



German 8205: Intellectual Constellations [CMAP 5001] | Fall 2016

## Media and the Senses

This seminar provides a rigorous introduction to modern media theory. Special attention is given to the way in which contemporary media address and reshape the human sensorium. Students will engage with different theories of vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste, and locomotion and with how media technologies such as phonography, photography, cinema, and digital imaging have captured and reworked human sensory perception. Additional attention will be paid to the question of how the human body and brain have been theorized and mapped as media, as the primary medium of sensation. Readings will include the work of canonical media theorists such as Arnheim, Benjamin, Crary, Heidegger, Manovich, McLuhan, as well as more recent writing from fields and disciplines as diverse as the neurosciences, gaming theory, cultural anthropology, and musicology. Various campus experts from different disciplines will offer their perspectives throughout the semester and engage participants in interdisciplinary discussions of how media and human body interact with each other.

Second and third-year graduate students interested in enrolling in the future in the Joint-Ph.D. Program in Comparative Media Analysis and Practice (CMAP) (pending approval) are highly encouraged to take this seminar. It will count as one of the program's core courses and, once the program has been officially approved, be listed under the official CMAP course number. This seminar is open to all interested students whether they seek to pursue a CMAP degree or not.

Lead Instructor: Lutz Koepnick

Class Time: W 7-10 pm

For questions please email: [lutz.koepnick@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:lutz.koepnick@vanderbilt.edu)



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# Media and the Senses



## COURSE INFORMATION

<b>Class Time</b>	Wednesday 7-10 pm
<b>Room</b>	Buttrick DH Center
<b>Instructor</b>	Lutz Koepnick
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:lutz.koepnick@vanderbilt.edu">lutz.koepnick@vanderbilt.edu</a>
<b>Telephone</b>	615.875.9065
<b>Office</b>	Furman 121
<b>Office Hours</b>	Tu 3-4, w 1-2 & by appointment

## PROJECTS

Students in this class will collaborate on various writing projects, mostly in groups of 2-3 students. Go to the “Special Assignments” page of this website for more detailed information about these projects and assignments.

## GRADE DISTRIBUTION

<b>Participation</b>	20%
	20%
	20%
	20%

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## REQUIRED TEXTS

Materials marked "ONLINE" in the course schedule will be made available electronically. All other books are available for purchase at the Vanderbilt University Bookstore or can be found via electronic access at Vanderbilt University Library.

- Jonathan Crary. *Techniques of the Observer*. ISBN: 9780262531078
- Malte Hagener and Thomas Elsaesser. *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. ISBN: 9781138824300
- Lev Manovich. *The Language of New Media*. ISBN: 9780262632553
- Malcolm McCullough. *Ambient Commons: Attention in the Age of Embodied Information*. ISBN: 9780262528399
- Marshall McLuhan. *Understanding Media*. ISBN: 9781584230731.
- W.J.T. Mitchell. *Critical Terms for Media Studies*. ISBN: 9780226532554.
- Juhani Pallasmaa. *The Eyes of the Skin*. ISBN: 9781119941286
- John Durham Peters. *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media*. ISBN: 9780226421353
- Patrick Süskind. *Perfume*. ISBN: 9780375725845

## COURSE POLICIES

**Class participation** is an important aspect of this class, and excessive absences will therefore adversely affect the final grade

**Policy on Pass/Fail Grading Option:** Students who take this course under the Pass/Fail option must receive a grade of C- or better in order to qualify for the Pass on their final grade.

**Academic Integrity:** Students are bound by the University rules on academic integrity in all aspects of this course. All references to ideas and texts other than the students' own must be so indicated through appropriate footnotes, whether the source is a book, an online site, the professor, etc. All students are responsible for following the rules outlined at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/studentaccountability/>

**Special accommodations for students with disabilities:** The Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages is committed to making educational opportunities available to all students. In order for its faculty members to properly address the needs of students who have disabilities, it is necessary that those students approach their instructors as soon as the semester starts, preferably on the first day of class. They should bring an official letter from the Opportunity Development Center (2-4705) explaining their specific needs so that their instructors are aware of them early on and can make the appropriate arrangements.

# Media and the Senses



## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week One: Introduction I (8/24/16)

- Mitchell and Hansen, *Critical Terms for Media Studies* (vii-xxii; 19-34; 88-100, 186-198)

### Week Two: Introduction II (8/31/16)

- Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds* (1-115)
- Mark M. Smith, *Sensing the Past: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching in History* (1-18, 117-132) [ONLINE]

### Week Three: Two Philosophies of Modern Media (9/7/16)

- Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" [ONLINE]
- Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" [ONLINE]

### Week Four: Medium, Message, Massage (9/14/16)

- McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (part I, selections of part II: chapters 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31)
- Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (1-115) [ONLINE]

### Week Five: Seeing I (9/21/16)

- Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*
- Siegfried Kracauer, "Photography" (from *Theory of Film*) [ONLINE]
- Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave" [ONLINE]

### Week Six: Seeing II (9/28/16)

- Arnheim, "A New Laocoon" [ONLINE]
- Hagener and Elsaesser, *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses* (sel)

### Week Seven: Seeing III (10/5/16)

- Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (introduction, chapters 1, 2, 4, 6)
- Alexander Galloway, "Origins of the First Person Shooter" [ONLINE]

### **Week Eight: Hearing I (10/12/16)**

- Salome Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence* (sel) [ONLINE]
- Christopher Cox, "Beyond Representation and Signification: Toward a Sonic Materialism" [ONLINE]

### **Week Nine: Hearing II (10/19/16)**

- Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (sel) [ONLINE]
- Brian Kane, "11 Thesis on Sound and Transcendence" [ONLINE]

### **Week Ten: Smell & Taste (10/26/16)**

- Constance Classen et al., *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell* (1-12, 180-205) [ONLINE]
- Süsskind, *Perfume*
- *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* (dir. Tom Tykwer, 2006)

### **Week Eleven | Bodies in Space (11/2/16)**

- Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*
- Mark B. N. Hansen, *Bodies in Code: Interface with Digital Media* (1-104) [ONLINE]

### **Week Twelve | Synesthesia I: From Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* to Modernist Experiments with Sensory Coupling (11/9/16)**

- Matthew Wilson Smith, *The Total Work of Art* (1-47) [ONLINE]
- Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (sel) [ONLINE]
- Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, *Painting, Photography, Film* (sel) [ONLINE]

### **Week Thirteen | Synesthesia II: Perspectives from the Neurosciences (11/16/16)**

- TBA

### **Week Fourteen | Synesthesia III: Sensory Perception in an Age of Ambient Media and Media Convergence (11/30/16)**

- Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (1-24) [ONLINE]
- Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (chapter 5)
- McCullough, *Ambient Commons: Attention in the Age of Embodied Information* (sel) [ONLINE]

### **Week Fifteen (12/7/16)**

- Final Discussion
- Presentation of Projects