



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

### 1. **Black Cult Media**

Kristen Warner, University of Alabama

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

This seminar asks its participants to explore rationales for why cult media are so white. Rarely, if ever, are media texts such as *Coming to America* or *The Color Purple* or *Friday* or *Real Husbands of Hollywood*—projects with predominantly Black casts and seemingly marketed toward Black audiences—also considered within the canon of cult. This kind of exclusion begs the central question of this: if traditional notions of cult media are normatively understood as white, should the area of Black Cult Media be made visible?

The global blockbuster success of contemporary predominantly Black-cast films like *Girls Trip*, *Black Panther*, and *Us*, television series such as *Scandal*, *Queen Sugar*, and *The Have and Have Nots*, on the surface counter claims of cult as these texts are so widely viewed they may operate as more “mainstream.” However, if we consider that black viewers are often considered niche in terms of viewing audiences, a characteristic of cult to be sure, how might we revisit these works as Black cult? This seminar will be asking participants to: Through what lenses can we understand how these texts appeal to Black audiences (is it affectively? Is it solely representational?) What strategies have mainstream understandings of cult film constructed to exclude predominantly Black cast and Black themed films as well as their audience? What counts as Black cult and according to what terms?

Participants will be asked to write a 3-4 page position paper exploring one of the questions above. Reading the papers beforehand, both the seminar participants and auditors will conduct a conversation around the themes that emerge from the position papers.



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

### 2. **Collaborative Methods Between Cinema and Media Scholars and Media Geographers**

Joshua Gleich, University of Arizona

*Open Session - Audience may only observe*

The day after the 2020 SCMS conference concludes, the annual meeting of the American Association of Geographers (AAG) begins in Denver. This represents a unique opportunity to bring together SCMS members and potential new collaborators working primarily in geography. This seminar will focus on methods for collaboration between the two fields.

This SCMS Partners event will be co-chaired by SCMS member Joshua Gleich and AAG member Chris Lukinbeal. In order to ensure equal participation, half of the seats (4 out of 8 participants; 5 out of 10 auditors) will be reserved for AAG members, while the other half will be reserved for SCMS members. Additionally, SCMS will offer a special \$15 Sunday day pass for AAG members to attend SCMS, whether or not they plan to attend this seminar. This includes access to any Sunday panels or sessions and the post-seminar coffee break.

Geographers bring expertise in digital mapping tools, as well as theories of how media practices intersect with cultural, topographical, and economic geographies. In turn, media scholars bring a rigorous understanding of historical, aesthetic, and ideological practices that structure media industries and media texts. This seminar addresses two subsets of SCMS members: 1) scholars working at the intersection of cinema/media and geography and 2) cinema/media scholars who rely on maps and other spatial visualization tools. The first group can serve as a springboard for a discussion of core approaches. The second group includes a broad cross-section of the membership, for instance, exhibition scholars investigating theater locations, media industries scholars researching patterns of global distribution, or video game scholars analyzing game maps/mapping.

Participants will submit a 3-5 page summary of a current research project that will utilize or benefit from methods and/or theories of geography, cartography, and spatial visualization. This will include projects in various stages of development and scholars with a range of professional experience. Participants and auditors will read papers in advance. We will organize small groups, matching scholars across disciplines by method and/or topic. Following small group meetings, groups will share potential ideas for collaboration, as well as potential challenges in integrating tools and methodologies. This will catalyze a larger discussion of best practices and future opportunities for collaborative research between geographers and media scholars.



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

### 3. **Computational Media: Theories, Methods, Futures**

Ranjodh Dhaliwal, University of California, Davis

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

Once the initial excitement surrounding the newness of new media was punctured and we knew it had been 'always already new,' most work on what would have been once categorized as 'new media' splintered into a number of subfields. In the last decade alone, we have seen a proliferation of subdisciplinary configurations such as videogame studies, internet studies, software studies, digital media art, critical makings, critical code studies, algorithm studies, and AI studies. At the same time, as digital media phenomenology clashed with media archaeology and Kulturtechniken, the possible number of approaches to thinking about the computational/digital/informational media all increased exponentially. This is to say nothing of the recent work that has started merging approaches from media studies with those of science and technology studies and philosophy of science and technology. In the middle of this dizzying variety of admirable scholarship on computational media lies a need and opportunity for taking stock and charting out possible future pathways. This seminar, with an experimental format, will do just that.

First, participants would pick and remotely share a (part of) their own research object with everyone else in the seminar: this can be a film clip, a portion of computer code, a (historical/contemporary) event/phenomenon, a videogame level, or whatever else they may work with.

Then, after everyone has been assigned someone else's research object, each participant shall write a short, 1000-1500 word position paper, using their own methods and theories but on the assigned object. This can either be a conventional 'reading' of the assigned object using the methods one is most comfortable with, or engage experimentally with it (eg, you may write about the possibilities (or a lack thereof) of bringing certain methods/theories to bear on the said objects.)

