Conventional media theory frequently dematerializes communication. Communication is reduced to a transparent cognitive immediate event, resulting in the marginalization or erasure of the tangible means, support, substratum, body, casing, the recto verso (backing) or intervening substances, that materially convey and circulate social knowledge, cultural codes, memory, norms and imagery in a socio-political field.

In contrast, the seminar seeks to relocate media theory in the social histories and material cultures of embodiment/disembodiment and to treat the body as media and media as embodied. We will explore the racialized, colonized, gendered, medicalized, technologized, disabled and terrorized body as the site for envisioning and archiving biopolitical communication and ex-communication. The political encoding of bodies is a crucial, yet under-analyzed, modality of modern political communication which encompasses gross violations of human rights, racial stigma, ethnic conflict, gender objectification, and political incarceration in refugee and concentration camps. The practices of political communication/ex-communication construct terrains of the sensible and the insensible and divide the social world into the visible and invisible, the audible and the inaudible. The course proposes that the body as a vehicle of intersubjective political communication and technological prosthetics can be conceptualized as a state of being-in-a-medium, and thus within a political philosophy of means, gesture, and communicability.

Seminar Requirements and Grading:

- Consistent attendance and participation in class discussion: 25%
- Midterm Final Paper proposal: 25%
- End Term Final Essay /Exam 2 Questions 50%

Course Resource Materials:

Course Documents Section Blackboard Course Site.

Learning Outcomes:

Students who successfully complete the course will be able to demonstrate:
• advanced understanding of research methodologies, vocabularies and comparative analyses appropriate to doctoral level work in Philosophy of Media, Visual and Cultural Studies and Critical Theory

• ability to write a critical literature review;

• knowledge of a range of specific critical vocabularies, debates and concerns focused on, body theory, critical theory and postcolonial theory.

Syllabus

Week One: Introduction: The Mediality of the Body


Recommended Reading:


Part One Inscriptive Technologies

Week Two: The Somatics of Truth


Friedrich Nietzsche, 1887 “Second Essay, Guilt, Bad Conscious and Related Matters, Genealogy of Morals “ http:www.mala.bc.ca/-johnstoi/Nietzsche/genealogy2.htm


Week Three: Agency, Visibility, and Subjection


**Recommended Reading:**


Week Four-Six: Colonial and Post Colonial Typographics of the Body


Recommended Reading:


Week Seven Creaturely and Bare Life: Bio-Political Media


Part Two: Disembodiment As Political Excommunication

Week Eight: Dialectics of Misrecognition I


http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/ph/phba.htm


Week Nine: Dialectics of Misrecognition II


Recommended Readings


Week Ten: Subtracted Bodies

Foucault Michel 2003 Abnormal. New York Picador (Selected Chapters)


Stone, A. 1995." “Violation and Virtuality: Two Cases of Physical and Psychological Boundary Transgression and their Implications”. In Posthuman Bodies. Judith Halberstam Ira Livingston (Editors), ( Indiana University Press.

Recommended Reading:


Weeks Eleven and Twelve: Second Bodies, Virtuality, and the Politics of the Puppet and the Doll

Walter Benjamin, 1933/1979 Doctine of the Similar New German Critique No. 17, pp 65-69


Giorgio Agamben, 2000 Notes on Gesture, Face. In Means Without Ends, Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis Press.


**Weeks Thirteen and Fourteen: Student Presentations**