related to the proposal will follow.

Final Project
The final assignment is a hybrid critical essay and media project. It will pursue a research question formulated by the student that addresses the major themes of the course. It addresses the research question in two ways: first, through a creative media project; and second, through a 5 page (1250 word) critical essay. The critical essay should clearly outline the following: the questions the project engages; the course readings it is in dialogue with; the claims it is making; and its formal logic (i.e., why the project takes its particular visual form, why it deploys its particular platform, etc.)

Week 1:

May 22 / Monday: Introduction
Syllabus Review

May 23 / Tuesday: Between Old Media and New
Reading: Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, “Did Somebody Say New Media?”
Browse: Rhizome.org Net Art Anthology
May 24 / Wednesday: Defining Media
Reading: Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (excerpts)
        Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (excerpts)

Screening: Al Jazeera Media Theorised Series: Stuart Hall, Marshall McLuhan, Edward Said

May 25 / Thursday: Televisual Feedback
Reading: David Joselit, *Feedback* (excerpts)

Screening: Nam Jun Paik, *Good Morning Mr. Orwell* (clips)
           Carlotta Schoolman and Richard Serra, *Television Delivers People*
           Dara Birnbaum, *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman*

First Tumblr Post due Saturday, May 27th

Week 2

May 29 / Monday
Memorial Day (No Class)

May 30 / Tuesday: Televising War and Global Media
        Marc Lynch, *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today* (excerpts)

Screening: Jehane Noujaim, *Control Room* (clips)
Browse: Coco Fusco, *A Field Guide for Female Interrogators*
        James Bridle, *The Iraq War: A History of Wikipedia Changelogs*

May 31 / Wednesday: Satellites and Surveillance
Reading: Lisa Parks, “Cover Yourwebcam: Unencrypting Laura Poitras’ *Citizenfour*”

Screening: *Citizenfour* (clips)
Browse: Clement Valla, *Postcards from Google Earth*
        Trevor Paglen, *Nonfunctional Satellites* and *The Other Night Sky*

Suggested: Lisa Parks, *Cultures in Orbit: Satellites and the Televisual* (excerpts)

June 1 / Thursday: Televising Resistance
Reading: Christine Acham, *Revolution Televised: Prime Time and the Struggle for Black Power* (excerpts)
Herman Gray, *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for Blackness* (excerpts)

Screening: Marlon Riggs, *Color Adjustment* (clips)
*The Black Power Mixtape, 1967-75* (clips)

Suggested: Stuart Hall, “What Is This ‘Black’ in Black Popular Culture?”

**First Draft of Project Proposal Due on Friday, June 2nd**

**Week 3**

**June 5 / Monday: Post-Network Television**
Reading: Amanda D. Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized* (excerpts)
Aymar Jean Christian, “Valuing Post-Network Television”

Screening: *Brujos* (clips)
*Brown Girls* (clips)

**June 6 / Tuesday: Reality TV**
Reading: Mark Andrejevic, *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched* (excerpts)

Screening: *Work of Art* (clips)
Ryan Trecartin’s *Center Jenny* (clips)
*Unreal* (clips)

Suggested: Nick Couldry, “Reality TV, or The Secret Theater of Neoliberalism”

**June 7 / Wednesday: Televising Drag**
Reading: José Esteban Muñoz, “‘The White To Be Angry’: Vaginal Davis’s Terrorist Drag”

Screening: *RuPaul’s Drag Race* (clips)
*Lipstick City by Shea Couleé* by Vaginal Davis, performance clips

**June 8 / Thursday: Trans Media**
Reading: Julia Serano, “Skirt Chasers: Why the Media Depicts the Trans Revolution in Lipstick and Heels”
Nicole Morse, “Daughter, Mother, Mirror: Zackary Drucker’s
Southern for Pussy

Screening: Southern for Pussy (clips)
Transparent (clips)

Midterm Prompts Distributed on Thursday, June 8th

Week 4

June 12 / Monday: Mobile Media
Reading: Raul Perterria, “Localizing Mobile Media”
Ramon Lobato and Julian Thomas, “Informal Mobile Economies”

Screening: Sophia Le Fraga, w8t1ng
Browse: Arte.Mov Festival Brazil Vimeo Page
Micha Cárdenas, The Transborder Immigrant Tool
Julian Oliver and Danja Vasiliev’s PRISM: The Beacon Frame
Suggested: Fumitoshi Kato, “Learning with Mobile Phones”

Midterm Essays Due Monday, June 23th

June 13 / Tuesday: Gaming
Reading: Lisa Nakamura, “Queer Female of Color: The Highest Difficulty Setting There Is?”

