New Media and Communication

Course Description
This course examines how new media technologies impact society and change communication practices. Particular emphasis is placed on different modes of cultural expression and social interaction made possible through digital media and the Internet.

Learning Objectives
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Critically evaluate many of the current scholarly topics and debates that occur within new media and digital media studies.
- Articulate the current and potential future implications of digital media on culture, as well as the way in which pre-existing cultural conventions also impact the advancement of Internet technology.
- Utilize cultural theories to analyze, describe, and further develop interpretive and evaluative arguments about the culture of digital media.
- Conduct a digital media research project to gain insight into how digital media platforms shape communication.

Major Course Requirements:
Attendance & Participation – 20%
Online Participation – 10%
Online Introduction Assignment – 5%
Classroom Discussion Leader – 5%
Take-Home Midterm Exam (due March 8) – 20%
Take-Home Final Exam (due May 10) – 20%
Final Project – 20%

Grade Scale:
A – 90%-100%
B – 80%-89%
C – 70%-79%
D – 60%-69%
F – 0%-59%

Required or Recommended Readings
All readings will be available on the course BlackBoard page and are all required, unless indicated otherwise.

Course Policies:

- **Attendance is required** for this course and is an important part of your participation grade. After all, you must be present and engaged to participate in class discussion. You are allowed three free absences (whether excused or unexcused) across the semester. For every additional excessive absence, the class participation grade will be lowered by a point at the instructor’s discretion. Participation
- **Complete readings and assignments as assigned.** Late assignments will receive a one-point deduction for every day that it is late. After ten days, assignments will receive a zero and will not be accepted. Exceptions will be made only for extraordinary cases and official documentation is needed.

- **Exams may not be rescheduled** except in extraordinary cases with official documentation. Do not make travel plans that conflict with the midterm.

- **Silence and put away cell phones during class.**

- **You may use laptops or tablets to take notes,** but please do not abuse this privilege. Your surrounding classmates may be distracted by your potential in-class extracurricular activities and could disrupt the class. If any such disruptions occur, I will ask you to put away your laptop or tablet and your day’s participation grade will be deducted.

- **Be responsible for any information and materials missed when absent.** You should ask your classmates for this information.

- **Respect the privacy and opinions of fellow students.** I expect students to participate in class discussion respectfully and I expect students to respect each other’s opinions, even if you may disagree.

- **Grades will not be discussed in the classroom** as they are considered personal information, but I will be happy to discuss your course performance with you in office hours.

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**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism.**

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.)

I treat plagiarism very seriously in my class. One incident of academic misconduct will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and an official misconduct report filed with the university. Two incidents of academic misconduct will result in an automatic “F” in the course and potential further disciplinary action.

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**Academic Advising.**

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

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**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 course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course 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. **April 6** is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

For the purposes of citation, please follow Modern Language Association (MLA) Style Guide. For reference, see: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/.

**Classroom/professional behavior**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Statement of Civility (can be in place of classroom/professional behavior)**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

**Grade Appeals**
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.

**Disabilities Accommodations**
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, Room #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.

*Required by SACS or HB2504

**Statement of Academic Continuity**
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Course Schedule**

*(with reading assignments to be completed by the day it is assigned)*

*(screenings will be discussed and applied to the topics in the following class session)*

### Unit 1 – Introduction to New Media and Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/18</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to the Course</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1/23</td>
<td><strong>Defining and Historicizing New Media</strong></td>
<td>Reading: TBD</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Online Introduction Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/30</td>
<td><strong>Who Uses New Media: The Digital Divide</strong></td>
<td>Reading: Norris, “The Digital Divide”</td>
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### Unit 2 – Online Communication

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/1</td>
<td><strong>Social Media and Networking</strong></td>
<td>Reading: Baym and boyd, “Socially mediated publicness: An introduction”; Hogan, “The presentation of self in the age of social media: Distinguishing performances and exhibitions online”</td>
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<td>2/6</td>
<td><strong>Online Identity</strong></td>
<td>Reading: Marwick, “Gender, Sexuality, and Social Media”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/13</td>
<td><strong>Online Communities</strong></td>
<td>Reading: Muller, “Virtual communities and translation into physical reality in the ‘It Gets Better’ project”; Klivans, “Making friends”</td>
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<td>2/15</td>
<td><strong>Online Dating, Relationships, and Catfishing</strong></td>
<td>Reading: Smith and Anderson, “5 facts about online dating”; Harris, “Who Coined the Term ‘Catfish’?”</td>
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<td>2/20</td>
<td><strong>Social Media Politics</strong></td>
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Reading: Silverman et al., “Hyperpartisan Facebook pages are publishing false and misleading information at an alarming rate”; Sanders, “Did social media ruin election 2016?”

2/22

**Fake News**

2/27

**Collective Action**
Reading: Postmes and Brunsting, “Collective Action in the Age of the Internet: Mass Communication and Online Mobilization”

3/1

**Online Activism**
Reading: van der Linden, “The nature of viral altruism and how to make it stick”; Jackson and Welles, “#Ferguson is everywhere: initiators in emerging counterpublic networks”

3/6

**Criticisms of “Slacktivism”**
Reading: Carr, “Hashtag Activism, and Its Limits”; White, “Clicktivism is ruining leftist activism”

3/8

**TAKE HOME MIDTERM EXAM**

3/12-3/16 **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**

**Unit 3 – New Media Formats**

3/20 **Video Games, Pt. I**
Reading: Newman, Introduction to *Atari Age*

3/22 **Gender & Sexuality in Gaming**

3/27 **“Let’s Play” Videos and Video Game Streaming**
Reading: Glas, “Vicarious play: Engaging the viewer in Let’s Play videos”; Zoia, “This Guy Makes Millions Playing Video Games on YouTube”

3/29 **YouTube**
Reading: Anderson, “The long tail”

4/3 **Social Media Celebrities**
Reading: Marwick, “You May Know Me From YouTube: (Micro-)Celebrity in Social Media; Petersen, “Why Teens Love YouTube’s Grace Helbig”

**Unit 4 – Traditional Media and New Media Practices**

4/5 **Transmedia Storytelling**
Reading: Jenkins, “Transmedia Storytelling 101”
4/10  
**The Matrix and Transmedia Storytelling**
Reading: Jenkins, “Searching for the Origami Unicorn: *The Matrix* and Transmedia Storytelling”

4/12  
**Participatory Media and Remix Culture**
Reading: Lessig, Introduction to *Remix*

4/17  
**Legal Issues**
Reading: White, “I never owned any music to begin with”; Lowery, “Letter to Emily White at NPR All Songs Considered”; Morrison, “Hey dude from Cracker, I’m sorry, I stole music like these damned kids when I was a kid”

4/19  
**Podcasting and the “New” Radio**
Reading: Bottomley, “Podcasting: A Decade in the Life of a ‘New’ Audio Medium

4/24  
**Evaluating Podcasts**

4/26  
**The Rise of Netflix**
Reading: McDonald, “Digital dreams in a material world: The rise of Netflix and its impact on changing distribution and exhibition patterns”

5/1  
**Streaming and the Future of TV**
Reading: Schatz, “HBO and Netflix – Getting back to the future”

5/10  
TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE BY 10:30 A.M.