

Screen Cultures and Media Arts/ Popular Media
EAST 560 / COMS 646
Topic: “Politics of Screen Media”

Prof. Yuriko Furuhata

Email: yuriko.furuhata@mcgill.ca

Office hours: Thursday 10:00 am-11:00 am on Zoom by appointment

Course Description

This course is designed for graduate students interested in the overlap between film/media studies and critical area studies of East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region. The seminar explores established and emerging scholarship on modern and contemporary screen-based practices, media technologies, and associated politics. Media examined include photography, radio, cinema, television, online video, digital media, and logistical media that organize, shape, and support the production, circulation, and consumption of mediated images and sounds. To counterbalance the Euro-American or North Atlantic canon of film, media, and screen theory, the course also includes readings that foreground the histories of colonialism and imperialism on both sides of the Pacific.

The course is divided into two parts. **Part I: Screen Theory and History** focuses on the established methods and approaches of studying screen-based media such as photography, cinema, television, and video cultures. This includes some texts from the classical canon of screen theory, such as Jean-Louis Baudry’s Marxist take on the ideological effects of the cinematographic apparatus and feminist psychoanalytic film theorist Mary Ann Doane’s analysis of information flows on networked television. These are combined with more geopolitically and historically grounded case studies of moving images, such as the political mobilization of animation in wartime Japan and China during the Cultural Revolution or viral K-pop videos. We also move from the single flat screen towards immersive multiscreen environments and the rise of VR in order to reexamine the ideological and affective forces of screen-based media.

Part II: Emergent Currents in Media & Area Studies expands the parameters of media studies and East Asian Studies by departing from spectator-centered, textually-oriented analyses of screen-based media and moving toward transnational, transpacific, and diasporic approaches to the study of media in the Asia-Pacific region. This section focuses on contemporary and emerging currents and methodological approaches such as German media archaeology, debates on the multispecies kinship and nonhuman labour, the extraction of raw materials such as gelatin and camphor to make film stock, the intersection with environmental humanities, and the rise of app studies and supply chain capitalism. The readings in this section also challenge some theoretical assumptions, such as the anthropocentrism found in scholarship examined in Part I. In so doing, the course encourages students to think critically about the fundamental concepts that undergird the study of screen-based media, including the “apparatus,” “labour,” “technology,” “human,” and “species” in dialogue with the site-specific analyses of screen-based media and infrastructures.

The seminar also incorporates the *Strata of the Asia-Pacific: Mediating the Geologic and Aquatic Environment* workshop, co-organized by Prof. Weixian Pan (Queens University) and Prof. Yuriko Furuhata (McGill University) for October 25-26, in place of the regular seminar for that week.

Objectives

The seminar is designed to foster productive dialogues between East Asian Studies, Film and Media Studies/Communication Studies, and more. Students will learn methodological, theoretical, historical, and political resonances and dissonances across the readings, which cover both established and emerging scholarship on modern and contemporary screen-based practices, media technologies, and associated politics. Students will also have the opportunity to develop and hone their skills to act effectively across various academic genres of performance, thinking, planning, writing and presenting.

Readings

Readings (required and recommended) will be available via myCourses.

Additional Note on Intellectual Property

I ask for everyone's collaboration and cooperation in ensuring that if we shift some classes to Zoom under extraordinary circumstances, video recordings of the class, lecture, and associated material are not to be reproduced or placed in the public domain. This means that each of you can use it for your own personal, educational purposes, but you cannot allow others to use it by putting it up on the internet or by giving it or selling it to others who will copy it and make it available. © Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that copyright infringements can be subject to follow-up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. Thank you very much for your help with this.

Assignments and Assessment

1) Participation

10 %

Please complete all assigned readings before coming to class and be prepared to participate thoughtfully and actively in class discussions. The weight of your grade for participation will be determined holistically, considering your synchronous and asynchronous participation in class discussions during the in person class activities as well as conversations taking place online on myCourses (e.g. engaging with your classmates' weekly response posts).

2) Weekly Reading Responses

20 %

In preparation for class, please write a short one- or two-paragraph response (approx. 200-300 words) to the **required** readings (not recommended ones) assigned for the given week and posted on myCourses by 10:00pm on Tuesday, the night before our scheduled class meetings on Wednesday. The purpose of this assignment is to allow you to identify and articulate the main threads of arguments and/or key issues from the readings before you come to the seminar. You can also frame your responses around questions raised by the texts or difficulties in reading them. For instance, you may point to passages in the text that you find difficult to understand and/or wish to discuss further in class. Your responses will be graded holistically for your ability to articulate key issues and questions across weeks.