Screening: Anna Anthropy, Queers in Love at the End of the World (game)
Cao Fei, RMB City (clips)
Hito Steyerl, Factory of the Sun (clips)
Suggested: Lisa Nakamura, “User-Generated Media Campaigns Against Racism, Sexism, and Homophobia in Digital Games”

June 14 / Wednesday: Apps and Swiped Intimacy
Reading: Shaka McGlotten, Virtual Intimacies (excerpts)

Screening: Shawné Michaelain Holloway, # B4 W/ UR(L) BAE (clips)

June 15 / Thursday: Dataveillance
Reading: Rita Raley, “Dataveillance and Countervailance”

Screening: Hito Steyerl, How Not to Be Seen (clips)
Second Tumblr Post due Friday, June 16th

Week 5

June 19 / Monday: Surveillance and Blackness
Reading: Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (excerpts)

Screening: Martine Syms, *Incense Sweaters & Ice* (clips) and *Laughing Gas* (clips)
Hannah Black, *My Bodies*
Suggested: Autumn Whitefield-Madrano, "I'll Be Watching You"

June 20 / Tuesday: Art After Social Media
Reading: Brad Troemel, “Art After Social Media”
Jennifer Chan, “Why Are There No Great Women Net Artists”

Screening: Jennifer Chan, *Boyfriend*
Omar Kholeif on “Electronic Superhighway (2016-1966)”
Browse: Corey Arcangel, *Working on My Novel*
Brad Troemel's Etsy Account
Deep Lab projects
Suggested: Martine Syms, “Black Vernacular”
Seth Price, “Dispersion”
James Bridle, “The New Aesthetic and Its Politics”

Revised Project Proposals Due Tuesday, June 20th

June 21 / Wednesday: The Cognitariat
Reading: Franco Berardi Bifo, “What Does Cognitariat Mean? Work, Desire and Depression” (excerpts)

Screening: Tyler Coburn, “I'm That Angel” (clips)
Browse: Wages for Facebook
Nick Thurston, *Of the Subcontract, or Principles of the Poetic Right*

Megan Foley, “Prove You’re Human”: Fetishizing Material Embodiment and Immaterial Labor in Information Networks

**June 22 / Thursday: Sound and The Politics of Listening**

Reading: Lawrence Abu Hamdan, “Aural Contract”

Screening: Lawrence Abu Hamdan, “What Now? The Politics of Listening”
Forensic Architecture, *ChapterSound 20141208 720pYoutube-5shotscomparison*
Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, *The Part about The Bandits* (Extract from Part 1 of *The Incidental Insurgents*)

Suggested: Kareem Estefan, “Exhibit A: How a Team of Artists, Architects and Theorists are Exposing State Violence”
Eyal Weizman, “Introduction: Forensis”

**Week 6**

**June 26 / Monday: #BlackLivesMatter**

Reading: Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (excerpts)

Browse: #BlackPoetsSpeakOut Tumblr
#BlackLivesMatter Syllabus

Suggested: Sanjay Sharma, “Black Twitter?: Racial Hashtags, Networks and Contagion”

**June 27 / Tuesday: The Politics of Data**

Reading: Hannes Grassegger and Mikael Krogerus, “The Data That Turned the World Upside Down”

Browse: Trevor Paglen, *Overhead: New Photos of the NSA and Other Top Intelligence Agencies Revealed*

Suggested: Mel Hogan, “Facebook Data Storage Centers as the Archive’s Underbelly”

**Final Projects Due Tuesday, June 27th**

**June 28 / Wednesday**

Exhibition and Project Presentations (Location TBA)