

**FMST0505 Introduction to New Media:
Digital Culture and Performance in East Asian Popular Culture**
Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Areum Jeong

Email: areum.jeong@scupi.cn

Lecture: Wed 1:50 pm to 4:25 pm / Zone 4, Room 201

Office Hours: Mon and Thu 10 am-12 pm and by appointment / Zone 3, Room 320B

Course Description

How do we experience the all-too-pervasive and deeply immersive relationship between media, technology, and society? This course will address this question in the context of popular culture in East Asia, looking at how media culture(s) rapidly change and shift form through technological innovations and new modes of participation. We do this through three large frames of entry: performance, television, and the so-called new media – specifically the developing forms of storytelling and viewing/participating that evolved from television to current digital and social media. By paying attention to how we participate in such media landscape – performing in it ourselves – we will reflect on our roles as social agents and discuss how our performances are enacted, represented, and played out. We will cover topics such as how the K-pop industry has shifted to new media and technology, and how the audience’s performances have evolved through time. Looking at how users perform on platforms like Twitter and Weibo, we also look at how social media operate as “stages” where users become actors that perform individually, as a collective, and for one another. Looking at how identities are negotiated within these media cultures, often clashing between groups (as we will see in the transnational fandoms of K-pop), we will pay close attention to the performances and representations of identity – ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, sexuality – in weekly discussion-based lectures. Students will be asked to create their own media-based project through the course of the semester.

Course Objectives

- Students will understand the role of diverse media platforms in the rapidly changing landscape of cultural production and consumption.
- Students will understand how mass media and social media shaped the definitions, perceptions, and stereotypes of identities (ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, sexuality) and how minority groups and activists have sought to alter such (mis)representations.
- Students will identify the key concepts, debates, and theories pertinent to the cultural forms of television and new media from scholars in gender, media, performance, and race.
- Students will develop critical media literacies (analytical tools and vocabularies for articulating how difference and diversity are depicted and enacted in television and social media).
- Students will generate informed insights and opinions on television and new media, and synthesize findings into a blog and essay in a coherent and persuasive manner.

Course Assessment

Weekly Blackboard Forum Posts and Discussion Participation 30%

Group Presentation 20%
Individual Presentation 20%
Final Project 30%

Course Assignments and Requirements

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and active participation are mandatory for all students. Students are expected to arrive to lecture on time and remain until class is dismissed. Students are expected to come to lecture prepared, with assigned readings and any additional assignments completed. All readings will be available as links or PDFs and uploaded on the course webpage. Students are highly encouraged to print out the readings, make notes, and bring both the readings and notes to lecture.

Electronic devices—cell phones, e-readers, laptops, pagers, tablets, etc.—must be turned off during class except with special permission from the instructor. Classroom courtesy includes the full participation of every student. If you must leave the room during class, do so quietly and unobtrusively. Disruptive eating, sleeping, and unnecessary talking will not be permitted. Anyone found to be in violation of this policy will be asked to leave the classroom immediately.

Attendance is taken at each lecture. Note: you may miss two lectures with no grade penalty. After two free absences, each unexcused absence will bear a penalty of a third of a letter grade. It is the student's responsibility to make sure the instructor is able to note their attendance. In the case of absences, only documented medical emergencies and death of immediate family will be accepted.

Weekly Blackboard Forum Posts

Write a short (250-300 words) response to the week's prompt/question on Blackboard by 9 pm, the day before class. Each week's prompt/question will be posted on Blackboard as a new discussion forum, and you will be required to write and post your answer as a thread. See appendix for grading rubric.

Group Presentation

Present on a topic in relation to the course texts and prepare 2-3 questions to lead the discussion. An ideal presentation ties case studies into the course texts, provides visual resources (images, video, etc.), and opens up deeper questions to the entire class to think together on. For your presentation case study/topic, you will introduce a media platform from below:

Topic 1: Apple (smartphones, augmented/virtual reality, etc.)

Topic 2: Huawei or other commerce platforms (Big Data, Cloud, Internet of Things, etc.)

Topic 3: bilibili, iQIYI, TikTok or other streaming platforms (content creators, performing the self, etc.)

Topic 4: Weibo or other social media platforms (news distribution, activism and movement, etc.)

