

Meghan Sutherland
Curriculum Vitae
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UNIVERSITY ADDRESSES

Cinema Studies Institute
Innis College, University of Toronto
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Department of Visual Studies
CCT Building, Room 3022
University of Toronto, Mississauga
Mississauga, ON L5L 1C6

DEGREES

Ph.D., Northwestern University, Department of Radio/TV/Film,
Media, Technology, and Society Program, 2007. Dissertation: "Variety, or the
Spectacular Aesthetic of American Liberal Democracy." Supervisors: Ernesto Laclau,
Jeffrey Sconce, Lynn Spiegel, Mimi White.

M.A., New York University, John W. Draper Program for Humanities and Social
Thought, 2003.

B.F.A., New York University, Major in Cinema Studies, Minor in Art History, 2001.

EMPLOYMENT

Associate Professor of Cinema and Visual Studies

--Department of Visual Studies, University of Toronto Mississauga, January 2011-present (Primary Appointment).

--Cinema Studies Institute, University of Toronto, January 2011-present (Graduate Faculty Appointment from January 2011).

--Affiliate, Centre for the Study of the United States (September 2011-present).

Core Faculty Member and Co-Designer

ReSET Symposium on Media and Philosophy, Kharkiv, Ukraine, 2009-present.

Assistant Professor of Screen Studies

Department of English, Oklahoma State University, Fall 2007-2010.

Lecturer

Program in Film and Video, University of Michigan, Winter-Spring 2004.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Co-Editor (with Brian Price and John David Rhodes), *World Picture*. Fall 2007-present.

Co-Organizer (with Olga Blackledge and Brian Price), ReSET Symposium on Media and Philosophy, Kharkiv, Ukraine, 2009-2012.

Co-Organizer (with Brian Price), *World Picture* Conference on Theory (formerly known as the *Framework* Conference), Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, 2006-2010, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, 2011-. Speakers include: D.N. Rodowick, Amy Villarejo, Joan Copjec, Lee Edelman, Lauren Berlant, Ernesto Laclau, Edward Brannigan, Alexander Garcia Duttman, Peter Hallward, Rey Chow, Elizabeth Povinelli, Lorenz Engell.

Programming Committee, 2012 Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference (Aesthetics and Philosophy submissions).

Member, Society for Cinema and Media Studies, 2002-present.

Peer-Review Consultant, *Journal of Television and New Media* and *Refractory*.

Faculty Advisor, Students for the Ethical Treatment of Theory, 2007-2010.

Co-Organizer and Co-Programmer (with Hugh Manon and Brian Price), *exciterbulb*, a series of avant-garde film and video screenings at Oklahoma State University, 2007-2010.

SCHOLARLY AND PROFESSIONAL WORK

**All publications are single-author except where noted.*

Refereed Publications:

Articles

“Populism and Spectacle,” *Cultural Studies* (January 2012), 1-16,
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09502386.2011.647646#preview>.

“Rigor/Mortis: The Political Life of Zombie Cinema,” *Framework* 48, no. 1 (Spring

2007): 64-78.

“The Comic Visualized, or Laughing at *Shallow Hal*,” *Senses of Cinema* 33 (Oct.-Dec. 2004): http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/04/33/shallow_hal.html.

“The Accident Museum, Accidentally,” *Framework* 45, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 102-108.

Books and Chapters in Books

The Flip Wilson Show (Wayne State University Press, 2008).

“On the Grounds of Disaster,” in *The Place of the Moving Image*, eds. John David Rhodes and Elena Gorfinkel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 339-361.

“Death, with Television,” in *On Michael Haneke*, eds. Brian Price and John-David Rhodes (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 167-189.

“Monstration and Spectacle,” in *Film Theory at the Very Beginning and the Very End*, eds. Enrico Biasin and Jane Gaines (Udine: Forum/University of Udine, 2010), 437-444.

Non-Refereed and Commissioned Publications:

Articles

“What Debord Can Teach Us about Protest,” *The Guardian*, Online Philosophy Series, 2 April 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/apr/02/guy-debord-society-spectacle-protest>.

