Divinity School of Chung Chi College
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

THEO 5933: Media, Popular Culture and Christianity 媒體、普及文化與基督教
Semester 1, 2017-2018

Lecturer: Yam Chi-Keung 任志強
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Logistics:
Time: Fridays 7:00pm – 9:15pm
Venue: ELB 403

Course Description:
This course is a critical exploration of the intricate relationships between popular media culture and Christianity. While popular culture and the media have long become a daily reality for many in the world, these have seldom been taken seriously by theologians and scholars of religion. Also, the relationship between popular media and religion (including Christianity) is often overlooked in academic studies until relatively recent time. We shall reexamine various manifestations of popular culture from Christian theological perspectives, and also probes into the subtle interrelatedness between media culture and Christianity as an organized religion. This course engages with the vigorously developing interdisciplinary field of media, religion, and culture (MRC) as its wider academic context; at the same time it attends particularly to the Chinese language popular media and Chinese Christianity in Hong Kong.

Prerequisite:
No formal prerequisite, but participants are EXPECTED to be fairly knowledgeable about the basics of Christian tradition and its contemporary expression, particularly in the Hong Kong and global Chinese contexts. Some academic background in the theological disciplines is ASSUMED, while academic or practical background in the media or communication or cultural studies would be advantageous.

Expected Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, participants should be able to:
1. Demonstrate critical understanding of the role of the media in contemporary society and culture, as well as the multiple and intricate relationships between popular media cultures and the Christian Church;
2. Critically evaluate particular media works in their various forms from Christian theological perspectives;

3. Engage with important texts in the field as well as available theological resources with reasonable familiarity;
4. Relate discussions in the course to their personal and communal experience of media consumption and involvement;
5. Use the foundation built in this course for further academic work in areas related to media, popular cultures and Christian theology.

Special Note:

The design and purpose of this course are academic nature – it focuses on theoretical quests and reflections rather than general daily practices of the 'how to'.

It is also designed to be interactive – the default mode of learning is through active involvement from all participants instead of long structured lectures by the instructor.

Course Requirements:

1. <u>Reading and Participation</u>: [20%]
   a. *Before* each class session, *study* at least one piece of the required readings specified for that session, and try to read at least one additional piece of suggested reading. Participants are expected to be familiar with the main points of the readings before class meetings.
   b. Active participation in weekly class discussions. (Attendance is presumed and mere attendance is not considered active participation.)

2. <u>Presentation and Reflection Paper</u>: [30%]
   a. One highly specific class presentation on one selected piece of the required readings - *absolutely not more than 10 minutes*.
      - Choose any topic from Chapter 4 (29 Sept) to Chapter 11 (17 Nov), and choose one piece of reading marked with an asterisk (*).
      - Overtime presentations will be stopped.
      - An electronic copy of the presentation material (such as powerpoint or notes or whatever) should be emailed to the lecturer at least 2 hours before class.
   b. Reading-reflection report: build on the class presentation, incorporate insights from class discussions and integrate with personal / communal experience of media practice.
      - *Not more than* 1000 words in Chinese or English.
      - Submission: upload odt or doc file to Blackboard AND email to lecturer within one week after the presentation; no printed copy please.
      - One letter grade will be deducted from works submitted more than one week after the presentation.
      - Works submitted more than two weeks after the presentation (i.e., one week late) will receive no grade.
   * NOTE: One total mark will be given to the 'presentation and reflection paper' as a whole; there shall be no individual mark for each part.

