

EMAC 6300
Fall 2014
Thurs. 7-10pm
JO 3.906

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Introduction to Theories of Emerging Media and Communication

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR EMAC GRADUATE COURSES:

1. Articulate an understanding of critical theories in emerging media and communication studies.
2. Demonstrate advanced perspectives on emerging media practices.
3. Create original research in the digital realm that demonstrates your artistic and technical skills.
4. Engage in the professional world that encompasses emerging media technologies and communications.

DESCRIPTION OF 6300: This course will introduce you to theories of emerging media and communication. In the first part of the course, we will consider the history of media and communication technologies, as well as the major theoretical approaches developed to explain the relationship among existing social, political, and economic structures and the development and use of media and communication technologies. In the second part, we will examine contemporary emerging media (especially, but not only, the Internet) in light of these theories, and what effect they are having in selected sites (knowledge production and information ownership; community formation; aesthetics and culture; surveillance; social justice efforts; labor; and modes of socializing). In all instances, our study will be illuminated through the examples provided by case studies. In practical terms, this course is intended to provide you with a firm grasp of how professionals both in the academy and outside it conceptualize media, technology, and communication; to give you deeper insights that might help you advance your own thinking and/or practice; and to expand your knowledge of how media and communication technologies are being integrated into various industries, social formations, and institutions today.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Participation (25%): Since this is a small seminar, your participation is vital. I will not be marking off an official account of that participation each class meeting, but I realize you will want some sort of accounting, so by the fifth week in the semester I will indicate if your participation grade needs improvement. On the reading schedule below, there are days that include an exercise. Your answers to that exercise will be considered part of your participation grade.

Blog Posts (25%): I'll assign everyone to one of two groups, and each group will create blog posts biweekly, with responses also biweekly. In other words, you are rotating between posting one week, responding to posts the next week. Your blog *post* should be posted by Tuesday, 12 midnight before class; *responses* are due no later than Sunday midnight (after our class meeting). Posts should be about 500 words; responses, at least a full paragraph. The URL for our blog is EMAC6300fall2014.wordpress.com. (See the end of this syllabus for a more detailed explanation of posts.)

Presentations/case studies (10%): Each student will give one presentation; some weeks there will be the options of doing a case study, while others will have the option of an additional reading (a short one, I promise). The purpose of the presentation is to give you experience in a public speaking situation; to aid your fellow students by contextualizing the reading, either illuminating it through your case study or contextualizing it through the perspective added by an additional reading; and to spark conversation. To that end, your presentation should conclude with a set of questions (at least 3) addressed to your fellow students. Everyone must speak to me at least one week before the case study/presentation so that I can okay your selection or, if you desire, direct you toward appropriate possibilities. Consulting with me will be a factor into the grade for this assignment.

Midterm (15%): The midterm will be a take-home essay. You are allowed to use your notes, your reading, and so forth, but if you quote from any sources, including the Internet, you **MUST** include a citation. Please refer to the University's policies on academic integrity (included below).

Final research paper (25%): Your final paper will explore a topic of your choosing, analyzed via the course readings and other secondary sources that you select in consultation with me. We will discuss this in more detail in fourth week of the course; there will be due dates for the paper's annotated bibliography and proposal after the midterm.

Required texts:

boyd, *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*

Drahos and Brathwaite, *Information Feudalism: Who Owns the Knowledge Economy?*

Eubanks, *Digital Dead End: Fighting for Social Justice in the Information Age*

Neff, *Venture Labor: Work and the Burden of Risk in Innovative Industries*

Starr, *The Creation of the Media*

Course readings are available through the library e-reserves. The URL is <http://utdallas.docutek.com/eres/coursepass.aspx?cid=1745>, and the password is <xxx>.

Contacting me: I check email (olivia.banner@utdallas.edu) regularly from about 7am until 6pm; after that, intermittently until about 8-8:30pm, at which point I disconnect. (I also stay away from networked devices on Saturday and Sunday.) Try to contact me before then; if for some reason you think you must communicate something to me and receive a response between 8:30pm and 7am, believe me, it's not a necessity. It can wait. I'm fairly lenient on matters of deadlines, as long as it's clear you're doing your best in general to hit them. Also, if you don't receive a reply within 24 hours, please feel free to nudge me again. I'm sometimes deluged by emails.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

NOTE: All readings subject to change, especially in the first few weeks as I assess students' backgrounds. If this poses a problem for you, please speak with me individually.

