Public Spheres, Public Media

Meeting Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:30-6:20
Room: Savery 167

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Office hours: Wednesdays 11 until noon, by appointment.

This seminar will explore the possibilities and potentials of media publics, building upon the concept of the public sphere. Starting with a historical examination of forms of television alternative to the dominant commercial and national model, the seminar will then grapple with the new kinds of public spheres structured by new media social platforms and networks. Along the way, we will consider different models of publics, counterpublics, and public sphericules; as well as crucial distinctions between publics, audiences, communities, and networks.

Students enrolled in the seminar will acquire a rigorous background in a concept that informs the fields of new media studies, communication studies, television studies, as well as political philosophy and cultural studies. The public sphere is supposed to be a place wherein people gather, free of the constraints of the capitalist market and the ruling government, to discuss and debate ideas. The public sphere - while having some affinity to the fabled Greek *agora* — is actually key to Enlightenment thought and bourgeois society. For Immanuel Kant, the public sphere gave voice to the bourgeois and was a kind of technology of Enlightenment; allowing for the public use of private reason. Jurgen Habermas's 1962 work, *The Structural Transformation of the Bourgeois Public Sphere*, historicizes this notion and calls attention to its inadequacies. Subsequently, a wide range of theorists, political philosophers, and critics have taken Habermas to task for supporting a concept overly reliant on face-to-face dialogue and a privileged form of rationality that therefore ends up being exclusionary, racist, and sexist. At the same time, many - if not all- of these critics aver that the idea of a public sphere is nonetheless crucial and necessary for political philosophy, media studies, understanding social movements, and for democracy itself.

This course attempts to navigate these positions while exposing students to original texts and subsequent critiques. The role of media in the conceptualization of the public sphere will be of primary interest (variously the public sphere is a medium itself, or is destroyed by mass media, or is 're-feudalized' by the electronic image, or is impossible without media).

Required texts:

Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Bourgeois Public Sphere*, (trans. Thomas Burger), Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989 (1962).
Oscar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience,* (trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff), New York: Verso, 2016 (1972).

All other readings are available through Canvas.

The above books are **on reserve at Odegaard** as well as the following:

Craig Calhoun ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,1992.
Dierdre Boyle, excerpts from *Subject to Change: Guerilla Television Revisited* Oxford University Press, 1997.

Michael Shamberg, *Guerilla Television* Holt Rinehart and Winstin, 1971.

Cinema and Media Studies

This course counts towards the PhD certificate in Cinema and Media Studies. This graduate program emphasizes the study of film and related media from a humanistic perspective, within the broader context of global culture. The curriculum centers on the medium of film, while also understanding the key concerns of film history and film theory as a productive horizon for assessing the phenomenal advances of digital and electronic media as well as a cinematic genealogy that stretches back to encompass the magic lantern, photography, sound recordings, and television among other technologically-produced art forms. The curricular goals emphasize the fundamental skills of cinema studies: an ability to interpret and clearly communicate the formal and stylistic elements of moving-image and audio-visual texts; a knowledgeable assessment of the canon of popular, art-cinema, and avant-garde cinemas, as well as animation and documentary forms; a capacity to engage the philosophical and social debates most germane to film theory since the early 20th century.

For more information, see https://complit.washington.edu/cinema-media-studies-graduate-program

Public Scholarship

This course also counts towards the PhD certificate in Public Scholarship, which brings together a crossdisciplinary cohort of UW graduate students and faculty interested in public scholarship that engages in cultural practice and inquiry; campus-community partnerships across all sectors of higher education; digital and multimedia publication, exhibitions, performance, and other innovative modes of disseminating scholarship; community-engaged research, teaching, and service; professional development for careers inside or outside of higher education. The Certificate's unique portfolio- and project-based curriculum enables fellows to integrate their scholarly and social commitments in the context of their intellectual and professional development. An extensive faculty advising network supports project and portfolio development.

For more information, see https://simpsoncenter.org/programs/curriculum/certificate-in-public-scholarship

Course policies

Attendance: Attendance is expected; excused absences include conference travel, illness, and family emergencies.

Email: Students must use their UW email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious offense. It undermines the fundamental mission of the university and sanctions are therefore severe. For information about the definition of plagiarism and the mandated UW penalties, please see the following website: https://depts.washington.edu/pswrite/plag.html

Disability-Related Needs: The University of Washington is committed to providing access, and reasonable accommodation in its services, programs, activities, education and employment for individuals with disabilities. For information or to request disability accommodation contact: Disabled Student Services at (206) 543-8924/V, (206) 543-8925/TTY, (206) 616-8379 (FAX), or e-mail at uwdss@u.washington.edu.

