

Academic year 2018 - 2019

Visual Global (In)Security

IA099 - Autumn- 6 ECTS

Course Description

Radical shifts in the global media landscape are transforming international security. Videos posted on platforms like *Youtube* or *Facebook* can prompt international military interventions in a matter of days. Corporations and commercial interests fashion what we see and what we do online, enrolling us in forms of everyday, mundane militarism. And new mediums of circulation have amplified and transformed the voices of activists and artists and allowed their creations to reach larger audiences than ever before, transforming practices of memorialization surrounding violence, war and peace. This seminar explores these shifts in relation to global security at both theoretical and practical levels. We will discuss core social theoretical texts examining how culture, technology, society, and media intersect in complex and often troubling ways. We work with these theories in relation to concrete cases and a variety image genres. We focus on specific tools of visual analysis. We provide a grasp of visual global in-security.

> INSTRUCTOR(S)

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Radical shifts in the global media landscape are transforming international security. Videos posted on platforms like *Youtube* or *Facebook* can prompt international military interventions in a matter of days. Corporations and commercial interests fashion what we see and what we do online, enrolling us in forms of everyday, mundane militarism. And new mediums of circulation have amplified and transformed the voices of activists and artists and allowed their creations to reach larger audiences than ever before, transforming practices of memorialization surrounding violence, war and peace. This seminar explores these shifts in relation to global security at both theoretical and practical levels. We will discuss core social theoretical texts examining how culture, technology, society, and media intersect in complex and often troubling ways. We work with these theories in relation to concrete cases and a variety image genres. We focus on specific tools of visual analysis. We provide a grasp of visual global in-security.

Thematically, the seminar focuses on the circulation of visual images with a specific focus on humanitarian crises. We will explore how the production and circulation of different types of images are intertwined with the evolution of such crises and how their political status affects power relations between different actors. Three specific types of visibility will be focused on. First, ‘user-generated’ images created during humanitarian crises (war, mass migration, etc.). Second, marketing visuals focused on particular non-governmental, corporate, or other interactions with humanitarian crises. Third, cinematic visuals that explore the contours of crisis through fictional or documentary means. Each of these types of visibility will be explored practically and theoretically vis-à-vis their relation to the contemporary politics of global (in)security.

Through this course students will gain a deep grasp of the ways in which images, videos, art-works, and other visual forms are politically implicated in (growing) discourses of (in)security. Students will be introduced theoretically and practically to the ways in which shifting technological and media infrastructures are leading to the acceleration of the relevance of visual material to dictating social and political priorities, often at the expense of ‘facts,’ ‘information,’ or ‘truth.’ In doing so, students will gain a theoretical awareness of political problems of representing crisis in a new media environment. These insights will also be translated into practical lessons. Specifically, students will gain A) a grasp of some of the more technical tools involved in the new mediation of (in)security, problematize these tools, B) an understanding of the artifice involved in the political composition of marketing related to (in)security problematiques, and C) an appreciation for the multiple roles that the cinematic (and, by extension, the artistic) play in problematizing social and political discourses.

1. Class Practicalities

Teaching takes place Tuesdays 18:15-20:00 unless otherwise indicated.

2.1 Attendance

Regular attendance at the seminar is expected. Up to 3 absences per semester are acceptable, without justification (though that would be much appreciated!), after which 0.25 points will be removed from your final grade for unjustified further absences.

2.2 Preparation

Students are expected to come to class well prepared, having completed the required readings, and any other required material. More specifically, the following elements are key to this seminar:

Reading

Students are expected to complete all the compulsory readings for each session and come to class prepared to discuss the readings in depth. A list of recommended readings is also provided that students can peruse, and are particularly encouraged to do so where these overlap with the focus of their assignments.

Watching

Throughout the seminar, a series of film-screenings and other visual material will be organised. These materials will also be made available to students outside of class. Similarly to the assigned readings, students are expected to watch these materials and come to class prepared to discuss them.

