EMF 140
Introduction to EMF: Media, Culture, and Convergence

Course Description:
This course provides a cultural studies approach to media analysis, to understand its role in the creation of Western ideology, identity, and representation. Particular emphasis is given to the convergent relationships among media narratives, technologies, and their audiences. These will be examined through the diverse lenses of cultural production, social power, and consumer interactions—past and present. Pairing a wide range of theoretical considerations with in-depth analysis of the everyday media we consume, this course will prepare students to become perceptive, ethical, democratic, and responsible media makers (as professionals and as citizens).

Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to
(1) Identify and analyze significant expressions of media convergence through the examination of media histories, technologies, and cultural contexts
(2) Understand and articulate media theory in relation to identity and dominant culture through characters and narratives across multiple media formats
(3) Demonstrate media literacy through study of ethical and representational practices connecting media production and audience reception
(4) Evaluate the impact of media on their own lives through self-reflective exercises

Required Texts:
All other readings will be available on our Blackboard page, under “Content.” You are expected to obtain your assigned readings every week, bring them to class, and be prepared to discuss them.
Assignments:

*Practicum project* = 350 pts. (*proposal @ 50 pts. + 3 reports @ 100 pts. each*)

*Media Foundations Exam* = 80 pts.

*TV Analysis paper* = 100 pts

*Digital Media Group Project* = 125 pts (*preview @ 25 pts. + presentation @ 100 pts.*)

*Final exam (Date:____________)* = 100 pts

*Attendance* = _____ pts.

*Participation/Professionalism* = _____ pts.

*Total possible points* = _______ pts.

**Practicum Project (350 pts. total)**

**PART I, Engagement:** This is a semester-long practicum project in which students interact with an unfamiliar convergent and participatory media experience. Students may choose their own project, which should be stated in the form of a goal. First, your PROPOSAL will identify the specific media texts to be explored and must comprise at least two different forms of media (TV, Internet, film, videogames, novel, comic, etc.) for the project (see examples below). You will also provide a timeline that indicates what and how much media you will examine during each of the three reporting periods throughout the semester. Use pp. 2-4 of this syllabus to guide you.

**PROPOSAL DUE in Week 3** (50 pts., 1-2 pages typed)

For example: “By the end of the semester, I will have...

... watched three web series and looked at how both academic (scholarly journals) and pop culture (blogs, articles) respond to them and compare these to my own responses.” For ideas: [https://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2016/12/the-10-best-web-series-of-2016.html](https://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2016/12/the-10-best-web-series-of-2016.html)

…listened to several classic-era radio comedies and then watched a comparable number of TV and cable sitcoms to trace the ways in which the genre (characters, situations, jokes) has evolved across these different media formats over time.”

Here is a *Buzzfeed* list of some good podcast options:

…*viewed* three films (or two films and one TV episode) that narratively and/or visually depict media convergence…” (their plots are about video surveillance, their *mise-en-scène* incorporates multiple screens-within-screens, such as images of videogames, TV, smartphone, satellite, GPS, CCTV, etc. such as *The Bourne Ultimatum* (2007), *Minority Report* (2002), *Enemy of the State* (1999), *Eagle Eye* (2008), *The Lives of Others* (2006), *The Net* (1995), *Surveillance 24/7* (2008), or others of your choice approved by instructor) “…and read how film critics and fans respond online to issues of privacy and convergent technology, either as a method of filmmaking or as a reflection of real-world surveillance.”

…*played* 6 hours of an MMO or videogame like *World of Warcraft* or *Assassin’s Creed* or *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* or *EVE Online* [the latter game is considered by many to be the most diverse] and followed the convergence and/or transmedia extension of its characters, story, etc. to another media platform such as TV, comics, or movies.”

For ideas: here’s an article that talks about MMO/MMORPG & transmedia:
-and here’s an article on MMO & Convergence:
https://www.theguardian.com/technology/gamesblog/2006/mar/16/mmoandtvconv
-and here’s one on bringing the *EVE* universe to comics and TV:

…*become* an active commenter on *Project Runway*, *RuPaul’s Drag Race*, *Survivor*, *Little People Big World*, *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, *Real Housewives of Atlanta*, *Queer Eye*, *Nailed It*, *Deadliest Catch*, *Love and Hip-Hop: New York*, *Bachelor/Bachelorette* or other ‘reality’ TV series (with instructor approval) discussion boards and read critical reviews after watching 6 episodes of the show.”

…*read* a science fiction/fantasy/horror fiction novel and watched the film or TV adaptation(s) or stage production (or some other medium) of it.”

