

## DISSERTATION SUMMARY:

My dissertation, *Tactical Encounters: Material Rhetoric and the Politics of Tactical Media*, articulates the concept of material rhetorical tactics, discrete rhetorical moves effecting political and social change, however ephemeral. I argue that *material* rhetorical tactics do not necessarily originate or conclude with a human subject, and that to understand this, we must reorient our conceptions of rhetorical action, agency, and, ultimately, publicness, to include actions, actors, agents, and events that are not, in themselves, human. This project, thus, builds on recent work in rhetorical theory that has done much to conceptualize the public function and nature of rhetoric as involving agents human and nonhuman, linked together in ecologies that exceed intentional, human rhetorical “situations.” I argue that these ecologies still need a concept of rhetorical tactics, which I develop in this dissertation.

To develop this concept, I analyze a media practice called “tactical media,” which is the use of media devices and systems for social and political change through hacking, altering, perverting or redirecting their functions. This practice shows itself as a privileged site for this analysis, since it attempts to effect sociopolitical change by and through technical media, and tactical media practitioners are well aware of the material tendencies and suasive forces that technologies bring into political situations and understand that such situations themselves are often constituted through media technologies. I develop a concept of material rhetorical tactics that does not originate nor conclude solely in an intending human subject, but implicates multiple materialities and forces, to model effective tactics once the role of human agency is reoriented.