



RTVF 5121

NEW MEDIA THEORY

Description

This graduate level seminar critically examines key theoretical approaches to understanding and analyzing the role of digital and interactive media in contemporary society and culture. The course is designed to introduce students to theoretical ideas that can be used as analytical tools for understanding, explaining, and predicting media development, control, uses, and practices. The theories and concepts also provide ways to make meaning out of everyday interactions with media technologies and cultures. The course takes an historical perspective that situates new media and theory within broader understandings of technology and its relationship to culture and social change. The course draws from multiple disciplines and perspectives including media studies, communication, anthropology, sociology, computer science, science and technology studies, cultural and critical studies, and law.

Spring 2016

Tuesday 5:00 - 7:50
RTFP 282

Dr. Jacqueline
Vickery

University of North
Texas

Dept. of Media Arts

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday & Thursday
12:30 – 1:45 & by
appointment
RTFP 237

jacqueline.vickery
@unt.edu

@JacVick

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. *Understanding Digital Culture*, Vincent Miller
2. *The Culture of Connectivity: A critical history of social media*, Jose Van Dijck
3. *Seeing Ourselves through Technology*, Jill Walker Rettberg
4. *Spreadable Media: Creating value and meaning in a networked culture*, Jenkins, Ford, & Green
5. *Smartphones as Locative Media* –Jordan Frith

ASSIGNMENTS

Response Papers (10 papers, 3 points each = 30 points)

You will choose one reading (if entire book is assigned choose the introduction plus an additional chapter) for 10 weeks and write a response paper that is approximately 500-700 words (3 pages). This is NOT just a summary of the article, but must also demonstrate serious engagement with the claims and perspectives of the text. All papers should:

1. concisely identify and summarize a main argument(s) or perspective(s)
2. defend at least one aspect of the author's argument, claim, or perspective
3. offer one critique and/or discuss one weakness/limitation of the perspectives, claims, or arguments
4. pose at least one question that either (a) furthers the discussion and understanding of the claims and/or (b) attempts to cumulatively connect the text to other theories/texts discussed in class

Papers will be assessed on strength of understanding and analysis, ability to engage with the theory or perspective, clarity, and contribution to the discussion. Papers will be evaluated as excellent ✓+ (3/3 points), good ✓ (2.55/3 points), fair ✓- (2.25/3 points), or unacceptable – (1.95/3 points). All papers are due by **9:00 p.m. Monday** prior to class. Late papers will be docked a full letter grade and will *not be accepted after 12:00 p.m. Tuesday*.

Lead Class Discussion (10 points)

You are responsible for leading one 45 minute discussion of at least one of the readings assigned for a particular week. You can assume everyone has read the article, however you should provide a *brief* introduction to the reading (e.g. background information, author perspective, etc.), concisely summarize the main argument(s) and perspective(s), and identify the article's contribution to the field. This should be brief; the majority of your time should be spent leading a discussion. You should come prepared to pose 4-6 discussion questions that will lead to further debate, critique, contextualization, and/or defense of the approach or claim(s). You may use whatever handouts, activities, media, or presentation material that aids in your discussion. Draft questions must be submitted to Dr. Vickery by **9:00 p.m. on Monday**. This assignment cannot be made up– so don't be absent!

Research Proposal (10 points)

You will develop a 2-3 page proposal of a research topic that you would like to explore throughout the semester. Your proposal should state your research question(s), the reason why you are interested in it, its significance, and a brief annotated bibliography. The question can change over the course of the semester as your research develops. You will present the proposal to the class and revise it based on feedback. Proposals are due in class on **March 8**. Late proposals will lose 1 full letter grade a day (up to 3 days), then it becomes a "0".

Final Paper (50 points)

You will research and develop a final paper (15-18 pages) that deals with one or more of the themes discussed in the class. Papers can be empirical research or theoretical, but must make original contributions to the field and further our understanding of the literature and theories. Papers are expected to be conference submission quality and must be accurately cited. You will present and submit your papers in class on **May 10**. No late work will be accepted.

PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE

This is a graduate seminar and as graduate students you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the topics, concepts, and readings for each assigned week. You should be prepared to answer questions posed by the instructor and the presenter. Likewise, you are expected to come to class prepared with talking points and questions based on the week's readings and theme. You will need to engage weekly and *participate in all class discussions*. *Your grade will be adversely affected* for coming to class unprepared, for not actively contributing to the discussions on a weekly basis, and for arriving late/leaving early. You are granted one free absence and will lose 5 points from your final grade for each additional absence.

EVALUATION

30 points - Weekly Response Papers (10 x 3 pts.)
 10 points - Lead Class Discussion
 10 points – Research Proposal
 50 points - Final Paper
 100 points total

A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D= 60-69; F = fewer than 60 points

COURSE SCHEDULE

Section 1: FOUNDATIONS & THEORIES OF MEDIA, TECHNOLOGY, & SOCIETY

* the reading is on Blackboard (in weekly order); ** available online for free; all others are required texts

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| Week 1 – January 19 Introduction | No readings |
| Week 2 – January 26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is “new” about new media? ➤ Digitization ➤ Remediation ➤ Convergence | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Lev Manovich – “What is new media?” 2. Vincent Miller – “Key elements of digital media” 3. Vincent Miller – “Convergence and the contemporary media experience” 4. **Tim O’Reilly – “What is Web 2.0?” 5. *Teresa Harrison and Brea Barthel – “Wielding new media in Web 2.0: exploring the history of engagement with collaborative construction of media products 6. **Recommended: Tim O’Reilly and John Battelle – “Web Squared: Web 2.0 Five Years On” |
| Week 3 – February 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Theories of Media Technology, Part 1 ➤ Technological determinism ➤ Social construction of technology ➤ Social and technical affordances | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Nancy Baym – “Making new media make sense” 2. *Ian Hutchby – “Technologies, texts, and affordances” 3. *Leah Lievrouw – “Determination and contingency in new media development” 4. Vincent Miller – “Revolutionary Technologies?” (Introduction) |

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| <p>Week 4 – February 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Theories of Media & Technology, Part 2 ➤ Information Society ➤ Participatory Culture ➤ Digital Inclusion | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Frank Webster – “Theories of the Information Society” (Ch. 1-3) 2. *Siva Vaidhyanathan – “Google’s Ways and Means” 3. *David R. Brake – “Are we all online content creators now?: Web 2.0 and digital divides” |
| <p>Week 5 – February 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Theories of Media & Technology, Part 3 ➤ Network society ➤ Networked individualism ➤ Social networks ➤ Networked publics | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Lee Rainie & Barry Wellman – “The new social operating system of networked individualism” 2. *Lee Rainie & Barry Wellman – “The social network revolution” 3. *Howard Rheingold – “Social-digital know-how: the arts and sciences of collective intelligence” 4. *danah boyd – “Social network sites as networked publics: affordances, dynamics, & implications” 5. Vincent Miller – “Social media and the problem of community space, relationships, and networks” |

Section 2: LIVING IN A NETWORKED SOCIETY

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| <p>Week 6 – February 23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sociality ➤ Connectivity ➤ Social media | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jose van Dijck – <i>The Culture of Connectivity: A critical history of social media</i> |
| <p>Week 7 – March 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identity formation ➤ Gender ➤ Race ➤ Queerness ➤ Anonymity | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *David Buckingham – “Introducing identity” 2. *Helen Kennedy – “Beyond anonymity, or future directions for internet identity research” 3. *Alice Marwick – “Online identity” 4. *Lisa Nakamura – “Digital race formations and networked images of the body” 5. *Niels van Doorn – “Digital spaces, material traces: how matter comes to matter in online performances of gender, sexuality and embodiment” |
| <p>Week 8 – March 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The body and information technology ➤ Selfies ➤ Blogs ➤ Wearable devices | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jill Walker Rettberg – <i>Seeing Ourselves through Technology</i> |
| <p>Week 9 – March 15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Spring break – no class | <p>No readings – have a fun & safe break!</p> |
| <p>Week 10 – March 22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Creative cultural production ➤ Spreadable (“viral”) media ➤ New media economies ➤ New media industries | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, & Joshua Green – <i>Spreadable Media: Creating value and meaning in a networked culture</i> |
| <p>Week 11 – March 29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Locative & mobile media ➤ Infrastructure ➤ Space & place | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jordan Frith – <i>Smartphones as Locative Media</i> |

