What do we mean when we talk about “media archaeology”? In the most generous terms, media archaeology is a loosely-codified web of methods attached to the historical and material study of media and media transmission. As a domain of inquiry, media archaeology delights in and brings attention to the failed, the broken, the forgotten and the speculative. Media archaeology can offer a valuable counterpoint to more progressivist, linear or innovation-focused approaches emphasized in traditional media history and other historical disciplines.

In this course, we will explore media archaeology with a strong emphasis on method. Students will familiarize themselves with media archaeology's historical and theoretical grounding, including scholarship by Michel Foucault, Walter Benjamin and Marshall McLuhan. Attention will be given to contemporary media scholars who began challenging progressivist media history in the 1980s, notably Lynn Spigel, Tom Gunning and Carolyn Marvin. The course will then weave through major figures and theoretical positions, including German media theory, contextualism and cyclicism, media ecology, feminism, and materialist media studies.

Each week of readings will be complemented by an in-class, hands-on exploration of a specific media object, so students build a basis for discussing the material and technical properties of media. Students will be assigned to compose 3 media archaeological treatments on the class’ Media Wiki. As a capstone to the course, students will reconstruct or reinvent a dead medium, such as a camera obscura, a faraday cage, a player piano, a magic lantern, or similar object.

Course Texts:
Many of the books on the syllabus are being read as selections. I do recommend purchasing these books, but will provide PDFs of book selections. A small number of books are required:

Required Texts
Kittler, Friedrich A. Gramophone, Film, Typewriter
Plant, Sadie. Zeros + Ones
Montfort, Nick, and Ian Bogost. Racing the Beam
Guins, Raiford. Game After

Recommended Texts
Nietzsche, Friedrich. On the Genealogy of Morals
Marvin, Carolyn. When Old Technologies Were New
Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. Railway Journey
Spigel, Lynn. Make Room for TV
Gitelman, Lisa. Always Already New
Zielinski, Siegfried. Deep Time of Media
Kirschenbaum, Matthew G. Mechanisms
Evaluation
Course grades will be based on 1 Course Presentations (10%) and 4 Object Lesson assignments (20% each), 3 of which will be posted to the course Media Wiki.

Course Presentation
Each student will prepare a short introductory presentation of a reading of their choosing. Students may not choose a reading on the same day an object lesson is due. Students should compose a powerpoint that covers:

- Brief biography of author
- Encapsulates main idea of text
- Articulates significance of text
- Offers one quote for close reading/discussion
- 2-3 question re: the text

Object Lessons
Graded at 20% each.

Object Lesson I: 500 words
Object Lesson II: 750 words
Object Lesson III: 1500 words
Object Lesson IV: Maker Project

Expectations
Students are expected to attend all classes, and to arrive on time with the course readings read and annotated. Failure to do so may result in grade penalties.

January 11: Course Introduction

January 18: An Archaeology of Method I

January 25: An Archaeology of Method II
February 1: Prefigurations of Media Archaeology (Or, There's Nothing New Under the Sun)


February 8: [NO CLASS]

February 15: Object Lesson I + Contextualism and Cyclicism I


February 22: Contextualism and Cyclicism II


February 29: German Media Studies: Man is the Extension of Media


March 7: Object Lesson II + German Media Studies: Variotology


March 14: German Media Studies: The Cold Gaze


March 21: [SPRING BREAK]

March 28: A Feminist Media Archaeology?

- Nooney, Laine. "A pedestal, a table, a love letter: Archaeologies of gender in videogame


**April 4: Object Lesson III + Material Archaeologies I**


**April 11: Platforms and Media Forensics**


**April 18: Material Archaeologies II**


**April 25: Media Afterlives**


**Object Lesson IV: TBD**