Doing

The assignments set for this class demand a degree of practical engagement with the subject matter. Students will therefore be expected to ‘learn by doing’ and – most importantly – to reflect on

how engaging with visual practice affects their own learning processes and its production of knowledge. Experimenting with the possibilities that visual mediums afford will thus be central to how the class proceeds.

2. Assignments and Grading

Your grade is comprised of the following components:

- 30%: Exercises related to each section of course (3*10)
- 45%: Final Project Doing Visual Security (Individual)
- 25%: Workshop presentation (Group work, individual grades)

2.1 Class Exercises

Each of the three sections of the seminar are concluded with a short exercise that makes up 10% of the final grade. The deadlines for these exercises are listed below. The exercises are intended to assist students in developing ideas and skills relevant to their final project. Instructions for each of these exercises will be provided to students at the first class.

2.2 Final Project on 'Doing Visual Security'

The core assignment for the seminar involves students conceiving of, researching, 'doing,' and writing-up a final project on the broad theme of doing visual security in relation to humanitarian crisis. The project can be related to any of the core sections of the seminar, or move in a different direction (please discuss with us beforehand). The only requirement is that the project involves a practical element ('doing') that relates to visual security. Examples would include developing a humanitarian marketing campaign based on visual materials that might parody current efforts or explicate an alternative style that such campaigns might take-up to overcome their current political problems. Depending on the type and scope of the practical engagement undertaken, the final project should also be written-up in paper form. Here, students should describe the conceptual, political, and other rationales for their project, relate these to the broad themes of the course, and hence balance their practical engagement with a critical (theoretical) reflection.

Students are highly encouraged to work in groups of around 4 students for their final projects.

2.3 Workshop Presentation

The final class of the seminar will take a workshop format in which students present the ideas and preliminary findings underlying their final projects. Students will receive feedback on these presentations from the instructors and fellow students, prior to their submitting the final version of their project.

3. Course overview

Session	Theme
1 18.09.18	<p>Introduction: <i>The (Global) Politics of Local Images</i></p> <p><i>This session introduces the seminar, its core themes, and the three sections it is comprised of. We will explore the core problematiques underlying the contemporary visual representation of insecurity, both theoretically and vis-à-vis present-day humanitarian crises.</i></p>
	<p>Section 1: <i>Witnessing Humanitarian Crisis</i> [Jonathan Luke Austin]</p> <p><i>This section focuses on how the new technologically means through which humanitarian crisis is visually witnessed and mediated generates new global (in)security dynamics. It begins by focusing on how the dynamics of 'witnessing' crisis have shifted in recent years, largely due to technological shifts, so as to allow what seem to be 'first-hand' visual representations of conflict to circulate globally, without limit. Throughout the section we explore both the positive potentialities of these shifts in the mediation of crisis and politically problematize their typically overly-technical claims to capturing the 'reality' of conflict. Basic training in visual 'verification' and 'accreditation' will be given, but the focus of this training will be on demonstrating how such efforts not only fail to produce a 'truthful' representation of crisis, but also risk allowing for new forms of political domination to emerge.</i></p>
2 25.09.18	The New Digital Mediation of Suffering
3 02.10.18	Liberating/Polarizing: <i>The Politics of User Generated Images</i>
4 09.10.18	Analysing/Verifying: <i>The Technicalities of User Generated Images</i>
5 16.10.18	Silencing/Crediting: <i>Visual Political-Economies of (In)Security</i>
	<i>Assignment #1 Due 22.10.18</i>
	<p>Section 2: <i>Marketing Humanitarian Projects</i> [Anna Leander]</p> <p><i>In this section we continue the discussion focussing specifically on the significance of commercial dynamics in the witnessing, mediation and generation of new global (in-)security dynamics. We begin from a reflection on the centrality of commercial imagery for humanitarian operations and indeed for visual culture more generally. We proceed to focus on the imbrication of humanitarianism in affective visual economies, using the place of humanitarianism in celebrity culture as an example. We then proceed to look more closely at two specific processes that generate space for politics (and hence openness for agency and change) around these visual constructions of politics: the multifarious visual agencies (including those of the images themselves) and their distributed, decentralized circulation. The section also strives to provide a thick understanding of the processes involved by linking them to empirically grounded articles, guest-lectures, film screenings, and site visits.</i></p>
6 – 23.10.18	Humanitarian Project Marketing: <i>Branding Culture and Visual Language</i>
7 – 30.10.18	Humanitarian Project as Marketing: <i>Moral Economies of Affective Imaginaries</i>
8 – 06.11.18	Dissenting Humanitarian Projects: <i>Multitudes of Visual Agencies</i>
9 – 13.11.18	Distributed Humanitarian Marketing: <i>Mediations and Visual Circulation</i>
	<i>Assignment #2 Due 19.11.18</i>
	<p>Section 3 [Riccardo Bocco]</p>
10 – 20.11.18	RB
11 – 27.11.18	RB
12 – 04.12.18	RB
13 – 11.12.18	RB