The seminar is a place of inclusivity and equity, where all of us can freely and respectfully express and share ideas and work together towards addressing the issues pertinent to the course materials, including systemic racism, institutionalized inequity, social injustice as well as the need and ongoing efforts to decolonize knowledge production. This entails discussing sensitive materials that deal with legacies of imperialism and colonialism. The seminar offers opportunities for you to explore new ways of thinking, expressing and exchanging your ideas with your fellow classmates. Never hesitate to ask a question, even if you think it's basic or trivial!

3) Midterm Research Paper Proposal: due November 1 **20%**

Write a 6-7 pages (approx. 1500-2000 words) research proposal for your final seminar paper related to themes and materials of the course (preferably also grounded or comparatively discussed in relation to the non-West/Asia-Pacific).

The proposal should include the following components: 1) an introduction that explains how your chosen topic relates to screen-based media and other issues covered in the readings from the course; 2) a thesis statement that leads to the hypothetical "argument" of your paper, organized in dialogue with at least **two** readings from the course (required or recommended); 3) a brief introduction of these two readings as well as one or two other outside scholarly texts, which you wish to use and engage in this paper. The aim here is to briefly explain the conceptual, methodological, and/or historiographic relevance of these readings to the hypothetical analysis of the topic/object you choose to research for this paper.

Also, for the final research paper, you will need to *develop* your hypothetical analysis by incorporating one more reading from the remainder of the course. Therefore, imagine this proposal to cover half or 2/3 of the project, leaving space for some development.

- Please make sure to explain the relevance of the course readings by briefly summarizing the main arguments of the articles. You may build upon, supplement and/or critique their arguments/analyses. You can draw on your weekly reading responses to write these brief summaries.
- Please make sure to provide full citations, including the *page numbers* for the sources/readings in the footnotes. You can use either the Chicago or MLA style, but I'd like to know which sections/pages you are referring to in your summary.
- After in-class presentation you can finesse and incorporate suggestions and feedback from your classmates. Please upload your proposal on myCourses before 11:00pm.

4) In-Class Presentation of Your Proposal: due October 30 **10 %**

Prepare a 5-7-minute class presentation on your proposal for the final seminar paper. To facilitate this presentation, I suggest that you come up with a "pitch" and a preliminary "argument" that persuasively frames the relevance of your proposed topic/example to the course and discuss your paper generatively with course readings (see above). If you'd like, you can share an audio-visual image (e.g. a screen capture from a video, a photograph, a map, a flow chart, etc.) or PowerPoint slides to aid your presentation. Feedback from the class on your presentation could be included in your Research Paper Proposal.

5) Final Research Paper & Workshop Presentation

40 %

Building on your midterm proposal and the feedback you receive, you will write a final research paper on the topic of your choice. The final paper should also engage with **one additional course reading**, which was not covered in your midterm proposal. As noted in the #3 Midterm Research Paper Proposal section, the aim is to *develop* your proposal with additional readings and sources. Imagine adding a new section to the outline of the argument you made in the midterm proposal or expanding your methodological and theoretical orientations with the new material.

The final paper should engage with **at least three readings** from the course, plus primary and secondary scholarly sources related to the topic. The total length of the paper should be 16-20 (approx. 4000-5000 words) pages.

- You will orally present your topic and preliminary argument for your paper during the workshop on **the last day of class (November 27)**.
- Please note that 5% out of 40% of the final grade allocated to this assignment will be based on the workshop presentation. The remaining 35% will be based on your final paper itself.
- Please submit the final version of your paper via myCourses *between December 4 (Wednesday) and December 7 (Saturday, 11:00 pm)*. This 4-day window gives you some flexibility. If you need more time, you can consult me about getting a further extension.

ChatGPT and other generative AI/Machine-Learning tools

Since this is a graduate-level seminar, I prohibit using generative AI tools for any writing assignments you do for this class. The objectives of this class are for students to learn how to read and articulate their understanding and synthesis of texts in their own words. Developing critical thinking is one of this class's main objectives; using machine learning tools like ChatGPT directly goes against this goal (and these tools are prone to hallucinations and misunderstandings of texts). Using generative AI tools such as ChatGPT in writing assignments and presenting them as your own work will be considered **plagiarism** (on which, see below). However, using spelling check and grammar correction tools such as Grammarly is permitted.

