

GRADUATE COLLOQUIUM

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Monday, February 22nd, 2016

11:30-12:50

Cornett A125

Dr. Jentery Sayers

Assistant Professor, English Department

Member of the Cultural, Social, and Political Thought program

Director of the Maker Lab in the Humanities

University of Victoria

Prototyping the Past



When conducting archival research, scholars interested in old media frequently encounter devices that no longer work or exist only as illustrations, fictions, or one-offs. Even when component parts or photographs are available, it is incredibly difficult to determine how this became that in a particular moment. Indeed, absences always persist. Rather than studying such uncertainty at a remove, I detail methods for prototyping absences in the historical record, with implications for thinking about materials and meaning across disciplines. Based on laboratory research conducted at the University of Victoria, I draw from three examples of remaking old media---wearable technologies from the 1860s, magnetic recording devices from the 1890s, and various optophones from the twentieth century---to demonstrate how prototyping the past affords unique approaches to examining the contingent relations between then and now.

EVERYONE WELCOME.