

CHINESE 5194: MEDIA EAST ASIA

Theory, Archive, History



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Time & place: WF 2:20-3:40, Hagerty 0071
OH: WF 1:20-2:20, Hagerty 366

Course Description:

This discussion and research based course introduces key concepts in media studies, including environmental media, media ecology, affect, emerging media, and media archaeology, by considering how media scholars of East Asia interact with archives and objects. By pairing texts with collections that subtend their arguments, we will learn how archives and archival methodologies allow us to navigate the tricky terrain of “Western theory” and “non-Western media history.” We will examine some of the most vibrant and understudied mediascapes of the past century, focusing primarily on Chinese-speaking regions, but recasting Chinese scholarship in comparative perspective to understand East Asia as a transnational media space. The affective resonances of early Chinese cinema and the “hot noise” of socialist film going, the audio infrastructure of Japanese empire, the transistorized sound ecology of the Taiwan Straits, Cold War weather experiments in the Pacific, human-machinic ensembles in the Tokyo subway, and the sand-time of particulate pollution in northern China are just some of the topics we will encounter. As we familiarize ourselves with cutting-edge scholarship in East Asian media studies, we will learn how media theory emerges from archival practice and critical historiography not as a (Western) grand narrative but as a diverse field of emerging, often competing, narratives. We will learn how to craft arguments about media aesthetics, how to write about the stakes of human-media entanglements, and how to understand the critical potential of theory in relation to the material histories of East Asian media and their archives.