“Acategoryal Imperatives: A Conversation with Sam Lipsyte,” (with Brian Price) in *World Picture* 6 (Winter 2011), http://www.worldpicturejournal.com/WP_6/Lipsyte.html.

“Suburbia and the Popular Imagination,” in *Cul-de-Sac: Catalogue for the Varley Art Gallery/Art Gallery of Markham*, June 2011, 15-29.

“An Empty Set,” *FlowTV: An Online Journal of Television and Media*, Volume 11, no. 12 (Spring 2010). < <http://flowtv.org/?p=4956> >

“Thinking the Box,” *FlowTV: An Online Journal of Television and Media*, Volume 11, no. 7 (Spring 2010). < <http://flowtv.org/?p=4772> >

“Being on Television,” *FlowTV: An Online Journal of Television and Media*, Volume 11, no. 3 (Winter 2009). <<http://flowtv.org/?p=4577>>

“About *Opsis*,” *World Picture* 4 (Spring 2010).
<http://www.worldpicturejournal.com/WP_4/Sutherland.html>

“Not a Ground but a Horizon: An Interview with Ernesto Laclau,” with Brian Price, *World Picture 2* (Fall 2008). <http://www.worldpicturejournal.com/WP_2/Laclau.html>

“On Debord, Then and Now: An Interview with Olivier Assayas,” with Brian Price, *World Picture 1* (Spring 2008). <http://www.worldpicturejournal.com/WP_1.1/Assayas.html>

“The Art of Impurity: An Interview with Emmanuel Bourdieu,” with Brian Price, *World Picture 1* (Spring 2008). <http://www.worldpicturejournal.com/WP_1.1/Bourdieu.html>

“The Word for a Thousand Pictures,” *World Picture 1* (Spring 2008). <http://www.worldpicturejournal.com/WP_1.1/MSutherland.html>

Book Manuscript in Progress:

Variety, Democracy, and Spectacle (Anticipated Completion in Fall 2013).

INVITED LECTURES AND TALKS

Invited Lectures

Invited Lecture, “Mediacracy,” at Toronto Film Seminar, Bell Light Box, Toronto, ON, January 2012.

Keynote Speaker, “Suburbia and the Popular Imagination,” at Revisiting the Suburbs: Annual Graduate Student Symposium, York University, Toronto, ON, April 2011.

Invited Talks, Interviews, Roundtables and Public Outreach

Invited Guest Commentator, *Square Off*, Episode on “Free Speech and the Web,” CHCH TV, 27 April 2012.

Interviewee (Invited) for “The Big Ideas Podcast: Guy Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle*,” *The Guardian*, Online Philosophy Series, 27 March 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/audio/2012/mar/28/big-ideas-podcast-debord-society-spectacle>.

Guided Gallery Talk, Sunday Scene Series: On Kerry Tribe’s *Speak, Memory*, at The Power Plant Gallery, Toronto, ON, April 2012.

Roundtable Participant, “Models for Taking Part: Art, Space, Democracy,” Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Toronto, ON, October 2011.

Plenarist on Professionalism for Junior Faculty Members, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, May 2009.

PAPERS PRESENTED AT MEETINGS AND SYMPOSIA

“Navigating the Academic Job Market,” Workshop Participant, Society for Cinema & Media Studies Conference, Boston, MA, March 2012.

“On Either Side of Distance,” World Picture Conference on Theory: Distance, Toronto, ON, October 2011.

“The Molten Image: On Phil Solomon’s *American Falls*,” Society for Cinema & Media Studies Conference, New Orleans, NO, March 2011.

“Events of a Graphic Nature,” Rendering the Visible Conference, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, February 2011.

“Representation after Representation,” The World Picture Conference on Theory: Representation, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, October 2010.

Chair, Presenter, and Panel Organizer for “Repositioning the Set: New Theoretical Approaches to Television,” Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference, Los Angeles, CA, March 2010.

