Abstract:

Drawing from case studies within the history of aerial media, this talk addresses the media logics of communicating from, onto and through the air. Indeed, many attempts in the past century have been made towards turning the sky into a medium of mass communication: searchlights have been experimented with to project onto clouds; planes have been used to drop propaganda leaflets and haul advertisements banners; and blimps and drones have sailed over cities to disseminate signs. Through such examples, I will explore the production of discourses and knowledge about the arts and science of operating media in the sky. In particular, I will develop the concepts of dropping, shooting and scrolling as the media logics of aerial communication while also addressing the transition of so-called “natural” spaces into mediascapes.

Bio:

Ghislain Thibault is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at the Université de Montréal. He received his PhD in 2010 from the Université de Montréal before pursuing postdoctoral work at Harvard University. Appointed as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University in 2011, he later joined the Université de Montréal in 2015. His current research project explores the conceptual and historical relationships between machines and media in mid twentieth-century theories. His recent work in the cultural and material history of media and on the history of philosophy of technology has appeared in journals such as Canadian Literature and the Canadian Journal of Communication, Configurations and VIEW.