	<i>Assignment #3 Due 17.11.18</i>
14 – 18.12.18	Collective Workshop
14 – 18.12.18	<i>Final Assignment Due 10.01.19</i>

SESSIONS & READINGS

SESSION 1 - September 18th

Introduction

1. Thrift, Nigel. (2011). "Lifeworld Inc—And What to Do about it," *Environment and Planning D*, 29 (1)

Section 1: *Witnessing Humanitarian Crisis*

Session 2 – September 25th

The New Digital Mediation of Suffering

1. Sontag, Susan. (2003). *Regarding the Pain of Others*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
2. Dijck, van Jose. (2009). "Users like you? Theorizing agency in user-generated content," *Media, Culture & Society* 31 (1), 41-58.
3. Ferraris, Maurizio. (2015). "Collective intentionality or documentality?" *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 41 (4-5).

Further Readings:

Adair, Bill., Filene, Benjamin. & Koloski, Laura. (2011). *Letting Go? Sharing historical authority in a user-generated world*, New York: Left Coast Press.

Ferraris, Maurizio. (2013). *Documentality*, New York: Fordham University Press.

Elaine, Scarry. (1985). *The Body in Pain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kilby, Jane. (2013). "The Visual Fix: The Seductive Beauty of Images of Violence," *European Journal of Social Theory* 16 (3), 326-341.

Mirzoeff, Nicholas. (2006). "Invisible Empire: Visual Culture, Embodied Spectacle, and Abu Ghraib," *Radical History Review* 95 (Spring), 21-44.

Andersen, Rune. & Moller, Frank. (2014). "Engaging the limits of visibility," *Security Dialogue* 44 (3).

Session 3 – October 2nd (** Followed by film screening 20:00-21:30 **)

Liberating/Polarizing:

The Politics of User Generated Images

1. Hermida, Alberto. (2016). "Twitter and video activism as tools for counter-surveillance: the case of social protests in Spain," *Information, Communication and Society* 21 (3).
2. Tomkiw, Lydia. (2019). "For Ukraine's Wartime Fact-Checkers, the Battle Rages On," *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2018.
3. Chesney, Robert. And Citron, Danielle. (2018). "Deep Fakes: A Looming Crisis for National Security, Democracy, and Privacy?" *Lawfare*.
4. Pantti, Mervi. (2013). "Seeing and not seeing the Syrian crisis: New visibility and the visual framing of the Syrian conflict in seven newspapers and their online editions," *Journalism, Media, and Culture Studies*.

Further Readings:

Bratich, Jack. (2011). "User-Generated Discontent: Convergence, Polemology, and Dissent," *Cultural Studies* 25 (4-5).

Gregory, Sam. And Losh, Elizabeth. (2012). "Remixing human rights: Rethinking civic expression, representation and personal security in online video," *First Monday* 17 (8).

Horsti, Karina. (2016). "Communicative memory of irregular migration: The re-circulation of news images on YouTube," *Memory Studies* 10 (2).