In addition, your group must submit a short essay (3 pages max, double-spaced, size 12, Times New Roman) that summarizes the presentation's key points, linking the observations to relevant themes or theoretical tools.

Individual Presentation and Final Project

Create a hashtag and/or selfie performance. Your performance should make an intervention on current issues or propose an ideal image.

You must submit your topic and main idea by Week 13. You are free to explore a topic of your choice, but all topics (and topic changes) must be approved by the instructor.

You must give a 5-10 minute presentation on your project in Week 15-16 and submit your final project in Week 17.

As part of your final submission, provide documentation of your performance process (images, screen grabs, etc.) and a short reflection paper (minimum 1500 words) in which you discuss your choice of media and performance as tools of engagement and intervention in that specific context. The evaluation of this work will be based on: 1) quality of the research and inquiry conducted in preparation for the project; 2) potential for the performance to grow, engage multiple audiences, and provide people with access to an effective form of activism; and 3) demonstrated critical awareness of the role and significance of performance and media in your activist piece.

You must submit the project in its required stages. Your grade will reflect the overall process as well as the final product. See appendix for grading rubric.

Use of Machine Translation and Other Online Writing and Language Tools

While students are encouraged to use dictionaries and other language resources, they should not rely on machine translators for large sections of text. Papers must be written in English. Any paper that is written in Chinese and then processed through an online translator will be considered unacceptable.

If an instructor believes that a paper was written using machine translation, the instructor reserves the right to ask the student to re-write (potentially with a different topic), or give an alternative assignment, which may include a timed-writing essay assignment. Until the re-write is submitted the student will have an F for the assignment.

Use of Non-English Sources

All non-English sources must be cited. The translation of non-English sources is equivalent to quoting. When using Chinese sources, use quotation marks to directly quote the sources and include the original text in brackets. For example:

Wang Chao in describing nanocarriers says, “Interaction between nanomaterials and organisms, especially Interaction between the Immunological Effect of Nanomaterials and the Immune System in vivo further clarification is needed to optimize the shape, physicochemical properties, size and surface of nanocarriers [纳米材料与生物机体内的相互作用，特别是纳米材料本身的免疫学效应与体内免疫系统的相互作用需要进一步阐明，优化纳米载体的形状、大小、表面、理化性质等]” (Wang 96).

Course Website

Assignment guidelines, lecture slides, supplemental handouts and information regarding academic writing and research, and the syllabus will be posted to the course website and/or emailed to students.

Additional readings and materials may be uploaded on a regular basis. Although these are not required reading, you may find them very useful in order to gain more in-depth understanding, which will be helpful for the writing of your papers. You will receive notifications when these additional resources are available, but it is your responsibility to check the course website on a regular basis. Students are also welcome to post thoughtful comments, ideas, and questions on the discussion thread. Please make sure that your e-mail address is up to date on the course website.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy

Students are expected to do their own work; this holds, in particular, for the writing assignments you have for the course. All assignments are expected to reflect the student’s careful research, original thinking, and writing. Plagiarism—the presentation or submission of work, in any form, that is not a student’s own, without acknowledgment of the sources—is a serious offense and can result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or dismissal. If you obtain ideas or information from an outside source, that source must be acknowledged. Citations must be provided for the content, ideas, or other materials that originate from other authors. Cheating will not be tolerated and those who do will receive a failing grade on the assignment or for the entire course.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to make reasonable changes to the assignments and schedule when deemed necessary and will offer advance notice.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (September 9) Introduction

Introduction to the course

Week 2 (September 16) Viewing Cultures, Audiences Perform I

Assigned reading: Nancy Wang Yuen, “Anti-Asian Racism Is Taking a Mental and Emotional Toll on Me,” <https://www.self.com/story/anti-asian-racism-coronavirus>

Week 3 (September 23) Viewing Cultures, Audiences Perform II

Assigned reading:

Zeng Yuli, "Making Sense of China's Deafening 'Fanquan' Echo Chambers,"

<http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1005350/making-sense-of-chinas-deafening-fanquan-echo-chambers>

Zhou Zihuan, "Life on the Edges of China's Livestreaming Boom,"

<http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1006104/life-on-the-edges-of-chinas-livestreaming-boom>

Week 4 (September 30) Social Media as Stage I

Assigned reading: Eileen Le Han, "Journalism and mnemonic practices in Chinese social media:

Remembering catastrophic events on Weibo,"

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698017714833>

Recommended reading: Sukjong Hong and Andrew Deck, "How K-pop fans mobilized globally to change Twitter's policy," <https://restofworld.org/2020/kpop-jonghyun-twitter-policy/>

Week 5 (October 7 → ?) Social Media as Stage II – Group Presentations**Week 6 (October 14) Gender on TV and Social Media**

Assigned reading:

Gladys Mac, "From Little Fresh Meat to Wolf Warriors: Understanding Chinese Masculinity in Pop Culture," <https://radiichina.com/chinese-masculinity-pop-culture/>

Sammy Tavassoli, "The Woes of the Flower-Boy Image,"

<https://confluence.gallatin.nyu.edu/context/first-year-writing-seminar/the-woes-of-the-flower-boy-image>

Recommended reading: Natalie Morin, "What K-Pop's Beautiful Men Can Teach Us About Masculinity,"

<https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/05/9674149/kpop-male-singers-masculinity>

Week 7 (October 21) Race on TV and Social Media

Assigned reading:

Elizabeth de Luna, "'They use our culture': the Black creative and fans holding K-pop accountable," https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/jul/20/k-pop-black-fans-creatives-industry-accountable-race?fbclid=IwAR09hB00GhVhNijcojUnW_qBeA-D6lUyrc2jhUoBcf2OjnBUe_5nMWJxyM

"Dear K-Pop, My Culture is Not Your Aesthetic," <https://yati.home.blog/2020/07/26/dear-k-pop-my-culture-is-not-your-aesthetic/>

Recommended reading: Nnehkai Agbor, "The Erasure of Black K-Pop Fans in the Wake of BLM & Activism," <http://kultscene.com/the-erasure-of-black-k-pop-fans-in-the-wake-of-blm-activism/>

Week 8 (October 28) How to do Things with Hashtags

Assigned reading:

Amanda Petrusich, "K-pop Fans Defuse Racist Hashtags,"

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/k-pop-fans-defuse-racist->

[hashtags?utm_source=facebook&utm_brand=tny&mbid=social_facebook&utm_social-type=owned&utm_medium=social](https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/06/05/1002781/kpop-fans-and-black-lives-matter/?utm_medium=tr_social&utm_campaign=site_visitor.unpaid.engagement&utm_source=Facebook-Echobox=1591394234)

Abby Ohlheiser, “How K-pop fans became celebrated online vigilantes,”

[https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/06/05/1002781/kpop-fans-and-black-lives-matter/?utm_medium=tr_social&utm_campaign=site_visitor.unpaid.engagement&utm_source=Facebook - Echobox=1591394234](https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/06/05/1002781/kpop-fans-and-black-lives-matter/?utm_medium=tr_social&utm_campaign=site_visitor.unpaid.engagement&utm_source=Facebook-Echobox=1591394234)

Kaitlyn Tiffany, “Why K-pop Fans Are No Longer Posting About K-pop,”

<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2020/06/twitter-k-pop-protest-black-lives-matter/612742/>

Recommended reading: Kushal Dev, “K-Pop Activism Must Go Further Than Fancams,”

<http://kultscene.com/k-pop-activism-must-go-further-than-fancams/>

Week 9 (November 4) Performing the Selfie

Assigned reading: Excerpts from Clare Sheehan, “The Selfie Protest: A Visual Analysis of Activism in the Digital Age”

Recommended reading: Zizi Papacharissi, “Without You, I’m Nothing: Performances of the Self on Twitter”

Week 10 (November 11) Transmedia Storytelling as World-Building: K-TV

Assigned reading: So-Rim Lee, “When Neoliberalism and Patriarchy Conspire: Plastic Surgery in the South Korean Reality TV Show *Let Me In*”

*** Virtual Q&A with Dr. So-Rim Lee

Week 11 (November 18) Transmedia Storytelling as World-Building: K-Film

Assigned viewing: *Gonjiam: Haunted Asylum* (2018)

Assigned reading: Areum Jeong, “Finding South Korean Found-Footage Horror: Bum-shik Jung on *Gonjiam: Haunted Asylum*,” <http://filmint.nu/finding-gonjiam-haunted/>

*** Virtual Q&A with Director Bum-shik Jung

Week 12 (November 25) Industry Insights

Assigned reading: Tamar Herman’s articles on *Billboard* and *Forbes*, etc.

