

# COMM 400: Communication and the Future

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**Spring 2009: Section 01**

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**Office Hours:** M & W 11:30am – 12:30pm

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## **Course Description:**

The purpose of this class is to explore the social, political, and economic implications of new media technologies. We will begin by interrogating our relationships, collectively and individually to the communication technologies that inundate our world and create our contemporary culture. We will then proceed to a study of contemporary communication technologies and our digital future. Among the specific topics of study will be: privacy, copyright, relationships between individuals and entities, conglomerates and globalization.

## **Course Objectives:**

In this course students will:

- Critically assess the impact of new technologies on culture and society
- Demonstrate understanding of the impact of media conglomeration, and how new regulations will impact society.
- Demonstrate understanding of the global interconnectedness of media systems, including the effects of multinational conglomerates and the effects of American media abroad as well as the effects of globalization on local media.
- Gain first hand experience exploring new communication technologies and practices.
- Complete an extensive research essay that demonstrates special knowledge of a contemporary issue or phenomenon within society.
- Develop skills in critical analysis, research, writing and knowledge of our changing media environment.

## **Required Texts:**

All texts for this course will be posted on blackboard or handed out in class.

## **Blackboard:**

Course materials including readings, assignment sheets, schedule changes and course emails will all be facilitated through blackboard therefore you should regularly log on for updates. Please be sure your account works and is connected to this course the first week of class. If you have any problems please inquire immediately (for technical issues there is link to contact the administrator directly on the blackboard site).

## **Grades:**

This is a capstone course with a capstone research essay. The research essay and the assignments that lead up to it will contribute to the major portion of your grade for this course. The assignments that lead up to the final essay are meant to support you and help you to succeed by providing regular feedback and opportunities to develop and refine your ideas. Failure to complete these smaller assignments (or complete them on time) will jeopardize your ability to be successful on the final essay.

There are no exams. There are no opportunities for extra credit. Plan your time and put your energy into completing the assignments well. Rubrics for each assignment will be provided.

**Grade Breakdown:**

15%	Discussion Leader Assignment
15%	Participation (includes in class work & peer reviews)
05%	Proposal of Three Topics
15%	Literature Review
10%	Prospectus
05%	Rough Draft
10%	Public Presentation
25%*	Final Draft

\*Failure to turn in a rough draft will drop the final draft grade by one full letter grade

*Short In-Class Assignments will be graded on a scale of 0-3*

0 – Did not do the reading; unprepared; unable to contribute

1 – Need to demonstrate more clearly that you have read and understand the material

2 – Material was read and reflected upon

3 – Solid understanding; thought-provoking; carefully considered responses

**Evaluation Standards for Research Essays**

- Knowledge of course material is demonstrated
- Clear thesis statement that articulates the main purpose/argument of your essay
- Connections of resources and quotations are explained
- Does not simply summarize current research, but synthesizes connections and a unique insight on a particular topic
- Appropriate use of citations
- Use of a variety of resources
- Evidence to support claims/ ideas
- Grammar/Spelling

**Expectations:**

Students will

- Come to class having completed the assigned readings AND having reflected upon them
- Come to class with questions and ideas about the readings and how the readings may connect to other topics we have addressed
- Come to class with a copy of the reading to refer to
- Be present and prepared for workshop days. This will give you the opportunity to give other students feedback on their work, and for them to do the same for you
- Be prepared to do in-class writing about reading assignments
- Come to class on time
- Use respectful speech
- Plan to listen to other students and reflect on what was shared
- Attend and come prepared for any meetings that you schedule with me
- Put forth full effort on course activities and assignments
- Ask for help if they are struggling

# Policies

**Attendance:** Attendance is necessary; in a seminar setting your voice (and your ears) are integral to exchanging ideas, working through questions, exploring readings, thought-provoking dialog, and the overall well being of our learning community.

Attendance will be taken at the start of class. Arriving late or leaving early will count as ½ of an absence. Three absences will endanger your grade and ability to pass the course. A fourth absence will result in your failure of this course, regardless of the quantity or quality of the assignments have been completed.

**Late Assignments:** Assignments are due at the start of class in a physical format (i.e. they cannot be emailed). Assignments that are turned in up to one week\* after their deadline will be penalized one full letter grade. Assignments that are more than a week late will receive an “F.” Only under extreme circumstances (i.e. you have documentation by a health professional that specifically states your inability to attend class on a specific date) will I consider exceptions.

\*Rough drafts will not be accepted more than 2 days late (if received in this two day window the paper will receive a “D” and less of my attention than on-time drafts).

**Emailed Assignments:** I do not accept emailed written assignments. Period. If you would like my feedback, please provide me with a printed copy to look at.

**Cell Phones:** Be respectful to our learning community. No cell phones (or similar devices) should be visible or audible during class.