Della Ratta, Donatella (2017). "Expanded places: Redefining Media Production in the Age of Networked Violence", *International Journal of Cultural Studies*.

Appelt, Nicolas. (2016). "Ziad Kalthoum ou le parcours du combattant : le cinéma syrien d'après mars-2011," *Confluences Méditerranée* 4 (99).

Session 4 – October 9th

Analysing/Verifying:

The Technicalities of User Generated Images

1. Silverman, Craig. *Verification Handbook*, Brussels: European Journalism Center. *Chapters 1-5*.
2. Toler, Aric. (2017). "Advanced Guide on Verifying Video Content," *Bellingcat*. Available at: <https://wp.me/p6D4OD-3RX>
3. Bellingcat. (2015). "Geolocating the Location Where the Syrian "Caesar" Photographs Were Taken," *Bellingcat*, Available at: <https://wp.me/s6D4OD-3062>
4. Higgins, Elliot. (2014). "The Process Of Video Verification – Rabaa, Egypt, August 14th 2013," *Bellingcat*, Available at: <https://wp.me/p6D4OD-c0>

Session 5 – October 16th

Silencing/Crediting:

Visual Political-Economies of (In)Security

1. Aradau, Claudia. And Huysmans, Jef. (2019). "Assembling Credibility," *Security Dialogue* 50 (1).

2. Calvino, Italo. (2000). *The Path to the Nest of Spiders*. New York: Ecco. *Preface to the Nest of Spiders*, pp. 3-21.
3. Ffrench, Patrick. (2005). "The Memory of the Image in Chris Marker's *La Jetee*", *French Studies* LIX (1): 31-37.
4. Paglen, Trevor. (2010). *Invisible: Covert Operations and Classified Landscapes*. New York: Aperture.

Further Readings:

Serres, Michel. *Angels: A Modern Myth*, London: Flammarion.

Campbell, David. (2014) The Integrity of the Image. Report of the World Press Photo Academy, available at: <https://goo.gl/iPHpsr>.

van der Velden, Loncke. (2015). "Forensic Devices for Activism: Metadata Tracking and Public Proof," *Big Data & Society* 2 (20).

Kunstmann, Ari, and Rebecca Stein. (2015) *Digital Militarism: Israel's Occupation in the Social Media Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Aistrophe, Tim. And Bleiker, Roland. (2018). "Conspiracy and foreign policy," *Security Dialogue* 49 (3).

Marasco, Robyn. (2016). "Towards a Critique of Conspiratorial Reason," *Constellations* 23 (2): 236-243.

Section 2: Marketing Humanitarian Projects

SESSION 6 – October 23rd (** Followed by film screening 20:00-21:30 **)

Marketing Humanitarian Projects

Branding Culture and Visual Languages

1. Arvidsson, Adam. (2006) *Brands: Meaning and Value in Media Culture*. London and New York: Routledge (chap. 1).
2. Vestergaard, Anne. (2008) Humanitarian Branding and the Media: The Case of Amnesty International. *Journal of language and politics* 7:471-93.
3. Perugini, Nicola, and Francesco Zuconi. (2017) Enjoy Poverty: Humanitarianism and the Testimonial Function of Images. *Visual Studies* 32:24-32 (see also <http://renzomartens.com/news>).

Further Readings:

Campbell, David. (2007) Geopolitics and Visuality: Sighting the Darfur Conflict. *Political Geography* 26:357-82.

Chisholm, Amanda. (2014) Marketing the Gurkha Security Package: Colonial Histories and Neoliberal Economies of Private Security. *Security Dialogue* 45:349-72.

Der Derian, James. (2009) *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network*. New York: Routledge.

Drezner, Daniel W. (2007) Foreign Policy Goes Glam. *The national interest* (92):22-28.