…*listened* to and viewed three radio transmedia projects that incorporate radio broadcast, internet, animation, music, etc. and include platforms for audience participation and have personally participated in at least one of these.”
(For ideas, you can look at Wk. 4 reading by Edmonds.)

…*read* one volume or issue of a comic book or graphic novel and watched the feature film and/or the television adaptation (at least three 1-hr. episodes) that covers that story arc.” (Ex: *The Walking Dead*, *Sin City*, *Judge Dredd*, *The Losers*, *Marvel’s
Daredevil or Luke Cage or Jessica Jones or The Punisher, Blade, Scott Pilgrim vs. the World, Tales from the Crypt, Kick-Ass, From Hell)

For ideas:
https://hpl.bibliocommons.com/list/share/202731033_hpl_terryberry_staff/213697825


It is very important that you pick goals for your practicum projects that are challenging, at least somewhat unfamiliar, and interesting, so spend the first two weeks of the course investigating your options and see what’s out there. You’ll be living with it for 3 months, so choose wisely!

PART II, Report (3 @ 100 pts. each)
Approximately 2-3 hours of media engagement per reporting period are accompanied by a 3-page typed progress report to be submitted in class (see due dates on course schedule below). Each report should include an in-depth discussion based on guided response prompts that will be provided ahead of time by your instructor.

Unit Assessments
Unit One—Media and Cultural Literacy
Quiz (80 pts.), Wk. 5
   For this assessment, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of course concepts from Weeks 1-4.
Television Analysis paper (100 pts.) DUE in class, Wk. 7
   Students will write a 4-5 pg. analysis of a television series/episode from the network era (1950s-1980s) through a cultural perspective. Guidelines will be distributed in class.

Unit Two—Cinema
You will be assessed on your in-class engagement with the issues raised by our readings and screenings during this unit. We will be discussing multiple topics on media and surveillance and your participation credit will be based on your preparedness with course materials and screening notes as/if assigned.

Unit Three—Digital Media
Group Presentation (125 pts.: 100 pts. presentation + 25 pts. preview document)
Preview Document DUE Wk. 10 / Presentation DUE on the week of your assigned readings
   In small groups, students will develop a presentation about the type of digital media
covered in their assigned week by looking at it in the context of ethics and democracy. Assigned dates will be determined by random drawing in Wk. 2. Guidelines will be distributed in class in Wk. 7.

- Preview Document: every member outlines their contribution in a one-paragraph narrative statement which will then be compiled into a single document by a team leader designated by the group, DUE Wk. 10. Plan should include these points:
  - if a member is responsible for one of the terms or concepts from that week’s reading, they will identify it here;
  - how they think issues of ethics and democracy relate to the topic(s) their group is exploring;
  - what text or image research they will do and at least two possible sources for finding these;
  - what spoken material they will be delivering to the class during the presentation;
  - what components of the visual aspects of the presentation they will be creating or locating and then delivering to their team, by when;
  - the team leader will be responsible for assembling each member’s typed narrative into a single document, but will ONLY be responsible for writing their own;
  - if any member fails to contribute their narrative statement to the team leader by the deadline set by the group, they alone will get a 0 for this portion of the assignment.

Final Exam (100 pts.)

EXAM IS SCHEDULED FOR ______________ FROM _______ a.m./p.m.
IN OUR REGULAR CLASSROOM

If you have any questions about excused/unexcused absences, review Towson University’s attendance policy here: [http://www.towson.edu/cofac/resources/documents/classattendance.pdf](http://www.towson.edu/cofac/resources/documents/classattendance.pdf)

Participation/Preparation (_______ pts.)

This course depends on our active collaboration and discussion of ideas and information that we will be sharing over the course of the semester. Your participation includes joining in the conversation, asking questions, working with your peers on class activities, and treating them with civility and respect. This is a space where you are encouraged to contribute your observations and experiences of media as well as to demonstrate your readiness to respond to questions about course materials when called upon. You are expected to come to class prepared and ready to learn, talk, and share.
Grade Breakdown

A (93%), A- (90%)  
B+ (87%), B (83%), B- (80%)  
C+ (77%), C (70%)  
D+ (67%), D (60%)  
F (59% or below)

“A” work is Excellent, signifies mastery  
“B” work is Good, signifies full proficiency  
“C” work is Adequate/Fair, signifies basic proficiency  
“D” work is Unsatisfactory, signifies a conscientious lack of proficiency  
“F” work is Failed, signifies an extreme lack of proficiency

Grade Dispute Policy: If you do not understand why you received a specific grade on any assignment, please come see me during my office hours or schedule an appointment with me. A short conversation may help clarify the issue. Prior to meeting, please be sure to review my comments on your work and then follow these instructions:

1. Please wait at least 24 hours after receiving the grade but no more than one week to speak with me.
2. Please write down in a short memo (1 page max) your reasoning for a different grade (and specify the grade you feel you should have).
3. Please include my original evaluation of the work, as well as all assignment materials, in your memo to me.