Week 1: Introductions

Week 2: Defining terms and historical moments

- Peters, "Introduction: The Problem of Communication," *Speaking into the Air* (e-reserves)
- Marx, "Technology: The Emergence of a Hazardous Concept" (handout)

- Gitelman, from “Introduction” to *Always Already New*, pp. 1-8 (e-reserves)
- Williams, “Media” (there are other keywords from Williams included here – please skim these and hold onto them to refer to throughout the semester) (e-reserves)
- Morus, “The Nervous System of Britain” (handout)

Exercise 1: Where do you see parallels to the telegraph and how people thought of it in our contemporary surrounding mediascape and/or communication technologies? Please bring one example to class.

Some questions to consider for your posts: 1) Is the telegraph (as Morus and the sources he relies on describe it) a medium, a technology, and/or a mode of communication?

2) Does Morus ever use the term “technology” in the “hazardous” way that Marx explains is so common?

3) Do the explanations and definitions that Marx, Gitelman, and Peters give us for our key terms overlap in any ways?

Group A posts (by 9.2, 12 midnight)

Group B responds (by 9.7, 12 midnight)

Week 3: The Many Alternatives to Determinism, or, Yup, We’re Not Reading McLuhan

- MacKenzie and Wacjman, “The Social Shaping of Technology”
- Mackay and Gillepsie, “Extending the Social Shaping of Technology Approach: Ideology and Appropriation”
- McChesney, “How Can the Political Economy of Communication Help Us Understand the Internet” from *Digital Disconnect* or “Introduction” to his *Political Economy of Media*

Exercise: Consider the recent events in Ferguson, which have combined a wealth of media (video cameras), communicative media (Twitter), and technologies (assault rifles, stun grenades, tear gas canisters). In what ways do they seem to support the case for technological determinism? In what ways do they support the social shaping of technology thesis? In what ways do they support the extension of the social shaping of technology approach offered by Mackay and Gillepsie?

Case Study

Group B posts (9.9)

Group A responds (9.14)

Week 4: History

- Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media*

Exercise & suggestions for posts: What models does Starr use in thinking about the technology-society relationship (if “society” is even the right term here)?

Case Studies (using *Narrating Media History*)

Group A posts (9.16)

Group B responds (9.21)

Week 5: Technical Structures, Political Structures

- Appendix *Blown to Bits*
- Townes, “The Spread of TCP/IP and the Political Origins of the Internet”
- Castells, “Why Networks Matter”
- Galloway, “Protocols vs. Institutionalization”

Case Study

Exercise: Find an example where the trope of “the network” is used. Look carefully at the structure of the thing being so named. Does it hold any of the characteristics Castells identifies? Does it seem to fall under what Galloway describes? Please bring this example to class.

Group B posts (9.23)

Group A responds (9.28)

Week 6: Publics

- Habermas, “The Public Sphere: Encyclopedia Article”
- Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere”
- Kelty, “Geeks, Social Imaginaries, and Recursive Publics”

Exercise: Find a recent example where someone uses the term “public sphere.” What do they mean by it?

Case Study (Twitter)

Group A posts

Group B responds

Week 7: Knowledge, Power

- Marx & Engels, “The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas”
- Gramsci, “History of the Subaltern Classes”
- Levy, from *Collective Intelligence*
- Carr, “The Amoralism of Web2.0”

Case Study: (Wikipedia, Gender, and the West)

Exercise: Select three sites you visit often. Visit the “About” or other page devoted to who staffs the company. Note what sorts of people occupy specific positions: e.g., Ownership, Management, Tech Operations, Customer Service, Business Relations, Press, etc.

Group B posts

Group A responds

midterm handed out

Week 8: Audiences, Commodities, Participants?