In the seminar itself, the participants will first briefly (2 mins each) outline their engagement/response to the assigned research object and then be paired with the auditors to generate discussion questions.

By disorienting the participants and exchanging our respective subdisciplinary perspectives, the seminar will generate provocations for all of us interested in studying the computer as a medium.

The auditors do not write anything but can read the material and participate in the discussions, while the walk-ins may speak up in the last 20mins when we shall be reflecting on the seminar and taking stock.



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

### 4. **Contemporary Screen Culture's Fascination with the Posthuman'**

Melissa Molloy, Victoria University of Wellington, Pansy Duncan, Massey University, and Claire Henry, Massey University

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

From robotics to climate change, recent technological, ecological and social developments have unsettled basic assumptions about the relationship between the human and the more-than-human world. Responding to these developments, theorists such as Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, Cary Wolfe, N. Katherine Hayles, and Stacy Alaimo have turned to the figure of the 'posthuman' to flag the demise of the human as a shared unit of reference. But how have our fantasies of and anxieties around 'the posthuman condition' found expression in narrative screen media? This seminar explores influential theories of the posthuman in tandem with kindred representations on-screen to underscore the significance of both at present, when the 'boundary breakdowns' Haraway proposed in 1975's prophetic 'A Cyborg Manifesto' have become central to culture in many respects. As evident across contemporary media, from auteur cinema such as *Air Doll* (Kore-eda, 2009) and *Annihilation* (Garland, 2018) to the idiosyncratic 'television' of *Black Mirror* and the virtual reality installation *Biidaaban: First Light* (Jackson, 2018), it contends that, like the work of Braidotti and Wolfe, these texts grapple with 'the pressing question of what it means to be human under the conditions of globalisation, technoscience, late capitalism and climate change' (Herbrechter 2017).

To facilitate productive conversation on depictions of posthumanism across media, we will ask that both participants and auditors read short extracts from several of the abovementioned key theorists. We will also ask that participants use these extracts as the basis for short video essays or position papers (600-1000 words) responding (directly or otherwise) to the following prompt: How does critical posthumanism illuminate 21<sup>st</sup> century screen media and culture? Discussing the results along with auditors, the seminar will highlight connections among case studies that participants present on, with the aim of advancing the scholarly conversation on the relationship between posthuman theories and contemporary screen media across genres.



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

### 5. **Creating an Archives-Wiki: Re-thinking Archival Practice, Feminist Research, and Historical Methods**

Christina Lane, University of Miami and Annie Berke, Independent Scholar

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

This seminar will engage participants in a collaborative process that examines the challenges and opportunities posed by archival practice, feminist research, historical methods, and writing women's stories. In recent decades, there has been a call to open up definitions of what counts as scholarship, with forms such as journalism, social commentary, biography, and blog increasingly regarded as legitimate and productive by the field of film and television studies. At the same time, due to trends toward digital archives and web research, scholars have unprecedented access to materials. This leaves open many questions pertaining to the research and writing process. There is great value in coming together to share individual experiences, as well as encounters with sites, archives, and sources.

Participants will generate an open-source *archives-wiki* for the purposes of compiling *notes from the field* and detailing experiences with archives, broadly defined as digital, paper, personal, institutional, unofficial, ethnographic, and ephemeral collections. The purpose is to create a long-lasting public resource—a space for logging details ranging from which physical archives allow cameras, to which digital collections have yielded successful publications, to constructive methods for conducting interviews.

As a free, accessible, and simple-to-use resource, the Google Sites wiki will itself serve as an evolving archive, continuing to generate insights and forge connections after the conference. The archives-wiki offers many short- and long-term possibilities including a potential journal publication, pedagogical resource (for shared lesson plans and syllabi), discussion forums, and so on.

**Responsibilities:** In advance of the seminar, participants will be required to share a short (3-5 page) project proposal or position paper that articulates either a methodological problem or solution (e.g., a case study, research example). Participants are required to read all papers and be prepared to comment. Auditors are asked to read papers and are invited to contribute.

**Structure:** In advance, participants will sub-divide into working groups delineated by the chairs. The seminar's first half will be spent in these smaller groups (including auditors), workshopping proposals, sharing primary resources, and establishing best research practices. Then the entire group will re-convene to facilitate reflections on our findings and position the wiki for future success.



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

### 6. **Fandom and the Use of Archival Footage: Histories, Theories, Methods**

Philipp Dominik Keidl, Goethe University Frankfurt and Abby Waysdorf, Utrecht University

*Closed Session*

This seminar will address the use and circulation of archival footage in fan communities and fan-produced works. The participants will explore, in their short research papers (1500 words), and in discussion during the seminar, the question of how fans actively engage with historical film documents and create historical knowledge that circulates within and beyond their fan communities.

