

Media pedagogy

Selected topics in US electronic media

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Office hours: MW 10-11a, W 2-4p, and by appointment

Comm 8210-001

M 2:30-5:30p

200 Ford

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Course description

Teaching is arguably a university's single most important function. At the very least, classroom instruction is probably the most common daily activity on any given campus. And yet, for all the actual teaching that takes place at institutions such as this one, the actual philosophy and practice of pedagogy is a surprisingly infrequent subject of attention. Most people who pursue careers in academia -- even at institutions where teaching takes precedence over research -- learn how to teach via trial and error, rather than through any formal training in pedagogical strategy or technique.

In a very limited way, this course attempts to offer a small corrective to that unfortunate oversight. In particular, we will devote significant portions of the semester to:

- the philosophy, ethics, and politics of higher education, with an emphasis on how such issues play themselves out in actual classroom settings,
- the relationship between higher education and active citizenship in a democratic society,
- the politics of the contemporary university, particularly with respect to the place of classroom instruction in the university's mission, and
- the nuts and bolts of putting the abstract principles of critical pedagogy into practice in "real life" teaching situations.

Teaching media studies adds a number of extra layers of complexity to the ordinary practices of teaching. In addition to the more general issues described above, we will devote much of our time and energy this semester to examining some of the unique issues related to teaching media studies. These include:

- the increased level of prior knowledge of the course material that students often bring to media studies courses,
- the heightened state of resistance students often have to critical analysis of media phenomena,
- the impact of a rapidly shifting mediascape on pedagogical practices, and
- the technological and legal hurdles related to using non-print texts in one's teaching (both in class and as required "reading" for students).

Readings

The following books are all available at the University Bookstore in Coffman Union.

- Carla Freccero, *Popular Culture: An Introduction*
- Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
- bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*
- Wilbert J. McKeachie and Marilla Svinicki, *McKeachie's Teaching Tips* [12th edition]
- Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*

There are also several dozen articles that will be made available as PDF files. [Reminder: official department policy does not allow students to use the copier in 270 Ford to print these PDFs. Sorry.]

Grading policy

Presumably, you're enrolled in this course because you want to learn about media pedagogy, and thus your primary motivation involves a critical engagement with the course material, rather than adding an(other) A to your transcript -- and that's the way it should be. With this in mind, my default assumption when it comes to graduate-level grades is that it's counter-productive to worry about how your work for this course translates into a letter grade. As of Day One, you begin the course with an A. And if you show up for all our class meetings, participate intelligently in our discussions (both in class and online), and complete the final research paper in satisfactory and timely fashion, you'll keep that A. That being said, in cases where people are clearly slacking off, I reserve the right to go deeper into the alphabet when I submit final grades (and I've actually done so in the past). Under such unfortunate circumstances, your grade will be calculated using the following formula:

Attendance/participation	15%
Course blog	15%
Statement of teaching philosophy	25%
Course design	45%

Attendance/participation

Our weekly meetings will be oriented around seminar-style discussions, rather than formal lectures. As such, your primary responsibility each week will be to show up prepared to contribute thoughtfully and productively to our conversations about the assigned readings. You are not expected to demonstrate perfect and immediate mastery of the issues raised by our readings -- questions and requests for clarification are more than welcome contributions to bring to the table -- but you are expected to be an active and regular participant in our ongoing dialogue. I'll chime in at enough length that you'll certainly get my take on the material at hand, but this course is not a spectator event for any of us.

Class meetings

Except for our two workshop sessions (19 Nov and 17 Dec), our class meetings will typically be split into two separate discussions: one focusing primarily on the "abstract" issues related to our readings, the other focusing primarily on the "concrete" issues of actual classroom practices. We will begin each of these halves with a quick survey of the group, and you should come to class every week prepared to put at least one significant comment, question, or concern on the table for each of those two conversations.

Course blog

In addition to our weekly face-to-face meetings, we will conduct a significant amount of course business online via a course blog. Full details on how to access and contribute to the blog are available on a separate handout. Here's a partial list of the ways we will use the course blog this semester:

- as a central "bulletin board" for official course announcements and major course handouts
- as an informal discussion space where we will continue and/or augment our in-class conversations
- as a collection point for various online resources relating to cultural studies and/or the course
- as a space for mutual support and feedback with your course-related research and writing

Ideally, the course blog should function as a space that's serious enough for people to share somewhat more extended thoughts on the course material than it may be possible to share in person, but simultaneously casual enough to allow people to post textual fragments, "in progress" ideas, and jovial interaction.

Statement of teaching philosophy

This statement should run roughly 1000-1500 words and be suitable for inclusion in a teaching portfolio. Your statements should be posted to the course blog no later than 2:30 pm on 5 November, and we will workshop these collectively in class on 19 November. More details about this assignment will be made available on a separate handout.

Course design

You will invent/choose an upper division undergraduate media studies course that you would like (or are already scheduled) to teach -- and then create a full syllabus and any major assignment handouts for that course. Your finished syllabus should include all necessary "front end" material (i.e., the course's rules, regulations, and requirements) as well as a full and detailed timetable of readings and assignment deadlines. You must submit a brief (~250-500 word) description of your proposed course to me by 8 October. Your final syllabi and handouts are due by 10 December, and we will workshop these collectively during our putative final exam timeslot on 17 December. More details about this assignment will be made available on a separate handout.

