

SM5357: MEDIA AND HUMAN EXPERIENCES: ANXIETY, NOSTALGIA, AND TRANSCENDENCE

Effective Term
Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title
Media and Human Experiences: Anxiety, Nostalgia, and Transcendence

Subject Code
SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number
5357

Academic Unit
School of Creative Media (SM)

College/School
School of Creative Media (SM)

Course Duration
One Semester

Credit Units
3

Level
P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction
English

Medium of Assessment
English

Prerequisites
Nil

Precursors
Nil

Equivalent Courses
Nil

Exclusive Courses
Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course explores how diverse forms of media - from traditional to modern - represent, shape, and amplify fundamental dimensions of human existence. Drawing on interdisciplinary frameworks from philosophy, literature, sociology, cultural studies, and design, the course examines five key themes of human experiences: alienation, anxiety, repetition, memory & nostalgia, and transcendence. By addressing how media engages with these human experiences, the course investigates the interplay between theoretical concepts and media practices.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Analyze the representation of fundamental human experiences in various forms of media through interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks.		x	x	
2	Critically evaluate the strengths, limitations, and deviations of media representations from theoretical expectations.		x	x	
3	Synthesize insights from different media types to understand the evolving relationship between humans and media systems.		x	x	x
4	Develop a nuanced appreciation of the cultural and emotional significance of media in shaping human experiences.		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Present interdisciplinary theories and media analysis related to human experiences.	1, 2, 3, 4	
2	Discussion Sessions	Facilitate critical discussions on media representations and their theoretical implications.	1, 2, 4	
3	Media Analysis Projects	Students analyze specific media works to critique their portrayal of human experiences.	2, 3	

4	Collaborative Workshops	Group activities that encourage the synthesis of theoretical insights and media practices	3, 4	
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class Participation	1, 2	30	-	Yes
2	Group Project (mid-term progress)	1, 2, 3	10	-	Yes
3	Group Project (Final group output)	1, 2, 3, 4	30	-	Yes
4	Individual Essay	1, 2, 3, 4	30	-	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Class Participation (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organized participation with their own argument and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self-initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

- Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative
- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize

Good

(B+, B, B-)

- Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter
- Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition
- Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

- Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter
- Fair organization, weak structure and composition
- Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management

Marginal

(D)

- Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter
- No organization, structure or/and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management

Failure

(F)

Students may fail if they lack coherent arguments, evidence from readings, or self-initiative for research. Failure can also result from poorly coordinated presentations, a lack of teamwork, or an inability to relate theories to individual experiences. It takes creative thinking to reach the discovery threshold. Failing to do so suggests a lack of effort in examining novel perspectives and applying knowledge effectively.

Assessment Task

Group Project (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

The criterion evaluates the aesthetic quality and theoretical application in media representation. It assesses the project's ability to evoke emotions, explore and apply aesthetic principles, and provoke thought about the creative process.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

- Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of aesthetics of media representation
- Excellent appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetics of media representation
- Work raises questions and instill insights about the process of conception, creative strategization and production in the aesthetics of media representation

Good

(B+, B, B-)

- Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetics of media representation
- Ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration regarding the aesthetics of media representation

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

- Basic appreciation and/or application of the aesthetics of media representation
- Limited ability to create project/ work that demonstrate an understanding of the aesthetics of media representation

Marginal

(D)

- Marginal appreciation of the aesthetics of media representation
- Marginal ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration regarding the aesthetics of media representation

Failure

(F)

- No appreciation of the aesthetics of media representation
 - Fail to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration regarding the aesthetics of media representation
-

Assessment Task

Individual Essay (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

The criterion evaluates the depth of analysis in an individual essay. It assesses the understanding of research material, organization, thesis clarity, and critical analysis. Essays are rated from excellent to poor based on their grasp of concepts, structure, insightful interpretation, and the quality of the bibliography.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

- Excellent grasp of research material, able to explain key concepts, assumptions and debates
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative
- Insightful interpretation of the subject matter with distinct themes and thesis
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize
- Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
- Strong bibliography suggesting breadth and depth of coverage and informed insights

Good

(B+, B, B-)

- Firm grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts and assumptions
- Reasonable organization, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret opinions independently
- Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

- Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts
- Fair organization, weak structure, adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions
- Unorganized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Marginal

(D)

- Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts
- Poor organization and structure, weak content, limited use of resources
- Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions
- Insufficient and/or unorganized bibliography

Failure

(F)

- Poor grasp of materials
- No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources
- Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions
- Irrelevant bibliography

Assessment Task

Class Participation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organized participation with their own argument and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self-initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

- Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative
- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize

Good

(B+, B)

- Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter
- Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition
- Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management

Marginal

(B-, C+, C)

- Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter
- No organization, structure or/and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management

Failure

(F)

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Assessment Task

Group Project (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

The criterion evaluates the aesthetic quality and theoretical application in media representation. It assesses the project's ability to evoke emotions, explore and apply aesthetic principles, and provoke thought about the creative process.