Course Policies:

Missed Classes and Taking Notes: It is your responsibility to take notes. If you are unable to take your own notes, you are welcome to see Disability Services (www.towson.edu/dss) about obtaining a note-taker. It is also your responsibility to request to borrow missed notes from your classmates and to make up work for missed class due to religious holiday, scheduled sports participation, or other university-excused absence.

Extra Credit: You may have opportunities to get extra credit by attending and describing your experience of TU / EMF events. Depending on the availability of such events, I will announce these as (or if) they come up. This option is NOT guaranteed; it varies by semester.

Writing Skills and Available Resources: Through the assigned work in EMF140, you are expected to develop your writing skills. We will periodically engage in discussion on writing mechanics. You may meet individually with me to discuss your writing and those paper topics that interest you. Anyone desiring assistance outside of class may also benefit from using one of the following resources: The Writing Support Program helps native English speakers with sentence-level and grammar skills. Phone 410-704-3426 to schedule an appointment.
Assignment Handouts: I will hand out detailed guidelines for assignments in class, allowing time to discuss them and answer questions. You are responsible for insuring that you understand the assignment, ask questions if you do not understand something, and to follow directions as they are stated on these guidelines.

An assignment is not considered turned in until hard copy is submitted during the class period it is due. NO EMAIL SUBMISSIONS without prior arrangement with instructor or if that particular assignment is designated as an electronic submission.

Late Assignments: An assignment will be marked down 5 points for every day it is late (including weekends). I CANNOT ACCEPT AN ASSIGNMENT MORE THAN ONE WEEK LATE (except for extenuating circumstances involving documented serious illness, accident, or family tragedy).

Any in-class work missed from absences MAY OR MAY NOT be available for make-up within the one week window (depending on the nature of the work; this is at my discretion).

The FINAL EXAM can only be made up in cases of documented emergency or illness only. You MUST contact me IMMEDIATELY if you foresee missing the exam.

FINAL EXAM: _____________________ (regular classroom)

ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

This course may not be repeated more than once without prior permission from the Academic Standards Committee.

Student Agreement: Once this syllabus has been handed out and discussed in class, the student acknowledges agreement to its terms when he/ she attends the 2nd class. It is also acknowledged that course structure has been identified.

Electronic Media and Film – Building Civility and Community

EMF places a priority on learning. We value the inherent worth and dignity of every person, thereby fostering a community of mutual respect. Students have the right to a learning environment free of disruptive behaviors. Faculty have the right to define appropriate behavioral expectations in the classroom and expect students to abide by them. Faculty have the
responsibility to manage and address classroom disruption. Staff have the right and responsibility
to define appropriate behaviors necessary to conduct any university activity free of disruption or
obstruction.

We believe that in order to achieve these ideals, all EMF students, staff, and faculty are expected
to exhibit and practice civil behaviors that exemplify: (1) respecting faculty, staff, fellow
students, guests, and all university property, policies, rules and regulations; (2) taking
responsibility for one’s choices and actions; (3) delivering correspondence – whether verbal,
nonverbal, written, or electronic – with respectful language and in complete sentences; and (4)
accepting consequences of one’s inappropriate choices and actions.

The use offensive, threatening, or abusive language, writing, or behavior will not be tolerated
and can lead to academic dismissal. Further information about civility can be found in Appendix
F of the university catalog.

**Your responsibilities as a civil student:**
- Be respectful of the professor and other students.
- Do not text or using cell phones or other electronic devices.
- Do not eat in class.
- Do not read outside material or listen to music during class.
- Do not sleep in class.
- Know your professor’s name and send polite and respectful emails to him/her.
- Understand that email is not a substitute for attending class.
- Arrive to class on time – lateness is prohibited and 3 will result in an absence.

**My responsibilities as a civil instructor:**
- Be respectful toward all students.
- Attempt to understand individual student needs and learning styles.
- Discuss civil behavioral expectations during the first class.
- Take time to talk with students whose behaviors negatively affect the classroom.
- Encourage students to engage in civil behavior and community-building
  activities.