*** Virtual Q&A with Ms. Tamar Herman

Week 13 (December 2) Beyond New Media: New Technology, #Fake News, and the Issues of Ethics and Media Literacy

TBA

Week 13 (December 2) Final Project Proposal Due

Week 14 (December 9) One-on-One Conference

Week 15 and 16 (December 16 and 23) Individual Presentations

Week 17 (December 30) Final Project due

Appendix

Grading Rubric for Blackboard Forum Posts

Excellent (3)

- Responds directly to the assignment, prompt, and/or question, and includes support material
- Appropriate length to develop a specific idea clearly and fully
- Logically sequenced, organized, well-structured sentences, written in formal language
- Contribution is analytical, original, and thoughtful
- Author makes clear, meaningful connections between ideas and shows understanding of the assignment and (prompt/question) course texts
- Free of grammatical/spelling errors
- Post was submitted before the deadline

Acceptable (2)

- Responds in some part but not directly to the assignment, prompt, and/or question
- Appropriate length, but idea developed is incomplete or vague
- Structure is present but organization of ideas is somewhat sporadic
- Shows evidence of study of the course texts and analytical thought, but analysis is not clearly presented or fully developed
- Some connections between ideas, but connections not clearly presented
- Some grammatical/spelling errors
- Post was submitted before the deadline

Unacceptable (1)

- Does not respond to the assignment, prompt, and/or question
- Short answer which does not develop an idea fully
- Lacks flow, organization, and/or structure
- Lacks depth or insight, does not express opinion clearly, and/or shows little understanding of the assignment (prompt/question) and/or course texts
- Written in informal language (using abbreviations or text lingo)
- Many grammatical errors and poor spelling
- Post was submitted after the deadline

Grading Rubric for Final Paper

A/A- – Above and beyond. This paper is well-written with an explicit thesis, points of support that are well-selected to advance the thesis, vivid detail, full development, a strong introduction and conclusion, clear and logical organization, and strong coherence and quote integration/selection and transitions. It should be generally free from contradicting or unrelated points, format/grammar/mechanics errors should be minor and not distracting, and the tone should be appropriate for the reader. This paper shows high engagement with the assignment and critical thought.

B+/B/B- – Solid. This paper contains a thesis that takes an identifiable position, with plausible supporting details and examples. It should be well organized, and format or grammar errors should be minor enough to not distract from the clarity of the paper. It should be generally free of contradicting points, it should show a clear attempt to fulfill the essay prompt, and the tone should be appropriate for the audience. This paper shows a solid attempt to engage with the assignment and is moving in the right direction. Often, it is a strong paper with one big thing holding it back.

C+/C/C- – Average. This paper contains a thesis with an identifiable position although it may be implicit or somewhat disconnected from the evidence. The reader may have to struggle to understand the argument. It may read as simplistic in style or rough/underdeveloped. It should nonetheless show a clear attempt to fulfill the paper prompt. It should be generally organized, and not appear written at the last minute. However, the paper may be less clear due to widespread grammatical, logical, or organizational mishaps, the argument might not follow the thesis or may contain contradictions, the points of support may be unrelated to the argument, or the tone may be inappropriate for the audience. Quotations will be present, but may not be integrated. Transitions may be lacking. Citation has been attempted, but may not follow MLA or Chicago format well.

D+/D/D- – Not passing. This paper must roughly focus on the prompt, with some attempt at maintaining focus, although it may be vague. However, it may have either an incoherent thesis or no thesis at all. Points do not connect with the thesis well. It may be too short/undeveloped to fulfill the prompt, or have such severe grammatical, logical, mechanical, or organizational problems that it is difficult to follow beyond a rough “general idea.” It may appear hastily written at the last minute, or may fail to fully follow the assignment prompt. There will still be some attempt to follow appropriate citation (otherwise it will fall into the “F” range), but it may be inconsistent, such as supplying only the author’s last name in an in-text citation without the page number.

F – To receive this score, the paper shows incoherence on all levels, with an obvious lack of attendance to the prompt. It does not read as a serious attempt at the assignment.

This syllabus is adapted from Dr. So-Rim Lee’s “Television and New Media” course and Dr. Marcela A. Fuentes’ “Performance and Activism in Digital Culture” course.