

EMAC 6300: Theories of Emerging Media & Communication

Fall 2016

Instructor: Gavin Mueller

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Office Hours: T 2-4pm / by appointment

Course Description: This course will introduce you to theories of emerging media and communication. 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. We will also examine contemporary emerging media and the effects they are having on 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.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand critical theories in emerging media and communication studies.
2. Demonstrate advanced perspectives on the issues raised by emerging media practices.
3. Perform original research in the digital realm that demonstrates your artistic, technical, and/or research skills.
4. Engage in the professional world that encompasses emerging media technologies and communications, through microblogging, blogging, Wikipedia editing, and so forth.

Texts

- Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter, *Games of Empire*
- Eubanks, *Digital Dead End*
- Gillom and Monahan, *SuperVision*
- Gunkel, *Of Remixology*
- Marwick, *Status Update*
- Pasquale, *Black Box Society*
- Parks and Starosielski, *Signal Traffic*
- Stokes, *How to Do Media and Cultural Studies*

Assignments

Participation (20%)

This class is organized as a seminar, so your contributions are a vital part of the course. It is imperative that you show up to every class, on time, attentive and prepared to contribute to class discussion. There will not be formal participation scores for each class, but I will give you an update

Wiki (20%)

For selected readings, the class will collaboratively produce summaries on a Wiki. These wiki entries should explain *key terms and concepts*, *main arguments* made in the reading, and *connections* to other readings and discussions. In class, those who wrote the wiki entry will be responsible for sharing what they wrote, in particular the section about “connections.”

You'll be divided into two groups, Stars (***) and Pluses (+++). Your group is responsible for producing a wiki entry on the assigned readings marked with your symbol by 5 PM on the day class meets. The other group is responsible for revisions for that entry, due at the end of the week (Friday 7pm).

I will consult with your group on organizing the work collaboratively, but you will have autonomy on how to do this. You will produce a peer grade that evaluates how each of your team members works together during the semester. This will determine part, but not all, of your grade.

Case Study (15%)

For one class, you will have to bring in a case study pertinent to the week's readings, but is not included in them (for example, if the reading is about Facebook, you can't do a case study of Facebook, but you could use the author's work to analyze another social media platform). The goal is to *crystalize* the important concepts and applications of the text(s), *extend* them into analysis of other objects, and *critique and refine* those concepts and theories in light of the case you bring to bear. Your case study will be a way to introduce the reading: it will consist of a 20-30 minute presentation at the beginning of seminar, and an outline you turn in to me. You should do the following:

1. Describe your object -- assume we have no experience with it (you may assume we have experience with the day's text(s)).
2. Give a brief history of the object's history, including its cultural impact. When did it arise? What other technologies does it draw from? What kinds of debates have occurred about its significance?
3. Apply specific concepts and theories from the text(s) to this object, and use the object to expand and critique the text. How does this object fit the theoretical frameworks of the

text(s)? How does it challenge or alter them? If we have multiple texts, be sure to say something about each of them.

Midterm (20%)

The midterm will be in take-home essay format. You will have one week to complete it, and you may use resources from the course (including the wiki) to complete it.

Final 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 later in the course; there will be due dates for the paper's annotated bibliography, proposal, and an outline after the midterm.

Course & Instructor Policies

Contact: Email is by far the most reliable way to contact me. I check email at least once a day and respond quickly, though it may take me an extra day on the weekend. You should also check your university email once a day: you are responsible for communication, including updates or revisions to the syllabus or assignments, transmitted via email.

Late Work: Late assignments are subject to a 20% penalty each day they are late. If you know you have a conflict or issue, I may grant you an extension, but *only* if you *contact me ahead of time* and we work out an alternate schedule. Contacting me after the due date will not work. When in doubt, email me!

Extra Credit: TBD (don't count on it!)

Special Needs: If you have a disability that requires a formal accommodation, please register with the [Office of AccessAbility](#). If you suspect you have a disability, or even if you just have questions, please contact them – conversations with them are fully confidential. The office is located in SSB 3.200, and can be contacted at 972-883-2098 or studentaccess@utdallas.edu.

Academic Honesty: You are expected to do your own work. Misrepresenting another's work as yours is an extremely serious offense, and accordingly, I take it extremely seriously. Plagiarism or cheating can create a permanent blight on your academic record. Don't do it, it's *never* worth it! If you have questions, email me. More information here: <http://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/manage-dishonesty/>

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

Disclaimer

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

Schedule

WEEK 1 INTRODUCTIONS

T 8/23 Go over the syllabus, Wiki tutorial

WEEK 2 DOING MEDIA AND CULTURAL STUDIES

T 8/30

Read: Stokes

WEEK 3 INFRASTRUCTURE

T 9/6

*****/+++Read:** Parks and Starosielski (we will divide chapters for the Wiki between the groups)

WEEK 4 IDEOLOGY

T 9/13

*****Read:** Barlow, “[A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace](#)”

Barbrook and Cameron, “[The Californian Ideology](#)”

Winner, “[Cyberlibertarian Myths and the Prospect for Community](#)”

Cegłowski, “[The Moral Economy of Tech](#)”

“[The Internet of Things Has a Dirty Secret](#)”

WEEK 5 PARTICIPATION

T 9/20

+++Read: [Networked Publics](#) (Introduction and Ch. 2 “Culture”)

Jenkins, “Quentin Tarantino’s Star Wars?” (e-reserves)

Fuchs, “The Limits of the Participatory Public Thesis” (e-reserves)

WEEK 6 SURVEILLANCE

T 9/27

*****Read:** Gillom and Monahan

Browne, "Digital Epidermalization: Race, Identity and Biometrics" (e-reserves)

WEEK 7 ALGORITHMS

T 10/4

+++Read: Pasquale

Hand out take-home midterm

WEEK 8 MIDTERM

T 10/11 Film Screening TBA

MIDTERM DUE

WEEK 9 SOCIAL MEDIA

T 10/18

*****Read:** Marwick

WEEK 10 GAMES

T 10/25

+++Read: de Peuter and Dyer-Witheford

Final paper proposal due

WEEK 11 LABOR

T 11/1

+++Read: Terranova, "[Free Labor](#)"

Zuboff - "[Surveillance Capitalism](#)"

Rosenblat, "[The Truth About How Uber's App Manages Drivers](#)"

Golumbia, "[The Amazonization of Everything](#)"

Scholz, "[The People's Uber](#)"

WEEK 12 POLITICS

T 11/8

*****Read:** Eubanks

Annotated bibliography due

WEEK 13 AESTHETICS

T 11/15

*****Read:** Gunkel

Dery, "[Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing, and Sniping in the Empire of Signs](#)"

WEEK 14 FALL BREAK

T 11/22 NO CLASS

WEEK 15 GEOPOLITICS

T 11/29

+++Read: Schiller, "The Militarization of U.S. Communications" (e-reserve)

Manjoo, "[Why the World is Drawing Battle Lines Against American Tech Giants](#)"

Agrawal, "[Why India rejected Facebook's 'free' version of the Internet](#)"

Gurstein, "['Internet Freedom' and Post-Snowden Global Internet Governance](#)"

Final paper outline due

WEEK 16

T 12/5 Final Paper Presentations and Critique

WEEK 17

Final Paper due by NOON on MONDAY, DECEMBER 11