“*In Medias Res*,” The World Picture Conference on Theory: Style, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, October 2009.

“Ontologies of the Spectacular,” 2nd Annual Film-Philosophy Conference, Dundee, Scotland, July 2009.

“Monstration, Monstrosity, and Spectacle,” XVI Udine Conference: Film Theory at the Very Beginning and the Very End, Udine, Italy, March 2009.

“The Monster with a Thousand I’s,” The World Picture Conference on Theory: the Popular, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, October 2008.

“The Spectacular and the Superficial,” The World Picture Conference on Theory: Ethics and Media, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, October 2007.

“Party Platforms: Internet Voting and Online Video,” Workshop on “Videophiles and the Digital Archive,” Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference, Chicago, IL, March 2007.

“Figurative Theory,” First Annual *Framework* Conference, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, November 2006.

“Structure and Politics in Zombie Cinema,” Society for Cinema and Media Studies, Vancouver, Canada, March 2006.

“Flow, or the History of Theory in Television Studies,” Workshop on “A Future for Theory,” Society for Cinema and Media Studies, Vancouver, Canada, March 2006.

“Amos, Andy, and Marvin Lattimer: Critical Genealogies of Performance on *The Flip Wilson Show*,” Society for Cinema and Media Studies, Atlanta, Georgia, March 2004.

“Cinema, TV, and the Bosnian War in Godard’s *For Ever Mozart*,” Society for Cinema and Media Studies, Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 2003.

“Cruel Landscapes: The Architecture of Violence in Oshima’s *Cruel Story of Youth*,” Society for Cinema Studies, Washington D.C., May 2001.

ACADEMIC HISTORY

Research Endeavors:

Areas of expertise include film and media theory; American television and new media history; continental philosophy; avant-garde and activist film, video, and performance art; theories of media, space, and place.

Grants/Research Awards:

SSHRC Institutional Grant, March 2012.

SSHRC Institutional Grant, March 2011.

ReSet Symposium Grant for the Seminar on Media and Philosophy, from the Open Society Institute, 2010-2012: This 3-year, \$300,000 grant (developed and executed in collaboration with Brian Price and Olga Blackledge) supports six bi-annual seminars on Media and Philosophy in the post-Soviet region, including support for the full funding of seminar participants and a wide range of keynote speakers.

College of Arts & Sciences Research Award, Oklahoma State University, Summer 2010.

College of Arts & Sciences Travel Award, Oklahoma State University, Summer 2010.

College of Arts & Sciences Dean’s Lecture Series Funds (for Dr. Victoria E. Johnson), Oklahoma State University, Spring 2010.

Dean’s Incentive Grant, Oklahoma State University, Summer 2009.

College of Arts & Sciences Travel Award, Oklahoma State University, Spring 2009.

College of Arts & Sciences Travel Award, Oklahoma State University, Fall 2008.

College of Arts & Sciences Lecture Series Funds (for Dr. Lauren Berlant), Oklahoma State University, Spring 2008.

College of Arts & Sciences Travel Award, Oklahoma State University, Spring 2008.

English Department Travel Award, Oklahoma State University, Spring 2008.

Dean's Incentive Grant, Oklahoma State University, Summer 2008.

RECENT COURSES TAUGHT AT UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

** Designed and taught all courses.*

Undergraduate Courses:

VCC 390 H5: TOPICS IN VISUAL CULTURE: PICTURING THE SUBURBS

Course Description: In many respects, the rise of suburbia cannot be separated from the economic development of television and new media technologies and the role they play in the construction of mainstream visual culture today. Perhaps for this same reason, artists and activists working in a wide range of “high” art practices have often used the image of the suburbs as the aesthetic trope of capitalist mass-production *par excellence*—the very embodiment of a culture that has sacrificed aesthetic value as such to the economic imperatives of mass-mediated standardization and surface appearance. This course will try to make sense of how images of the suburbs move across these uncomfortably entwined threads of 20th and 21st century visual production, and the implications this movement holds for how we understand the relation between aesthetics and mass-production; between private and public space; between “high” and “low” art; and between visual media and the sociopolitical space of the built environment. We will trace the appearance of suburban imagery across contemporary photography, painting, avant-garde film, and multimedia installation art as well as popular genres of film, television, and new media, in each case exploring the latter's significance as both an object of visual culture and a distinctly pictorial mode of spatial and cultural organization.

