Sites like YouTube, Flickr, Second Life, and Wikipedia have made visible a set of cultural practices and logics that had been taking root within fandom over the past hundred-plus years, expanding their cultural influence by broadening and diversifying participation. In many ways, these practices have been encoded into the business models shaping so-called Web 2.0 companies, which have in turn made them far more mainstream, have increased their visibility, and have incorporated them into commercial production and marketing practices. The result has been a blurring between the grassroots practices I call participatory culture and the commercial practices being called Web 2.0.

Fans have become some of the sharpest critics of Web 2.0, asking a series of important questions about how these companies operate, how they generate value for their participants, and what expectations participants should have around the content they provide and the social networks they entrust to these companies. Given this trajectory, a familiarity with fandom may provide an important key for understanding many new forms of cultural production and participation and, more generally, the logic through which social networks operate.

So, to define our three terms (at least provisionally): fandom refers to the social structures and cultural practices created by the most passionately engaged consumers of mass media properties; participatory culture refers more broadly to any kind of cultural production which starts at the grassroots level and which is open to broad participation; and Web 2.0 is a business model that sustains many web-based projects that rely on principles such as user creation and moderation, social networking, and "crowdsourcing."

That said, the debates about Web 2.0 are only the most recent set of issues in cultural and media studies which have been shaped by the emergence of a field of research focused on fans and fandom. Fan studies:

- emerged from the Birmingham School's investigations of subcultures and resistance
- became quickly entwined with debates in Third Wave Feminism and queer studies
- has been a key space for understanding how taste and cultural discrimination operate
- has increasingly been a site of investigation for researchers trying to understand informal learning or emergent conceptions of the citizen/consumer
- has shaped legal discussions around appropriation, transformative work, and remix culture
- has become increasingly central to discussions of racial representation, diversity, and inclusion within the entertainment industry.
• has become a useful window for understanding how globalization is reshaping our everyday lives.

This course will be structured around an investigation of the contribution of fan studies to cultural theory, framing each class session around a key debate and mixing writing explicitly about fans with other work asking questions about cultural change and the politics of everyday life.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

• trace the history of fandom from the amateur press associations of the 19th Century to its modern manifestations
• describe the evolution of fan studies from the Birmingham School work on subcultures and media audiences to contemporary work on digital media
• discuss a range of theoretical framings and methodologies which have been used to explain the cultural, social, political, legal, and economic impact of fandom
• arbitrate the most common critiques surrounding the Web 2.0 business model
• situate fan practices in relation to broader trends toward social networks, online communities, and remix culture
• develop their own distinctive contribution to the field of fan studies, one which reflects their own theoretical and methodological commitments

Assignments:

• Students will be expected to post regular weekly comments reacting to the readings on the Blackboard site for the class. (20 percent)

• Students will write a short five-page auto-ethnography describing their own history as a fan of popular entertainment. They will explore whether or not they think of themselves as a fan, what kinds of fan practices they engage with, how they define themselves a fan, how they became invested in the media franchises that have been part of their life, and how their feelings about being a fan might have adjusted over time. (15 percent) (Due Jan. 25th)

• Students will develop an annotated bibliography exploring one of the theoretical debates that have been central to the field of fan studies. These might include those which we've identified for the class, or they might include other topics more relevant to the student's own research. What are the key contributions of fan studies literature to this larger field of inquiry? What models from these theoretical traditions have informed work in fan studies? (20 Percent) (Due Feb. 22)

and write a five-page response which discusses what you see as the most significant similarities and differences between fan practice (as we've read about it in the class) and the business models associated with Web 2.0. (15 percent) (Due April 1st)

- Students will write a 15-20 page essay on a topic of their own choosing (in consultation with the instructor) which they feel grows out of the subjects and issues we've been exploring throughout the class. The paper will ideally build on the annotated bibliography created for the earlier assignment. Students will do a a short 10 minute presentation of their findings during the final week of class. (30 percent) (Due May 7)

Books:


Statement for Students with Disabilities
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Integrity
USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/.
DAY 1: Wednesday, January 11th

Defining Terms


Mark Duffet, “Fan Stereotypes and Representations”

(Rec.) Angela McRobbie, “Settling Accounts with Subcultures: A Feminist Account”
http://www.hu.mtu.edu/~jdslack/readings/CSReadings/McRobbie_Setting_Accounts_with_Subcultures.pdf

DAY 2: Wednesday, January 18th

Fan Studies and Cultural Resistance


DAY 3: Wednesday, January 25th

From Engagement to Participation (Guest talks: Erin Reilly, Annenberg Innovation Lab; Meredith Levine, Troika; Eric Von Hippel, MIT Sloan)


Auto-Ethnography Assignment Due

DAY 4: Wednesday, February 1st
Tracing the History of Participatory Culture
Robert Darnton, "Readers Respond to Rousseau: The Fabrication of Romantic Sensibility," The Great Cat Massacre And Other Episodes in French Cultural History (New York: Basic, 2009)

DAY 5: Wednesday, February 8th
Logics of Fan Production
DAY 6: Wednesday February 15th
Fan Identities (Gender and Sexuality)

DAY 7: Wednesday, February 22nd
Fandom and Race
Rebecca Wanzo, “African American acafandom and other strangers: New genealogies of fan studies,” Transformative Works and Culture, 2015,
Elizabeth Gilliland, “Racebending fandoms and digital futurism,” Transformative Works and Cultures, 2016,
Henry Jenkins, “Negotiating Fandom” (Forthcoming).
Benjamin Woo, “The Invisible Bag of Holding: Whiteness and Media Fandom” (Forthcoming)
Annotated Bibliography Assignment Due

DAY 8: Wednesday, March 1st
Fandom and Authorship


DAY 9: Wednesday, March 8th
Collectors, Archives, and Popular Memory (Guest Speaker: Mark Williams)

Jason Sperb, “Reassuring Convergence: Online Fandom, Race, and Disney’s Notorious Song of the South.” Cinema Journal 49(4), 2010


Henry Jenkins, Excerpts from Comics and Stuff (Work in Progress).


SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS MARCH 15TH.

DAY 10: Wednesday, March 22nd
Produsers and Lead Users

**DAY 11: Wednesday, March 29th – NO CLASS**

**DAY 12: Tuesday, April 1st**
**Fan Labor, Moral Economy, and the Gift Economy**

**Web 2.0 Assignment Due**

**DAY 13: Wednesday, April 5th**
**Fan Expertise, Taste and Mastery**
Alan McKee, "Which is the Best Doctor Who Story? A Case Study in Value Judgment Outside the Academies," *Intensities* 1, 2001


DAY 14: Wednesday, April 12th

Fan Activism

Henry Jenkins, “‘From Culture Jamming to Cultural Acupuncture,” forthcoming


DAY 15: Wednesday, April 19th

Fandoms in National and Transnational Contexts


DAY 16: Wednesday, April 26th
Student Presentations

Final Essay Due on May 7