**The CLOUD and the CROWD**

****

Graduate Seminar

Fall 2014

Prof. Cori Hayden

Department of Anthropology

cphayden@berkeley.edu

Fridays 2-4pm

Berkeley Center for New Media Commons

Moffitt Library

Late 19th century crowd theory, largely emanating from France, was famously animated by social theoretical and political worries about the emergence of a new, distinctive, ontologically puzzling social formation -- the (dangerous) crowd. In the late 20th century, this worrying crowd (always, we must ask, worrying for whom?) has become re-narrated in social theory. Crowds have become “re-invented” as (also) wise, valuable, and synonymous with decentralized, radical democracy itself. Why, and with what effects, have such reinventions occurred? There is a reason for bringing cloud into the mix here. Crowds have become re-imagined in large part in relation to new database and media platforms, including social media. We will explore how crowd and cloud in the IT/media/platform sense have come to name and produce new kinds of collectives; to animate visions of markets, value, and creative labor (“the wisdom of the crowd,” data-mining); to suggest new compositional possibilities for “smart” urban environments and for their militarization; and to underpin transformations in the practices and politics of knowledge production, for example in the realm of health. But clouds are important to crowds not just in *this* media/data sense. From the deployment of chemical warfare in World War 1, to the figure of the mushroom cloud in the Cold War, to the figure of planetary climate crisis, “clouds” in the atmospheric sense have also been constitutive of contested forms of crowds, commons, and publics -- particularly in the modern idioms of crisis and vulnerability, which also suggest possibilities for shared futures and kinships. Readings on these political atmospheres provide us with another way to ask about the medium or media through which clouds and crowds materialize.

This course is an outcome of, and will be linked to, a broader multi-campus working group sponsored by the UC Humanities Network, The [Cloud and Crowd](http://cstms.berkeley.edu/special-projects/the-cloud-and-the-crowd/the-cloud-and-the-crowd-multicampus-research-group-in-the-humanities/). Stay tuned for more information on invited guests and a follow-on graduate seminar at UC Davis in winter 2014.

Course organization and assignments

We will meet weekly, and you are expected to have read the material on the syllabus listed for that week with care. I value active participation in class and expect all present to be engaged and to participate during our discussions.

Unless otherwise noted, readings will be available for you as pdfs online. (First two weeks will be emailed to you).

Précis: you will be asked to write seven reading responses (one single spaced page) over the course of the semester (roughly every other week), and to post them on the bCourse site. You do not have to commit to particular weeks in advance. Please post your responses by 5pm the day before class, so that everyone has a chance to read all of the précis that are posted for that week, before class. Both parts of this equation are critical! We will discuss the format and purpose of the precis in the first class meeting.

Final paper: An 18-20 page paper will be due at the end of the semester. The paper can be organized in one of two ways. 1) For those with an already well-defined dissertation project, you can use the paper to think through your projects in close engagement with the course themes and readings. Concretely, you should work with and through, in a substantive manner, at least three of the pieces or authors we have read. 2) All participants also have the option of writing a classic seminar paper that works through a selection of the course material or a key theme in an in-depth manner. I will consult with each of you about potential paper topics in the latter third of the semester.

Participation and précis will count together for 35% of your grade, the paper for 65%.

**COURSE INTRODUCTION**

1. Fri August 29

**Points of entry**

Borch, Christian and Britta Timm Knudsen. “Postmodern Crowds: Re-Inventing Crowd Thinking.” *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory* 14, no. 2 (August 2013): 109–13.

Kelty, Christopher M. “Preface: Crowds and Clouds | Limn.” *Limn, Issue 2*, 2012.

<http://limn.it/preface-crowds-and-clouds/>.

**THE WORRYING CROWD**

2. Fri September 5

Le Bon, Gustave. *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*. New York: Classic Books, 1895. Emphasis on pp. 1-50 and 79-95

Jonsson, Stefan. “The Invention of the Masses.” In *Crowds*, edited by Jeffrey Schnapp and Matthew Tiews, 46 – 75. Stanford University Press, 2006.

Tarde, Gabriel. “What Is a Society?” In *The Laws of Imitation*, translated by Elsie Clews Parson, 59–88. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1903.

**MARKET CROWDS: INFLATION, SPECULATION**

3. Friday Sept 12

Stäheli, Urs. “Market Crowds.” In *Crowds*, edited by Jeffery Schnapp and Matthew Tiews, 271–85. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006.