VCC 427 H5: PARTICIPATORY MEDIA

Course Description: In the age of TiVo, YouTube, and voter-based reality shows such as the global *Idols* and *Got Talent* franchises, it is easy to think of the “new” in new media as a short-hand for the revolutionary promise of consumer participation in the construction of both global and national popular culture. However, the phenomenon of participatory media is hardly as “new” as new media technology, nor is it the self-evident bearer of democratic values that many proponents of new media technology would like to suggest. In order to make sense of the complex social and political issues that surround contemporary discourses of participatory media—as well as their mobilization by activists and consumers alike—this course will provide a historical survey of “old” media technologies and aesthetics of participation, running from 19th century popular theater to

20th century radio, film, television, and activist video art, but with a special emphasis on the voter-based television shows of the fifties that set the generic precedent for contemporary television and internet programming. At the same time, it will provide a theoretical and philosophical inquiry into the very notion of participation as it intersects with theories of democratic politics and activism. In short, the course will provide an intensive opportunity to think about the politics of participation and the sociopolitical challenges they present in contemporary media culture.

VCC 209H5: SOCIETY AND SPECTACLE

Course Description: Spectacles have been vehicles of social and political power at varying historical moments and locations. Since Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* was published in 1967 the term has been deployed as a critical concept for thinking about visual culture. This course takes up a number of historical case studies in order to locate and situate phenomena associated with spectacle and spectacular visual entertainments. Topics may include the role of images in mediating contemporary social relations and the connection between spectacle and violence.

VCC 340H5: MONSTERS!

Course Description: This course examines monster movies and television shows alongside readings from monster literature, comics, and critical essays. It considers the social significance of the monster in order to learn something about how the threat of the monster relates to historical anxieties concerning mass-media technologies, social deviance, and the hybrid forms of visual media culture that we typically associate with the era of 21st-century convergence culture but define the genre of monster media from its ancient beginnings.

CIN 1005HS L0301: SPECIAL TOPICS IN CINEMA STUDIES: MEDIA/PARTICIPATION

Course Description: In the age of TiVo, YouTube, and voter-based reality shows such as the global *Idols* and *Got Talent* franchises, it is easy to think of the “new” in new media as a short-hand for the revolutionary promise of consumer participation in the construction of both global and national popular culture. However, the phenomenon of participatory media is hardly as “new” as new media technology, nor is it the self-evident bearer of democratic values that many proponents of “social media” technology would like to suggest. In order to make sense of the complex social and political issues that surround contemporary discourses of participatory media—as well as their mobilization by activists and consumers alike—this course will provide a historical survey of “old” media technologies and aesthetics of participation, running from 19th century popular theater to 20th century radio, film, television, and activist video art, but with an extended concentration on the participation-driven television shows of the fifties that set the generic precedent for contemporary television and internet programming. At the same time, it will provide a theoretical and philosophical inquiry into the very notion of participation as it intersects with theories of democratic politics and activism. In short, the course will

provide an intensive opportunity to think about the politics of participation and the sociopolitical challenges they present in contemporary media culture.

Courses Taught at Other Universities in the Last Five Years:

** Designed and taught all courses in English department at Oklahoma State University.*

ENGL 2453: Introduction to Screen Studies (Fall 2010)
ENGL 3353: Image/Text: The Graphic, the Visual, and the Moral (Fall 2010)
ENGL 3363: Image/Text: Monsters & Monstrosities (Spring 2009)
ENGL4263: Aesthetics: Experimenting with Tele-vision (Spring 2009)
ENGL 3340: Topics in Television Studies: Video Realisms and Realities (Fall 2008)
ENGL 5293: Seminar in Screen Theory: Media, Excess, & Sublimity (Fall 2008)
ENGL 4263: Aesthetics: The Art of MTV (Spring 2008)
ENGL 3353: The Inauthentic Self in Autobiographical Media (Spring 2008)
ENGL 3263: Screen Theory & Criticism (Fall 2007)
ENGL 4450: Culture and the Moving Image: Television as Common Culture (Fall 2007)

ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

Administrative Positions Held at University of Toronto:

Faculty Liaison, Department of Visual Studies Student Society, September 2011-present.
Member, Blackwood Gallery Advisory Committee, April 2011-present.