Fan studies has primarily investigated fan practices in relation to the consumption, production, and criticism of fictional texts, with non-fiction texts and fan practices receiving considerably less attention. Yet fans regularly engage with history in their practices, both in terms of it as a text and historical awareness of themselves. This seminar will use the example of fans' use of audiovisual materials that they find in archives and that they archive themselves to show how fans are active participants in assembling, preserving, restoring, and disseminating materials from and about the past.

Seminar participants will foreground practices, objects, and networks that have found little attention, such as: the distinct forms of historical media fans produce; community structures and hierarchies with history-making at their center: fan historians' relationship to the media industries; the impact of fan labor on cultural heritage; intersections between fandom and historical societies. Together, the contributors will further understanding of how central engagements with the past are to the formation, maintenance, and shaping of individual and collective fan identities.

Participants will distribute their papers to attendees and auditors by Feb.15, 2020. The seminar leaders will group the contributions before the conference and develop three central and intersecting questions that address their issues. Following a 15-minute introduction, each question will be discussed for about 20 minutes. The final 30 minutes will be used to draft a collective research statement about the future research prospective and challenges for fans' use of archival materials, the knowledge they are producing, as well as the media that they produce to disseminate it. The research statement will be posted on the websites of the research projects European History Reloaded (Utrecht University) and Configurations of Film (Goethe University Frankfurt). We will also start an online discussion group to further collaboration and scholarly engagement with the intersection of fandom, archives, and public history.



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

### 7. **Geographies of Race in Film**

Elizabeth Patton, University of Maryland, Baltimore County and Merrill Schleier, University of the Pacific

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

This seminar will examine the role of place to define geographies of race in global cinema from the Silent Era to the present. We will explore how certain regions come laden with meaning, which, in turn, signal racialized spatial policies and attitudes (e.g. inclusion and exclusion, wholesome vs. dangerous, progressive vs. retrogressive). George Lipsitz argues that “the lived experience of race has a spatial dimension, and the lived experience of space has a racial dimension.” Craig Barton extends this analysis by demonstrating the way architectural places often act as palimpsests of their racialized pasts, which are embedded in their meanings. But as Rhodes and Gorfinkel note, the depiction of place in film is not simply the selection of a particular geographical location; rather it is a fabrication, a synthesis of the actual and the artificial, which “share an intriguing and morphologically consonant doubleness” the result of “ontology and the articulation of a code or codes.” These codes are demonstrated in *Green Book* (2018), which situates the geography of racism in the South despite well-documented instances of racism in the North and the necessity for entries in *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (1936-1966). Likewise *Boyz in the Hood* (1989) was marketed as an “inner city film,” a code for its Black inhabitants despite its setting in suburban Los Angeles. We are interested in papers that take a position on any of the following questions: How are places racialized in film? How has film contributed to regions that have developed a certain racial profile? How are race and place co-constructed? How do audiences understand race through places and regions? How does film order and control spaces and places? We welcome essays from various perspectives, including but not limited to pre/post production, marketing, levels of representation, set design, and reception/audience studies.

Participants will be asked to write a 5-page position paper that explores the above issues. Participants and auditors will read a short passage from Lipsitz, Barton, or Gorfinkel and Rhodes to gain a sense of work in the field. Participants and auditors are required to read all essays in advance and participate in seminar discussion. External audience members are invited to listen and/or contribute to the discussion. Each participant will generate 1-2 questions on two papers that might draw those two papers together. The seminar will consist of a discussion of the readings and the pre-circulated essays.



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

### 8. **Ghosts, Holobionts, and Superorganisms: Towards a Holographic Theory of the Political**

Elizabeth Alvarado, University of Chicago and Dan Wang, University of Pittsburgh

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

From Tupac at Coachella to Maria Callas on tour, from 3D dinosaurs to Princess Leia, the hologram is a figure that promises to be more than life, to “[bring] life back to the stage.” Such are the claims of companies like Base Hologram, which capitalize on art corporations’ fear of dwindling revenue by promising to deliver an “ultra-realistic experience where fantasy becomes reality.” How does the hologram’s ephemeral embodiments invite us to think differently about identity, presence, celebrity, and capital in the first quarter of the twenty-first century?

For instance, while the hologram offers economic optimism in an era of audience bleed, it has also become a recurrent metaphor for thinking about the object-ness of race, beside the biological and the cultural. Witness the ending of *Ghost in the Shell* (2017), in which the “ghost” turns out to be a sort of racial “holobiont”: a Japanese woman inside the shell of Scarlett Johansson’s more recognizable and marketable body. Elsewhere, the internet has declared Orono Noguchi, lead singer of the band Superorganism, to be not a biological but a holographic entity.