**EMF Policy about Multitasking in the Classroom**

The EMF Department recognizes the utility of laptop computers and other electronic devices in
the classroom, but only for academic purposes related to the course and under the direction of a
faculty member to enhance learning. Student use of electronic devices for personal or other, non-
course related activities, such as texting, e-mailing, Internet surfing, Facebook, Twitter,
YouTube, iPod, gaming, etc., is disruptive to fellow students, disrespectful to the professor, and
detrimental to the student’s own academic performance.

Recent research findings indicate students who multitask perform **significantly worse** than do
those who don’t multitask – with multitasking students performing at the same level as those
who **never come** to class.

For these reasons, the Department of Electronic Media & Film fully supports faculty if they
implement a course policy prohibiting or limiting the use of personal electronic devices in the classroom. The Department of Electronic Media & Film also fully supports any penalties, stated in the syllabus, assessed against students who violate the course policy.

Electronic Devices in EMF140:

*LAPTOPS, TABLETS, and CELL PHONES must be put away during classroom and in our screenings. So, be sure to bring a notebook for taking notes!*

We'll be screening work in class and electronic screens are a distraction for other students. Failure to comply with this equals a failure to comply with course policies and with our civility code. More than 1 instance of cell phone or laptop use during class will lower your grade.

Copyright: Images and printed matter used in this class are for educational purposes only. They are meant for use within the context of the classroom. They cannot be published in any way on the internet or otherwise or copyright will be violated.

Academic Integrity: The EMF Dept. follows the Towson University Policy on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with it (see URL below). www.towson.edu/studentlife/judicialaffairs/academicintegrity.html.

- You are expected to understand this document.
- Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Anyone feeling that they still do not understand the policy or have specific questions should arrange to meet with me.
- Anyone caught plagiarizing will automatically receive a grade of **F** on the assignment in question, and may be given a failing grade for the course.
- Plagiarism is defined in Diana Hacker’s *A Pocket Style Manual* as follows: “(1) Failing to cite quotations or borrowed ideas, (2) failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks, and (3) failing to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words.” Any suspicious phrases or passages of text will be checked through Google, “turnitin.com,” Amazon.com’s “Search Inside the Book” and other tools at our discretion.

Disability Note: The EMF Dept. follows the Towson University Policy on disability. Please see www.towson.edu/dss for details. Any student who needs accommodation for a disability, please see instructor the first week of class with your memo from Disability Support Services.

Weapons Policy: To promote a safe and secure campus, Towson University prohibits the possession or control of any weapon while on University property. The term weapon includes any potentially dangerous object or substance or replica thereof. The full policy can be found at: http://inside.towson.edu/generalcampus/tupolicies/documents/06-01.11%20Weapons%20Prohibited.pdf

Emergency Text Alerts: All students must sign up for the Campus Emergency Alert Text Message Notification System. Go to following link for instructions to do so: http://www.towson.edu/adminfinance/facilities/police/campusemergency/ and watch the
emergency preparedness video and print out the pocket guide by clicking on this link: 
https://www.towson.edu/publicsafety/emergencies/preparedness/

**EMF Google Group List Serve:**
All EMF students are required to join the EMF Google Group List Serve at 
http://groups.google.com/group/TowsonEMF. This will guarantee that you receive daily postings regarding digital media, video, film, and audio production topics including festivals, special screening, guest speakers, film/video crew needs, internships, and jobs.
Use this email address (TowsonEMF@googlegroups.com) to post your own messages to the group. The main page will also archive all posts.

**Instructions:**
1. Create a user account and password, and be sure to use the email to which you prefer receiving mail. (You only need to sign up once and you’ll continue to receive EMF Google group emails.)
2. Please select one of the three Email options for reading the group messages:
   (a) Abridged Email (No more than 1 email per day) -- Summary of new activity each day 
   (b) Digest Email (Approximately 1 email per day) -- Up to 25 full new messages bundled into a single email 
   (c) Email (Approximately 1 email per day) -- Best way not to miss important postings, as you get every message sent as it arrives

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**Course Schedule**

**Unit One: Media and Cultural Literacy**

*Topics covered: Convergence Culture, Advertising, Music/Sound, Television, Representation & Ethics*

**Week 1—Introduction to Media, Culture, and Convergence**

Introduction to Course
Reading:

- Get Practicum Proposal guidelines in class (proposal DUE in Wk. 3)

**Week 2—Media Convergence in Theory and Practice**

Readings:

