

HUMA5452

POLITICS OF FAN CULTURE STUDIES

Fall 2024

Friday, 9:00 – 11:50pm

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Baryon Tensor Posadas

Room 2355

Office Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Scholarship on fan cultures often revolves around discussions of the new modes of interactivity enabled by the emergence of transnational communities of consumption and transmedia storytelling. The most salient characteristics ascribed to transmedia narratives are the tendencies towards presenting total immersive worlds that exceed the capability of a singular text to explore on its own, thus developing across multiple media platforms as new iterations offer further expansions and developments. Because transmedia stories take on a decentralized structure without a principal text and with the totality of its narrative universe extending beyond any single text within it, any act of interpretation demands the active participation of the audience in reconstructing a world out of a multiplicity of texts. But if the techniques of world-building are indeed at the heart of the practices of fan culture, an argument can be made that this manifests not only in the act of constructing imagined worlds within fictional narratives stories, but in the formation of fan community itself as a world, as a site of social relations, as a latent social collective engaged in the practice of the imagination of worlds.

Conversely, a parallel trajectory can be observed in the recent scholarship on the new modalities of social movements, which have observed the significant shifts in tactics and transformations in organizational structures in response to the emergence of new technologies of communication, mediation, and surveillance. Under the conditions of communicative capitalism, social movements now seemingly engage with what may be characterized as practices akin to fan cultures in their interpretative techniques, and participatory practices.

This course explores these issues by taking up the theories, debates, and challenges surrounding the study of media theories of fan culture as a site of political engagement. Its central problematic is the question of how new media forms and technologies engender practices of spectatorship and consumption and how these practices mediate new forms of political activities. Topics of discussion will include spectatorial practice between cinema and animation, media convergence and participatory culture, intersections of gender/sexuality and fan practice, fan work as immaterial labor, politics of world-making, etc.

This course is completely online in a synchronous format. The course will meet online at the scheduled times via Zoom.

COURSE EVALUATION

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| Attendance and participation | 20% |
| Weekly responses (x10) | 50% |
| Conference Presentation | 20% |
| Final paper | 30% |

Attendance and Participation

Attendance to class sessions and active participation in the discussions are mandatory. Please come to class having already read materials assigned for that session and be prepared to critically discuss them in class.

Weekly Responses

Every week, students are required to electronically circulate a short response to be posted on the discussion board of the course website. In these responses, students are asked to identify a key passage or paragraph from one of the assigned readings and articulate its significance to the larger ongoing discussions taking place in class. Upon setting up the concepts and arguments from this passage, students are then asked to take it up as a point of departure to formulate a discussion question, with the goal of provoking further conversation in mind. These should go beyond simple factual questions to instead raise open-ended issues that get at the larger critical context of the reading's discussion, the stakes of its claims and contentions, potential implications and applications, etc.

(Due on the Thursdays before class sessions by 12:00 midnight)

Final Paper

Using one or more texts or cultural event as a focal point, produce an analysis of the politics of media consumption and fan cultural practices. Topics can include (but are not restricted to) any of the themes discussed in class, e.g., participatory practices, intersections of race and gender in fan cultural practices, orientalism and the fandom surrounding "Japan," the limits of fan culture as a site of political engagement, etc. Papers should be rigorously documented and well-organized. While students are expected to make use of the relevant theoretical and critical materials covered in class, the specific focus of the paper is for the student to determine in consultation with the instructor.

Final papers should be between 2000-2500 words (6-8 pages) in length for undergraduate students and 5000-6000 words (16-20 pages) for graduate students.

(Due Dec 21st)

SCHEDULE

Week 1 Introduction

Sep 6 Orientation

Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, Translated by Edmund Jephcott, Stanford University Press, 2007, 94-136.

Hall, Stuart. "Encoding/Decoding." Simon During, ed. *The Cultural Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 1993. 90-103.

