COMM-5346.B01 Seminar in New Media
Summer I 2017
MW 6:00 - 9:45pm
Room TBA

Professor David Gurney
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Office Hours: M 2-3pm, T 9am-noon, W 2-3pm, and by appointment

Course Description:
Explores contemporary instances of new and emerging media platforms, especially as facilitated through digital media technologies, as they continue to disseminate more widely as portals of communication. Students will engage with specific issues in new media through the lenses of various cultural theories in order to gain a greater understanding of the scope of new media including social media, its culture, and the relationships that exist between machines and humans, as well as those between society and technology.

Student Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:
» Understand and critically evaluate many of the current scholarly topics and debates that occur within new media and digital media studies.
» Understand and articulate the current and potential future implications of digital media on culture, as well as the way in which pre-existing cultural conventions also impacts the advancement of Internet technology.
» Utilize postmodern and contemporary theories to analyze, describe, and further develop interpretive and evaluative arguments about the culture of digital media.
» Conduct a new media research project

Required Materials:
» Phillips, W. (2015). This is why we can’t have nice things: Mapping the relationship between online trolling and mainstream culture. MIT Press.
» Access to PDFs or online versions of all other required readings will be provided through Blackboard

Course Policies:
» Attendance is required – both physically and mentally. Unexcused absences will have a direct effect on your final grade for this course, with each one equaling a 100-point deduction (out of a possible total of 1000 points). Attendance will be taken starting exactly at 6:00 p.m. and completed within the first five minutes of class. Arrivals after that time will be considered late.
Late arrivals and departures prior to the finish of the class period will count as half-absences, meaning that two of either type will be counted as a full absence.

» You are allowed one fully excused absence throughout the semester. This is to be employed at your discretion, but it should be used to cover illness, religious holiday observances, or most any other events or circumstances that cause you to miss class. Only extreme hardship with back-up documentation (e.g. a doctor’s note) will allow for consideration of any additional absences being excused. Classes missed due to university-approved activities (athletic teams, student government, etc.) will also be considered excused. For those absences, I will need official TAMUCC documentation. If appropriate, you may arrange to make up quizzes or exams missed due to excused absences, but it will be your responsibility to get any information from a missed class lecture or discussion from one of your classmates.

» All absences not fitting into the excused categories described immediately above, will be considered unexcused. Any work missed due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up.

» Late work will be penalized by a reduction of ten percent of its total possible points for each day it is late.

» A note on competing media: Laptops are permitted for note taking purposes during lecture only, but please do not abuse this privilege. While you may personally feel capable of multitasking during class while still paying attention to lecture and discussion, your surrounding classmates will more likely find your in-class extracurricular activities distracting, so please, for the sake of your peers, respect this restriction. No laptop use will be permitted during screenings.

» Please remember to check your Islander email account regularly during the week and monitor the course Blackboard site for any course updates.

» If you would like to discuss any course readings, lectures, or assignments outside of class, you should feel free to contact me via email or by arranging to visit me during my office hours. If you need to schedule a time to meet outside of office hours, please let me know.

» All writing for this course must be composed using a standard, 12-point font size, double spacing, and standard 1” margins.

Academic Advising:
Students pursuing the Master of Arts in Communication will be paired with a graduate faculty member advisor in their first semester. Students should contact their advisors within the first two weeks of a semester to arrange a meeting during which degree plans, tracks, and opportunities for professional development should be discussed. If there is any question regarding whom a student’s academic advisor is, the student should contact Dr. Stephanie Rodriguez, Graduate Coordinator, for assistance (stephanie.rodriguez@tamucc.edu). To finalize your degree plan and register for graduation, you must also meet with the Graduate Student Academic Advisor in the Academic Advising Center for the College of Liberal Arts. This office is located in Driftwood 203E and can be reached at (361) 825-3466.

Notice to Students with Disabilities
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.
**Grade Appeal Process:**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean's Office.