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- Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of aesthetics of media representation
- Excellent appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetics of media representation
- Work raises questions and instill insights about the process of conception, creative strategization and production in the aesthetics of media representation

Good

(B+, B)

- Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetics of media representation
- Ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration regarding the aesthetics of media representation

Marginal

(B-, C+, C)

- Marginal appreciation of the aesthetics of media representation
- Marginal ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration regarding the aesthetics of media representation

Failure

(F)

- No appreciation of the aesthetics of media representation
 - Fail to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration regarding the aesthetics of media representation
-

Assessment Task

Individual Essay (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

The criterion evaluates the depth of analysis in an individual essay. It assesses the understanding of research material, organization, thesis clarity, and critical analysis. Essays are rated from excellent to poor based on their grasp of concepts, structure, insightful interpretation, and the quality of the bibliography.

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- Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret opinions independently
- Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Marginal

(B-, C+, C)

- Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts
- Poor organization and structure, weak content, limited use of resources
- Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions
- Insufficient and/or unorganized bibliography

Failure

(F)

- Poor grasp of materials
 - No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources
 - Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions
 - Irrelevant bibliography
-

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Media Representation, Human Experience, Interdisciplinary Insights, Alienation, Anxiety, Repetition, Memory, Nostalgia, Transcendence, Media Analysis, Modernity, Media Practices, Creative Technologies, Media Narratives, Identity and Agency, Modernity.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Bai, Y., Ocampo, J., Jin, G., Chen, S., Benet-Martinez, V., Monroy, M., Anderson, C., & Keltner, D. (2021). Awe, daily stress, and elevated life satisfaction. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 120(4), 837–860.
2	Boym, S. (2001). <i>The future of nostalgia</i> . Basic Books.
3	Camus, A. (1990). <i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i> (J. O'Brien, Trans.). Penguin Books.
4	Deleuze, G. (1994). <i>Difference and repetition</i> (P. Patton, Trans.). Columbia University Press. (Original work published 1968)
5	Ernst, M., Niederer, D., Werner, A. M., Czaja, S. J., Mikton, C., Ong, A. D., Rosen, T., Brähler, E., & Beutel, M. E. (2022). Loneliness before and during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review with meta-analysis. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 77(5), 660–677.
6	Fisher, M. (2012). What is hauntology?. <i>Film Quarterly</i> , 66(1), 16-24.
7	Foucault, M. (1988). <i>Technologies of the Self</i> . In <i>Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault</i> /Tavistock.
8	Han, B. C. (2015). <i>The burnout society</i> . Stanford University Press.
9	Han, B. C. (2017). <i>In the swarm: Digital prospects</i> (Vol. 3). MIT press.
10	Kierkegaard, S. (2014). <i>The concept of anxiety</i> (A. Hannay, Trans.). Liveright Publishing. (Original work published 1844)
11	Kierkegaard, S. (2009). <i>Repetition and philosophical crumbs</i> . Oxford University Press.
12	Marx, K. (2007). <i>Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844</i> . Dover Publications. (Original work published 1844)
13	McLuhan, M. (1994). <i>Understanding media: The extensions of man</i> . MIT press.
14	Sousanis, N. (2015). <i>Unflattening</i> . Harvard University Press.
15	Sturken, M. (1997). <i>Tangled memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS epidemic, and the politics of remembering</i> . University of California Press.
16	Stellar, J. E., Gordon, A. M., Piff, P. K., Cordaro, D., Anderson, C. L., Bai, Y., ... & Keltner, D. (2017). Self-transcendent emotions and their social functions: Compassion, gratitude, and awe bind us to others through prosociality. <i>Emotion Review</i> , 9(3), 200-207.
17	Xiang, B. (2021). Suspension: seeking agency for change in the hypermobile world. <i>Pacific Affairs</i> , 94(2), 233-250.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Camus, A. (1942). <i>The Stranger</i> . (L. V. Smith, Trans), Penguin Books.
2	Fromm, E. (2013). <i>To have or to be?</i> . A&C Black.
3	Haraway, D. (2013). A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century. In <i>The transgender studies reader</i> (pp. 103-118). Routledge.
4	Heidegger, M. (2010). <i>Being and time</i> (J. Stambaugh, Trans.). SUNY Press. (Original work published 1927)
5	McLuhan, M. (2011). <i>The Gutenberg galaxy</i> . University of Toronto Press. (Original work published 1962)
6	McQuire, S. (2017). <i>Geomedia: Networked cities and the future of public space</i> . John Wiley & Sons.