3. <u>Final Essay</u> [50%]
   a. An integrative paper on an issue of the participant's own choice – it should:
      i.   fall within the main concerns of the course;
      ii.   indicate the participant's own learning / discovery throughout the course;
      iii. focus on a specific topic covered in the course, preferably (but not necessarily) an expansion and deepening on the short reflection paper.
   b. Assessment criteria:
      ▪ Clarity in defining the issue and objective;
      ▪ Sufficient critical engagement with relevant literature and other media materials as references;
      ▪ Originality of discussion, clarity of organisation, logic of argument;
      ▪ Proper and consistent formatting, layout, and language style (such as diction, grammar, lack of typos).
   c. Length and format:
      ▪ Approximately 5000 words, either in Chinese or English.
      ▪ Must be typed in 12-point font size, double spaced.
      ▪ Word count includes footnotes but exclude bibliography.
      ▪ For the convenience of your reader (me!), please use footnotes rather than endnotes or author-date citation format.
      ▪ Please follow the Chicago Style Guide and be consistent.
   d. Submission: upload doc or odt file to: (1) Blackboard (2) VeriGuide (3) email to yam.cuhk@gmail.com; NO pdf please; NO printed copy please.
      ▪ Deadline: 15 December 2015
      ▪ Late submissions:
         ▪ Special grace for late submission will be granted ONLY in cases of unforeseen personal or direct family disasters, such as serious illness, injuries or death. It is the participant's responsibility to obtain written (email) consent from the lecturer as early as possible and absolutely not after the deadline.
         ▪ Otherwise: a sub-grade will be deducted per day from works submitted after the deadline (e.g., B+ becomes B, C- becomes D, etc.); works received on or after 22 December 2017 will automatically receive an F grade.

Academic Integrity:
This course, as in the case of the whole Chinese University of Hong Kong as well as any decent institution in the world, takes a stance of zero tolerance toward academic dishonesty. Submitted works that are found to have committed plagiarism will automatically receive an F grade and the case will be reported to University authority concerned, and could result in the termination of study at the University. Plagiarism defined in its plain sense is the act of using other people's works or ideas without duly acknowledging it, thus intentionally or unintentionally creating an impression that the piece in question is one's own original creation. Repeated use of one's own work without proper acknowledgement is considered self-plagiarism and is therefore penalised in the same manner.

For more information that can help you further understand and comply with the University's standard in academic honesty, please refer to the CUHK official website on this issue: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

Important Texts (selected):

In addition to reading materials listed in weekly requirements, course participants are encouraged and expected to become familiar with at least some of the books here:

Campbell, Heidi A. (ed.). *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*. Routledge, 2013.

Campbell, Heidi A. *When Religion Meets New Media*. Routledge, 2010.

Campbell, Heidi A. and Stephen Garner, *Networked Theology: Negotiating Faith in Digital Culture.* Baker Academic, 2016.

Cheong, Pauline Hope, Stefan Gelfran, Peter Fischer-Nielson and Charles Ess (eds.). *Digital Religion, Social Media, and Culture*. Peter Lang, 2012.

Cobb, Kelton. *The Blackwell Guide to Theology and Popular Culture.* Blackwell, 2005.

Ford, Dennis, *A Theology for a Mediated God: How Media Shapes Our Notions about Divinity.* Routledge, 2016.

Hoover, Stewart M. *Religion in the Media Age*. Routledge, 2006.

Hoover, Stewart M. and Knut Lundby (eds.). *Rethinking Media, Religion, and Culture*. Sage, 1997.

Horsfield, Peter. *From Jesus to the Internet: A History of Christianity and the Media.* Wiley Blackwell, 2015.

Lundy, Knut. *Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences*. Peter Lang, 2009.

Lundy, Knut (ed.). *Religion across Media: From Early Antiquity to Late Modernity.* Peter Lang, 2013.

Lynch, Gordon. *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture.* Blackwell, 2005.

Lynch, Gordon (ed.). *Between Sacred and Profane: Researching Religion and Popular Culture.* I.B. Tauris, 2007.

Lynch, Gordon, Jolyon Mitchell, with Anna Atrhan (eds.). *Religion, Media and Culture: A Reader.* Routledge, 2012.

Mitchell, Jolyon. *Media Violence and Christian Ethics.* Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Mitchell, Jolyon. *Promoting Peace, Inciting Violence: the Role of Religion and Media.* Routledge, 2013.

Mitchell, Jolyon and Sophia Marriage (eds.). *Mediating Religion: Conversations in Media, Religion and Culture.* T&T Clark, 2003.