Administrative Positions Held at Other Universities:

Placement Committee, Department of English, Oklahoma State University, 2009-2010.
Search Committee Member, Cinema Studies Hire, OSU, Summer 2010.
Search Committee Member, Post-Colonial/Multi-Ethnic Literature Hire, OSU, Spring 2009.
Search Committee Member, Post-Colonial/Indigenous Studies Hire, OSU, Spring, 2008.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

General Description of Research:

Although my research crosses different disciplines, different forms and historical periods of media culture, and different methodological approaches, virtually all of it attempts to contribute to the same overarching project: elaborating the nature of the distinct role that visual media aesthetics play in the production of social and political relations. While media and cultural studies scholars have generally approached this line of inquiry using the materialist theoretical foundation of Marxism—with special emphasis on the Althusserian interpretation of Marx—my work draws on contemporary continental philosophy to explore the limitations, the blind-spots, and the generalizations that have grown out of an increasingly codified and unthinking embrace of this theoretical and methodological model by scholars in the field. Drawing on materialist

methods of analysis (including archival research and close analysis) as well as theoretical and philosophical methods of analysis, I argue that visual media play a constitutive role in the production of social existence itself, and in turn, that the stylistic codes of mass-media representation—which are often ignored altogether by media scholars when it comes to questions of sociopolitical issues—play an ontological role in the construction of this existence.

In the course of presenting more than 12 conference papers and publishing 4 essays in journals (three peer-reviewed); 3 peer-reviewed essays in edited volumes; one book; 3 interviews; and contributing by invitation to the popular online media journal *FlowTV* this project has grown increasingly explicit and coherent. However, one can see faint traces of this methodological sensibility and the questions that animate it even before I established this research agenda explicitly. For instance, “The Accident Museum, Accidentally” explores the role that the distinctly visual dimension of television images plays in the construction of my own personal relation to the mediated communities of television disasters and pageants—an exploration that feeds directly into more recent essays on television aesthetics in variety shows and disaster coverage, such as “What Is Variety?” and “On the Grounds of Television.” Similarly, “Laughing at Shallow Hal” clearly anticipates the increasing interest in the aesthetics of visual presentation, the display of bodily excess in low-cultural forms, and the blending of close visual analysis with philosophical consideration that informs virtually all of my recent writing and conference presentations, but especially the book manuscript I am currently working on, *Variety, Spectacle, and Democracy*. Even the interviews with filmmakers and philosophers that I have published in my own journal with Brian Price move between these same realms, exploring the relation between visual media style and contemporary philosophy that define my research agenda. For indeed, the work as a whole draws from all of these opportunities and modes of scholarly research to re-think the nature of this relation, the political implications that it holds, and the methodological implications it holds for the way we study visual media culture.

References:

Ernesto Laclau, Distinguished Visiting Professor, Department of Communication Studies, Northwestern University [can be reached at 116 Fordwych Road, London NW2 3NL London, or laclaudr@aol.com].

Jeffrey Sconce, Associate Professor of Screen Cultures, Department of Radio/Television/Film, Northwestern University, 1920 Campus Drive, Room 213, Evanston, IL 60208, #847-491-5982, sconce@northwestern.edu.

Lynn Spigel, Frances E. Willard Professor of Screen Cultures, Department of Radio/Television/Film, Northwestern University, 1920 Campus Drive, Room 213, Evanston, IL 60208, #847-491-7315, lspigel@northwestern.edu.