

## Capital Screens (Lee Grieveson)

I am interested in this class in exploring screen media *and* political economy in the neo-liberal era beginning in the 1970s and extending to the current mutations of neo-liberalism and new forms of fascism. I mean the *and* above principally in two ways: 1) as a history of the economies of screen media and related policy frameworks from the corporate reconstruction of Hollywood beginning in the 1970s to the emergence of new forms of digital networked media beginning in the 1990s and expanding thereafter when it becomes “social,” mobile and convergent across filmic, televisual, and computer screens. 2) as a history of the ways screen media has been shaped and used to facilitate and sustain the political and economic principles and practices of advanced, de-regulated, capital integral to the accelerated globalization and new imperialism of the neo-liberal era and culminating in the surveillance capitalism fundamental to digital media. Our explorations will include watching screen media and new media forms produced in the service of these agendas, as well as reading materials about screen media and global political economy (e.g. governmental policy documents shaping media ownership; the place of screen media in global trade agreements; the lobbying, economic plans, and records of corporate media entities from film studios to Google/YouTube.) *Capital Screens*, then, pursues a genealogy of our current configuration of media and political economy, focusing in particular on the ways in which screen media has been shaped and used to sustain exploitative political and economic practices that have been deeply damaging to people around the world and to shared environments. The class could run in conjunction with a *Radical Screen Media* class exploring the ways in which film/screen media have been used by media-makers and activists around the world to explicate and challenge imperialism, global inequality, and other forms of exploitation.

### 1. Introduction: **Militant Liberalism and the World According to Hollywood**

**Screening:** *Star Wars* (Twentieth Century Fox, USA, 1977); *Top Gun* (Paramount, USA, 1986).

**Reading** (sample): David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neo-liberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2005); Douglas Gomery, “Economic and Institutional Analysis: Hollywood as Monopoly Capitalism,” in Mike Wayne ed., *Understanding Film: Marxist Perspectives* (Pluto Press, 2005); Perry Anderson, “Imperium,” *New Left Review*, 83 (2013); Toby Miller et al., *Global Hollywood 2* (BFI, 2005); Jon Lewis, “Some Notes on the Political Economy of the Hollywood Blockbuster,” in Julian Stringer ed., *Movie Blockbusters* (Routledge, 2003).

### 2. **Empires of Media**

**Screening:** *The Matrix* (Warner Bros., USA, 1999); *Iron Man* (Marvel/Paramount, USA, 2008).

**Reading:** Eileen R. Meehan, “A Legacy of Neoliberalism: Patterns in Media Conglomeration,” in J. Kapur and Keith Wagner eds., *Neoliberalism and Global Cinema* (Routledge, 2011); Thomas Schatz, “Conglomerate Hollywood and Convergence Culture,” in Federico Zecca ed., *The Cinema of Convergence* (Mimesis Press, 2012); Toby Miller with Bill Grantham, “The United States as Global Media Behemoth,” in Toby Miller and Marwan M. Kraidy, *Global Media Studies* (Polity Press, 2016); Jennifer Holt, *Empires of Entertainment: Media Industries and the Politics of Deregulation, 1980-1996* (Rutgers University Press, 2011).

### 3. **The Digital and Convergent Screen**

**Screening:** *Marvel’s The Avengers* (Marvel/Disney, USA, 2012); *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D* (ABC, 2013-); YouTube, *Marvel One Shot: A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Thor’s Hammer* (2017).

**Reading:** Manuel Castells, *The Rise of Network Society* (Blackwell, 2000); David Hesmondahigh, *The Cultural Industries* (Sage, 2013); Yochai Benkler, *The Wealth of Networks* (Yale University Press, 2006); Janet Wasko, *Understanding Disney* (Polity, 2001).

### 4. **The Spectacles of Corporate Property**

**Screening:** *The Apprentice* (NBC, USA, 2004-); *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* (E!, USA, 2007-); *Location, Location, Location* (Channel 4, U.K., 2000-); example from global sports media (likely a football game in the competition sponsored by Gazprom, the state-owned Russian gas company.)

**Reading:** Laurie Ouellette and James Hay, *Better Living Through Reality TV* (Blackwell, 2008); Laurie Ouellette, *Lifestyle TV: Television and Post-welfare Citizenship* (Routledge, 2016); Marwan M. Kraidy and Katherine Sender, *The Politics of Reality Television: Global Perspectives* (Routledge, 2011); Tim Wu, *The Attention Merchants* (Atlantic, 2016).

### 5. **The Eye (Phone) of Power**

**Screening:** Selections from YouTube, including Google produced content; screen media produced by new media corporations like Amazon and Netflix; selection of TV/online advertisements for smartphones from 2007; *do no track* (dir. Brett Gaylor) documentary about online surveillance available here: <https://donottrack-doc.com/en/intro/>.

**Reading:** John Bellamy Foster and Robert W. McChesney, “Surveillance Capitalism: Monopoly-Finance Capital, the Military Industrial Complex, and the Digital Age,” *Monthly Review*, (2014); Mark Andrejevic, “Exploiting YouTube,” in Pelle Snickers and Patrick Vonderau eds., *The YouTube Reader* (National Library of Sweden, 2009); Sean Cubitt, *Finite Media: Environmental Implications of Digital Technologies* (Duke University Press, 2017).

### 6. **Liberal Fascism Today: The Movie**

**Screening:** extracts: *Hillary: The Movie* (Citizens United, USA, 2008); *Occupy Unmasked* (Glittering Steel, USA, 2012); *Clinton Cash* (Glittering Steel, 2016); *Brexit: The Movie* (dir. Martin Durkin, U.K., 2016); and *Trumping Democracy* (Thomas Huchon, USA, 2017); *HyperNormalisation* (Adam Curtis, UK, 2016).

**Reading:** Christian Fuchs, *Digital Demagogue: Authoritarian Capitalism in the Age of Trump and Twitter* (Pluto Press, 2018); John Bellamy Foster, *Trump in the White House* (Monthly Review Press, 2017); Victor Pickard, “Media Failure in the Age of Trump,” *The Political Economy of Communication*, 4:2 (2016); Angela Nagel, *Kill All Normies* (Zero Books, 2017); Carole Cadwalladr, “The Great British Brexit Robbery: How Our Democracy was Hijacked,” *The*

*Guardian*, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2017; Hannes Grasseger and Mikael Krogerus “The Data That Turned The World Upside Down,”  
*Motherboard*, January 28<sup>th</sup> 2017.