Spadaro, Antonio. *Cybertheology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet* (ET Maria Way) Fordham University Press, 2014.

Morgan, David (ed.). *Key Words in Religion, Media and Culture*. Routledge, 2008.

吉見俊哉著，蘇碩斌中譯，《媒介文化論》。台北：群學，2009。

駱穎佳，《後現代拜物教－消費文化的神學批判》（新編）。香港：基督徒學生福音團契，2010。

葉菁華編，《信仰市場，消費教會：消費主義與當今教會》。香港：基督教文藝出版社，2013。

Course Contents and Schedule:

<u>**LEVEL ONE:**</u>　　<u>**THE GROUNDWORK**</u>

Chapter 1　　**Prologue**
(8 Sept)
- What do contemporary media cultures and Christianity have to do with each other?
- Positioning the study of media cultures within a theological curriculum

Chapter 2　　**Christian Theological Perspectives on Culture and the Media**
(15 Sept)

A. Required reading:
1. Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*, Ch. 2 and 5.

B. Other suggested readings:
1. Cobb, *Blackwell Guide*, Ch. 3-4.
2. H. Richard Niehuhr, *Christ and Culture* (Harper, 1951).
3. Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (Oxford, 1959).

Chapter 3　　**The Intersection of Popular Media and Christianity in Hong Kong**
(22 Sept)

A. Required reading:
1. Yam Chi-Keung, 'Regarding the Interplay of Popular Media and Religion in Hong Kong', in *Media and Religion in China: Insights and Case Studies from the Mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong*, edited by Stefania Travagnin (Routledge, 2017), 35-52.
2. 任志強，<卅年回望身後事——今日教會群體所虧欠蘇恩佩前輩的>，收錄於文蘭芳、何盛華、李淑潔合編《把火種撒在地上》（突破，2013），154-161。【原刊《時代論壇》1284 期（2012 年 4 月 8 日）專論】

Chapter 4　　**From Media Effects to the Mediatization of Everything**
(29 Sept)

A. Required readings:
1. Knut Lundy, 'Introduction: Mediatization as Key', in Knut Lundby (ed), *Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences*, 1-18.

2. *吉見俊哉，《媒介文化論》，1-106。

B. Other suggested readings:
1. Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*, Ch. 1, 6, 7, 8.
2. Cobb, *Blackwell Guide to Theology and Popular Culture*, 'Introduction' and Ch. 1-2.
3. Simon During (ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader* (2nd Ed) (Routledge, 1999):
   ▪ Ch. 1: During, 'Introduction'
   ▪ Ch 2: Adorno & Horkeimer, 'The Cultural Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception'
   ▪ Ch. 7: Stuart Hall 'Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies'

LEVEL TWO: ISSUES AT THE CORE

**Chapter 5
(6 Oct)**

Mobile Network and the Future of Humanity

A. Required reading:
1. *Heidi Campbell and Stephen Garner, *Networked Theology: Negotiating Faith in Digital Culture* (Baker Academic, 2016), 1-59.
2. 任志強〈合一與多元：媒體生態巨變下的實況與挑戰〉，收錄於林榮樹主編，《多元氛圍下的證道與教導》（崇基學院神學院，2016）， 100-114。

B. Other suggested readings:
1. Heidi Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*. Routledge, 2013.
2. Knut Lundby, 'Dreams of Church in Cyberspace', in Pauline Hope Cheong *et. al*. (eds.), *Digital Religion, Social Media, and Culture*. Peter Lang, 2012, 25-42.
3. Peter Horsfield, ' "A Moderate Diversity of Books"? The Challenge of New Media to the Practice of Christian Theology', in Pauline Hope Cheong *et. al.* (eds.), *Digital Religion, Social Media, and Culture*. Peter Lang, 2012, 243-258.
4. Jan van Dijk, 'Introduction', in *The Network Society* (3rd edition). Sage, 2012, 1-21.