Mental health: It is important that we take care of ourselves inside and outside of class and in our professional lives. Towards that end, there are many different kinds of support services on campus, such as the Counseling Center and Hall Health Mental Health Clinic. If you are concerned about yourself or a friend who is experiencing emotional distress and/or may be at-risk for suicide, you can call SafeCampus at 206-685-7233 (SAFE). They will provide a 24/7 risk assessment and help to connect to appropriate resources on campus. Please save the SafeCampus number in your cell phones.

The SafeCampus website https://www.washington.edu/safecampus/ is an excellent resource for both mental and physical health concerns. Roughly one out of every three graduate students suffers from depression while in graduate school. If you're worried about yourself or someone you know, seek help and assistance.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Discussion lead (20%):

Beginning April 19th, seminars will be led by students. Students are required to provide their choices by submitting the attached sign-up sheet by April 3. Discussion leaders are encouraged to meet with Steve before leading seminar.

Preparation for discussion lead should include outlining/summarizing the argument(s) of each article, a map of how the readings fit together for that today, and a larger map indicating their place amongst the rest of the course materials so far. In other words, be analytical and synthetic.

Bring these outlines and maps to class along with passages for discussion and 3-4 questions for the class as whole (you may choose to publicize these ahead of time, but it is not required).

If you are co-leading discussion, coordinate with your partner.

Pro-seminar (10%):

Each Thursday, beginning April 26, the last 20 minutes (or so) will be reserved for "proseminar" style discussions regarding public scholarship, academia as an institution, life as a graduate student and so on. Students can reserve time to workshop their research and scholarship (conference presentations, abstracts, grant proposals, etc.) a week in advance. Students are encouraged to bring in questions and issues for discussion during this time. The shortened seminar time on Thursdays **does not** affect evaluation of the discussion leader.

Short writing assignments (10% each):

1. Due April 3, 5, or 10: Students will receive a sentence from *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* chosen by Steve. Students will write a short (500-750 word) paper responding to and inspired by that sentence.
2. Due April 12, 17, or 19: Students will receive a sentence from *Public Sphere and Experience* chosen by Steve. Students will write a short (500-750 word) paper responding to and inspired by that sentence.

Engagement (20%):

The more you put into this course, the more you will get out of it. Come to class prepared with notes, questions, ideas, and ready for discussion. Remember that your colleagues are often facilitating and leading discussion. Be respectful and helpful. Contribute and be productive.

Final project (30%):

Details TBD. I am open to a variety of project styles, including but not ending with a long paper. I encourage projects that attempt to grapple with the relationship between academic scholarship and its publics. The issue of public scholarship and what sorts of final projects would constitute such an engagement can be discussed during the "pro-seminar" sessions (see above).

Course Schedule

[an asterisk (*) indicates that a short writing assignment (see above) on the previous meeting's reading is due for certain students]

Tuesday March 27: Course Introduction

- Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Philosophy of Kant* edited by Carl J. Friedrich, New York: The Modern Library, 1949 (originally from *Berlinische Monatsschrift* December 1784), pp. 132-139

Thursday March 29: The Bourgeois Public Sphere

- Jürgen Habermas, "Introduction" *The Structural Transformation of the Bourgeois Public Sphere*, (trans. Thomas Burger), Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989 (1962), pp. 1-26.
- Habermas, "Social Structures of the Public Sphere", pp. 27-56.

Tuesday April 3: The Bourgeois Public Sphere *

- Jürgen Habermas, "Political Functions of the Public Sphere", pp. 57-88.
- Habermas, "The Bourgeois Public Sphere: Idea and Ideology", pp. 89-140.
- Habermas, "The Social-Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere", pp. 141-180.

Thursday April 5: The Bourgeois Public Sphere *

- Jürgen Habermas, "The Transformation of the Public Sphere's Political Function", pp. 181-235.
- Habermas, "On the Concept of Public Opinion", pp. 236-250.

Tuesday April 10: The Proletarian Public Sphere *

- Miriam Hansen, "Foreword" in Oscar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience,* (trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff), New York: Verso, 2016 (1972), pp. ix-xli.
- Oscar Negt and Alexander Kluge, "Introduction", pp. xliii-xlix.
- Negt and Kluge, "The Public Sphere as the Organization of Collective Experience", pp. 1-53.

Thursday April 12: The Proletarian Public Sphere *

- Oscar Negt and Alexander Kluge, "On the Dialectic between the Bourgeois and the Proletarian Public Sphere", pp. 54-95.
- Oscar Negt and Alexander Kluge, "Public Service Television", pp. 96-129.