Borch, Christian. “Crowds and Economic Life: Bringing an Old Figure Back In.” Talk given at the Centre for the Study of Invention and Social Process, Goldsmiths College, November 21, 2005

Canetti, Elias. *Crowds and Power*. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1962, pp. 183-188.

D’Avella, Nicholas. “Ecologies of Investment: Crisis Histories and Brick Futures in Argentina.” *Cultural Anthropology* 29, no. 1 (2014): 173–99.

Mackay, Charles. *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*. Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions. Boston: L. C. Page & company, 1932. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008310030>. Just dip in and see what you find …

**MICROWORKING THE CROWD**: **DIS- AND RE-AGGREGATIONS**

4. Friday Sept 19

Terranova, Tiziana. “Free Labour,” in *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age*. London ; Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2004, pp. 73-97

Irani, Lilly. “Microworking the Crowd | Limn.” *Limn, Issue 2*, 2012.

<http://limn.it/microworking-the-crowd/>.

Feltsiner, Alek. “The Weakness of Crowds | Limn.” *Limn, Issue 2*, 2012.

<http://limn.it/the-weakness-of-crowds/>.

Goldblatt, Laura. “A Specter Is Haunting Precarity.” *Full Stop: Reviews.Interviews.Marginalia.*, April 23, 2014. <http://www.full-stop.net/2014/04/23/blog/laura-goldblatt/a-specter-is-haunting-precarity/>.

***Extra reportage***: *you’ll get the point quite quickly but do look at them!*

Swarns, Rachel L. “Freelancers in the ‘Gig Economy’ Find a Mix of Freedom and Uncertainty.” *The New York Times*, February 9, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/10/nyregion/for-freelancers-in-the-gig-economy-a-mix-of-freedom-and-uncertainty.html>

Parramore, Lynn Stuart. “Cut-Throat Capitalism: Welcome To the Gig Economy.” *AlterNet*, May 27, 2014. <http://www.alternet.org/economy/cut-throat-capitalism-welcome-gig-economy>.

***ADDITIONAL REVIEW IF YOU’RE INTERESTED***: Neilson, Brett, and Ned Rossiter. “From Precarity to Precariousness and Back Again: Labour, Life and Unstable Networks.” *The Fibreculture Journal*, no. 5 (2005).

**POST- CROWDS?**

5. Friday Sept 26

Deleuze, Gilles. 1992. “Postscript on the Societies of Control.” *October* 59: 3–7

Mazzarella, William. “The Myth of the Multitude, Or, Who’s Afraid of the Crowd?” *Critical Inquiry* 36, no. 4 (2010): 697–727.

M Hardt and A Negri, excerpt from Multitude

**VIOLENCE, DENSITY, AND MASS**

6. Friday Oct 3

Weizman, Eyal. *Hollow Land: Israel’s Architecture of Occupation*. London: Verso, 2007. Chapter 7, “Urban Warfare: Walking through Walls,” pp. 185-218

Swarm, tbd

Moore, Brian E., Saad Ali, Ramin Mehran, and Mubarak Shah. “Visual Crowd Surveillance through a Hydrodynamics Lens.” *Communications of the ACM* 54, no. 12 (December 1, 2011): 64.

**PLATFORM POLITICS (1)**

7. Friday Oct 10

Rafael, Vicente L. “The Cell Phone and the Crowd: Messianic Politics in the Contemporary Philippines.” *Public Culture* 15, no. 3 (2003): 399–425.

Hirschkind, Charles. “From the Blogosphere to the Streets: Social Media and Egyptian Revolution.” *Oriente Moderno* XCI, no. 1 (2011): 61–74.

Hirschkind, Charles. “Interview with Alaa Abd Al-Fattah, Tahrir Square, 12 PM, July 19th.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 85, no. 3 (2012): 917–25.

**PLATFORM POLITICS (2): ALGORITHM AND AFFECT**

8. Friday Oct 17

Canetti, Elias. *Crowds and Power*. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1962, pp. 15-22

Ravetto-Biagioli, Kriss. “Anonymous. Social as Political.” *Without Sin* 19, no. 5 (September 15, 2013).

boyd, danah, and Kate Crawford. “CRITICAL QUESTIONS FOR BIG DATA: Provocations for a Cultural, Technological, and Scholarly Phenomenon.” *Information, Communication & Society* 15, no. 5 (June 2012): 662–79.

