

## Professor in media theory (Utrecht Univ, NL)

Oliver Grau

Faculty of Arts

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT:

FULL PROFESSORSHIP IN MEDIA THEORY INSTITUTE FOR MEDIA AND RE/PRESENTATION,  
UTRECHT UNIVERSITY, THE NETHERLANDS

Located within one of the Netherlands' oldest and largest universities, Utrecht University's Faculty of Arts and Letters has nineteen degree programs in the languages and letters of Europe and the Middle-East, the various arts and media, and in history. Research programs are organized into two institutes with extensive national and international links. Special attention is paid to interdisciplinary collaboration, the use of new media, and the quality of teaching. The Faculty is housed in the historic center of the city and enjoys excellent facilities. The Institute of Media and Re/presentation offers studies on the BA, MA and PhD level.

The Institute of Media and Re/presentation seeks a:

### PROFESSOR IN MEDIA THEORY

General Context The media are very much in a state of transition. The printed word, photography, film, television and audio and communication technologies each have their own developmental histories and changing patterns of production, distribution and consumption. Each has, over the years, developed a range of distinctive expressive capacities evident in industrial, artistic, and individual usages. And each has spawned generations of theoretical approaches and modes of analysis. The introduction of digital technologies has offered yet another twist, providing both new media forms (e.g. computer games, the internet, and information technologies) and intervening fundamentally in the form and function of older media forms (e.g. telephony, digital audio and video production and distribution). Digitalization has enabled and encouraged media convergence, evident as much in media ownership patterns, as in systems of textual production, as in the everyday experiences of audiences. And it has facilitated the transformation of communication media as well as information storage, processing, and retrieval systems. The result is a complex fabric of practices and cultural forms, where local media traditions meet global influences; where established media technologies encounter new digital

possibilities; and where ways of theorizing and analyzing the media confront new paradigms and disciplinary influences.

The Professor of Media Theory The Institute for Media and Re/Presentation (Faculty of Arts, Utrecht University) offers an interdisciplinary approach to this dynamic understanding of the media, one rooted in the traditions of the humanities. It seeks an exceptional researcher, an inspired teacher, and a collegial and visionary leader with shared responsibilities for the programs in Communication and Information Studies as well as Film and Television Studies. The new professorship assumes a high level of expertise in the domain of media theory and analysis, ranging from cinema to digital media, complementing an existing professorship in media history. The professor of media theory will demonstrate a broad understanding of the theoretical and methodological contours of humanistic media studies, as well as a specialized knowledge of selected theories within the field. Utrecht's tradition of media study is based upon a contextualized or situated notion of the media text and its experience, whether in terms of historical or cultural setting, reception context, or the understanding of the text as a part of a larger signifying system. In this sense, the theoretical and analytic domains of greatest relevance include such approaches as narrativity, political economy, cultural and gender studies, apparatus theory, identity, subjectivity, inclusion and exclusion, and norms and values. Given the fast-changing state of contemporary media, the professor of media theory must be able to comprehend a variety of media experiences through a particular theoretical lens, while at the same time responding to the dynamic needs of quickly evolving patterns of media deployment and use. Most importantly, she or he must demonstrate an ability to operationalize theory, moving from abstraction to application in the analysis of media forms, experiences, and developmental trends.

The Institute of Media and Re/Presentation seeks a builder of bridges between theory and analysis, between media texts and social/cultural contexts, and between 'old' and 'new' media forms. It is particularly concerned with developing the connection between the theories and methods traditionally associated with humanistic media studies and those now being developed in the area communication and information studies. These latter domains, both because of their recent digital transformation and integration with older media forms, and because of their recent inclusion within the analytic framework of the humanities, remain highly dynamic. The professor of media theory will be charged with continuing to develop a program of study and a program of research for these most recent manifestations of media culture. Such developments as peer-to-peer networks (Napster), on-line and computer-based gaming, and SMS

telephone messaging communities stand at the juncture of traditional media and the new possibilities of the ICT sector, and require continued theorization and analysis. They embody the media practices that the Institute for Media and Re/presentation embraces, and that the professor of media theory will help to 'bridge' through the strategic deployment and development of humanistic media theory.

The creative opportunities to develop a program of teaching and research within media studies generally, and specifically within the new field of communication and information studies, are central to the new professorship. These themes are related to gender and cultural studies, and culture management and culture education. Teaching and research take place at the BA, MA (1 and 2 years), and PhD levels, and are supported by a team of colleagues with expertise in diverse media and with a broad interdisciplinary orientation. The distinction in three levels is new in the Dutch university system and there is a need to build effective links and systematic interconnections between the levels. The Institute maintains a network of relations with colleagues in other Dutch, European, and North American universities (exchange programs with University of California, Santa Barbara and Berkeley; University of Wisconsin, Madison; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and so on) as well as with various media industries, all of which contribute to the resources available for the study of the ongoing development of media technologies, practices, and culture (Rotterdam Film Festival; V2\_Organisation; The National Institute for Image and Sound, etc.).

The professor of media theory will draw on the intellectual legacy of humanistic media studies in order to define a research agenda appropriate to the media challenges facing us. He or she will be responsible for making the most of existing institutional relationships, while developing both new connections as well as new research initiatives. Close collaboration with the existing professors in the Institute as well as with the colleagues in the Research Institute for History and Culture and the Huizinga Institute (Dutch Cultural History Research School) will help to create a sense of synergy; but at the same time, ample space is available for leadership and the development of new projects and perspectives. The new professorship for media theory offers an opportunity for an exceptional researcher and teacher to play a leading role in the conceptualization and analysis of a crucial cultural sector, and the shaping of a generation's understanding of the dynamic media environment that surrounds it.

For this position we ask for: research experience in the profiled area as evidenced by a dissertation, scholarly publications, and participation in

academic congresses; experience with developing research proposals and with PhD advising; teaching experience ranging from large introductory courses to advanced seminars; experience with administration of research as well as teaching programs; experience with multi- and interdisciplinary collaboration; knowledge of the Dutch language and university system is an advantage.

For this position we offer: a permanent, full-time position (an 80% position is discussable); a salary consistent with experience (maximum: EUR 6360 bruto per month) [professor level A, consistent with the CAO (collective labor agreement) for Dutch universities]

The Faculty seeks to expand the number of women in professorships. For these vacancies, all qualified female candidates will be invited for an interview, and in the event of equal competencies, the position will be awarded to the woman.

Interested?

For more information please contact the chair of the search committee:

Professor dr. mr. P.J. van den Hoven, 030-2538093,

Paul.vandenHoven@let.uu.nl .

You can also visit the Institute's website at

<http://www.let.uu.nl/tftv>

The delivery of sample lecture, the submission of a research plan, and a psychological assessment may constitute part of the application process.

NB: Given the late date, a letter of intention submitted before 31 January 2003 is sufficient to hold a place in the selection process. By that point or shortly thereafter, we would appreciate a written application (including a curriculum vitae). Address your correspondence to:

Personnel and Organisation department, drs. M.E.S. Arends

Kromme Nieuwegracht 46

3512 HJ Utrecht The Netherlands, or e-mail PenO@let.uu.nl

Please refer to vacancy number 68249.

This announcement has already been published in a Dutch newspaper in December 2002. The new deadline only applies to candidates from outside the Netherlands.

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Reference:

JOB: Professor in media theory (Utrecht Univ, NL). In: Arthist.net, Jan 24, 2003 (accessed Aug 8, 2025),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/25454>>.