This seminar invites participants to think about how modern holograms, ghosts, holobionts, and superorganisms reshape the material bases of film theory, including (but not limited to) the political value of representation and embodiment. For example, to what extent is our investment in the idea that films “reflect” minority experience grounded implicitly in the flatness of screens? How might our political imagination of what is possible change if we envision different surfaces, different uses of light, and different realizations of a “flesh”? A holographic theory of the political may get us closer to what Laura Mulvey, in her analysis of the phantasmatic screen body, called “the thrill that comes from leaving the past behind without rejecting it.” How might her focus on “mechanisms, not meaning” allow us to better comprehend the holographic star image?

Seminar participants will be asked to write a 5-6 page position paper that approaches the question of holographic theory from the standpoint of their interests and expertise. Prior to the meeting, participants will circulate their papers and clips among the group for advance reading and screening.

Presenters will be sent a couple of questions to consider for discussion, during which they may play brief clips where applicable. Auditors will also be asked to read and view all submissions in advance.





## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

### 9. **Location Services On: Embodiment and Mobile Technologies**

Kelsey Cummings, University of Pittsburgh and Emma Downey, Bucknell University

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

Increasing awareness of and news coverage on mobile media demonstrate the central importance of the body to a conceptualization of cell phone technologies. From period tracking and pregnancy apps to surveillance capabilities that target Black Lives Matter protesters, there are a wide array of biopolitical potentialities, questions, and concerns associated with the technologies that we carry with us regularly. This seminar brings together critical literature on embodiment in media studies to allow participants to consider and discuss how we can most effectively understand mobile media through a framework of biopolitics.

What are the tangible embodied effects of mobile media on political daily life? How do categories of class, race, gender, and ability affect an individual's choices in use and consumption of mobile media? Per Puar (2017), mobile media assemblage needs to be centered in the study of cell phone technologies for its important implications to an understanding of the politics of embodiment. What does this approach to media studies mean for our broader theoretical approaches to touch and time in the contemporary context?

Seminar participants will be asked to prepare a short position paper and read those of other participants before SCMS. Position papers should reflect on questions emerging from or inspired by the seminar description. Potential questions include: How do the categories of race, class, ability, and gender influence our understandings of and interactions with mobile media? How can mobile media aid us in understanding and analyzing the contemporary politics of embodiment? What does this approach to media studies mean for our broader theoretical approaches to touch and time in the contemporary context?

Auditors will be asked to read the participants' position papers before SCMS. The seminar will be open, allowing observers to ask questions or provide comments after participants and auditors have been given the time to discuss the position papers, connections emerging among and across them, and the seminar topic generally.

Using a biopolitical framework, this seminar will discuss the way power structures and social hierarchies emerge within our technologies and how mobile technology can be leveraged to perpetuate and solidify



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

these structures. In doing so, we will look at the paradoxical way the 'mobility' of our technology simultaneously enhances our freedom and acts as a mechanism to control it.

### 10. **Media Economies of Entertainment Industry Award Shows**

Raffi Sarkissian, Christopher Newport University

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

Over the past two decades, media industry award shows have grown in number, scope, and prominence in cultural discourses. They are now a cornerstone of a constellation of industries from increased press and campaigning to blogs, podcasts, and social media traffic. Moreover, award shows today often function as battlegrounds for both socio-cultural politics—think Meryl Streep’s speech against Trump at the Globes—and industry politics, like #OscarsSoWhite, Grammy president’s remarks/backlash on the work ethic of women artists in music, or the recent debate over whether Netflix/streaming films should qualify in the Oscar race. While so much of the media landscape is in constant flux, these award shows still direct a significant share of the discourses and influence practices for their respective industries. And yet, there is minimal academic scholarship on the continued and proliferating function of award shows.

This seminar uses “media economies” as a broad entry point to analyze a variety of issues concerning award shows and their related media industries. While studio campaigning and sales/box office performance are still relevant, seminar participants are also encouraged to think about political economy, attention economy, representation and equity, and other ways that award shows traffic, translate, and/or distort the value of cultural production. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Production, broadcast, and future of the award show telecast
- Digital/social media engagement and afterlife (hashtags, GIFs, memes)
- Organizational policies and politics (rules, membership, voting)
- Industry paratexts (trade coverage, campaigning, festivals, podcasts, blogs)
- Representation, accountability, and equity
- Red carpets, fashion industry
- Implications of/on global media economies

#### Structure and Responsibilities

Participants will submit a 4-5 page position paper before the conference. Based on the content of these papers, participants will be split into smaller groups to read each other’s papers and assemble talking



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

points for the seminar (specific guidelines to follow). Auditors are expected to read all position papers and contribute during the seminar discussion.