Gillespie, Tarleton. “Can an Algorithm Be Wrong? Twitter Trends, the Specter of Censorship, and Our Faith in the Algorithms around Us.” *Culture Digitally*, October 19, 2011.

Seaver, Nick. “Algorithmic Recommendations and Synaptic Functions | Limn.” *Limn*, no. 2: Crowds and Clouds. Accessed August 29, 2014. <http://limn.it/algorithmic-recommendations-and-synaptic-functions/>.

Madrigal, Alexis C. “#BostonBombing: The Anatomy of a Misinformation Disaster.” *The Atlantic*, April 19, 2013. <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2013/04/-bostonbombing-the-anatomy-of-a-misinformation-disaster/275155/>.

Miller, Claire Cain. “How Social Media Silences Debate.” *The New York Times*, August 26, 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/27/upshot/how-social-media-silences-debate.html.

**POLITICAL ATMOSPHERES**

9. Friday Oct 24 + 10. Friday Oct 31

**No class on Friday Oct 24**. **We will hold a 3 hours session (2-5pm) on Friday Oct 31 as make-up**

CLUSTER 1: MEDIA OF WAR, revisited

Sloterdijk, Peter *Terror from the Air* (selections, pdf)

Masco, Joseph, “Survival is your Businesss” and “Bad Weather: Planetary Crisis”

Orr, Jackie. *Panic Diaries: A Geneaology of Panic Disorder*. Durham [N.C.] and London: Duke

University Press, 2006. Selections.

CLUSTER 2: BREATHERS

Choy, Timothy. “Air’s Substantiations,” in *Lively Capital*

**SECURING A STATE OF HEALTH?**

11. Friday Nov 7

Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*, pp, 239-257 (scan forthcoming)

Lakoff, Andrew. “The Generic Biothreat, Or, How We Became Unprepared.” *Cultural Anthropology* 23, no. 3 (August 1, 2008): 399–428.

Caduff, Carlo. “Sick Weather Ahead: On Data-Mining, Crowd-Sourcing and White Noise.” *Cambridge Anthropology* 32, no. 1 (March 1, 2014): 32–46.

Delaney, Arthur. “CDC Removed Info on Coughing and Sneezing from Ebola Q & A (UPDATE).” *Huffington Post*, October 31, 2014. <http://today.yougov.com/huffingtonpostwidget/live/webpollsmall1.html?topic=politics>.

Laura Johnston, Northeast Ohio Media Group. “Man Not Worried about Ebola after Visiting Same Bridal Shop as Amber Joy Vinson.” *Cleveland.com*, October 17, 2014. http://www.cleveland.com/akron/index.ssf/2014/10/man\_not\_worried\_about\_ebola\_af.html.

**MASS HEALTH meets THE “N OF 1”**

12. Friday Nov 14

Dumit, Joseph. *Drugs for Life: How Pharmaceutical Companies Define Our Health*. 1 edition. Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2012. Chapter 4, pp. 105-134

*Personal Data for the Public Good*. Health Data Exploration Project. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology, UC Irvine, and UC San Diego, March 2014.

Wolf, Gary, and Ernesto Ramirez. *Quantified Self/Public Health Symposium*, April 2014.

**TEST BED URBANISM: DATA-CITY**

13. Friday Nov 21

Latour, Bruno “Tarde’s idea of quantification” in Candea, ed. *The Social after Gabriel Tarde*

Halpern, Orit, Jesse LeCavalier, Nerea Calvillo, and Wolfgang Pietsch. “Test-Bed Urbanism.” *Public Culture* 25, no. 2 70 (March 20, 2013): 272–306.

“The Santa Cruz Experiment: Can a City’s Crime Be Predicted and Prevented?” *Popular Science*. Accessed August 29, 2014. http://www.popsci.com/science/article/2011-10/santa-cruz-experiment.

\*\*\*\*\*\* Final paper prep time \*\*\*\*\*\*

14. Friday Nov 28 [Thanksgiving, no class]

15. Friday Dec 5 [American Anthropological Association Meetings in Washington DC, no class]

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* **Project roundtable \*\*\*\***

16. Wrap up meeting, TBD during RRR week Dec 8-12

Papers due December 12