- Drawing for Group Presentation dates (to be presented in Unit 3 of the course)
- Discuss readings

**Week 3—Advertising and Mediated Identity**

Readings:

- Discuss readings
- DUE: Practicum Proposal
  - First Practicum Report due in 3 weeks (Wk. 6)

**Week 4—Convergence of Music/Sound and the Moving Image**

Readings:

- Discuss readings
- Get Exam study guide

**Week 5—Televisual Convergence: Industry, Characters, and Story**

Readings:
• Discuss readings
• Get “TV Analysis” assignment, DUE Wk. 7
• In-class: Exam (over Weeks 1-4)

Wk. 5 In-class viewings:
A selection of series excerpts described in Television and American Culture (may include, for example: Cagney & Lacey, Ellen, The Sopranos, Jackass, Kung-Fu, The Goldbergs, Amos ‘n’ Andy, The Nat ‘King’ Cole Show, Julia, Barney Miller, Sanford and Son, The Jeffersons, Roots, The Cosby Show, All-American Girl, George Lopez)

Week 6—Television, Myth, and American Culture

Readings:

• In-class viewing: The Twilight Zone “The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street” (Written and Introduced by Rod Serling, CBS, March 4, 1960)
• The Mary Tyler Moore Show “Pilot/Love is All Around” (1970)
• Good Times “The Dinner Party” (1975)
• DUE: Practicum Report #1 (be prepared to discuss in class)
• Discuss reports, TV episodes, and readings

Week 7—Representation and Ethical Storytelling

Readings:
[1] “The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media,” by Stuart Hall, Gender, Race, and Class in Media (2010), pp. 81-84 [PDF available on Blackboard]

• DUE: TV Analysis paper
• Get Group Presentation guidelines (Preview Document DUE in Wk. 10)
• Discuss readings and screened material

Wk. 7 In-class viewing (selections from):
The Bronze Screen: 100 Years of the Latino Image in Hollywood (Documentary, 2002), excerpts
The Celluloid Closet (Documentary, 1995), excerpts
“Blackface” Montage from Bamboozled (2000), on Power Point

Unit Two: Cinema--Then and Now
Topics covered: history, industry, media technologies, surveillance, and genre case study

Week 8—Industry and History / Genre Case Study

Readings:
[1] Media Essentials, Ch. 7 “Movies and the Impact of Images”
[2] Online article: “The Conversation Encapsulated All of Our Nixon-Era Fears” by Jonathan Kirshner at Slate, June 22, 2017:
http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/conspiracy_thrillers/2017/06/coppola_s_the_conversation_portrayed_all_our_fears_of_privacy_and_trust.html [URL/link available on Blackboard]

• Discuss readings and film
• In-class viewing: The Conversation (Coppola, 1974, 113 mins.)

Week 9—Genre Case Study: The Action-Thriller: Media, Surveillance & Ideology

Readings:

• In class viewing: Enemy of the State (Scott, 1998, 132 mins.)
• Discuss reading and the issues raised by the juxtaposition of these 2 films
• DUE: Group Presentation Preview Document

Week 10—Wrap-up Day; discuss screenings; set up groups for Digital projects in Unit 3

• DUE: Practicum Report #2 (be prepared to discuss in class)
Unit Three: Digital Media

Topics covered: old & new media—remediation, participatory fan culture, global media, the digital divide, social media, democratic activism, gaming & transmedia storytelling

Week 11—Remediation of Old and New Media

Readings:

- In-class presentation: Group 1
- Discuss readings

Week 12—Fan Practices, the Digital Bubble, and Online Participatory Culture

Readings:
[2] “‘To Each Their Own Bubble’: Mobile Spaces of Sound in the City,” by Michael Bull, *Mediaspace: Place, Scale and Culture in a Media Age*, pp. 275-291 [PDF available on Bb.]

- In-class presentation: Group 2
- In-class viewing: video examples referenced in Kennedy article
- Discuss readings & videos

Week 13—Social Media and the Challenges of Digital Activism

Readings:

- In-class presentation: Group 3
- Discuss readings & TED video
Week 14—Gaming and Transmedia

Readings:

- DUE: Practicum Report #3 (be prepared to discuss in class)
- In-class presentation: Group 4
- Get Final Exam study guide
- Discuss readings

Week 15—Global Media and the Digital Divide

Readings:

- In-class presentation: Group 5
- Discuss readings
- Final Exam review

FINAL EXAM WILL BE HELD IN OUR REGULAR CLASSROOM
Date:___________ at _______ a.m. / p.m.