

EMAC 2322: Theories of Emerging Media & Communication

Spring 2017

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Description: The course will examine the history and theory of digital communications with a critical view of their effects on society. The focus will be on the role of the Internet in contemporary life. We will foster your ability to think critically about your media environment by providing skills necessary to be better producers and receivers of media and mediated messages.

Learning objectives:

1. Understand the social, political, ethical, and legal ramifications of the Internet and networked technologies
2. Be able to apply basic theoretical concepts to media and communication technologies
3. Communicate with the new media community through the use of contemporary digital tools and platforms.
4. Engage in the collaborative production of knowledge

Assignments:

Participation (20%)

Because of the collaborative nature of the course, your ideas are both expected and greatly valued by your professor and your peers. Each individual possesses unique personal experiences and unique patterns of reading, thinking and learning that will us to understand more thoroughly the nature of issues in emerging media and communication. We each carry a responsibility to share those ideas, as well as an equal responsibility to foster an atmosphere conducive to productive collaboration, in which everyone feels safe to express openly ideas, opinions, questions and doubts. Thus, a portion of your grade will be based on class participation.

Participation comes from two ways. The most important is *physical, attentive presence in the classroom*. *Physical* means you have to be here: If you miss *more than three* classes, it will begin to affect your participation grade. *Attentive* means you have to be involved in the class, by coming prepared to discuss the material.

The second method of participation comes from the class Slack. Slack is a platform that allows us to chat and share content in an easy and streamlined way outside of class time. We'll use it for assignments, but you can also use it for free-form discussion, resource sharing, and even creating your own collaborative spaces with your classmates. I'll pop in to chat as well, especially if you tag me, although email is best for important communication. There isn't a required amount you have to use Slack, but I'd like to see you try!

By Week 5 I will give you feedback if your participation needs improvement in some way.

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 one hour before class meets. The other group is responsible for revisions for that entry, due at the end of the week (Friday 7pm). So for example, if Tuesday has a ***, then the Stars make the wiki before class, and the Pluses revise that entry AFTER class, incorporating clarifications and additions from class discussion. Some weeks both groups will have to produce a wiki entry (for example, Stars on Tuesday, Pluses on Thursday) -- each group will revise the others' entry by 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 at two points in the semester. This will determine part, but not all, of your grade.

Midterm Paper (15%)

The paper will be the most traditional assignment in the class. You will write a 5 page (1250-1500 word) essay in which you summarize and respond to the course material and make connections across texts. You must cite at least SIX sources from at least FIVE different class periods. If the class wiki is in good shape, this should be a breeze!

Mini-Projects (5% each, 20% total)

We will have four small projects throughout the semester. I will give you more specific instructions for each project when it approaches. Projects should be posted in Slack (click the plus sign and select “Create a post”). All projects should be posted to Slack one hour before class starts on the day they are due.

Final Presentation (25%)

Your final presentation will be a synthesis of the approaches we’ve examined in class. While the final format will be a presentation, it should still consist of the elements you would find in a research paper: an introduction, thesis statement presenting an argument, evidence and rhetorical support to support that argument, a conclusion, and cited works. This is an opportunity for you to use the tools from class to investigate a topic of interest to you, and to teach your peers something new. In the spirit of the class, I am especially interested in creative interventions! Final presentations will be either individual or as a group of two.

Texts:

- Abelson, Ledeen, and Lewis, *Blown to Bits* – available in print or in PDF [here](#).
- M.T. Anderson, *Feed* -- available in print from campus bookstore or Off-Campus Books

Course & Instructor Policies

Contact: You can tag me in Slack if you think it is a question about class content that others would benefit from seeing answered. Private issues should be dealt with via email -- use your UT Dallas email for this. 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 (do you have ideas?)