Given the lack of focus on this area of media studies, an added commitment of this seminar is to propose a foundation for a would-be subfield on the topic in the form of a collaborative draft syllabus. All attendees are encouraged to contribute and help organize references into a shared document.

### 11. **New Historiographies of Asian Cinemas**

Jose Capino, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Mark Nornes, University of Michigan  
*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

Much of the published scholarship on Asian cinemas is shaped around current lines of critique, conceptual approaches, and theoretical concerns from Euro-American academia. The unintended and regrettable result of this trend has been the marginalization or undervaluation of historical scholarship built on neglected primary or secondary sources.

We envision a forum for the discussion of nascent or ongoing historical research projects on Asian cinemas. Of special interest are presentations about understudied archives or sources, novel or underutilized methodologies and conceptual frameworks, rarely attempted comparative analyses or periodizations, revisionist accounts, and hybrid modes of scholarship.

Participants will be required to submit a 4-page paper describing their project and scholarly intervention specific to the part of Asia they address, outlining the challenges they have faced while researching the project, and reflecting on how they might use their project as a springboard for future work.

Participants and auditors alike must read all papers. The seminar will begin with brief statements from the participants, followed by a discussion with the participants and auditors, and—time permitting—questions from the audience.



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

### 12. **Public Policy and SCMS: Identifying Priorities and Developing Positions**

Deborah Jaramillo, Boston University and Jennifer Porst, University of North Texas

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

The SCMS Public Policy Committee (PPC) is charged with formulating and communicating SCMS positions on matters of public policy that affect the members of the organization in their professional capacity as scholars and educators. The members of the PPC wish to make their charge more legible and useful to the general SCMS membership. Accordingly, the aim of this seminar is to open a direct line of communication with SCMS members in order to ascertain which policy issues are foremost on members' minds. At the top of the committee's current agenda are the following issues and lines of inquiry:

#### *Fair Use*

We are interested in determining faculty's intellectual property rights as they pertain to course shells and whether media streamed in classrooms need to be licensed. While the Fair Use exception creates the appearance that the licensing issue is settled, we know of universities that do not acknowledge the exception. Should media scholars consider adjusting how we frame our use of media in the classroom?

#### *Academic Labor*

How should public policy be mobilized to address the precarious labor crisis in academia? What impactful steps can be taken in our departments, universities, and states? How can senior faculty work to monitor the treatment of adjunct faculty? And as the number of adjunct faculty continues to rise, what are the effects on the workloads of tenure-track and tenured faculty?

#### *Academic Research Opportunities Tied to Local Productions*

Given the prevalence of production centers outside of Los Angeles, should we communicate with state lawmakers about including provisions for academic research opportunities (access to sets/personnel) in legislation approving tax incentives and funding for local productions?

These are just a few of the possible avenues for discussion.



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

Participants should write short position papers of no more than 1500 words responding to one of our topics and/or introducing a new topic for discussion. The papers should identify central challenges or concerns related to the topic and create a proposal for how the PPC might address those challenges or concerns. Participants and auditors are expected to read these papers in advance of the seminar. The seminar will begin with small group discussions of each topic and end with a full group conversation. Ultimately, ideas and data gleaned from this session will be incorporated into the committee's plans for its own work and for its inter-committee collaborations.

### **13. Refracting Global Art and Political Cinema through the Lens of the Indian New Wave**

Usha Iyer, Stanford University and Manishita Dass, Royal Holloway, University of London

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

This seminar seeks to disrupt and expand Eurocentric understandings of art and political cinema – and Bollywood-centric curricular approaches to Indian cinema – by exploring a neglected moment in Indian film history and the history of global art cinema, extending from 1969 to the 1980s. During this period, a constellation of alternative film practices emerged in India at the intersection of state interventions, oppositional politics, and regional and transnational influences and exchanges. This upsurge in non-mainstream filmmaking was facilitated by government funding for low-budget, offbeat films, and was dubbed the “Indian New Wave” (INW).

Moving beyond purely auteurist approaches and the prism of national cinema, this seminar traces the imbrication of the global and the local in the New Wave's political and aesthetic genealogies and impulses. While investigating the cultural matrix (institutions, discourses, political debates, and intermedial traffic) within which the films were made, circulated, and remembered/forgotten, it will attend to transnational networks and exhibition circuits, and the INW's relationship to Third Cinema and European art cinema. Related topics of interest include the pleasures and afterlives of the INW and the pedagogical challenges and gains of teaching the INW.

Given the significant number of South Asian cinema/media scholars at the SCMS conference and our focus on less-researched but deeply significant global art and political cinema networks, this seminar will have broad appeal. Foregrounding transnational approaches to film theory, history, and pedagogy will enable an inquiry into global art cinema studies, the “non-western” breadth requirement on university curricula, the need for comparative histories of the avant-garde, and the universalist claims of film theory. This attention to relational logics in conceptualizing the contours of the global has theoretical and practical import for all of us as scholars, instructors, and curriculum-planners. With this broader focus, we invite scholars working on other art and political cinema movements to participate as well in this seminar.

