

COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

RTF 309/COM 309 – Unique #07900

Fall 2010

MWF 9:00-10:00, CMA A2.320

Professor

Jacqueline Vickery

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Teaching Assistants

Stephanie Appell

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Michael Nevradakis

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Mandatory Discussion Sections

W 5-6

BIO 301

Michael Nevradakis

W 6-7

BEN 1.104

Michael Nevradakis

Th 5-6

MEZ 1.122

Stephanie Appell

Th 6-7

MEZ 1.122

Stephanie Appell

Course Description

This course examines the context and significance of contemporary information and communication technologies and institutions. It offers an overview of the social and political dimensions of these technologies, surveys their historical development and current uses, and highlights some of the significant social issues and conflicts they raise. We use communication and sociological theories to make sense of the relationships between communication technologies, social uses, and social changes. We pay special attention to ongoing dilemmas in contemporary communication policy and practice such as democracy and civic engagement, the protection of privacy and personal information, digital inclusion, intellectual property, youth engagement with new technologies, and information literacy.

This course has 3 objectives:

1. The course offers students the conceptual and analytical tools necessary to examine the real and potential influences of contemporary communication technologies.
2. It provides students with a working knowledge of the development, organization, and operation of different communication technologies and institutions.
3. It highlights the social choices students face as citizens, consumers, producers, and future media professionals in their own encounters with communication technologies.

Readings

REQUIRED: The course packet is available at Jenn's Copy (2518 Guadalupe, 482-0779, jenns2@io.com) and on reserve at PCL.

Screenings

We will watch several films in class this semester. In the event that you are absent the day of a screening the films will be made available in the IMC (5th floor of CMA) the day after the screening and will remain available until the day of the exam.

Course Evaluation

10 Reading Assignments (4% each) = 40%
3 Exams (15% each) = 45%
Attendance & Participation = 15%
Total = 100%

I will convert the total number of points to the final grade using a plus/minus system according to the following scale:

93-100	A	77-79	C+	60-62	D-
90-92	A-	73-76	C	59 or lower	F
87-89	B+	70-72	C-		
83-86	B	67-69	D+		
80-82	B-	63-66	D		

Course Assignments & Exams

Reading Assignments

You will write a 1-page response paper to 10 of the weekly readings assigned throughout the semester. You will choose no more than 1 reading per week - this means you CANNOT turn in 2 papers for the same week.

Each paper should include 1 paragraph that summarizes the reading's main ideas or arguments. Your summary should clearly state the MOST IMPORTANT points from the reading. The second paragraph should include your own perspectives, critiques, raise specific questions related to the reading, note what the reading failed to address, or appropriately apply theories and concepts from lecture to the reading.

All papers MUST have 1" margins, double spaced, and use Times New Roman font. You will turn the papers into your TA in sections. TAs will evaluate the reading assignments as good (100%), satisfactory (80%), or unsatisfactory (60%).

If you receive an unsatisfactory (60%) you have the opportunity to re-write the paper and turn it in (with the original) the NEXT week for a re-grade. If the re-write receives a higher grade than the original the new grade will replace your unsatisfactory (60%) grade. Papers which receive a satisfactory (80%) are NOT eligible for re-writes.

Extra Credit You may choose to write an additional 11th paper in order to potentially drop your lowest paper grade (i.e.: If you have an 80% on a previous assignment and earn a 100% on the 11th paper then the 100% will replace the 80% on ONE assignment).

Exams

There will be 3 non-cumulative exams throughout the semester. Exams will be a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and short answer questions based on course readings, lectures, screenings, and class discussions. I will NOT schedule a make-up exam without written documentation demonstrating your absence was necessary.

Attendance & Participation

There will be 11 pop quizzes worth 1 point each given in lecture throughout the semester. You MUST be present to take the quiz – make-ups are NOT available. The quizzes will consist of 1 multiple choice question - if you are present in lecture that week you should know the answer to the question. These quizzes will count towards your overall attendance and participation grade and will also help you prepare for the exams.

