Course Description:

This course introduces students to some of the main analytic frameworks and theoretical debates through which media and the mediation of culture have been examined. Using an anthropological approach, students will explore how media as representation and as cultural practice have been fundamental to the formation and transformation of modern sensibilities and social relations. We will examine various technologies of mediation—from the Maussian body as “Man’s first technical instrument” to print capitalism, radio and cassette cultures, cinematic and televisual publics, war journalism, the digital revolution and the political milieu of spin and PR. Themes highlighted in this course include 1) the materiality of media in the transformation of the senses and space-time relations, 2) the role of media in the production of cultural difference, subjectivities and publics, and 3) the social worlds and cultural logics of media institutions and sites of production. Course readings will tack between key conceptual essays by media theorists and ethnographic studies of media by anthropologists working in various cultural contexts.

Course Objectives:

1. Broaden student knowledge and appreciation of anthropological approaches to the study of media as representation and as cultural practice, with an emphasis on ethnographic participant-observation across a geographically and socially diverse range of settings.

2. Develop students’ understanding and mastery of key concepts and analytical frameworks for examining media and the mediation of culture.

3. Sharpen students’ critical listening, reading and writing skills, particularly their ability to grasp, articulate, synthesize and challenge key arguments in course readings, lectures and discussions.

4. Hone students’ ability to apply analytical skills and knowledge from this course to issues of contemporary relevance.
Prerequisites:

There are no prerequisites for this course. Students do not need any background in Anthropology or Cinema and Media Studies to do well in this course. I will provide basic historical and social context for all topics we address in class sessions. However, while students do not need any specialized background to excel in this course, they are expected to keep up with current events (e.g. reading major news sources like the *New York Times*) during the semester as well as look critically and reflexively at their own personal histories (e.g. media practices) in order to enrich class discussions and assignments. Students are especially encouraged to explore various media forms and media practices in their own environment. Intellectual curiosity and critical thinking are valued and will be rewarded.

Required Readings: All books are available for purchase at the Wellesley College Bookstore. They are also on reserve at the Knapp Center in Clapp Library.


Selected Texts on E-Reserve and in the Firstclass subconference, “ANTH 232-Online Links.”

Recommended Readings:


NOTE On This Course’s Online Conference:
All students enrolled will automatically have “ANTH 232” as a Firstclass conference on their desktop. You must regularly check this online conference for weekly readings, key terms, course notices and assignments.

Course Requirements:
This course will consist of both lecture and discussion with the expectation that students come to class ready with questions and comments about the assigned readings and key concepts for each week. The course is meant to be reading-intensive and very participation-oriented with a major production-based group assignment, regular small group discussions and active use of the online Firstclass conference for continual

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conversation and critique. Students need to be prepared to draw on readings and other
course materials to critically discuss in-class screenings of films and presentations of
media artifacts as well as for small group work. Because students are encouraged to learn
media partly by doing media production, some class time will also be devoted to
technical media training at the Knapp Technology Center. This semester, we are also
fortunate to have three exciting guest lecturers—anthropologists who are all working on
the cutting edge of media and who will hopefully engage in an active Q&A with students
in class. For all the above reasons, preparation, class attendance and participation are
essential. I can’t stress enough how you will NEED to keep up with the reading load and
come to class with ready comments and questions!

In terms of attendance, you will have one permissible skip day (no questions asked) and
beyond that, each unexcused absence will cost you 1 point from your final total of 100.
Excessive tardiness (10 minutes or more late to class) will also cost you 1/2 a point from
your final grade. As far as participation, you will be expected not only to contribute
comments and questions in class but also to post additional thoughts and concerns online
via our Firstclass course conference. Particularly, I encourage you to share your
reactions and questions about weekly readings prior to our discussions of them in our
Monday sessions. Evaluation of participation will be based on how engaged you are both
in our class sessions and online in our Firstclass course conference.

Besides preparation, attendance, and active engagement (10%), there will be one
group assignment, three VERY short writing exercises and a final take-home exam
during the semester. They are as follows:

1. **Soundscape Group Project (15%)**: During the first half of the semester,
   students will form groups of four to produce soundscape tours of the Wellesley
campus. Each audio tour will consist of five locations and include a sound mix of
at least two audio tracks. The finished group project will also include a campus
map of the tour route and a written summary of the project’s themes and focus (no
more than 500 words). The final report and audio project will be graded
collectively. All technical training necessary to complete this assignment will be
provided during class time at the Knapp Technology Center.

2. **Soundscape Individual Analysis (15%)**: After swapping group projects and
taking each others’ audio tours of the Wellesley campus, each student will write a
5-7 page critical analysis (1250-1750 words) about another group’s Soundscape
Project. These papers must draw on readings from Unit I and II of this course.

