

**ACTIVE AUDIENCES, CONFLICTS, CONVERGENCES**Mafalda Stasi

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**Workshop Objectives:**

This workshop will analyse how various modes of media audience reception are creating conflicts and convergences within the system. Are we going towards a digital media model where producers and consumers harmoniously converge as "prosumers"? Will centripetal forces and irreconcilable differences going to prevail? Or will different outcomes co-exist in specific contexts?

Through a series of case studies, students will investigate concretely how audience reception and interaction with media can take place and shape.

The instructor will provide key methodological tools and theoretical references, linked with the main disciplines of Sciences-Po, especially Communications, Media Studies, Anthropology, Ethnology and Sociology.

**Teaching Method:**

Students are expected to actively and creatively participate in this workshop as follows:

- Brief lectures by the teacher or by invited guest speakers, usually aimed at introducing or structuring class activities, and summarising appropriate source materials
- In-class presentations based on critical engagement and independent research, expanding on various themes, analysing case studies, or reporting on key reading materials (10 minutes/presentation, individually or in pairs)
- Teacher's feedback, comments and coaching on presentations

**Student Workload:**

Students are expected to conduct the vast majority of their work in class. Homework will be limited to preparing presentations and writing a final paper. Selected supplementary material and handouts will be optional. It will be possible to provide such materials in digital form, either as text files, or as downloadable video or audio files (for ease of fruition).

**Evaluation:**

Students will be provided with a detailed explanation of evaluation criteria to ensure maximum fairness, equanimity and objectivity. The criteria will follow these guidelines:

- 40% Written final research paper or other textual product on a topic of choice (TBD with the teacher) Under normal circumstances, late final papers will not be accepted
- 40% in-class presentation work
- 10% attendance, participation, preparedness and punctuality (i.e. + or - 2 points)

**Language:**

All the readings, presentations, and discussions will be in English

## Workshop Syllabus:

### 1. Introduction:

- Explain workshop objectives, methods and evaluation criteria (15')
- Provide an overview of the main concepts such as active audiences, conflicts, convergences (60')
- Provide syllabus/course calendar for the whole year (15')
- Sign up for case study presentation topics and dates (15')
  - Public virtual places:
    - Interest groups vs. subject-neutral hangouts
  - Music:
    - From Napster to Pirate Bay: information wants to be free
  - Literary remixes:
    - Official literary spin-offs: *The Wind Done Gone*, *Coming Through the Rye*
    - *Labours of love*: fan fiction
  - Video:
    - Remixing and repurposing existing media material: songvids
    - What do families want? The YouTube home video genre
    - *Stormtroopers*, *Raiders The Adaptation*, *The Hunt for Gollum*
  - Videogames:
    - Freedom: narration or ludology?
    - Gaming Seriously: appropriating the Sims, SecondLife, RPGs
  - Software:
    - The philosophy of open source
  - Archives and encyclopaedias:
    - Collective worldviews: Wikipedia, Gutenberg & Librivox project, text archives
  - Phones and other mobile devices:
    - Twitterature
    - Text message novels in China
  - Political and countercultural applications:
    - Obama's use of Web 2.0,
    - Twitter in Iran
    - Persepolis 2.0
    - grassroots Internet radio and TV (back to the 70s)
- Complete self-presentation forms (15')

### Active audiences: Refuting Passivity

### 2. What are the main media reception models?

The Emergence of "prosumers": when producers and consumers overlap  
Repurposing the information jungle, or media effects?  
Transformative Works and Cultures  
Affordances and constraints

### 3. Convergence, divergence or both?

Points of view:

- Sociology, ethnography, cultural anthropology
- Communications, Media Studies and textual rhetoric
- Audience theories (postcolonial, performance, gender studies)

*Case study: Public virtual places (interest groups vs. subject-neutral hangouts)*

### 4. Prosumers and Economics

Positioning emerging active audience behaviour in front of the law:

- Intellectual Property and Copyright
- Non-commercial uses and Creative Commons licenses
- Branding and franchising prosumers

*Case study: Music (from Napster to Pirate Bay)*

## 5. Prosumers and the Law

Understanding the economical dimension of emerging active audience behaviour:

- Tangible vs. non-tangible goods
- Rival vs. non-rival goods
- Market, gift and Tupperware economies

*Case study: Literary remixes*

[Final Paper assigned](#)

[Guest speaker TBD](#)

## Refuting the Amateur/Professional Divide

### 6. Make your own movie

Increasingly affordable technologies give people the tools to produce their own videos. What is the range of scopes, objectives and ambitions?

*Case study: Video*

### 7. Create your own adventure

Videogames make for the biggest entertainment industry. But whose industry is it?

*Case study: Videogames*

### 8. Write your own software

What are the impulses creating, supporting and spreading the Open Source movement?

*Case study: Software*

[Final Paper: table of contents and executive summary due](#)

[Guest speaker TBD](#)

## Expressing New Philosophies and Politics: Praxis

### 9. World creation, world view, world preservation

Which knowledge systems and taxonomies are being collectively created, preserved, or erased?

*Case study: Archives and encyclopaedias*

### 10. New media are the new message

Ever more rapid and mobile technologies create new forms of expression

*Case study: Phones and other mobile devices*

### 11. Brave New World: Yes we can

The praxis of political and countercultural direct audience action

*Case study: Political and countercultural applications*

[Final Paper due](#)

[Guest speaker TBD](#)

## Conclusions

### 12. Happy convergence, stubborn divergence, or both?

- Summing up trends in new media mutations
- Positioning them within an emerging socio-political, economic and legal framework
- Developing some provisional recommendations for future developments and actions

**Basic Bibliography:**

Goggin, Gerard and Christina Spurgeon. 2007. "Premium rate culture: the new business of mobile interactivity." In *New Media Society*. (9:5). 753-770.

Jaszi, Peter. 2008. "Copyright, Fair Use and Motion Pictures."  
[http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/files/pdf/fairuse\\_motionpictures.pdf](http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/files/pdf/fairuse_motionpictures.pdf)

Jenkins, Henry. 2006. *Convergence culture*. New York: New York Univ. Press.

Katyal, Sonia. 2006. "Performance, Property, and the Slashing of Gender in Fan Fiction." In *Journal of Gender, Social Policy & The Law* (14:3).

Taylor, Bryan C et al. 2002. "New Media and the Circuit of Cyber-Culture: Conceptualizing Napster." In *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, (46:4). 607-629.