**Academic Integrity:**
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work. For a more expansive definition of plagiarism please see the relevant passage from the University's student handbook.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade (F) for the assignment, at the very least, or a report to the Chair of the Department of Communication and Media, the Dean of the School of Arts, Media, and Communication, and the Office of Student Affairs. For the purposes of citation, please follow American Psychological Association (APA) Style Guide. For reference, see: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

**Dropping a Class:**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the class be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. June 30, 2015, is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.
Grade Scale:
A 900-1000
B 800-899
C 700-799
D 600-699
F 599 and below

Grade Distribution:
» Attention & Participation (100 points): Each student is expected to be attentive and, ideally, to participate in class discussion when appropriate. This grade will reflect how well you accomplish these goals.

» Online Discussions (5 x 40 points = 200 points total): Preceding some of our class meetings, we will initiate class discussion online. Each student will post a reaction to a reading-specific prompt in the Blackboard Discussion Forum area by the end of the day before the scheduled class meeting. Each student will then post at least one response to a fellow classmate's reaction before the beginning of class.

» Reading Presentation (100 points): Each student will take responsibility for one of our scheduled readings. You will need to create a short in-class presentation of approx. 15-20 min., followed by 30+ minutes of an open discussion facilitated by the presenter. Both should be based on the reading you select. A more detailed description of these presentations is available on Blackboard and a schedule will be established on the first evening of class.

» Final New Media Research Paper Proposal (100 points): A short written proposal will be due in Week 2 of class. This will establish your research topic and allow for Professor Gurney to offer you feedback and guidance. You will be given great flexibility in choosing a topic on some form of communication taking place through new media, but Professor Gurney may make suggestions, especially in pursuit of better defining or narrowing your focus, as part of his feedback to your proposal.

» Presentation of Final Paper (100 points): Students will describe the findings of their final paper project in a presentation to the class.

» Final New Media Research Paper (400 points): Each student will write a research paper on a new media topic approved by the professor that will serve as the culminating work for the class. This will be explained further in a description available on Blackboard and reviewed in class.
Course Schedule:
Readings are to be completed prior to the class meeting dates alongside which they are listed, unless they are designated as optional. Also, this schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

Week 1 – Introduction, Course Outline, New Media Beginnings and Aesthetics
May 31 Introduction, Course Outline, General Discussion
June 1 Discussion Post 1 due before end of day, response to a classmate due before class on June

Week 2 – The Impacts of New Media Connectivity
June 5 Rheingold, H., excerpts from The virtual community
Bolter, J. D. and R. Grusin, excerpts from Remediation
Dijck, J. van (2013). The culture of connectivity, Chapters 1&2
Research Proposals to be submitted via Blackboard before class on 6/5.
June 6 Discussion Post 2 due before end of day, response to a classmate due before class on June 7
June 7 Dijck, J. van (2013). The culture of connectivity, Chapters 3-8

Week 3 – Social Media Identity
June 12 boyd, danah. (2014). It’s complicated, Introduction and Chapters 1-4
Proposal Workshop in class on 6/12.
June 13 Discussion Post 3 due before end of day, response to a classmate due before class on June 14
June 14 boyd, danah. (2014). It’s complicated, Chapters 5-8

Week 4 – Social Media Branding
June 18 Discussion Post 4 due before end of day, response to a classmate due before class on June 19
June 20 Discussion Post 5 due before end of day, response to a classmate due before class on June 21
June 21 Marwick, A. E. (2013). Status update, Chapters 4-6 and Conclusion

Week 5 – Social Media Agitation
June 26 Phillips, W. (2015). This is why we can’t have nice things
June 28 Presentations of Final New Media Research Papers

Final New Media Research Paper must be submitted via Blackboard before the end of the day on Thursday, 6/29.
References


Phillips, W. (2015). This is why we can’t have nice things: Mapping the relationship between online trolling and mainstream culture. MIT Press.