NOTES:

- (1) In accord with McGill University's [Charter of Students' Rights](#), students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives." (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009).
- (2) McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#)" (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) (See [McGill's guide to academic honesty](#) for more information).
- (3) In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

- (4) If you have concerns related to disabilities, please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 514-398-6009 before you do this.

McGill University (Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal) is situated on the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehà:ka, a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst many First Nations including the Kanien'kehá:ka of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Huron/Wendat, Abenaki, and Anishinaabeg. We recognize and respect the Kanien'kehà:ka as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which we meet today.

SCHEDULE

August 28 Introduction and overview of the course.

Part I: Screen Theory and History

Sept 4: The Apparatus of Cinema

- Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," *Film Quarterly*, Winter, 1974-1975, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Winter, 1974-1975), pp. 39-47.
- Aaron Gerow, "The Benshi's New Face: Defining Cinema in Taisho Japan," *Iconics* 3 (1994): 69-86.
- Jane Gaines, "Dream/Factory," in *Reinventing Film Studies*, eds. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (London: Arnold, 2000), 100-113.

Recommended

- Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*, ed. Philip Rosen (Columbia UP, 1986), 198-209.

Sept 11: Animation and Labour

- Thomas Lamarre, "Speciesism, part I: Translating races into animals in wartime animation." *Mechademia* 3, no. 1 (2008): 75-95.
- Daisy Yan Du, "Animals, Ethnic Minorities, and Villains in Animated Film during the Cultural Revolution," *Animated Encounters: Transnational Movements of Chinese Animation 1940s-1970s* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), 152-180.
- Diane Wei Lewis, "Shiage and Women's Flexible Labor in the Japanese Animation Industry," *Feminist Media Histories*, Vol.4 No.1 (2018):115-141.

Recommended

- Bishnupriya Ghosh, "Animating Uncommon Life: U.S. Military Malaria Films (1942-1945) and the Pacific Theater," *Animating Film Theory*, ed. Karen (Beckman) Redrobe (Duke UP, 2014), 264-286.

Sept 18: Liveness and Ambience: From Television to Reaction Videos

- Mary Ann Doane, "Information, Crisis, Catastrophe," in *New Media, Old Media: A History and Theory Reader*, ed. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan (New York: Routledge, 2005), 251-264.
- Anna McCarthy, "The Rhythms of the Reception Area: Crisis, Capitalism, and the Waiting Room TV," *Television after TV*, eds. Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004, 183-209.
- Michelle Cho, "Pop Cosmopolitics and K-pop Video Culture," *Asian Video Cultures: In the Penumbra of the Global*, eds. Joshua Neves and Bhaskar Sarkar (Duke UP, 2017), 240-265.

Recommended

- Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Crisis, crisis, crisis, or sovereignty and networks." *Theory, Culture & Society* 28, no. 6 (2011): 91-112.

Sept 25: Multiscreen Environments: Empathy and Surveillance

**We'll also use the second half of the seminar for an SSHRC/FRQSC application workshop*

- Fred Turner, "The Family of Man and the Politics of Attention in Cold War America," *Public Culture* 24.1 (2012): 55-84.
- Yuriko Furuhashi, "Cloud Control: Tear Gas, Cybernetics, and Networked Surveillance," *Climatic Media* (Duke UP, 2022), 133-165.
- Beatriz Colomina, "Enclosed by Images: The Eameses' Multimedia Architecture," *Grey Room* 2 (Winter 2001): 5-29.

Recommended

- Danika Medak-Saltzman, "Transnational Indigenous Exchange: Rethinking Global Interactions of Indigenous Peoples at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition," *American Quarterly* 62.3 (September 2010): 591-615.

Oct 2: Virtual Reality (VR): Immersion and Empathy

- Paul Roquet, "Introduction: The Ambient Power Play" and "Translating the Virtual into Japanese," *The Immersive Enclosure: Virtual Reality in Japan* (Columbia UP, 2022), 1-19 & 49-80.
- Sasha Crawford-Holland, "Humanitarian VR documentary and its Cinematic Myths," *Synoptique* 7 no.1 (2018): 19-31.
- Lisa Nakamura, "Feeling Good about Feeling Bad: Virtuous Virtual Reality and the Automation of Racial Empathy," *Journal of Visual Culture* 19, no. 1 (2020): 47-64.

Recommended

- Lisa Messeri, "Tinseltown and Technology: Producing Virtual Reality in the Dream Factory," *In the Land of the Unreal: Virtual and Other Realities in Los Angeles* (Duke UP, 2024), 75-100.

