

MCC-GE 3200 - Doctoral Core Seminar II

Spring 2020
T 2:00-4:50

Lisa Gitelman (lg91@nyu.edu)
hrs. T 11:30-12:30 & by apt.

Course Description on the books: Periodic meeting of doctoral students & faculty to discuss current research & professional development.

Overview: Doctoral Seminar 2 is the spring seminar for first-year PhD students in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication. The seminar focuses on key texts in social theory, media studies, and cultural studies. A continuation of and complement to Doctoral Seminar 1, this course is designed to focus more on contemporary works, issues, and debates in the field. With Doctoral Seminar 1, this course serves as the basis for the General Theories qualifying exam administered at the end of the first year.

Structure and Assignments

Please read each assigned text prior to class and come prepared to discuss texts cumulatively as the semester progresses. Attendance is mandatory. Aim for knowledge-building contributions to class discussion in pursuit of reasoned colloquy. Each student will be asked to plan and help lead discussion twice during the term; for those class sessions you will be asked to hand in a brief 5-6 pp. paper on the reading(s) assigned. Suggestions of related readings ("intertexts") for further study are always welcome. In cases where the required readings entail representative selections of longer works, I will work with the discussion leader to identify selections the week before. At the end of the semester you will be asked to write a 10 pp. research essay or prolegomenon for an article-length paper. Your grade for the seminar will be based 1/3 on your value to the intellectual life of the seminar across the semester (discussion, presentations), 1/3 on your two response papers, and 1/3 on your final research essay.

Accessibility and Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with documented disabilities, with the advice and assistance of the appropriate services on campus. Contact <http://www.nyu.edu/csd>.

I have tried to locate or will provide electronic versions of most of the readings, but there are a few readings for which we'll need to figure out access. I'm happy to try to repair dead links as they occur; just let me know.

Please be sure to bring the readings with you to class in some form so we can refer to specifics. Know yourself: be sure you have a strategy for reading critically that works for you. For example, I have learned that I need to hold and mark hardcopies of anything I really need to retain, and then I also need to generate a page or two of notes before class that will help me access parts of argument and points of interest.

SCHEDULE (I'll email if there are school-closings or other adjustments to make.)

1.

Tuesday Jan 28

Introductions, planning and discussion of the syllabus, recap Doc Sem 1.

Donna Haraway, [Manifestly Haraway](#) (2016) (at least pp. 91-198)

2.

Tuesday Feb 4

Recent accounts of the media field/concept

John Durham Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds* (2016), Chapter 1

Bernhard Siegert, *Cultural Techniques* (2015), [Introduction](#) plus one ch.

Recommended: John Guillory, "[Genesis of the Media Concept](#)" *Critical Inquiry* (2010)

3.

Tuesday Feb 11

Recent accounts redux, de-colonial perspectives

Arvind Rajogopal, "[Putting American in Its Place](#)," (2015) *Public Culture*

Dipesh Chakrabarty, [Provincializing Europe](#) (2007) Introduction and Chapter 1

Recommended: Achille Mbembe, "[Decolonizing the University](#)" (2016) *Arts and Humanities in Higher Ed*

Recommended: Fred Moten, "The University and the Undercommons"

4.

Tuesday Feb 18

Historical epistemology

Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, "[The Image of Objectivity](#)" (a 1992 article that was prelude to the 2007 book *Objectivity*, recommended)

Steven Shapin, "[Proverbial Economies](#)" (2001)

Sophia Rosenfeld, [Common Sense: A Political History](#) (2011) (selection)

5.

Tuesday Feb 25

Ruha Benjamin, *Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code* (2019).

6.

Tuesday Mar 3

Jacqueline Wernimont, [Numbered Lives: Life and Death in Quantum Media](#) (2019),

7.

Tuesday Mar 10

Special issues rodeo

For this class session you will each be asked to identify and offer a detailed description of a special issue of a journal (or an edited collection; check with me) that is of particular interest to you. We will work together to analyze the warranting (framing of argument) done by these issues and (especially) the articles they contain. Your final research essay for the seminar should be a "lost" contribution—or an extended plan for one—to the special issue you select.

Examples: [Critical Inquiry](#) 31:1 (2004) on the arts of transmission; [boundary 2](#) 31:2 (2004) on critical secularism; [Grey Room](#) 60 (2015) on acoustic modernity

Spring Break

8.

Tuesday Mar 25

Lisa Parks, [Rethinking Media Coverage: Vertical Mediation and the War on Terror](#) (2018)

Thursday March 27

(Lisa Parks of MIT is this year's distinguished LeBoff Scholar. The annual LeBoff seminar is optional; you are however required to attend Lisa's LeBoff lecture on March 27.)

9.

Tuesday Apr 1

Knowing subjects

Wendy Chun, [Updating to Remain the Same: Habitual New Media](#) (2016)

Hélène Mialet, [Hawking Incorporated: Stephen Hawking and the Anthropology of the Knowing Subject](#) (2012)

10.

Tuesday Apr 8

Knowledge architectures

Tung-Hui Hu, [Prehistory of the Cloud](#) (2015), Intro plus one ch.

Finn Brunton, [Digital Cash](#) (2019)

11.

Tuesday Apr 15

Toward new materialisms

Bruno Latour, "[A Collective of Humans and Nonhumans](#)" (1999)

Jane Bennett, [Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things](#) (2010), selection

Karen Barad, "[Posthumanist Performativity](#)" (2008)

12.

Tuesday Apr 22

Circulation redux

Igor Kopytoff, "[The Cultural Biography of Things](#)" from Arjun Appadurai, ed., *Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (1986)

Hito Steyerl, "[In Defense of the Poor Image](#)" (2009)

Isabel Hofmeyr, "[Colonial Copyright, Customs, and Port Cities: Material Histories and Intellectual Property](#)" (2018)

13.

Tuesday Apr 29

Labor

Manu Karuka, [Empire's Tracks: Indigenous Nations, Chinese Workers, and the Transcontinental Railroad](#) (2019), selected chapters

Recommended: Lisa Lowe, [The Intimacies of Four Continents](#) (2015)

14.

Tuesday May 6

Concluding thoughts

Roundtable on final papers