

Newsreels during the Second Half of the 20th Century: A Worldwide History of Cinema as a News Media

Friday, September 18, 2020

Condorcet Aubervilliers Campus

Seminar sponsored by the Agence nationale de la recherche (ANR)



This seminar aims to present the latest historical research related to the newsreel industry during the second half of the 20th century. Sponsored by the ANR, this event is part of the ANTRACT project, a cross-disciplinary apparatus focused on the analysis of the French newsreel company *Les Actualités Françaises* (1945-1969) and its film production. Founded during the liberation of France, this state-owned company filmed more than 20,000 news reports shown in French cinemas and throughout the world over its 24 years of activity. The ANTRACT project relies on research with a dual historical and technological perspective: its goal is to study the production process, the film content, and the audience reception of the *Actualités Françaises* newsreels using data processing tools developed by the ANTRACT Laboratory Consortium dedicated to image, sound, and text analysis.

Proposed presentations can either be based upon a synchronic approach, emphasizing newsreels as historical markers of their time, or established on a diachronic perspective questioning their use as film archives in today's media. As an inclusive platform, this seminar will promote research presented by international scholars and film collection experts. It will also encourage media producers to share their experiences regarding a recurring challenge: the editorial and technological issues raised by the use of newsreel extracts within contemporary programs. This unprecedented dialogue between the seminar participants will renew and enhance the historiography of these films by assessing their impact on contemporary audiences as vectors of cultural, social, and political history.

Thematic approaches

Presentations can address the following topics:

1. Production system

- Private business versus state-owned companies: newsreel companies within the scope of their legal status.
- The economy of the newsreel industry: production models, the financial role of governments, competition between the private and public sector.
- Newsreel cinematography: the production process of newsreel journals from shooting to mass printing and its influence on the form and the content of film reports.
- The trades of the newsreel industry (cameramen, editors, etc.)
- Gender and status in the work environment of newsreel companies.
- Trade unions and political activism within newsreel firms.
- State censorship procedures concerning newsreels.

2. Content analysis

- Newsreels as transnational, national or regional history carriers.
- Establishment of identities and social affiliation through newsreel editorial policies.
- Collective memory representation sustained by newsreel journals.
- Newsreels versus TV news: a comparative analysis of rival narratives and their production processes.

3. Audience reception

- Cinema programs and theater audiences after World War II.
- Delayed delivery of newsreels after events: technical limitations, economic factors, and geographic inequalities.
- Newsreel innovation and adaptation to audiences' shifting tastes: color, cinemascope, and biweekly editions.
- The worldwide circulation of newsreels and the political agendas of their producers: newsreels distributed in Europe, Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East as instruments of the foreign policies of major powers.
- The use of newsreel extracts within contemporary documentary production.

4. Sound, image, and text automatic recognition programs applied to cinematographic research

IT development in data analysis brings significant technical and methodological support to the exhaustive study of extensive cinematographic corpora. In this regard, presentations can cover the following fields of research:

- Textometric analysis: research on named entities contained in the production records, dope sheets, scripts, and commentary texts linked to one or several film collections.

- Automatic speech and sound recognition: voice-over, interviews, music, and sound effects analysis within one or several film collections.
- Automatic image recognition: faces, animated or inert objects, shot size and angle analysis within one or several film collections.
- Multimodal analysis: joint analysis of image, sound, and texts contained in one or several film collections.

Submission requirements

Applicants are invited to submit presentations of no longer than 15 minutes based upon one or more of the following sources: film, sound, and text documents. Applications must include a text of 2,500 characters maximum and a short author biography with her/his bibliographic references if available.

Please send applications before 20th December 2019 to Pascale Goetschel at the following address: antract2020@gmail.com

The ANTRACT consortium

- Centre d'histoire sociale des mondes contemporains (CHS)
- EURECOM - École d'ingénieur et centre de recherche en sciences du numérique
- Institut d'histoire des représentations et des idées dans les modernités (IHRIM)
- Institut national de l'audiovisuel (INA)
- Laboratoire d'informatique de l'université du Mans (LIUM)
- Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

Scientific board

Jean Carrive (INA)

Pascale Goetschel (Paris 1/CHS)

Serge Heiden (IHRIM)

Franck Mazuet (Paris 1/CHS)

Sylvain Meignier (LIUM)

Bénédicte Pincemin (IHRIM)

Raphaël Troncy (EURECOM)

Organization committee

Jean Carrive (INA)

Pascale Goetschel (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne/CHS)

Franck Mazuet (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne/CHS)

Location

Campus Condorcet-Aubervilliers, Centre de colloques
Ground-floor conference room 0.010

Date

Friday, September 18, 2020

URLs

<https://antract.hypotheses.org/>

<http://histoire-sociale.univ-paris1.fr/spip.php?article996>

<http://ihrim.ens-lyon.fr/recherche/contrats/article/anr-antract-analyse-transdisciplinaire-des-actualites-filmees-1945-1969>

<https://lium.univ-lemans.fr/antract/>

<http://www.eurecom.fr/fr/eurecom/presentation>