Jonathan Gray, Cornel Sandvoss, and C. Lee Harrington, "Why Study Fans?" in Jonathan Gray, Cornel Sandvoss, and C. Lee Harrington (eds.), *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World* (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

Daniel Cavicchi, "Foundational Discourses of Fandom" in Paul Booth (ed.), *A Companion of Media Fandom and Fan Studies* (New York: Wiley Blackwell, 2017).

Week 2 Participatory Culture

Sep 13 Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers* ("Get a Life!": Fans, Poachers, Nomads")

Jenkins, Henry. "Searching for the Origami Unicorn: *The Matrix* and Transmedia Storytelling." *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. NYU Press, 2006. 93-130.

Henry Jenkins, Mizuko Ito, and Danah Boyd, "Defining Participatory Culture," in *Participatory Culture in a Networked Era*, 2016, pp. 1-31.

Fiske, Jack. "The Cultural Economy of Fandom." In Lisa A. Lewis, ed. *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*. London: Routledge, 1992. 30-49

Week 3 Feminist Fan Studies

Sep 20 Matt Hills, "From Fan Doxa to Toxic Fan Practices," *Participations*, May 2018.

Suzanne Scott, "Interrogating the Fake Geek Fan Girl: The Spreadable Misogyny of Contemporary Fan Culture," *Fake Geek Girls: Fandom, Gender and the Contemporary Culture Industry* (New York: New York University Press, 2019).

Mel Stanfill, 2011, "Doing Fandom, (Mis)doing Whiteness: Heteronormativity, Racialization, and the Discursive Construction of Fandom," in Robin Anne Reid and

Daisuke Okabe and Kimi Ishida, "Making Fujoshi Identity Visible and Invisible," in Mizuko Ito, Daisuke Okabe and Izumi Tsuji (eds.), *Fandom Unbound: Otaku Culture in a Connected World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

Week 4 Performing Queer Fan Identities

Sep 27 Lothian, Alexis, Kristina Busse, and Robin Anne Reid. 2007. "'Yearning Void and Infinite Potential': Online Slash Fandom as Queer Female Space." *English Language Notes* 45 (2): 103-11.

Ng, Eve. 2017. "Between Text, Paratext, and Context: Queerbaiting and the Contemporary Media Landscape." *Transformative Works and Cultures* 24.

Kam, Lucetta Y. L. (2020) "Fandom—Transcultural Desires and Lesbian Fandom." In *Keywords in Queer Sinophone Studies*, edited by Howard Chiang and Alvin K. Wong, New York: Routledge. 132-152.

Zheng, X. (2024). Chinese media production and fandom between queerbaiting and "survival instincts". *Media, Culture & Society*, 0(0).

Week 5 Transnational Fan Culture

Oct 4 Koichi Iwabuchi, "Undoing Inter-National Fandom in the Age of Brand Nationalism," *Mechademia* 5, no. 1 (November 10, 2010): 87-96.

Lori Hitchcock Morimoto and Bertha Chin, "Reimagining the Imagined Community: Online Media Fandoms in the Age of Global Convergence"

Rukmini Pande, "Can't Stop the Signal: Online Media Fandom as Postcolonial Cyberspace," *Squee From the Margins: Fandom and Race* (Iowa City: University of

Iowa Press, 2019).

Mizuko Ito, "Contributors Versus Leechers: Fansubbing Ethics and a Hybrid Public Space," in Mizuko Ito, Daisuke Okabe and Izumi Tsuji (eds.), *Fandom Unbound: Otaku Culture in a Connected World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

Week 6 NO CLASS – Cheung Yeung Festival

Week 7 Japan

Oct 18 Eiji Ōtsuka, "World and Variation: The Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative," trans. Marc Steinberg, *Mechademia* 5 (2010): 99–116.