Tuesday April 17: The Proletarian Public Sphere *

- Oscar Negt and Alexander Kluge, "The Individual Commodity and Collections of Commodities in the Consciousness Industry", pp. 130-148.
- Negt and Kluge, "The Context of Living as the Media Cartel's Object of Production", pp. 149-159.
- Negt and Kluge, "Changes in the Structure of the Public Sphere", pp. 161-186.

Thursday April 19: Liberal Democracy? * Discussion lead:_____

- Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" *Social Text* 25/26 (1990), 56-80.
- Seyla Benhabib, "Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermas" in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (1992), pp. 73-98.

Tuesday April 24: Counterpublics 1 Discussion lead:_____

- Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics" *Public Culture* 14 (2002), 49-90.
- Michael C. Dawson, "A Black Counterpublic?: Economic Earthquakes, Racial Agenda(s), and Black Politics" *Public Culture* 7 (1994), 195-223.

Thursday April 26: Counterpublics 2 Discussion lead:_____

- Mary Ryan, "Gender and Public Access: Women's Politics in Nineteenth-Century America" in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (1992), pp. 259-288.
- Houston Baker, "Critical Memory and the Black Public Sphere" *Public Culture* 7 (1994), 3-33.

Tuesday May 1: Television's Publics 1 Discussion lead:_____

- Richard Collins, "Public Service Broadcasting" in *From Satellite to Single Market: New communication technology and European public service television* New York: Routledge, (1998), pp. 51-74.
- Daniel Dayan, "The Peculiar Public of Television" *Media Culture Society* 23.6 (2001), 743-765.
- Todd Gitlin, "Public Sphere or Public Sphericules" in *Media Ritual and Identity,* edited by Tamar Liebes and James Curran, New York: Routledge (1998), pp. 168-175.

Thursday May 3: Television's Publics 2 Discussion lead:_____

- Devorah Heitner, "Performing Black Power in the 'Cradle of Liberty'" *Television and New Media* 10.5 (2009), 392-415.
- Jane Rhodes, "The 'Electronic Stimulus for a Black Revolution': *Black Journal* and 1960s Public Television" *Black Renaissance* 14:2 (2014), 136-151.
- Kevin Howley, "Manhattan Neighborhood Network: Community Access Television and the Public Sphere in the 1990s" *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 25.1 (2005), 119-138.
- Eric Freedman, "Public Access/Private Confession: Home Video as (Queer) Community Television" *Television & New Media* 1:2 (2000), 179-191

Tuesday May 8: Guerilla Television 1 Discussion lead:_____

- Michael Shamberg, excerpts from *Guerilla Television* Holt Rinehart and Winstin, 1971.
- Dierdre Boyle, excerpts from *Subject to Change: Guerilla Television Revisited* Oxford University Press, 1997.

Thursday May 10: Guerilla Television 2 Discussion lead:_____

- David Joselit, "Feedback" in *Feedback: Television Against Democracy*, Cambridge: MIT Press (2007), pp. 86-131.
- Umberto Eco, "Towards a Semiological Guerilla Warfare (1967)" in *Travels in Hyperreality*, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich (1983), pp. 135-144.
- Jayson Harsin, "Rumor Bombs: American Mediated Politics as Pure War" in *Cultural Studies, an Anthology*, ed. Michael Ryan. New York: Blackwell (2008), pp. 468-482.

Tuesday May 15: Cinema as Public Sphere Discussion lead:_____

- Miriam Hansen, excerpts from *Babel and Babylon* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Shawn Shimpach "Representing the Public of the Cinema's Public Sphere" in *Media and Public Spheres*, edited by Richard Butsch, New York: Palgrave MacMillan (2007), pp. 136-148.

Thursday May 17: Digital Communities Discussion lead:_____

- Craig Calhoun, "Community without Propinquity Revisited: Communications Technology and the Transformation of the Urban Public Sphere" *Sociological Inquiry* 68:3 (August 1998), 373-379.
- Jan Fernbeck, "The Individual within the Collective: Virtual Ideology and the Realization of Collective Principles" in *Virtual Culture: Identity and Communication in Cybersociety* edited Steven Jones, Sage Publications, 1997, pp. 36-54.
- Anna Everett, "The Revolution will be Digitized: Afrocentricity and the Digital Public Sphere" *Social Text* 20:2 (2002), 125-146.