In addition, attendance will be taken EVERY WEEK in discussion sections – each week you are present you earn 1 point towards your attendance grade for a total of 14 possible attendance points.

You are expected to PARTICIPATE in the discussions - not paying attention, sleeping, texting, browsing Facebook, etc. will negatively affect your overall participation grade. You may earn up to 10 participation points as determined by your TA.

Your Attendance & Participation grade will be based on:

- a) # of quizzes you turn in = 11 possible points
 - b) # of weeks you attend discussion section = 14 possible points
 - c) Your overall participation in sections as evaluated by your TA = 10 possible points
- Total points available = 35

Attendance & Participation counts as 15% of your total grade and will be determined as follows:

34-35 points = 100%	24-26 points = 80%	Less than 15 points =
32-33 points = 95%	21-23 points = 75%	50%
30-31 points = 90%	18-20 points = 70%	
27-29 points = 85%	15-17 points = 65%	

Extra Credit

There will be a couple extra credit opportunities announced in class throughout the semester. They are of course completely optional and made available to the entire class. Please DO NOT ask for individual extra credit assignments or opportunities. If you are struggling with lectures, attendance, exams, reading assignments, etc. then please come talk to me and/or your TA for additional guidance and resources. Do not wait until the end of the semester to try to salvage your grade and do not ask for individual extra credit opportunities.

A Note Regarding Technology in the Classroom

I do not have a problem with you bringing a laptop to class - it is your responsibility and decision to pay attention or not. However it is inappropriate to allow your computer behavior - such as playing games or always browsing the internet - to continuously distract other students. I do not intend to regulate your use of the computer in the classroom, but if you think your computer behaviors might distract others then please sit on the aisles or towards the back of the room so as to minimize distractions to those around you. Finally, be aware that your participation in *discussion sections* affects your overall final grade.

Undergraduate Writing Center

The Undergraduate Writing Center, located in the FAC 211 (<http://uwc.utexas.edu/>) offers individualized assistance to students who want to improve their writing skills. There is no charge and students may come in on a drop-in or appointment basis. *If you are struggling with the writing assignments in this course then I STRONGLY encourage you to seek additional help from the writing center. Your TA is also an invaluable resource for additional help.*

The University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of the University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect towards peers and community.

Scholastic Dishonesty

The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or extension on a test, quiz, or assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without prior permission. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. For more information on scholastic dishonesty, please visit the Student Judicial services website at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>. *In this course, any student found violating the scholastic dishonesty policy will receive an automatic "F" on the assignment or test.*

Students with Disabilities

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259.

Religious Holidays

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss a work assignment or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the policy of the University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors at least 14 days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.

University Email Notification Policy

All students should become familiar with the University's official email student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her email address. Students are expected to check email on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications. It is recommended email be checked daily, but a minimum of twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your email address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

Use of Blackboard

This course uses Blackboard, a Web-based course management system in which a password-protected site is created. Students' grades will be kept up-to-date and made available on Blackboard.

Course Schedule & Readings

Week 1 (8/25, 8/27)

INTRODUCTION

W 8/25 No reading

F 8/27 Webster, "The Information Society Revisited"

Week 2 (8/30, 9/1, 9/3)

COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN SOCIETY

Screen: *From Information to Wisdom*

M 8/30 Winston, "How Are Media Born and Developed"

W 9/1 Lievrouw, "New Media Design and Development"

F 9/3 Lessig, "Code is Law"

Week 3 (9/6, 9/8, 9/10)

ORALITY, PRINT, & LITERACY

M 9/6 LABOR DAY - NO CLASS
Robinson, "The Origins of Writing"

W 9/8 Burke, "Communication in the Middle Ages"

F 9/10 Eisenstein, "The Rise of the Reading Public"; Graff, "Early Modern Literacies"

Week 4 (9/13, 9/15, 9/17)