3. **Media Critique (15%)**: Some time between Week 7 and 14, each student will
   write a critique of a media artifact with relevance to course lectures and readings
   and post it online to the ANTH 232 course conference. The artifact reviewed
must be in digital format (scanned image, online web link, quicktime file, etc.)
and posted to the ANTH 232 conference alongside a succinct and thorough
critique of 2-3 pages (500-750 words). Ideally, each critique will provoke
discussion and develop its own thread with other students responding with online
comments. Active student responses to each critique is expected and part of each
student’s attendance/participation grade. Part of each class session (as time
permitting) will be devoted to further discuss each media critique and its responses.

4. **Guest Lecture Review (15%)**: Students will write a review of one of the three guest lecturers along with the class materials (readings, media artifacts, etc.) assigned for that week. Reviews should be 2-3 pages (500-750 words) and posted to the ANTH 232 online conference. Students are encouraged to respond to comments made by other reviews in their own writing as part of an ongoing online thread.

5. **Take-home final exam (30%)**: There will be a take-home final exam which requires students to demonstrate knowledge and mastery over all readings, lectures and other film/media content from the entire course. Again, if you do not keep up with all the readings, you will suffer the consequences when you have to take this final exam!

More details on all assignments will be posted to the Firstclass folder, ANTH 232-Assignments, as deadlines for each assignment approaches. I will also post a specific guide to grading standards for this course online in ANTH 232-Syllabus/Policies.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Evaluation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation, attendance and engaged class participation – 10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soundscape Group Project – 15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soundscape Individual Analysis – 15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Critique – 15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guest Lecture Review – 15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Take-Home Exam – 30%</td>
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**Course Policies and Protocol:**

All students are expected to abide by the Wellesley Honor Code. While students are encouraged to work collaboratively with each other, you are expected to develop original arguments in your written assignments and cite properly when drawing on the ideas of others (including from class lectures and discussions). A more detailed guide on proper citations for this course will be posted online as assignment deadlines approach. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any incident of dishonest work will be immediately reported to your class dean and advisor.**

Unless you have prior permission and verifiable reasons for missing deadlines for assignments, late work will be docked half a grade per day past the formal deadline. For instance, if you are one day late, your maximum grade will be A-. After two days, the maximum grade will be B+ and so forth.

**All papers must be time-dated electronically by posting online to the Firstclass conference folder, ANTH232-Student Submissions. Make sure you SAVE your**
email copy of student submissions in case of computer system glitches. If your paper fails to upload to the online drop box, the burden of proof is on you…

The process for discussing or contesting a grade for a particular assignment is as follows:

1. Students must wait at least 24 hours to reflect and review their assignment and the instructor’s comments before coming to discuss a grade.
2. After 24 hours, if the student still wants to contest a grade, they must write and submit a one-page explanation of why they deserve a different mark on their assignment.
3. The instructor will then meet with the student to discuss possible options for working towards a better grade in the course.

Regarding general class protocol—students are expected to come to class on time and engage in open and respectful discussion with each other and the instructor. Make sure you turn off your cell phones and other disruptive electronic devices before class.

Course Schedule by Topic:

I. Body as Media(tion)

Week 1 (1/30): Orientation
• Marcel Mauss, “Techniques of the Body,” in Incorporations, pp. 455-464

Week 2 (2/6): Agentive Bodies
• Start reading Steven Feld, Sound and Sentiment, pp. 3-43.

In-Class Screening: Jero on Jero: A Balinese Trance Séance Observed (1981), dirs. Linda Connor, Timothy Asch and Patsy Asch

II. Auditory Cultures: Sound, Sentiment and Space

Week 3 (2/13): Silence, Noise and Earful Meanings
• Murray Schafer, “Silence” in The Tuning of the World, pp. 253-259
• Philip Peek, “Re-sounding Silences,” in Sound, pp. 16-33.
• Murray Schafer, “Noise,” “A New Definition of Noise,” and “Sound Sewage: A Collage” in The Thinking Ear, pp. 48-49, 107-118
• Continue reading Steven Feld, Sound and Sentiment, pp. 44-129 (skim 47-57).

In-Class Listening: Excerpts from Voices of the Rainforest (1991), Steven Feld
In-Class Lab: Audio Training at the Knapp Technology Center (4-5:20 PM)

NOTE: Soundscape Groups MUST be formed by the end of this class session! Email names for each group to the instructor by 6 PM, Monday, 2/13.

Week 4 (2/20, No class—Holiday): Sounding Off: Performance and Reception
• Continue reading Steven Feld, Sound and Sentiment, pp. 130-216


NOTE: Storyboards for Soundscape Project due by 6 PM, Wednesday, 2/23.