Reading/assignment schedule

10 September

no readings

17 September

Pedagogy of the Oppressed

McKeachie's Teaching Tips, preface and chs. 1-2

24 September

Teaching to Transgress

McKeachie's Teaching Tips, chs. 3-5

1 October

McKeachie's Teaching Tips, chs. 6-8

Elizabeth Ellsworth, "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering?: Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy"

Gregory Jay and Gerald Graff, "A Critique of Critical Pedagogy"

Gerald Graff, "Teach the Conflicts"

Katha Pollitt, "Why We Read: Canon to the Right of Me . . ."

E.D. Hirsch Jr., John Kaliski, Jon Pareles, Roger Shattuck, and Gayatri Spivak, "Who Needs the Great Works?"

Elizabeth Bell, "Listen Up, You Have To: Voices From 'Women and Communication'"

Elizabeth Bell and Kim Golombisky, "Voices and Silences in Our Classrooms: Strategies for Mapping Trails Among Sex/Gender, Race, and Class"

Elizabeth Bell, Kim Golombisky, G'han Singh, and Krista Hirschmann, "To All the Girls I've Loved Before: Academic Love Letters on Mentoring, Power, and Desire"

8 October

Course proposal due

The University in Ruins

McKeachie's Teaching Tips, chs. 9-11

15 October

McKeachie's Teaching Tips, chs. 12-14

Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University* [selections]

Carol Stabile, "Another Brick in the Wall: (Re)contextualizing the Crisis"

Cary Nelson and Stephen Watt, *Academic Keywords: A Devil's Dictionary* [selections]

Mark Edmundson, "On the Uses of a Liberal Education: As Lite Entertainment for Bored College Students"

Earl Shorris, "On the Uses of a Liberal Education: As a Weapon in the Hands of the Restless Poor"

22 October

McKeachie's Teaching Tips, chs. 15-17

Louis Menand, "What Are Universities For?"

David Horowitz, "Trials of the Intellect in the Post-Modern Academy"

Cary Nelson and Stephen Watt, *Office Hours: Activism and Change in the Academy* [selections]

Michael Bérubé and Janet Lyon, "Free Speech and Discipline: The Boundaries of the Multiversity"

Michael Bérubé, *What's Liberal About the Liberal Arts?: Classroom Politics and "Bias" in Higher Education* [selections]

29 October

Popular Culture: An Introduction

McKeachie's Teaching Tips, chs. 18-20

5 November

Statement of teaching philosophy due

McKeachie's Teaching Tips, chs. 21-23

Tony Bennett, "Popular Culture: A 'Teaching Object'"

Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing 'The Popular'"

Henry A. Giroux, "Doing Cultural Studies: Youth and the Challenge of Pedagogy"

Lawrence Grossberg, "Teaching the Popular"

Lawrence Grossberg, "From Media to Popular Culture to Everyday Life"

Lisa Henderson, "Communication Pedagogy and Political Practice"

12 November

McKeachie's Teaching Tips, chs. 24-26

Walter R. Jacobs, *Speaking the Lower Frequencies: Students and Media Literacy* [selections]

Brian Goldfarb, *Visual Pedagogy: Media Cultures in and Beyond the Classroom* [selections]

Steven Johnson, *Everything Bad Is Good for You* [selections]

Jane Avrich *et al.*, "Grand Theft Education: Literacy in the Age of Video Games"

Henry A. Giroux, "Teaching the Cultural With Disney"

19 November

Workshop day for Statements of teaching philosophy

26 November

Gilbert B. Rodman, "Histories"

Constance Penley, "From NASA to *The 700 Club* (With a Detour Through Hollywood): Cultural Studies in the Public Sphere"

Andrew Ross, "No Respect: An Introduction"

Kembrew McLeod, "Our Privatized World: Selling Off the Public Square, Culture, Education, Our Democracy, and Everything Else"

MGM v. Grokster, amici curiae brief of Media Studies Professors

Center for Social Media, "The Cost of Copyright Confusion for Media Literacy"

3 December

Gilbert B. Rodman, "Tyrannosaurus Text: Publishers, Profits, and Pedagogy"

Robert C. Allen, "More Talk About TV"

Paul du Gay *et al.*, *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman* [selections]

Joanne Hollows and Mark Jancovich, "Popular Film and Cultural Distinctions"

Roy Shuker, "'What's Goin' On': Popular Culture, Popular Music, and Media Literacy"

Margaret Werry and Róisín O'Gorman, "Shamefaced: Performing Pedagogy, Outing Affect"

10 December**Course design materials due**

Lawrence Grossberg *et al.*, "Media in Context"

Jane Stokes, "Analyzing Media and Cultural Texts"

Chris Barker, "Television, Texts and Audiences"

Simon During, "Media and the Public Sphere"

Neil Campbell and Alasdair Kean, "The Transmission of American Culture"

17 December -- 10:30a-12:30p**Workshop day for Course design materials**