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| <p>Week 12 – April 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Surveillance ➤ Sousveillance ➤ Privacy ➤ Data protection ➤ Contextual integrity | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vincent Miller – “Everyone is watching: privacy and surveillance in digital life” 2. *Helen Nissenbaum – “A contextual approach to privacy online” 3. *Steve Mann and Joseph Ferenbok – “New media and the power politics of sousveillance in a surveillance-dominated world” 4. *danah boyd & Alice Marwick – “Social privacy in networked publics” 5. *Amy Hassinoff – “Sexting Panic: Information and Consent” 6. **Recommended: danah boyd – “The politics of ‘real names’” |
| <p>Week 13 – April 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Youth media ➤ Digital literacy ➤ Moral panics ➤ Digital education | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *David Buckingham – “Is there a digital generation?” 2. *John Palfrey and Urs Gasser – “Reclaiming an awkward term: what we might learn from ‘digital natives’” 3. *Heather Horst, Becky Herr-Stephenson, & Laura Robinson – “Media Ecologies” 4. *S. Craig Watkins – “Digital divide: navigating the digital edge” 5. *Sarah Banet-Weiser – “Branding the post-feminist self: girls’ video production and YouTube” |
| <p>Week 14 – April 19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public sphere ➤ Polarization ➤ Citizen journalism ➤ Digital activism | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Zizi Papacharissi – “The virtual sphere 2.0: the internet, the public sphere, and beyond” 2. *Jennifer Brundidge and Ronald E. Rice – “Political engagement online: do the information rich get richer and the like-minded more similar?” 3. *Mark Deuze – “The changing context of news work: liquid journalism and monitorial citizenship” 4. *Zeynep Tufekci – “‘Not this one’: social movements, the attention economy, and microcelebrity networked activism” 5. Recommended: Vincent Miller – “Information Politics, Subversion, and Warfare” |
| <p>Week 15 – April 26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Governance of infrastructures ➤ Politics of platforms ➤ Copyright ➤ Algorithms | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Tarleton Gillespie – “The politics of platforms” 2. *Tarleton Gillespie – “Designed to effectively frustrate: copyright, technology, and the agency of users” 3. *Lawrence Lessig – “How creativity is being strangled by the law” 4. *Jose van Dijck – “Users like you?: theorizing agency of user-generated content” 5. **Chrisitan Sandvig – “Corrupt Personalization” |
| <p>Week 16 – May 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Catch your breath day – no class | <p>I will have extended office hours from 12:30- 1:45 and 4:00-6:00 for anyone who wants to come discuss their final paper *15 minute appointments, must sign-up*</p> |
| <p>Week 17 – May 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Presentations ➤ Final paper due | <p>Location T.B.D.</p> |

Course schedule is subject to change (specifically readings), but I will never move up deadlines.

POLICIES

ODA Notification: The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism, don't do it. If I catch you plagiarizing or cheating on any part of any assignment – this includes websites, videos, music, papers, blogs, images, presentations, etc. – I will report you to the Office of Academic Integrity and you will receive an automatic “0” on the assignment with no opportunity to make it up. A zero on an assignment could mean you fail the course, just don't do it, it's really not worth it. If this is not your first infraction, then you will automatically receive an “F” in the course. For a full definition of academic dishonesty and the repercussions, read the UNT policy here: https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf.

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you will 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. If you are going to miss an assignment, please let me know at the beginning of the semester.