- Gregory, Sam. (2012) Kony 2012 through a Prism of Video Advocacy. Practices and Trends. *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 4:462-68.
- Grove, Nicole Sunday. (2017) Weapons of Mass Participation: Social Media, Violence Entrepreneurs, and the Politics of Crowdfunding for War. *European Journal of International Relations*.
- Iazzolino, Gianluca, and Nicole Stremlau. (2017) New Media and Governance in Conflict. *Third World Quarterly* 38:2242-57.
- Joachim, Jutta, and Andrea Schneider. (2017) Humanitarian Ngos as Businesses and Managers: Theoretical Reflection on an Under-Explored Phenomenon. *International Studies Perspectives* 19:170-87.
- Lenoir, Timothy. (2000) All but War Is Simulation: The Military-Entertainment Complex. *Configurations* 8:289-335.
- Schuetze, Benjamin. (2017) Simulating, Marketing, and Playing War: US–Jordanian Military Collaboration and the Politics of Commercial Security. *Security Dialogue* 48:431-50.
- Stahl, Roger. (2009) *Militainment, Inc.: War, Media, and Popular Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Weber, Cynthia. (2008) Popular Visual Language as Global Communication: The Remediation of United Airlines Flight 93. *Review of International Studies* 34:137-53.

SESSION 7 – October 30th (** Followed by film screening 20:00-21:30 **)

Humanitarian Project as Marketing

Moral Economies of Affective Imaginaries

1. Brighenti, Andrea. (2007) Visibility. A Category for the Social Sciences. *Current Sociology* LV:323-42.
2. Richey, Lisa Ann, and Lene Bull Christiansen. (2018) Afropolitanism, Celebrity Politics, and Iconic Imaginations of North–South Relations. *African Affairs* 117:238-60.
3. Day, Sophie, and Lury, Celia. (2017) New Technologies of the Observer: #Bringback, Visualization and Disappearance. *Theory, Culture & Society* 34 (7-8):51-74.

Further Readings:

- Biccum, April R. (2016) What Might Celebrity Humanitarianism Have to Do with Empire? *Third World Quarterly* 37:998-1015.
- Brighenti, Andrea Mubi. (2015) Nathalie Heinich, "De La Visibilité. Excellence Et Singularité En Régime Médiatique". Paris: Gallimard, 2012, 593 Pp. *Sociologica* 9:0-0 (<https://www.rivisteweb.it/doi/10.2383/82486>) OR better of course the book :-).
- Brockington, Dan. (2014) The Production and Construction of Celebrity Advocacy in International Development. *Third World Quarterly* 35:88-108.
- Budabin, Alexandra Cosima, Louise Mubanda Rasmussen, and Lisa Ann Richey. (2017) Celebrity-Led Development Organisations: The Legitimizing Function of Elite Engagement. *Third World Quarterly* 38:1952-72.
- Chouliaraki, Lilie. (2012) The Theatricality of Humanitarianism: A Critique of Celebrity Advocacy. *Communication and critical/cultural studies* 9:1-21.
- Hood, Johanna. (2015) Peng Liyuan's Humanitarianism: Morality, Politics and Eyeing the Present and Past. *Celebrity Studies* 6:414-29.
- Härting, Heike. (2013) Foreign Encounters: The Political and Visual Aesthetics of Humanitarianism in Contemporary Canadian Film Culture. pp. 331-52: University of Toronto Press.
- Mostafanezhad, Mary. (2017) Celebrity Humanitarianism and the Popular Geopolitics of Hope Along the Thai–Burma Border. *Political Geography* 58:67-76.
- Ponte, Stefano, and Lisa Ann Richey. (2014) Buying into Development? Brand Aid Forms of Cause-Related Marketing. *Third World Quarterly* 35:65-87.

Richey, Lisa Ann. (2015) *Celebrity Humanitarianism and North-South Relations: Politics, Place and Power*. Routledge.