Marc Steinberg, "Character, World, Consumption." *Anime's Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan*. University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Azuma, Hiroki. Otaku: "The Otaku's Pseudo-Japan" & "Hyperflatness and Multiple Personality," *Japan's Database Animals*. [English ed.]. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

Stevie Suan, "Anime's Performativity: Diversity through Conventionality in a Global Media-Form," *Animation* 12, no. 1 (March 1, 2017): 62–79.

Week 8 East Asia

Oct 25 Li, Jingyi, "Danmaku: the Interface Affect of a Contact Zone." *Anime's Knowledge Cultures: Geek, Otaku, Zhai*. University of Minnesota Press, 2024.

Suan, Stevie, "Anime's Media Heterotopia," *Anime's Identity: Performativity and Form Beyond Japan*. University of Minnesota Press, 2021.

Cho, Michelle. "BTS for BLM: K-Pop, Race, and Transcultural Fandom." *Celebrity studies* 13.2 (2022): 270–279.

Miranda Ruth Larsen, "'But I'm a Foreigner Too': Otherness, Racial Oversimplification and Historical Amnesia in K-Pop Fandom," in Rukmini Pande (ed.), *Fandom, Now in Color: A Collection of Voices* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2020).

Week 9 Fan Labor

Nov 1 Terranova, Tiziana. "Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy." *Social Text*, vol. 18, no. 2 (63), June 2000, pp. 33–58.

Abigail De Kosnik, "Fandom as Free Labor," *Digital Labor: The Internet As Playground and Factory*, Trebor Scholz (ed.), Taylor & Francis Group (New York: Routledge, 2012)

He, W., Lin, L., & Fung, A. (2022). Online Fiction Writers, Labor, and Cultural Economy. *Global Media and China*, 7(2), 169–182.

LaMarre, Thomas. "Otaku Movement." *Japan After Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present*, ed. Tomiko Yoda and Harry Harootunian. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006, 358–94.

Week 10 Fan Activism

Nov 8 Henry Jenkins, "Art Happens not in Isolation, but in Community': The Collective Literacies of Media Fandom," *Cultural Science*, 2019.

Earl, Jennifer, and Katrina Kimport. "Movement Societies and Digital Protest: Fan Activism and Other Nonpolitical Protest Online." *Sociological Theory*, vol. 27, no. 3, Sept. 2009, pp. 220–43.

Pande, Rukmini. "Aang Still Ain't White: Postcolonial Praxis." *Squee from the Margins: Fandom and Race*. 1 edition, University of Iowa Press, 2018. 75-110.

Matt Hills, "Fan Cultures Between Community and 'Resistance'," *Fan Cultures*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Week 11 Network Cultures

Nov 15 Terranova, Tiziana. "Three Propositions on Informational Cultures." *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age*. Pluto Press, 2004. 6-38.

Parikka, Jussi, "Contagion and repetition: On the viral logic of network culture," *Ephemera*, 7:2 (2007), pp. 287–308.

Chun, Wendy Hui Kyong. "Scenes of Empowerment." *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics*. MIT Press, 2006. 129-170.

Nakamura, Lisa. "Alllookslike? Mediating Visual Cultures of Race on the Web." *Digitizing Race: Visual Cultures of the Internet*. U of Minnesota Press, 2007. 70-94.

Week 12 Multitude and/or Communicative Capitalism

Nov 22 Diane Penrod, "Writing and Rhetoric for a Ludic Democracy: YouTube, Fandom, and Participatory Pleasure," in Heather Urbanski ed., *Writing and the Digital Generation: Essays on New Media Rhetoric*, McFarland, 2010.

Hardt and Negri, "The Political Constitution of the Present," *Empire*. Harvard University Press, 2000.

Jodi Dean, "Introduction." *Democracy and other Neoliberal Fantasies*. Duke University Press, 2009.

Jodi Dean, "Affective Networks." *Blog Theory: Feedback and Capture in the Circuits of Drive*. Polity, 2010.

Week 13 Conference Presentations

Nov 29 Conference Presentations