Introduction to the Study of Emerging Media and Communications

EMAC 6300

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Fall 2011   Office Number: 1.502

T 7:00-9:45 CB 3 1.306   Office Hours: T 6:00-7:00,R 2:30-3:30

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Course Description:

This class is a broad overview of the theories which have come to influence how we understand the relation of media and culture. In order to understand how "emerging media" or "digital media" are shaping and reshaping our culture it is important to first have a grounding in a range of traditional approaches for theorizing the effects of media. Thus this class is divided between considering some of the canonical texts in this field of media history and theory and works which refigure these approaches based on the rise of digital media (Bolter & Grusin, Shirky, etc.).

Required Texts:

(all texts are available at Off-Campus Books)

-*Blown to Bits: Your Life, Liberty, and Happiness After the Digital Explosion.* Abelson, Leeden, Lewis. ISBN 0137135599

-*The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communication.* Paul Starr ISBN 0465081940

-*Connected: The Surprising Power of Out Social Networks and How They Shape our Lives* by Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler ISBN 0316036137

-*Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations* by Clay Shirky ISBN 0143114948

-*Code 2.0* by Lawrence Lessig ISBN 0465039146

-*Information Fuedalism* by Peter Drahos and John Braithwaite ISBN 1595581227

-*The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It* by Jonathan Zittrain ISBN 0300151241

-*The Printing Press in Early Modern Europe* by Elizabeth Eisenstein ISBN 0521607744 (optional)

There will be several readings available online or via eReserve, which you will need to print out and bring to class.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation (20%): The primary requirement for this course is class participation. To do well in this course you will need to come to class having done the reading for the week prepared to discuss the text at hand. I realize that the reading load for this class is heavy at times, however, we are going to be covering some complex and complicated issues and in order for the class discussion to proceed and for everyone to benefit the most from our time in class it is necessary for every student to have a shared basis from which class discussions can proceed.

Thus for every class it is your responsibility to come to class not only having done the reading, but to have spent time considering the issues that each text raises, ready to engage in a lively discussion about the questions at hand. Missing more than one class can lead to a lower grade. In addition to attendance and participation the following are required for this class.

Class Wiki (20%): Over the course of the semester the class will produce a collaborative wiki that collects notes on the readings and our in class discussions. Your grade will be based in part on the wiki as a whole, and on your individual contributions. Details of the specific assignment will be given during class.

Midterm (25%): There will be a short (1500-1800 word) take home midterm exam handed out on October 11th, due the following week at the beginning of class. The midterm will ask you to synthesize and reformulate the readings from the first half of the semester.

Final Paper (35%): Each student will be responsible for writing a 8-10 page final paper. Your paper should look at one particular contemporary "media object/event," and utilize the readings from class to analyze, critique, and develop a more nuanced understanding of said objects place in the media landscape. The choice of object/event is up to you. This will be discussed more during the second half of the class. Proposals are due November 15th. Papers are due Friday, December 9th.

Course Website:

The course website for this class can we found at <http://www.outsidethetext.com/arche>. You should get in the habit of checking this regularly as I will post suggestions and thoughts about the readings here, as well as links to other things that might interest the class. The syllabus can be found here as well, and any changes to the syllabus will be posted here. If you forget the web address you can always find it from <http://www.outsidethetext.com>, an easier url to remember.

How to Reach Me:

The best way to reach me is by email <dparry@utdallas.edu> or you can find me online at <http://www.outsidethetext.com>. I check email frequently throughout the day. If you email me and do not receive a response within 48 hours (usually I will get back to you within a day), please feel free to email me again (I might not have received your first one) and give me a reminder. I promise not to consider this harassing.

My office hours are Tuesdays 6:00-7:00, Thursdays 2:30-3:30 (or by appointment—I am frequently on campus outside of these hours). My office is ATEC 1.502.

Schedule of Readings

Week One: Introduction (August 30th)
- *Introduction to Class*

Week Two: Where We Stand (September 6th)
- Abelson, Leeden, Lewis, *Blown to Bits*

Week Three: The Nature of Humanity and the Internet (September 13th)
- Rousseau vs. Hobbes (reading TBA)
- *Blown to Bits,* Appendix
- MIles Townes, "The Spread of TCP/IP and the Political Origins of the Internet"

Week Four: Orality and Literacy (September 20th)
- Plato, "Phaedrus"
- Walter Ong, *Orality to Literacy.* (selections)
- Linda Stone, "May I Have Your Attention Please? -Linda Stone -SIME 09"
- Marshall McLuhan, "The Medium is the Message"
- *Culture and Technology*, Chapters 3 & 4

Week Five: History of Communication Technology (September 27th)
- Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communication*

Week Six: Fundamental Shifts (October 4th)
- Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."
- Bill Nichols, "The Work of Culture in the Age of Cybernetic Reproduction."

Week Seven: The Power of the Networks (October 11th)
- Manuel Castells, "Why Networks Matter."
- *Connected: The Surprising Power of Out Social Networks and How They Shape our Lives* Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler
- ***Midterm Handed Out***

Week Eight: The Virtual or the Real (October 18th)
- Jay David Bolter & Richard Grusin "Remediation."
- *Matrix* & *Minority Report*
- ***Midterm Due***

Week Nine: Reshaping Identities (October 25th)
- *We Live in Public.* Ondi Timoner
- *Culture and Technology* 13 &14
- danah boyd "Why Youth Heart Social Network Sites"
- Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs"

Week Ten: The Power of Everyone (November 1st)
- Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody*
- Jared Lanier, "Digital Maoism: The Hazards of the New Online Collectivism"
- Nicholas Carr "The Amorality of Web 2.0"