Chapter 6　　　　**Visuality, Textuality and Theological Unease**
(13 Oct)

　　　　　　A. Required reading:
　　　　　　　　1. *Dennis Ford, *A Theology for a Mediated God: How Media
　　　　　　　　　　Shapes Our Notions about Divinity (Routledge, 2016), 1-66.

　　　　　　B. Other suggested readings:
　　　　　　　　1. Jacques Ellul, *Humiliation of the Word* (ET, Eerdmans, 1986).
　　　　　　　　2. David Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze* (University of California Press,
　　　　　　　　　　2005), Ch. 1 – 3 (pp. 25-112).
　　　　　　　　3. Walter Ong, *Orality and Textuality* (Routlege, 2002 [1982]), Ch. 4
　　　　　　　　　　(pp.77-113).
　　　　　　　　4. 駱穎佳《後現代拜物教》，142-157：<影象越界>。

LEVEL THREE:　　**POPULAR MEDIA CONFRONT CHRISTIANITY**

Chapter 7　　　　**Narrative Media and the Cultural Turn of Theology**
(20 Oct)

　　　　　　A. Required reading:
　　　　　　　　1. *Clive Marsh and Gaye Ortiz (eds), *Explorations in Theology and
　　　　　　　　　　Film (Blackwell, 1997):
　　　　　　　　　　▪ Ch. 2: Marsh, 'Film and Theologies of Culture'.
　　　　　　　　　　▪ Ch. 18: Marsh and Ortiz, 'Theology beyond the Modern and the
　　　　　　　　　　　　Postmodern: A Future Agenda for Theology and Film'.
　　　　　　　　2. *Robert K. Johnston, *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in
　　　　　　　　　　Dialogue* (2nd ed) (Baker Academic, 2006), Ch. 10: 'Responding to
　　　　　　　　　　Movies Theologically'.

　　　　　　B. Other suggested readings:
　　　　　　　　1. Robert K. Johnston, *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue*
　　　　　　　　　　(2nd ed) (Baker Academic, 2006), Ch. 1-4, 8.
　　　　　　　　2. Yam Chi-Keung, 'A Secular Gospel for the Marginal: Two Films of
　　　　　　　　　　Stephen Chow as Hong Kong Cinematic Parables', in *Exploring
　　　　　　　　　　Religion and the Sacred in a Media Age*, edited by Christopher
　　　　　　　　　　Deacy and Elisabeth Arweck (Ashgate, 2009), 203-218.
　　　　　　　　3. Yam Chi-Keung, 'Contemporary Christianity and the Religiosity of
　　　　　　　　　　Popular Chinese Cinema', in *Christianity in Contemporary China:
　　　　　　　　　　Socio-cultural Perspectives*, edited by Francis K.G. Lim (Routledge,
　　　　　　　　　　2013), 91-104.

4. 任志強〈人算什麼？從《猩凶革命》與猿人電影系列再思人的角色與位置〉，載於王礽福主編，《睇電影，學神學》（宣道出版社，2013），37–50。

**Chapter 8
(27 Oct)**

Popular Music and the Shaping of Contemporary Spirituality
* with guest lecture by Mr Enoch Lam

A. Required readings:
  1. *Jeremy Begbie, *Theology, Music, Time* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 9-68.
  2. *Jeremy Begbie, *Music, Modernity, and God: Essays in Listening* (Oxford University Press, 2013), Ch. 1, 7, 8.

B. Other suggested readings:
  1. Tom Beaudoin, *Secular Music and Sacred Theology* (Liturgical Press, 2013).
  2. Clive Marsh and Vaughan S. Roberts, *Personal Jesus: How Popular Music Shapes our Souls* (Baker Academic, 2013).
  3. 朱耀偉《歲月如歌：詞話香港粵語流行曲》（香港：三聯，2009）。

**Chapter 9
(3 Nov)**

News Media and the Framing of Reality

A. Required readings:
  1. *Mitchell, *Media Violence and Christian Ethics*
     ▪ Ch. 1: 'Remembering violent news'.
     ▪ Ch. 2: 'Reframing news'.

