

## **“What’s New about New Media? The Technology of Protest Past and Present”**

Department of History

Carleton University, Ottawa Canada

May 15 and 16th 2014

From the G8 demonstrations to the Occupy Movements, Idle No More, and revolutions in the Middle East, the last few years have witnessed a phenomenal upswing in the use of social media in popular protest. Social technology has played an important role in mobilizing grassroots opposition and, according to some scholars and pundits, it has served to politicize a broader base, bringing about greater participation in and new forms of civic action. Activists use platforms like Flickr, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to raise consciousness around lightning-rod issues. New technologies aid in the organization of demonstrations. They help mobilize emotions, map out logistics, and after all is said and done, they catalogue and document opposition success and further challenges. Social media’s democratizing potential is not without its detractors, however, and alongside concerns for the protection of privacy and surveillance, skeptics question whether networked publics really can serve as meaningful spaces of protest and opposition.

In lending shape to everyday opposition, cataloguing images of excess and exuberance, and circulating them in networked publics, there can be no doubt Web 2.0 is writing a history of the present. Yet aside from the thorny issue of impact, it is worth asking how new is new media in the way it shapes protest and opposition? This two-day symposium takes a *longue durée* approach to this question. It aims to bring together early modern historians with modernists and media/communications scholars to interrogate what is in fact new, different, and unique about how “old” and “new” media have structured, popularized, given voice to, and helped mobilize protest and opposition across time and space.

We will discuss pre-circulated papers of 15 pages in length. Each paper should demonstrate a conceptual engagement with the interplay of time and place-specific media and their relation to public sentiment and opposition. We will also have two keynote addresses, one from a communications scholar, the other from an historian.

### **Themes may include:**

- vernacular forms of protest across time and media
- protest and public engagement, diverse publics, counterpublics
- protest and affect

- protest as performance, the staging of opposition, counter protest and solidarity
- visualizing, spatializing, or mapping violence, resistance, and identity
- media, self, and subjectivity – forging activist or oppositional selves
- networks of opposition and collusion
- rethinking the local, the regional, and the global
- mediatized protest: chronicle, archive, database, scrapbook
- media, protest, and public/social memory

Please forward a short CV and a 1-2 page paper abstract to the following address by **December 15th, 2013**.

Dr. Jennifer Evans  
Associate Professor and Graduate Chair  
Department of History  
1125 Colonel By Drive  
Ottawa, ON  
K1S 4P6

Email: [newmediaconference@carleton.ca](mailto:newmediaconference@carleton.ca)