Attend Anthro’s Departmental Lecture, PNE Atrium, 5 PM on Thurs, 2/23!
Angela Zito, New York University
“How can we be modern without religion? Mediating the bodies of Falun Gong”

Week 5 (2/27) Soundscapes, Soundtracks and the Marking of Space-Time
• Finish Steven Feld, Sound and Sentiment, pp. 217-268 (skim 225-230).


In-Class Screening: Excerpt from Reassemblage (1982), dir. Trinh Minh-Ha and other soundtracks

III. Media and The Transformation of Modernity

Week 6 (3/6): Media in the Formation of National Publics
• Benedict Anderson, “Cultural Roots,” in Imagined Communities, pp. 9-36.
• Jurgen Habermas, Excerpt from The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, pp. 1-26.
• Richard R. Wilk, “Television, Time, and the National Imaginary in Belize,” in Media Worlds, pp.171-186


Students will swap projects in class for writing their Soundscape Analysis.

Week 7 (3/13): Mechanical Reproduction and the Industrialization of Space-Time
• Wolfgang Schivelbush, “Railroad Space and Railroad Time” and “Panoramic Travel” in The Railway Journey: The industrialization of time and space in the 19th century, pp. 33-44, 52-69.


In-Class Screening: Excerpt from Photo Wallahs (1991), dirs. David and Judith MacDougall.

NOTE: Individual Soundscape Analysis are DUE at 6 PM, Friday, 3/17.

IV. Representing Selves and Others

Week 8 (3/20, No class—Spring Break): Picturing Others
• Begin reading Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins, Reading National Geographic, Ch. 2-4, pp. 15-118 (also skim Ch.1, pp. 1-14).

Week 9 (3/27): Spectacles of Difference
• Continue reading Lutz and Collins, Reading National Geographic, Ch. 5-6, pp. 119-186 (skim Ch. 7-8, pp.187-258).
• Timothy Mitchell, “Egypt at the Exhibition,” in Colonising Egypt, pp. 1-33.

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In-Class Screening: Sight Unseen (1996), 27 min., dir. Nicholas Kurzon.

**Week 10 (4/3): Indigenous Media**
- Faye Ginsburg, “Screen Memories: Resignifying the Traditional in Indigenous Media” in Media Worlds, pp. 39-57


Screening before Class: Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner) (161 min., 2000), dir. Zacharias Kunuk

In-Class Screening: Excerpt from Nanook of the North (1922), dir. Robert Flaherty
Excerpt from Nanook Revisited (1990), dir. Claude Massot

**Week 11 (4/10): Mediating Human Rights—Guest Lecturer, Winifred Tate**


In-Class Screening: Well-Founded Fear (2000), dirs. Shari Robertson, Michael Camerini

**Week 12 (Tuesday, 4/18, NOTE—Monday is a Holiday!):**
Autoethnography among Transnational Adoptees—Guest Lecturer, Eleana Kim
- Nancy Fraser 1992 Rethinking the Public Sphere. In Habermas and the Public Sphere, Calhoun, ed. MIT, pp. 109-142.
- Louisa Schein, “Mapping Hmong Media in Diasporic Space,” in Media Worlds, pp. 229-244.
- Eleana Kim, “Korean Adoptee Autoethnography: Refashioning Self, Family and


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**Attend Film Event: S/KIN DEEP (Tuesday evening, 4/18, time/location TBA)**

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**V. The Mediatization of Politics and War**

**Week 13 (4/24): Cultures of Spin and PR**
- Stuart Ewen, excerpt from *PR! A social history of spin*.
- Jeff Gerth, “Military’s Information War is Vast and Often Secretive,” *The New York Times*, Section 1, Column 5, Foreign Desk (Dec. 11, 2005): pg. 1

*Recommended Reading*: Jeff Himpele, “Arrival Scenes: Complicity and Media Ethnography in the Bolivian Public Sphere,” in Media Worlds, pp. 301-316.

In-Class Screening: Excerpt from *Feed* (1992), dirs. Kevin Rafferty and James Ridgeway Excerpt from *The Yes Men* (2002), dirs. Dan Ollman and Sarah Price

**Week 14 (5/1): Making News in Times of War—Guest Lecturer, Amahl Bishara**
- Mark Pedelty, excerpts from *War Stories: The Culture of Foreign Correspondents*.


In-Class Screening: Excerpt from *Control Room* (2004), dir. Jehane Noujaim Excerpt from *Manufacturing Consent* (1992), dirs. Mark Achbar and Peter Wintonick

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V. Theorizing Contemporary Technoculture

Week 15 (5/8)


Recommended Readings: Paul Virilio, Ch. 12 in The Information Bomb, pp. 107-114.


NOTE: Take-Home Final Due on Friday, May 19th at 4:30 PM!