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 of Assignments

WEEK 1 Introductions, Beginnings

T 1/10 Introductions to syllabus, Wiki and Slack

R 1/12

Read: Imagining the Internet - "[1960s-1990s Internet](#)"

Blown to Bits, Ch. 1

[optional] Bush - "[As We May Think](#)"

WEEK 2 HACKER CULTURE AND THE EARLY INTERNET

T 1/17

*****Read:** Douglas Thomas - Hacker Culture (Introduction) (e-res)

J.P. Barlow - "[A Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace](#)"

Timothy Leary - "[The Cyber-Punk: The Individual as Reality Pilot](#)" (e-res)

R 1/19

+++Read: Townes - "[The Spread of TCP/IP and the Political Origins of the Internet](#)" (e-res)

Richard Stallman - "[Philosophy of the GNU Project](#)" "[What Is Free Software?](#)" "[Why Free](#)

[Software is More Important Now Than Ever](#)

WEEK 3 INFRASTRUCTURES

T 1/24

Read: *Blown to Bits*, Appendix

Blum - "[Netscapes](#)"

Lee - "[40 Maps that Explain the Internet](#)" (1-16)

R 1/26

*****Read:** Ford Foundation - "[Roads and Bridges: The Unseen Labor Behind Our Digital Infrastructure](#)" (pp. 8-36, 53-88, but skim the rest!)

WEEK 4 WEB 2.0 AND PARTICIPATION

T 1/31

+++Read: Tim O'Reilly - [What Is Web 2.0?](#)

Clay Shirky - "[Gin, Television, and Social Surplus](#)"

Jay Rosen - "[The People Formerly Known as the Audience](#)"

R 2/2

Read: Jenkins - "[How To Watch a Fan Vid](#)"

POST a fan vid to Slack with a brief (1-2 paragraphs) analysis drawn from Jenkins

WEEK 5 MEMES

T 2/7

*****Read:** Shifman - *Memes* Ch. 2-4 (e-reserves)

Nick Hudson - "[It's Supposed to Look Like Sh*t](#)" (e-res)

R 2/9

Read: Hudson Hongo - [The Rise of Weird Facebook](#)

MEME ASSIGNMENT DUE

WEEK 6 Intellectual Property

T 2/14

+++Read: *Blown to Bits* Chapter 6

R 2/16

*****Read:** Lessig - [Remix](#) (pp. 1-19)

Duncan Geere - "[The History of Creative Commons](#)"

[About Creative Commons Licenses](#)

WEEK 7 OPEN ACCESS

T 2/21

+++Read: "[Guerilla Open Access Manifesto](#)"
Laskow - "[The Rise of Pirate Libraries](#)"

R 2/23 MIDTERM DUE

SCREENING: The Internet's Own Boy (2014)

WEEK 8 PRIVACY AND SURVEILLANCE

T 2/28

***Read: *Blown to Bits* Chapter 2

R 3/2

+++Read: Mark Andrejevic - "[Surveillance and the Digital Enclosure](#)" (e-res)
Play: [Data Dealer](#) (watch the trailer first!)

WEEK 9 SOCIAL MEDIA

T 3/7

FACEBOOK SURVEILLANCE ASSIGNMENT DUE

R 3/9

***Read: Charles Peterson - "[In the World of Facebook](#)"
[optional] Zadie Smith - "[Generation Why?](#)"

WEEK 10 SPRING BREAK

T 3/14 NO CLASS

R 3/16 NO CLASS

WEEK 11 ALGORITHMS

T 3/21 +++Read: *Blown to Bits* Chapter 4
"[What Is Google Poetics?](#)"

Browse: [Google Poetics](#), [Poetweets](#), [Times Haiku](#)

R 3/23

***Read: Seaver - "[Knowing Algorithms](#)"

Miller - "[When Algorithms Discriminate](#)"

Honan - "[I Liked Everything I Saw On Facebook for Two Weeks](#)"

WEEK 12 MAINTENANCE

T 3/28 ALGORITHM ASSIGNMENT DUE

R 3/30 WORKSHOP

FINAL PRESENTATION PROPOSAL DUE

WEEK 13 FEED

T 4/3

+++Read: *Feed* Part 1 and 2 (up to page 72)

R 4/5 *Feed* (94-119, 139-150, 190-214)

WEEK 14: LABOR

T 4/10

*****Read:** Rob Horning - "[Social Media, Social Factory](#)"

Laurel Ptak - "[Wages for Facebook](#)"

Chen - "[The Laborers Who Keep D*ck Pics and Beheadings Out of Your FB Feed](#)"

+++R 4/12

Read: Light - "[When Computers Were Women](#)"

WEEK 15 MAINTENANCE

T 4/17 LABOR ASSIGNMENT DUE

R 4/19 WORKSHOP

Bring Materials to Class!

WEEK 16

T 4/24

FINAL PRESENTATIONS, DAY 1

R 4/26

FINAL PRESENTATIONS, DAY 2