- Smythe, “The Audience as Commodity”
- Rosen, “The People Formerly Known as the Audience”
- Jenkins, “Quentin Tarantino’s Star Wars?”
- Fuchs, “Social Media as Ideology: The Limits of the Participatory Public Thesis”
- O’Reilly, “What Is Web 2.0?”

midterm due: no posts

Week 9: Identity

- AAUW, “Why So Few? Women in STEM,” Executive Summary
- Turkle, “Computational Reticence: Why Women Fear the Intimate Machine”
- Miller, “Technology’s Man Problem,” www.nytimes.com/2014/04/06/technology/technologys-man-problem.html
- Bryant, “Girls of Color + CODING = Radical Act,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bSmdUGw90g>

- Warwick, “The Myths of Entrepreneurship”
- “Male Programmer Privilege Checklist,”
http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Male_Programmer_Privilege_Checklist
- Goggin, “Connecting Disability: New Modes of Participation and Communication”
- Amanda Bagg’s blog, <http://ballastexistenz.wordpress.com/>

Case Studies

Exercise: Consider the Wiki page for feminism. Look carefully at the edits page. Alternately, you could choose another topic that spurs heated responses and consider its Wiki page and associated edit page.

Group A posts

Group B responds

Week 10: Aesthetics and Tactical Media

- Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, “Introduction,” chaps. 1-3
- Dery, “Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing, and Sniping in the Empire of Signs,”
http://markdery.com/?page_id=154

Exercise: Select your favorite web site – a news site, a cultural commentary site, a SNS, an “interactive” site: it’s up to you. Then apply Bolter and Grusin’s theory to that site. What other media does the web interface remediate? Where do you see immediacy; where hypermediacy? Now select a non-Internet form of media – TV, a movie screen, a fitness tracker, even (as Bolter and Grusin do) “the body” as a medium. Ask the same two questions of it: What other media does the web interface remediate? Where do you see immediacy; where hypermediacy?

To think about: How do Bolter and Grusin envision transformations to aesthetics – is it due to social, political economic, historical, formal, etc. influences? In other words, of the theories of technologies we looked at in Week 4, which one is operating here – or which ones? Is anything excluded from this kind of theory/criticism?

Case Studies

Exercise: Visit the following two sites. What do you think?

- FORCE, “Pink Loves Consent,”
http://pinklovesconsent.com/pink/pink.victoriassecret.com/about_pink_nation.html
- FORCE, “Playboy’s Top Ten Party Commandments,” <http://partywithplayboy.com/>

Group B posts

Group A responds

Week 11: Surveillance and Control: Big Brother and Little Brother

- Foucault, excerpts, *Discipline and Punish*
- Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control”
- Andrejevic, “Intelligence Glut: Policing, Security, and Predictive Analysis”
- Cheney-Lippold, “A New Algorithmic Identity: Soft Biopolitics and the Modulations of Control”

Exercise: For the week prior to class install Ghostery and MaskMe on your browser. What did they tell you? Make sure they are still installed for our class meeting.

Case Study

Group A posts

Group B responds

Week 12: Intellectual Property, Ownership

- Drahos and Brathwaite, *Information Feudalism: Who Owns the Knowledge Economy?*
- Watch REMIX

Case Study**Group B posts****Group A responds**

Week 13: Labor

- Neff, *Venture Labor: Work and the Burden of Risk in Innovative Industries*

Exercise: Select a social media or Internet company. In the press, how does the company present its working conditions? Register at glassdoor.com; collect reviews about a job category at your selected company. What are the working conditions really like at this company?

Case Study**Group A posts****Group B responds**

Week 14: Activism

- Virginia Eubanks, *Digital Dead End*

Group B posts**Group A responds**

Week 15: The Kids Are Alright?

- danah boyd, *It's Complicated*

POLICIES AND MISCELLANEOUS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Scholastic Dishonesty: Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting for credit any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. *Plagiarism*, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source, is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details).