Part II: Emergent Currents in Media & Area Studies

Oct 9: Non/human Labour and their Ecologies

- Elizabeth R. Johnson, "At the Limits of Species Being: Sensing the Anthropocene." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, no. 2 (2017): 275-292.
- Nelson, Sara Holiday Nelson. "Beyond *the Limits to Growth*: Ecology and the Neoliberal Counterrevolution." *Antipode* 47, no. 2 (2015): 461-480.
- Yuki Kihara, "Vā Fealoa'i – Nurturing the Space Between People and Between People and Nature," *Lagoonscapes* 3.2 (2023): 183-195.
- Tao Leigh Goffe, "Sugarwork: The Gastropoetics of Afro-Asia After the Plantation," *Asian Diasporic Visual Cultures and the Americas* 5 (2019): 31-56.

Recommended

- Laura Kina, "Ancestral Cartography: Trans-Pacific Interchanges and Okinawan Indigeneity." *Asian Diasporic Visual Cultures and the Americas* 6, no. 1-2 (2020): 48-70.

Oct 16 – Thanksgiving break

Oct 23 – Class cancelled. Instead, please attend the *Strata of the Asia-Pacific* workshop online on **Oct 25-26**. More details to follow.

Oct 30 – Midterm Research Proposal Workshop in class. Please submit your proposal on Mycourses by 10:00pm on **November 1**.

Nov 6: Material History and Media Archaeology

- Marek Jancovic, “‘Please Reseed.’ Camphor, Turpentine, and the Agrogeographies of Celluloid Cinema.” *Cinematic Ecosystems*, ed. Jessica Mulvogue and Mary Hegedus. (Wilmington, DE: Vernon Press, forthcoming) – *please do not circulate this article outside the classroom*.
- Nicole Shukin, “Automobility: The Animal Capital of Cars, Films, and Abattoirs,” *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 87-130.
- Weihong Bao, “Archaeology of a Medium: The (Agri)Cultural Techniques of a Paddy Film Farm,” *boundary 2* 49:1 (2022): 25-69.

Recommended

- Bernhard Siegert, “Introduction: Cultural Techniques, or, the End of the Intellectual Postwar in German Media Theory,” *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulations of the Real*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young. (Fordham UP, 2015), 1-17.

Nov 13: Oceanic and Botanical Turns in Media Studies

- Elizabeth DeLoughrey, “Mining the Seas: Speculative Fictions and Futures.” *Laws of the Sea*, pp. 144-163. Routledge, 2022.
- Lisa Han, “The Blue Frontier: Temporalities of Salvage and Extraction at the Seabed,” *Configurations* 27.4 (Fall 2019), 463-481.
- Melody Jue, “‘A Seaweed Goes to War’: Agar as a Thermal Medium in C.K. Tseng’s Research at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography (1943–1946),” *Being Algae: Transformations in Water, Plants*, eds Yogi Hale Hendlin, Johanna Weggelaar, Natalia Derossi, and Sergio Mugnai, *Critical Plant Studies* Volume 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2024), 215-233.
- Alenda Y Chang, “Where the Model Ends,” *Configurations* 32, no. 2 (2024): 213-227.

Nov 20: Logistics of Media, Apps, and Supply Chain Capitalism

- Anna Tsing, “Supply Chains and the Human Condition.” *Rethinking Marxism* 21, no. 2 (2009): 148-176.
- Marc Steinberg, Rahul Mukherjee, and Aswin Punathambekar, “Media power in Digital

Asia: Super Apps and Megacorps,” *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 44(8) (2022): 1405–1419.

- Matthew Hockenberry, Nicole Starosielski, and Susan Zieger, “Introduction: The Logistics of Media,” *Assembly Codes: The Logistics of Media*, eds. Matthew Hockenberry, Nicole Starosielski, and Susan Zieger (Duke UP, 2021), 1-20.
- Kay Dickinson, “Supply Chain Cinema, Supply Chain Education: Training Creative Wizardry for Offshored Exploitation,” 171-189, *Assembly Codes: The Logistics of Media*, eds. Matthew Hockenberry, Nicole Starosielski, and Susan Zieger (Duke UP, 2021).

Recommended

- Ishita Tiwary, “Streaming and India's film-centred video culture: Linguistic and formal diversity.” *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 27, no. 1 (2024): 65-81.
- Marisa Elena Duarte, “Decolonizing the Technological,” *Network Sovereignty: Building the Internet across Indian Country* (Washington University Press, 2017), 122-140.

Nov 27: Final Research Paper Workshop

Dec 4-7: Final Paper submission