THE TELEGRAPH

Screen: *The History of the Telegram and the Telegraph*

M 9/13 Headrick, "The Optical Telegraph"

W 9/15 Standage, "Telegraphy - The Victorian Internet"

F 9/17 Standage, "The Legacy of the Telegraph"

Week 5 (9/20, 9/22, 9/24)

THE TELEPHONE

Screen: *The Telephone, American Experience*

- M 9/20 Marvin, "The Early Uses of the Telephone"
- W 9/22 Fischer, "The Telephone Takes Command"
- F 9/24 Stald, "Mobile Identity: Youth, Identity, and Mobile Communication Media"

Week 6 (9/27, 9/29, 10/1)

FILM

- M 9/27 **EXAM #1**
- W 9/29 Czitrom, "Early Motion Pictures"
- F 10/1 Eyman, "Movies Talk"

Week 7 (10/4, 10/6, 10/8)

BROADCAST RADIO

Screen: *Empire of the Air, The Men Who Made Radio*

- M 10/4 Douglas, "Early Radio"
- W 10/6 Douglas, "The Social Construction of American Broadcasting"
- F 10/8 Fornatale & Mills, "Radio in the Television Age"

Week 8 (10/11, 10/13, 10/15)

BROADCAST TELEVISION

Screen: *Television Window to the World*

- M 10/11 Boddy, "Television Begins"
- W 10/13 Spiegel, "Making Room for TV"
- F 10/15 Stephens, "Television Transforms the News"

Week 9 (10/18, 10/20, 10/22)

CONVERGENCE: CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES, MEDIA, AND AUDIENCES

M 10/18 *The Economist*, "Changing the Channel"

W 10/20 Berry, "Will the iPod Kill the Radio Star?"

F 10/22 Jenkins, "*The Matrix* and Transmedia Storytelling"

Week 10 (10/25, 10/27, 10/29)

COMPUTERS AND NETWORKS, PART 1

Screen: *Nerds 2.0.1*

M 10/25 Manovich, "How Media Became New"

W 10/27 Winston, "The First Computers"

F 10/29 Abbate, "Popularizing the Internet"

Week 11 (11/1, 11/3, 11/5)

COMPUTERS AND NETWORKS, PART 2

M 11/1 **EXAM #2**

W 11/3 Norris, "The Digital Divide"

F 11/5 Watkins, "Digital Migration: Young People's Historic Move to the Online World"

Week 12 (11/8, 11/10, 11/12)

PRIVACY AND PUBLICITY

M 11/8 *The Economist*, "The End of Privacy" and *Business Week*, "Privacy on the Net"

W 11/10 boyd, "Facebook's Privacy Trainwreck"

F 11/12 boyd, "Making Sense of Privacy and Publicity"

Week 13 (11/15, 11/17, 11/19)

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND COPYRIGHT

Screen: *Rip! A Remix Manifesto*

M 11/15 Lessig, *Remix*: "Introduction"

W 11/17 Lessig, *Remix*, "Cultures of Our Past"

F 11/19 Gasser & Ernst, "From Shakespeare to DJ Danger Mouse: A Quick Look at Copyright and User Creativity in the Digital Age"

Week 14 (11/22, 11/24, 11/26)

TECHNOLOGY, POLICY, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

M 11/22 Smolla, "The Case for an Open Culture" and Aufderheide, "The 1996 Telecommunications Act: Ten Years Later"

W 11/24 Livingstone, "Participation and Civic Engagement"
HAPPY THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS OR SECTIONS

F 11/26 NO CLASS OR OFFICE HOURS

Week 15 (11/29, 12/1, 12/3)

MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

M 11/29 Livingstone, "Media and Digital Literacies"

W 12/1 No reading

F 12/3 **EXAM #3** – Your choice: Take the exam *Friday, December 3 at 9:00* (will meet in our regular classroom) for an extra 3 points on your exam OR take the exam during Finals Week on *Thursday, December 9 at 10:00* (will meet in our regular classroom)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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