

Tentative Course Outline (subject to revision)

HUMA 888/2-A, Fall 2013

"Distant Reading and Related Methods"

Thursday, 1:15pm to 3:30pm, MB 1.301

Darren Wershler

This course will introduce students to a range of contemporary critical and philosophical approaches whose focus is contextual and discursive rather than textual and hermeneutic. Franco Moretti's term "distant reading" might serve a convenient shorthand for this range of approaches, though we'll be looking at a wider range of texts than this term alone would suggest.

The course is designed to encourage students to think about culture in terms of a set of interrelated concepts: assemblages and networks, materiality, and circulation. Will Straw's article "The Circulatory Turn" provides an accessible overview of major texts dealing with these concepts, and a convincing narrative about the necessity of considering them in concert. Many of the texts we'll be looking at consider some or all of these concepts simultaneously, but they each have their particular strengths. The overall structure of the course, then, will itself be a survey that will provide students with enough information to pursue particular trajectories of their own devising later in their studies.

Program of Study (tentative)

Introduction

- The Circulatory Turn (Straw)

Discursive Analysis

- The Archaeology of Knowledge (Foucault)

Assemblages, Networks, Linkages

- Rhizomes (Deleuze & Guattari)

- Articulation Theory (Hall, Grossberg)

- Actor/Network Theory (Latour)

Things

- The Materialities of Communication (Gumbrecht, Kittler)

- Object-Oriented Ontology (Harman, Bogost)

- Media Archaeology (Parikka, Huhtamo)

Circulation

- Public Culture (Gaonkar and Povinelli, Lee and Li Puma)

Visualization

- Graphs, Maps and Trees (Moretti)

Conclusion

- The Critical Digital Humanities (Liu)