

LMC 8000 Proseminar in Media Theory

Wednesday 2-5pm

Prof. Ian Bogost
ibogost@gatech.edu
(404) 894-1160

Office Hours: TBA (based on student schedules)

OVERVIEW

In this seminar students will explore the key traditions of disciplinary and theoretical inquiry that contribute to the study of Digital Media, including design theory, literary-critical theory, visual culture and the cultural studies of media, communications theory, and performance studies. Students will examine key texts in each of these areas and explore their application to representative digital artifacts.

By the end of the course students will be able to demonstrate their understanding of the assumptions and methodologies characteristic of each of these approaches, and write a research paper using media theory to advance our understanding of digital media.

In addition to writing a research paper, students will participate in creating a bibliography of all the materials that we read during the semester, together with a series of descriptive and interpretive notes. These notes will serve as study aids for the qualifying exam after 8001 (and for future classes/work).

GRADING

Participation: 40%
Research paper: 50%
Reading notes: 10%

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Successful completion of this course will enable students to:

- Identify the historical and cultural roots of digital media
- Identify the major theoretical traditions contributing to scholarly discourse about digital media
- Summarize and paraphrase key theoretical works
- Give examples of important historical and cultural elements of scholarly discourse about digital media

SCHEDULE

0. Introductory Meeting (Aug 24)

1. Introductory readings (Aug 31)

**** NMR is a text you'll probably want to own**

Bush, "How We May Think"

Nelson, "Computer Lib"

nelson, *Computer Lit*

Raymond Williams, "The technology and the society"

UNIT: LITERATURE, FILM, GAMES, DIGITAL

2. Interactive Narrative: visual forms (Sept 7)

Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck*, Chapters 3 and 4

Laurel, Brenda. *Computers as Theater* 1, 6

Ryan, Mary-Laure. *Avatars of Story*, Chapters 1, 5

Aristotle, *Poetics*

Benjamin, "What is Epic Theatre?"

3. Sept 14 - No Class Meeting

4. Filmic narrative and film theory (Sept 21)

Bordwell, David, "Post theory"

Bazin, André, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" and "The Myth of Total Cinema"

Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, Chapter 3.

5. Literary Theory (Sept 28)

**** Please buy the Eagleton book**

Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*: Introduction, Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5

Eco, *The Open Work*, Introduction, Chapters 1, 5

6. Interactive Narrative and textual theory (Oct 5)

Michael Joyce, "Siren Shapes" (Of Two Minds)

Stuart Moulthrop, *NMR*, 691-704

Espen Aarseth, excerpts from *Cybertext* and other essays

Hayles, *Writing Machines*

Hayles on Digital Literature (<http://eliterature.org/pad/elp.html>)

Landow, *Hypertext*.

7. Game Studies (Oct 12)

Ian Bogost, chapters 1 and 2 from *Persuasive Games*

Essays from *First Person*: Murray, Mateas, Eskillinen, Aarseth, Moulthrop

8. Performance Studies (Oct 19)

Jon McKenzie, *Perform or Else*

Auslander, *Liveness*

Schechner-Performance:

UNIT: VISUAL FORMS AND THE MATERIALITY OF MEDIUM

9. Digital Theory and Art (Oct 26)

Lev Manovich, chapters from *The Language of New Media*
Software Takes Command, Introduction

10. Art and Picture theory (Nov 2)

Barthes, essays from *Image, Music, Text*
Goodman, excerpts from *Languages of Art*
Mitchell, W. J. T., *Picture Theory* (introduction)
Mitchell, W.J., chapters from *The Reconfigured Eye*
Carroll, Noel. excerpts from *Theories of Art Today*.

11. Modernism in art (Nov 9)

Greenberg, "Avant-garde and Kitsch" and "Modern Painting"
Dick Higgins, *Intermedia*
Debord, *Society of Spectacle* (also the film version on YouTube)
Drucker, chapter from *Sweet Dreams*

UNIT: MODERN, POSTMODERN, AVANT GARDE

12. Modern(ist) Media Theory (Nov 16)

Benjamin, "Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
Adorno and Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry"
McLuhan, chapters from *Understanding Media*

13. Thanksgiving Break - No Class Meeting (Nov 23)

14. Visual Culture (Nov 30)

Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, Intro & Chapters 1-7

15. Postmodern Media Theory (Dec 5-6)

**** Rescheduled meeting**

Baudrillard, excerpts from *Simulacra and Simulations*,
Jameson, chapters from *Postmodernism*
Lyotard, excerpts from *The Postmodern Condition*