Tuesday May 22: Transnational Public Spheres Discussion lead:_____

- Nancy Fraser, "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere*" Theory, Culture, and Society* 24:4 (2007), 7-30.
- Jodi Dean, "Cybersalons and Civil Society: Rethinking the Public Sphere in Transnational Technoculture," *Public Culture* 13:2 (2001), 243-265.
- Manuel Castells, "The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance" *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616 (Mar., 2008), 78-93.

Thursday May 24: Digital Protests 1 Discussion lead:_____

- Kevin Michael DeLuca and Jennifer Peeples, "From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism, and the 'Violence' of Seattle" *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19:2 (2002), 125-151.
- Jun Liu, "Communicating beyond information? Mobile phones and mobilization to offline protests in China" *Television and New Media* 15:1 (2014), 1-18.

Tuesday May 29: Digital Protests 2 Discussion lead:_____

- Guiomar Rovira Sancho, "Networks, insurgencies, and prefigurative politics: a cycle of global indignation" *Convergence: The International Journal of Research in New Media Technologies* 20.4 (2014), 387-401.
- John Postill, "Freedom technologists and the new protest movements: a theory of protest formulas" *Convergence: The International Journal of Research in New Media Technologies* 20.4 (2014), 402-418.
- Megan Boler, Averie Macdonald, Christina Nitsou, and Anne Harris, "Connective labor and social media: Women's roles in the 'leaderless' Occupy movement" *Convergence: The International Journal of Research in New Media Technologies* 20.4 (2014), 438-460.
- John Downey and Natalie Fenton, "New media, counter publicity and the public sphere" *New Media and Society* 5:2 (2003), 185-202.

Thursday May 31: Public (Im)mobilites Discussion lead:_____

- Mimi Sheller and John Urry, "Mobile Transformations of 'Public' and 'Private' Life" *Theory Culture Society* 20.3 (2003), 107-125.
- Wolfgang Sützl, "Street Protests, Electronic Disturbance, Smart Mobs: Dislocations of Resistance" in *Traffic: Media as Infrastructures and Cultural Practices* edited by Marion Näser-Lather and Christoph Neubert, Boston: Brill Rodopi, 2015, pp. 220-232.

Discussion Lead sign-up sheet

Name_____

Rank your top three choices (1st, 2nd, 3rd) Mark an "X" next to any day you **cannot** lead discussion.

_____Thursday April 19: Liberal Democracy?
[Fraser "Rethinking Public Sphere" & Benhabib "Models of Public Space"]

_____Tuesday April 24: Counterpublics 1
[Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics" & Dawson, "A Black Counterpublic?"]

_____Thursday April 26: Counterpublics 2
[Ryan, "Gender and Public Access" & Baker "Critical Memory and the Black Public Sphere"]

_____Tuesday May 1: Television's Publics 1
[Collins "Public Service Broadcasting" & Dayan "The Peculiar Public of Television" & Gitlin "Public Sphere or Public Sphericules"]

_____ Thursday May 3: Television's Publics 2
[Heitner "Performing Black Power" & Howley "Manhattan neighborhood network" & Rhodes, "The 'Electronic Stimulus for a Black Revolution'" & Freedman, "Public Access/Private Confession"]

_____ Tuesday May 8: Guerilla Television 1
[Shamberg, excerpts from *Guerilla Television* & Boyle, excerpts from *Subject to Change*]

_____ Thursday May 10: Guerilla Television 2
[Joselit "Feedback" & Eco, "Towards a Semiological Guerilla Warfare" & Jayson Harsin, "Rumor Bombs"]

_____Tuesday May 15: Cinema as Public Sphere
[excerpts from Hansen, *Babel and Babylon* & Shimpach, "The Public of Cinema's Public Sphere"]

_____Thursday May 17: Digital Communities
[Calhoun "Community without Propinquity Revisited" & Fernbeck, "The Individual within the Collective" & Everett "The Revolution will be Digitized"]

_____Tuesday May 22: Transnational Public Spheres
[Fraser, "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere" & Dean, "Cybersalons and Civil Society" & Castells, "The New Public Sphere"]

_____Thursday May 24: Digital Protests 1
[DeLuca and Peeples "From Public Sphere to Public Screen" & Liu, "Communicating beyond information?"]

_____Tuessday May 29: Digital Protests 2
Sancho, "Networks, insurgencies, and prefigurative politics" & Postill "New Protest Movements" & Boler et al., "Connective labor and social media" & Downey and Fenton, "New media, counter publicity and the public sphere"]

_____Tuesday May 29: Public (Im)mobilities

[Sheller and Urry “Mobile Transformations of ‘Public’ and ‘Private’ Life” & Sützl “Street Protests, Electronic Disturbance, Smart Mobs”]