

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
Communication and Media Studies (COMS) 401, Lecture L02
Historical and Critical roots of Transmedia in Germany
Spring 2017
Class dates/Lectures, days and times: May 1-21, 2017

Instructor: Kerry McArthur
Office Location: SS 307
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Office Hours: Upon request

Course Description

The course explores the evolving concept of transmedia, drawing on the 19th-century notion of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (the total work of art) to explain the contemporary phenomenon of media storyworlds unfolding collaboratively through producer/audience networks. Comparisons will be made between North American examples of transmedia and culturally idiosyncratic examples of this media form in Germany, with reference to German print media, film and television paradigms. Critical examination of transmedia in the North American and European contexts will reveal issues around story branding and fan cultures.

Additional Information

- The course takes a seminar format in which students lead the discussion and engage with the assigned readings.
- This is a reading-, viewing- and writing-intensive course.

Objectives of the Course

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the phenomenon of transmedia in a German context, with study of Berlin-based “total media” experiences and lectures/exercises with local practitioners and academics. By the end of the course, you will be:

- Knowledgeable about the social and media theory that informs the study of transmedia;
- Attuned to transmedia production and audience reception issues within the media industries in German and North American contexts;
- Equipped to read more deeply into debates, both public and personally observed, on the transmedia industry;
- Comfortable using academic, policy and media sources to present the results of your thinking and research.

Textbooks and readings

Required textbook: No required textbook, but a series of online scholarly articles from the University of Calgary library website (see *Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings* below).

Internet and electronic communication device/professionalism information

Cellphones will be silenced for the duration of the class. Laptops and tablets may be used *only* for taking notes.

When contacting the instructor by e-mail, use the tag “COMS 401” in your subject line.

Assignments and Evaluation

You will be graded on four components:

1. *Open book quiz* (15%): held in Berlin May 8, 2017
2. *In-class presentations* (20%): in Berlin, throughout
3. *Journal* (30%): weekly, in Berlin (May 6, 13 and 20, 2017)
4. *Research project* (35%): due Friday, June 30, 2017

1. *Open book quiz* (15%): Students will be quizzed on their knowledge and insights into the readings, the lecture and discussions of pre-session work for May 3, 2017.

2. *In-class presentations* (20%): Working in groups of three, students will present summaries of their assigned readings to the class (in Berlin). Groups will be responsible for preparing a Powerpoint slide deck with accompanying video/audio clips, then leading their classmates in a wrap-up discussion.

3. *Journal* (30%): Each student will keep a weekly journal (three complete entries) with reflections upon the readings/presentations and how these relate to experiences/tours in Berlin; due dates are May 6, 13 and 20, 2017.

4. *Research project* (35%): The research project due June 30, 2017 will challenge the student to compare and critique the theoretical models examined throughout the course, and to apply these to a transmedia project of his/her choice. The project will comprise a paper of 8 to 10 pages (not including the References section); students must discuss their selected topic with the instructor before proceeding to the research and writing stages.

Registrar-scheduled final examination: No

All assignments must be completed or a grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments: Please hand in your essays directly to your instructor or submit using Dropbox on D2L. Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. Including a version date in your file name may be helpful.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

- Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the University Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. If

you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. In this course, letter grades will be used for written assignments, while percentage grades will be used for exams and quizzes. The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the mid-point of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations**
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good—clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	00 - 49.99%	0%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calgary Police Service• Emergency Text Messaging• Emergency Evacuation & Assembly• Safewalk Program	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IT help line	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing Support Services• Student Services Mobile App	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Faculty of Arts Reps• Student Ombudsman	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds

<p>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	<p>403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</p> <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>
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Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

May 3, 2017: Pre-session seminar in Calgary, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Readings:

- Jenkins, H. (2007, March 22). Transmedia storytelling 101. (Web log article). Retrieved from http://henryjenkins.org/2007/03/transmedia_storytelling_101.html
- Jenkins, H. (1992). "Get a life!": Fans, poachers, nomads. In *Textual poachers: television fans & participatory culture*. New York, NY: Routledge. (Online book available through University of Calgary library)
- Wagner, R. (1895). *The Art-Work of the Future*. The Wagner Library, Edition 1. Available at: <http://users.skynet.be/johndeere/wlpdf/wlpr0062.pdf>

May 7, 2017: Visit to Deutsche Kinemathek, Potsdamer Platz: 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Viewing: *Aguirre, the Wrath of God*, with seminar: 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.

Reading:

- Rossol, N. (2010). Performing the Nation: Sports, Spectacles, and Aesthetics in Germany, 1926-1936. *Central European History*, 43(4), pp. 616-638.

May 8, 2017: Seminar in apartment and open-book quiz: 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Two student group presentations on readings

Readings:

- Kidd, J. (2014). The Transmedia Museum. *Museums in the New Mediascape*, Chapter 1, 23-40. (Chapter from online book in UofC library)
- Ibrus, I. & Ojamaa, M. (2014). What Is the Cultural Function and Value of European Trans-media Independents?, *International Journal of Communication*, 8, pp. 2283–2300.

May 10, 2017: Seminar in apartment: 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Two student group presentations on readings

Readings:

- Ghellal, S., Morrison, A., Hassenzahl, M., Schaufler, B. (2014). The remediation of Nosferatu: Exploring transmedia experiences. *Proceedings of the 2014 conference on designing interactive systems*, pp. 617-626.
- Clarke, M.J. (2014). Branded Worlds and Contracting Galaxies: The Case of Star Wars Galaxies, *Games and Culture*, 9(3), pp. 203-224.

May 11, 2017: One student group presentation on reading, 7:00 to 7:45 p.m.
 Guest lecture from Dr. Woitek Konzal, 7:45 to 9:00 p.m.

Reading:

- Drechsel, B. (2010). The Berlin Wall from a visual perspective: comments on the construction of a political media icon, *Visual Communication*, pp. 3-24.

May 12, 2017: Seminar in apartment, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
 Two student group presentations on readings

Readings:

- Whalen, T. (Spring 2000). Review: Run Lola Run. *Film Quarterly*, 53(3), pp. 33-40.
- Thomas, B. (2011). What is fan fiction, and why are people saying such nice things about it?, *StoryWorlds: A journal of narrative studies*, 3, pp. 1-24.

May 14, 2017: Seminar in apartment, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.
 One student group presentation on reading

Reading:

- Nesselhauf, J. & Schleich, M. (2015). A Stream of Medial Consciousness. Transmedia Storytelling in Contemporary German Quality Television, Special Issue *Media Convergence and Transmedial Worlds* (Part 2), 21, pp. 50-62.

May 15, 2017: Morning tour of Hackesche Höfe, with trip to Neurotitan Shop & Gallery at Rosenthaler Str. 39: 9:00 to noon

May 20, 2017: Tutorials in instructor's apartment: 8:00 a.m. to noon