DISABILITY:

It is the policy and practice of The University of Texas at Dallas to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. However, written notification from the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA) is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for a course, please discuss it with an OSA staff member and allow at least one week's advanced notice. Students who have questions about receiving accommodations, or those who have, or think they

may have, a disability (mobility, sensory, health, psychological, learning, etc.) are invited to contact the Office of Student AccessAbility for a confidential discussion. The primary functions of the Office of Student AccessAbility are to provide: 1) academic accommodations for students with a documented permanent physical, mental or sensory disability 2) non-academic accommodations 3) resource and referral information and advocacy support as necessary and appropriate. OSA is located in the Student Services Building, suite 3.200. They can be reached by phone at (972) 883-2098, or by email at disabilityservice@utdallas.edu.

TECHNOLOGY USE IN CLASS

You may bring your laptop and phone to class – in fact, please do, because we will need them for some exercises. However, you may ONLY use them to access the class readings, posts, or material you've saved for the day's exercise; you may not use them to IM, post to a SNS, or do anything else involving communicating with someone outside the classroom. **NO CELL PHONE USE ALLOWED IN CLASS.** We'll take a break halfway through class; please save your texting and calling until then.

TIPS FOR SUCCEEDING IN THIS CLASS (AND ALL 6000-LEVEL COURSES)

GETTING HELP:

I'm here to help lead you through this new material. Reach out to me at any point, regarding any concerns. Do not be embarrassed if you don't understand something; ask questions. I'm available for appointments outside of the stated office hours above, and for graduate students I'm willing to arrange to meet or talk by phone or Skype on weekends.

READING:

Do the reading, and, if you can, print it out. We are all concerned about the cost of education, and I realize that course materials increase your burden. That is one reason anything that is not in book form has been posted online, to relieve you of having to pay printing and copyright costs. There are two huge drawbacks to this system: the first concerns the loss of income for authors, which we'll be discussing in the second half of the class; the second is that reading using electronic devices may decrease how much of the information you retain and engage with, since those devices are so often networked into tempting distractions. My advice is that, if you can do so, you print out the reading materials and read them on paper, using the old school methods of a pen to underline and to take marginal notes. If you can't, try your best to download the material and then unplug from the network. All of us are undergoing rapid changes to our attention spans due to our exposure to flickering screens, and at the very least following these suggestions will give you some practice in attempting deep reading.

GUIDELINES FOR POSTS:

Blogs are a way of continuing learning outside of class, because they continue to foster conversation around our meetings. The intention of a graduate-course blog is to give you experience in what it means to engage in academic conversation. To enable such an experience, I have selected key documents in media and communication studies that have either been seminal in stimulating whole fields of study or are building on those seminal works to take them into new territories. Some will prove illuminating; some may be challenging to understand; you may not agree with some of them. However, as

graduate students, it is your job to accept that they cannot be dismissed and must be grappled with. Here is how to go about that.

In general, the goal for a post is not to summarize the reading's argument, since you can assume that your readers (myself and your classmates) have also done the reading and know the reading's argument. Your goal is to engage with the reading. You could do that in these ways:

- 1) Pursue a claim the author makes by relating it to another concept you're familiar with. In this way, you are developing or adding to the reading.
- 2) Suggest a modification to a claim the author makes, using an example of something you're familiar with. *This does not mean arguing the entire reading is wrong.* It means breaking off one element of the reading's argument and showing strengths and weaknesses in that individual element.
- 3) Contextualize the reading. This means A) considering it in light of other material we've read (e.g., how does the reading from week 4 overlap with concepts from week 3's reading); B) putting it into historical context (for this class, this may only apply to readings from week 2); C) if you know the broader academic conversation into which the reading enters, providing that additional knowledge. B & C will not apply that much for this semester, but they will if you take my course next semester, and they will also for future EMAC 6000 level courses.
- 4) You're confused by the reading, because it contains words/concepts you're not familiar with. Your post can then be a record of how you tracked down definitions for terms that were stumbling blocks to your comprehension, and, once you had a clear definition under your belt, what part of the reading that helped you to understand.

Blog etiquette: This is a space that requires you engage in mutual respect for ideas and for those who present them. Please be courteous and civil to your fellow posters; this is not the place to troll. Remember as well that other people are depending on you to post your contribution in a timely fashion, so get your work done on time.