The seminar will be structured around group discussion of key themes, breakout groups on specific areas, and a concluding discussion of future possibilities. Participants will write 4-6 page position papers,



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

and comment on other papers prior to the seminar. Auditors will read all papers but are not expected to comment prior to the seminar.

### 14. **Studying Moving Image Journalism II: Global Newsfilm and News Media Archives**

Ross Melnick, University of California, Santa Barbara and Mark Williams, Dartmouth College

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

For more than a century, media makers around the world have generated hundreds of thousands of hours of global news for both cinema and television screens. This vast output, which has shaped our historical understanding and memory of national and international events, remains one of the least studied media objects in our field.

Amid widespread concerns about the credibility of digital-era journalism during a time of global democratic crises, this seminar examines the importance of studying moving image journalism on a *global* scale and engages the importance of teaching, researching, and writing both nationally and transnationally, especially in relation to archival deposits of historical newsfilm and contemporary news media within global institutions of cultural heritage.

We look forward to engaging a wide range of global perspectives for a critical discussion of how cinema and media studies scholars and scholarship can bring the tools of our field to bear upon a wealth of historical materials that have been long ignored or unavailable but today are becoming newly available, often online. We hope to collate information about global news media collections available to scholars and others, and collections that may be less accessible or in peril.

Participants of this seminar will be asked to write a short position paper focused on specific collections or new methods and tools that facilitate teaching and research of these archival materials. Areas of focus may include global newsfilm/news media production and consumption, governmental newsfilm production and propaganda, wartime newsfilm/media practices, local, national, and regional specificity, colonial newsfilm production, historical chronotopes of news footage, inter-medial approaches to newsfilm studies, contemporary interventions in archival practices, analyses of specific global newsfilm/news media archives, as well as born-digital television, online, and mobile news (and social media algorithms) in the twenty-first century.



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

This seminar will be open to guests who may participate in the session.

The seminar will be co-chaired by Ross Melnick, associate professor of Film and Media Studies at UCSB, and Mark Williams, associate professor of Film and Media Studies at Dartmouth College and director of The Media Ecology Project (MEP), who were two of the co-editors of *Rediscovering U.S. Newsfilm: Cinema, Television, and the Archive* (AFI/Routledge, 2018).

### 15. Teaching Sex Media

Lynn Comella, University of Nevada, Las Vegas and Hoang Tan Nguyen, University of California, San Diego

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

In recent years there's been an uptick in academic scholarship exploring the history of sexually explicit film and media, tracing its evolution from the early days of cinema to the contemporary digital era. The rise of pornography studies as a legitimate academic field has contributed to increased, interdisciplinary interest among scholars regarding how to effectively teach the history of sex media (e.g., softcore, hardcore, sexploitation, etc.) as something central to cinema's production, reception and regulation. Yet how does one make a case for the importance of such courses to administrators and students who may be unconvinced of their scholarly value? What is involved in teaching sex media, broadly defined, in an era of trigger warnings and #MeToo? Is teaching sexually explicit film and media just like teaching any other subject matter, or does it involve a unique set of pedagogical strategies and considerations, including addressing the ways in which it can make both teachers and students vulnerable, exposed, and engaged in specific intellectual and bodily ways?

This seminar seeks to engage with these and other questions, while also providing an opportunity for participants to think critically about and discuss the politics and practicalities of teaching sexually explicit media. What materials and texts might be included? What assignments work well? How, moreover, does one introduce sexually explicit media into a course that is not specifically about pornography? As discussions about porn literacy gain cultural traction, and more and more U.S. states declare pornography to be a public health crisis, the significance of teaching about sexually explicit media, including its production, consumption, and effects, is perhaps more relevant than ever.

This seminar will offer a space for a true working group to think about and discuss questions related to the practice of teaching sex media. The goal is for participants to deepen their understanding of different yet equally viable pedagogical approaches that will help them navigate what at times can be challenging institutional and classroom contexts. Participants will be asked to submit in advance course descriptions and outlines, or completed syllabi, as well as examples of assignments and in-class exercises, which will



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

form the basis of the discussion during the seminar itself and help illustrate for others how the complexities of teaching sexually explicit media can be handled.