B. Other suggested reading:
  2. Mitchell, *Media Violence and Christian Ethics*, Ch. 3: 'Re-envisaging Photojournalism'.

**Chapter 10
(10 Nov)**

Mass Media and the Construction of Collective Identity

A. Required readings:
  1. *馬傑偉、曾仲堅《影視香港：身份認同的時代變奏》（香港中文大學香港及亞太研究中心，2010）。

2. *Gordon Mathews, Lui Tai-lok, and Eric Ma, *Hong Kong, China: Learning to Belong to a Nation* (Routledge, 2008), Ch.4: 'Representing the nation in the Hong Kong mass media'.

B. Other suggested reading:
   1. 馬傑偉《電視與文化認同》（突破，1996）。

Chapter 11
(17 Nov)

Advertising, Hyper Consumerism and Eco-Disaster

A. Required readings:
   1. *Mitchell, *Media Violence and Christian Ethics*, Ch. 6: 'Reappraising advertisements'.
   2. *駱穎佳《後現代拜物教》，25-141，172-180。

B. Other suggested readings:
   1. Tom Beaudoin, *Consuming Faith: Integrating Who We are with What We Buy* (Sheed and Ward, 2003; 2nd ed. 2007).
   2. Simon During (ed), *The Cultural Studies Reader* (2nd ed.) (Routledge, 1999)
      ▪ Ch. 28: Meaghan Morris, 'Things to do with Shopping Centres'
      ▪ Ch. 29: Raymond Williams, 'Advertising: The Magic System'

LEVEL FOUR: **MEDIA, THEOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN PRAXIS**

Chapter 12
(24 Nov)

Reconsidering Christian Media Praxis in Hong Kong

A. Required readings:
   1. Yam Chi-Keung, 'The Curious Case of Discovering Noah's Ark in Hong Kong', in *Media and Religion in China: Insights and Case Studies from the Mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong*, edited by Stefania Travagnin (Routledge, 2017), 241-255.
   2. Yam Chi-Keung, 'Projecting Christian Faith on the Hong Kong Screen', *Studies in World Christianity* 15 (2009) 2: 113-130.
   3. Yam Chi-Keung, 'Engagement in Television by Protestant Christians in Hong Kong', *Studies in World Christianity* 11 (2005) 1: 87-105.

Chapter 13
(1 Dec)

Re-envisioning Christian Theology in a Mediatized World

A. Required readings:
1. 任志強〈從媒體文化的比喻窺探閾中人：閾間神學芻議〉，收錄於邢福增、關瑞文、吳青主編，《人言我為誰乎？盧龍光院長榮休紀念文集》（香港：基督教文藝出版社，2014），603-614。\
2. Antonio Spadaro, *Cybertheology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet* (ET Maria Way) (Fordham University Press, 2014), Ch. 3: 'The Mystical and Connective Body' (pp. 29-50).

B. Other suggested readings:
1. Delwin Brown, Sheila Greeve Davany, and Kathryn Tanner (eds) *Converging on Culture: Theologians in Dialogue with Cultural Analysis and Criticism* (AAR/Oxford, 2001).
    ▪ Ch. 1: Davaney, 'Theology and the Turn to Cultural Analysis'.
    ▪ Ch. 2: Linell Cady, 'Loosening the Category that Binds: Modern "Religion" and the Promise of Cultural Studies'.
    ▪ Ch. 5: Victor Anderson, 'Secularization and the Worldliness of Theology'.
2. Lynch (ed), *Between Sacred and Profane*
    ▪ Ch. 5: Elaine Graham, 'What We Make of the World'.
    ▪ Ch. 6: Pete Ward, 'The Eucharist and the Turn to Culture'.
    ▪ Ch. 7: Tom Beaudoin, 'Popular Culture Scholarship as a Spiritual Exercise'.

EPILOGUE
(15 Dec)

** Submit Final Essay **
Nothing can possibly be perfect in this imperfect world.
Just get it done and upload.