SESSION 8 – November 6th (** Related Guest Lecture, ICRC, Time/location TBC**)

Dissenting Humanitarian Projects

Multitudes of Visual Agencies

1. Mitchell, W.J.T. (2011) *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to the Present*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Chap. 7.
2. Chouliaraki, Lilie. (2010) Post-Humanitarianism: Humanitarian Communication Beyond a Politics of Pity. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 13:107-26.
3. Van House, Nancy A. (2011) Personal Photography, Digital Technologies and the Uses of the Visual. *Visual Studies* 26 (2):125-34.

Further readings:

- Brownlee, Billie Jeanne. (2017) Media Development in Syria: The Janus-Faced Nature of Foreign Aid Assistance. *Third World Quarterly* 38:2276-94.
- Chouliaraki, Lilie. (2010) Self-Mediation: New Media and Citizenship. *Critical Discourse Studies* 7:227-32.
- Chouliaraki, Lilie. (2012) Re-Meditation, Inter-Mediation, Trans-Mediation. *Journalism Studies* 14:267-83.
- Goldman, Robert, and Stephen Papson. (1996) *Sign Wars: The Cluttered Landscape of Advertising*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Hoskins, Andrew, and Ben O'Loughlin. (2011) Remediating Jihad for Western News Audiences: The Renewal of Gatekeeping? *Journalism* 12:199-216.
- Hutchison, Emma. (2014) A Global Politics of Pity? Disaster Imagery and the Emotional Construction of Solidarity after the 2004 Asian Tsunami. *International Political Sociology* 8:1-19.
- Jenkins, Henry. (2007) *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press.
- Mortensen, Mette, and Hans-Jörg Trenz. (2016) Media Morality and Visual Icons in the Age of Social Media: Alan Kurdi and the Emergence of an Impromptu Public of Moral Spectatorship. *Javnost - The Public* 23:343-62.
- O'Loughlin, Ben. (2011) Images as Weapons of War: Representation, Mediation and Interpretation. *Review of International Studies* 37:71-91.
- Tomiak, Kerstin. (2018) Humanitarian Interventions and the Media: Broadcasting against Ethnic Hate. *Third World Quarterly* 39:454-70.

SESSION 9 – November 13th (** Related Visit to *Art for the World* project, Time/location TBC**)

Distributed Humanitarian Marketing

Mediations and Visual Circulation

1. Ingold, Tim. (2017) Surface Visions. *Theory, Culture & Society* 34:99-108.
2. Della Ratta, Donatella. (2017) *The Unbearable Lightness of the Image*. *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 10:109-32.
3. Givoni, Michal. (2016) Between Micro Mappers and Missing Maps: Digital Humanitarianism and the Politics of Material Participation in Disaster Response. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34 (6):1025-43.

Further readings

Crone, Manni. (2014) Religion and Violence: Governing Muslim Militancy through Aesthetic Assemblages. *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 43:291-307.

Favero, Paolo. (2014) Learning to Look Beyond the Frame: Reflections on the Changing Meaning of Images in the Age of Digital Media Practices. *Visual Studies* 29:166-79.

Förster, Till. (2018) Mirror Images: Mediated Sociality and the Presence of the Future. *Visual Studies* 33:84-97.

Givoni, Michal. (2016) Between Micro Mappers and Missing Maps: Digital Humanitarianism and the Politics of Material Participation in Disaster Response. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34:1025-43.

Khamis, Susie, Lawrence Ang, and Raymond Welling. (2017) Self-Branding, 'Micro-Celebrity' and the Rise of Social Media Influencers. *Celebrity Studies* 8:191-208.

Iqani, Mehita, and Jonathan E. Schroeder. (2016) #Selfie: Digital Self-Portraits as Commodity Form and Consumption Practice. *Consumption Markets & Culture* 19:405-15.

Singer, Brooke. (2016) A Chronology of Tactics: Art Tackles Big Data and the Environment. *Big Data & Society* 3:2053951716665869.

Section 3: TBC

SESSION 10 – November 20th

SESSION 11 – November 27th

SESSION 12 – December 4th

SESSION 13 – December 11th

SESSION 14 - December 18th

Workshop