

SEMIOTICS & MEDIA

a concentrated seminar

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Winter 2020/21



Outline & Credit (FN 17 August 2020)

The founder of modern semiotics, *Charles Sanders Peirce*, wrote this: "All my notions are too narrow. Instead of 'signs', ought I not to say medium?" By saying this, he announces a terminological identity between the two terms, *sign* and *medium*. Occasionally, current times are called an "epoch of media", if not sweepingly, "media society". When we are asked, what a medium is, a first simple answer can always be: "an in-between". A medium is something between two others, thus establishing a link between the two: a "relation". The sign is introduced by Peirce explicitly also as a relation! He specified the sign as a relation of three components, or dimensions (Peirce preferred to call them "relata"). How are media and signs different, how are they the same? Since we are studying Digital Media, we must develop an understanding of those two fundamental concepts.

We will start into the seminar with three meetings (see below) that are dedicated to introducing the topic, to gain a first understanding of the Peircean concept of "sign", of semiotics in general, of the general concept of "media", and of "digital media" in particular. I will introduce a list of papers on semiotics, on media, and on digital media. As a participant, you will be asked to select one from that list of papers and turn it *your paper*. This will mean that you study it carefully, select from it what you think is worth and interesting to discuss, and present your paper by that selection at our closing session. You may work on this alone or in a pair. We schedule for two days of presentations towards the end of the term. Details will depend on the number of active participants. We will try to meet in person in any case, trying to stay away as much as possible from Corona. If circumstances require differently, we'll adjust to that.

Conditions for Credit Points

You are supposed to actively take part at all our meetings. Your important contribution will, however, be the presentation of your selected paper. We organize the selection of papers at the second and third of the meetings. We plan for 30 minutes per presentation plus 15 minutes for discussion. You are also asked to write an essay about your chosen paper. – The learning effect from doing this work is supposed to be: improving your skills in reading a scientific publication to such a degree of detail that you can present the main idea and argumentation to an audience and spark a discussion with the audience; further, to write an essay about the specific topic of your chosen paper culminating in your conclusions from the study, presentation, and discussion. – The module will be "Topics in Digital Media".

Schedule of Meetings

Thursday 29 Oct. 2020	14-16 Welcome and introduction Introducing the set of papers to choose from
Thursday 12 Nov. 2020	14-16 Semiotics: Introduction Assigning papers to students, issues of presentation
Thursday 26 Nov. 2020	14-16 Media and Digital Media: Introduction Final issues of the upcoming individual work
Thursday 25 Feb. 2021	10-17 Six presentations by students, discussion
Friday 26 Feb. 2021	10-17 Six presentations by students, discussion Concluding remarks
28 March 2021	Deadline for submission of essays