### 16. **Television after Legitimation**

Michael Newman, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Elana Levine, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

This seminar examines the cultural status of television in the streaming age. In *Legitimizing Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Status* (Routledge, 2012), we traced the rising cultural status of TV, focusing on developments in the first decade of the 21st century that brought newfound legitimacy to a medium long debased and disparaged. Since then, the spread of streaming platforms has been part of a further transformation of television: the technologies that constitute the medium and our ideas about it. How has the growth of streaming as a means of distribution and reception of television shaped its cultural status? How have the discourses we identified as key to the legitimation of television—the showrunner-auteur, the “cinematization” of TV’s visual aesthetics, the masculinization of serialized narrative, the “upgrading” of TV technologies and their integration into the home, and the agency of audiences—functioned across the 2010s? What new practices and discourses now contribute to television’s legitimation? In what ways have gendered, classed, raced, and aged associations with television shifted amidst the rise of streaming platforms? How has academic television studies itself contributed to or resisted these discourses?

We examined television’s cultural status most extensively in the Anglo-American context, thus we are eager to bring together diverse and inclusive perspectives on the global flows of TV programming and the globalization of TV distribution and viewing practices that engage with these questions. The local and national are still crucial contexts, yet a broader geography of legitimation discourses within the circulation and reception of media also ought to be part of this discussion. This seminar will be especially welcoming of participants looking at the ways that global flows of television technology and programming may be part of the medium’s legitimation, or how they might avoid or resist it. How is the process of legitimation enabled or constrained by the political, economic, and cultural structures that shape digital media across the globe?





## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

Participants will share a 4-5 page position paper in advance of the seminar and come prepared to discuss each others' contributions. Seminar leaders will circulate a bibliography of recommended readings in advance. Auditors will be expected to have read the position papers and be prepared to engage in a discussion of them. This seminar will be open to guests, who also may participate.

### **17. The Ethics and Politics of Military Media Studies**

Anna Froula, East Carolina University

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

Business is booming in war and media studies, which in and of itself is tragic. Yet it means much work ahead for scholars to keep pace with the ways that film, TV, video games, and other media attempt to grapple with the current terms of the United States' ongoing wars in ways that public discourse has not. Wars intersect with intensifying crises in climate change and infrastructure readiness, global hunger, and increasingly toxic environments. This seminar asks participants to explore the ethics and politics of conducting research on military media culture and teaching it in the classroom. Military media culture also includes peace and security studies, surveillance studies, militarization (of police forces, borders, concentration camps) propaganda, commercial news coverage, and "militainment" (war games, fashion, toys).

War culture can, and often does, bleed over into trauma culture, which raises the stakes in classrooms, especially when students are military dependents and/or veterans who could be traumatized or re-traumatized by the course content and discussions. Other ethical concerns may arise when civilian instructors teach stories about veterans. The pressure to produce public-facing scholarship that is critical of military culture and its agents can be also be risky.

I invite a range of methodological approaches that engage with one or more of these questions:

What key texts are most appropriate and engaging to explore issues of conflict, trauma, war, and poverty?  
What theoretical or methodological approaches are most valuable, and why?



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

How might discussions of war, politics, conflict and genocide help raise questions about the ontology of different media, their relationship to time and memory, their utility as tools of war, surveillance, memorialization, and cultural amnesia?

How should we go about discussing these events, especially when they seem particularly distant, unfamiliar, or even irrelevant to students today? Or, how do we teach these events to students who have been involved in war and conflict themselves as personnel, military family or as refugees or immigrants? What are the ethical concerns about citizens of a country waging multiple wars abroad who are constructing much of the scholarship about those wars?

Participants will submit position papers in early February. I will pair participants and ask them to devise 3-5 discussion questions for the seminar. Auditors receive materials in advance and are welcome to speak.

### **18. The History and Theory of Adolescent Sexuality with Adults in Film and Media**

Maureen Turim, University of Florida and Diane Waldman, University of Denver

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

Our seminar will revisit the representation of adolescent sexual expression in film and media from a historical and theoretical perspective. Feminist and queer film and media theory have often championed the autonomy of adolescent sexuality, but not without concerns that consent is subject in young people to an uneven balance of power and the potential for exploitation. The seminar will consider key historical touchstones. One is the silent period's portrayal of reformism and the subversions of it, for example the ambiguities suggested by *The New York Hat*, DW Griffith, 1912. Another would be the late seventies, as three notable films engaged with codes of sexual liberation to pose teenage girls as potentially consenting to their relationships to older men: *Taxi Driver*, Martin Scorsese, 1976; *Pretty Baby*, Louis Malle, 1978; and *Manhattan*, Woody Allen, 1979. Strikingly, over three decades Catherine Breillat rendered narratives of young girls' autonomous sexuality as a feminist cause in *Une vraie jeune fille*, (*A Real Young Girl*) 1976 *36 fillette*, (*Virgin*), 1988, *A ma soeur*, (*Fat Girl*). 2001. Adolescent homosexualities with older objects of desire from *Mädchen In Uniform* Leontine Sagan, 1931 to *Call me by Your Name*, Luca Guadagnino, 2017, adds another dimension to the debate, as does Pedro Almodòvar's renditions of adolescent seduction and incest, for incest is also a concern in approaching adolescent sexuality, as in *Murmurs of the Heart*, Louis Malle, 1971, and *Eve's Bayou*, Kasi Lemmons, 1997. The recent anthology, *Screening Minors in Latin American Cinema*, edited by Carolina Richa and Georgia Seminet. 2014, suggests the potential for expanding the corpus globally. Television studies approaches might look at how such series as *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* has treated childhood sexual victims, for example. Those specializing in the internet representations of this topic are also urged to participate. We envision short papers of five pages to be circulated in advance for discussion at the seminar. Each paper should discuss how specific media representations and responses to them address or neglect questions of the