**Academic Honesty:** MMC fosters an academic community where students and faculty work together to create a learning experience that imparts knowledge and forms character. All work submitted should be done by the student in preparation for this specific class (for example, you may not hand in a paper for this class that you are also writing for another course). Plagiarism and cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. Students whose work is plagiarized or recycled will jeopardize their grade not for the assignment but for the entire course. IF a student has difficulty understanding how to cite sources or has questions concerning academic honesty, they should contact the professor far in advance of the submission date of the assignment. The college requires that all members of the community adhere to the Academic Honesty policy as found in the Student Handbook, the College Catalogue and the College Website.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations or academic adjustment for this course must either enroll in the Program for Academic Access or register with the Office of Student Support Services. For any accommodation, the instructor must be presented with either a letter from the Assistant Director of the Program for Academic Access or an Accommodations Card from the Office of Student Support Services during the first week of classes.

**Schedule (subject to change, check blackboard for the most up to date info)**  
**Dates are DUE dates**

Feb 2	<b>Topic:</b> Getting Situated
Feb 4	<b>Topic:</b> Library Visit
Feb 9	<b>Readings:</b> Chapter 1 & Chapter 3 from Technology Matters (Nye)
<b>Feb 11</b>	<b>Topic:</b> MLA Citations <b>Due: 3 Topics for Research Essay</b>
<b>Feb 16</b>	<b>President's Day – No Class</b>
Feb 18	<b>Topic:</b> Watch “Read/Write” Government; visit sites posted on blackboard
Feb 23	<b>Readings:</b> The End of TV 101: Reality Programs, Formats, and the New Business of Television (Madger); Viral Future of Cinema (Cadwell)
Feb 25	<b>Readings:</b> Why I Love Bees: A Case Study in Collective Intelligence Gaming (McGonigal); Troubling 'Games for Girls': Notes from the Edge of Game Design (Flanagan)
<b>Mar 2</b>	<b>Topic:</b> Moving from the Literature Review to a Prospectus <b>Due: Literature Review</b> <b>Readings:</b> Interactive Textiles
Mar 4	<b>Readings:</b> Viewing American Class Difference Through MySpace & Facebook (boyd); Social Network Sites: Definition, History and Scholarship (boyd)
Mar 9	<b>Readings:</b> Why Youth [Heart] Social Network Sites (boyd); Spoiling <i>Survivor</i> : The Anatomy of a Knowledge Community from <u>Convergence Culture</u> (Jenkins).
<b>Mar 11</b>	<b>Topic:</b> Moving from a Prospectus to a Draft <b>Due: Prospectus</b>
Mar 16	<b>Readings:</b> The Power of the Mobile Many (Rheingold); Quentin Tarantino's <i>Star Wars</i> ? Grassroots Creativity Meets the Media Industry from <u>Convergence Culture</u> (Jenkins)
Mar 18	<b>Readings:</b> Excerpt 1 from The Long Tail (Anderson); Excerpt 2 from The Long Tail (Anderson); *Free! Why \$0.00 Is the Future of Business (Anderson)
Mar 23	<b>Readings:</b> *Free Culture Video Lecture (Lessig); Music of My Own? The Transformation Rights to Usage Privileges (Baruh)

<b>Mar 25</b>	<b>Topic: Draft Workshop – bring outline</b>
Mar 31	<b>Readings:</b> Chapter 3: Is-Ism: Is the Way it Is the Way it Must Be from Code 2.0 (Lessig); Trademark Law and the Social Construction of Trust: Creating the Legal Framework for Online Identity (Noveck)
Apr 1	<b>Readings:</b> Chapter 4: Architectures of Control from Code 2.0 (Lessig); Chapter 5: Regulating Code from Code 2.0 (Lessig)
Apr 13	<b>Readings:</b> Authenticity in the Age of Digital Companions (Turkle) *Love in the Time of No Time (Egan); Surveillance Creep! New Manifestations of Data Surveillance at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century (Preemptive Media)
<b>Apr 15</b>	<b>Topic: Next Steps</b> <b>Due: Rough Draft (3 copies)</b>
<b>Apr 20</b>	<b>Peer Review</b>
<b>Apr 22</b>	<b>Advisement Day</b>
Apr 27	Individual Meetings
Apr 29	<b>Readings:</b> Surveillance and the Sinews of Commerce from <u>Soft Cage</u> (Parenti); The New Taylorism: Surveillance, Work and Discipline from <u>Soft Cage</u> (Parenti)
May 4	<b>Readings:</b> Empire Strikes Back (Stone); Cyborg Manifesto (Haraway)
<b>May 6</b>	<b>Due: Poster Presentations</b>
May 11	Work Day/ Individual Meetings
May 13	Work Day
<b>FRIDAY MAY 15</b>	<b>FINAL ESSAYS DUE</b>
May 18	Final Wrap Up