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

autonomy of adolescent sexuality, concerns about consent and the potential for exploitation. How does the form or mode affect this? Participants and auditors will read all the papers and send us at least five points for discussion in advance. Others may join the discussion after initial responses by participants and auditors.

### **19. Transforming the Canon: Teaching Early, Silent, and Classical Film History Now**

Anna Cooper, University of Arizona and Monica Sandler, University of California, Los Angeles

*Open Session - Audience may join the discussion*

This seminar will consider how we as educators can redefine and retool teaching the first half of film history for the contemporary era. Virtually every film program has one or more introductory courses on film history, and for decades these classes have typically rehearsed a fairly standardized history focused on U.S. production companies and certain canonical (usually white and male) filmmakers. Yet this canon poses increasing challenges for pedagogy. These historical events are moving further into the past, and the relevant films are becoming less accessible for young viewers - both literally, as technologies change, and often also in terms of intellectual/emotional engagement.

Many recent studies, moreover, challenge these canonical narratives. Shelley Stamp and others show how female filmmakers like Lois Weber were central to the formation of film industries and styles. Laura Horak shows that queer and genderqueer identities have always been present in film culture. Ronny Regev has sought to give a greater voice to creative labor communities in the studio era, upending the common focus on studio heads. Other recent work looks at the transition to sound from an international perspective rather than the typical U.S. emphasis. Meanwhile, new DVD releases which compile early African American filmmakers like Oscar Micheaux and digital research platforms like the Women Film Pioneers Project make it easier for students to access information on alternative approaches to film history than ever before.

This seminar asks how we can transform our pedagogy in response to these evolving perspectives on the early, silent, and classical periods of film history. Focusing through the lenses of race, gender, class, sexuality, and non-US contexts, we will consider how to revamp our teaching of film history in order to



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

engage new generations of students. Participants will be asked to submit 2 or 3 items drawn from their own teaching (e.g. syllabus, assignment prompt, lecture slides/notes, or other less traditional materials), as well as a brief 1-2 page position paper which discusses current pedagogical challenges and/or proposed innovations. These written materials will be widely shared amongst all seminar attendees, and possibly used to populate a teaching materials database. During the session, everyone present will be invited to join small groups for discussion, then share their findings and questions with the big group.

### 20. **What is Radical Cinema and Media?**

Sarah Hamblin, University of Massachusetts Boston

*Open Session - Audience may only observe*

Since its emergence, radicals have been drawn to cinema as a means of thinking, expressing, and inciting social change. This seminar asks participants to trace this genealogy and theorize what we mean by “radical cinema and media.” While the decades following the decline of the global revolutionary film movements of the long 1960s arguably witnessed a shift away from both radical film practice and politically oriented criticism, the series of economic and environmental crises and escalating global conflicts that have dominated the 21st century, coupled with new forms of digital cinema and shifts in production, distribution, and exhibition, have undoubtedly precipitated a reinvestment in radical film and media. Indeed, given the intensification of an increasingly volatile right-wing extremism and the resurgence of large-scale protest and social unrest, radicalism has become a vital lens through which to approach film and media, and marxist and other revolutionary anti-capitalist frameworks have been reinvigorated via this renewed investment radicalism.

This seminar aims to work towards a theorization of the concept of radical film and media and to map out intersections between the various theoretical and methodological approaches that constitute the framework of radical cinema today. To do so, we will ask: what has the term “radical film and media” meant historically? What movements and philosophies have been left out of received histories of radical cinema? How has the landscape of oppositional politics transformed since the 1960s and what new modes of radical film and media practice have emerged in response? How have digital technologies and new platforms for exhibition and distribution impacted the definition of radical film and media? What are the limits of the ways radical film and media have been understood and how do/should they intersect with other politically motivated analytical frameworks?



## 2020 Seminar Topic Summaries

In preparation, participants will be asked to write short position papers (3-4 pages) that take up some of the questions outlined above and to provide a link to a short clip that they consider relevant to the aims of the seminar. Both participants and auditors will be expected to read the papers and watch the clips in advance. On the day of the seminar, participants and auditors will break into small groups to discuss key questions raised by the papers and clips before working towards a more comprehensive theorization of the concept as a large group.