



VANCOUVER ISLAND
UNIVERSITY

MEDI 113 EMERGING DIGITAL COMMUNICATION FALL 2018

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This course is an introduction to emerging digital communication from the framework of media studies today, in the age of media studies 2.0/3.0 where I have only a marginal idea of what you do with and what you know about media, but I have a good idea of how to make sense of it. Let's not fool ourselves; it's hard to say that we are all on the same page when it comes to media in the 'digital age.' Sure, I facebook but not for the same reasons that you probably do. But how did we get here, where are we going, and how do make sense of media today? What is the relationship between the material and the digital world? Why am I going to suggest that we are no longer full force in the digital age but instead on the cusp of a new materiality?

We are going to take an immersive approach to media by starting with the 'context of digital' as a vehicle for making sense of the role of media in the world, your world, our world, and for addressing the evolution of media thinking across a variety of disciplines. The readings for this course are drawn largely from contemporary examples in 'digital culture.' The lectures provide a link between where we are now – seemingly always looking forward – by suggesting how media today are rooted in rich and diverse histories, and, indeed, are the cornerstones of societies and cultures the world over. We will experiment by treating this course as a kind of 'story' to be told over 13 weeks where the actual 'introduction to media exists as a narrative behind the 'this is what's going on in the world today' reading structure.

This course is a survey of why media matters, and leads into second-year courses that go into greater depth about the history and theory of the media, as well as the practices of media production, including the intellectual tools we can use to make sense of them. At the end of this course you should know how to make more informed choices in your relationship with media – not necessarily different ones, but ones that, when you make them, you'll be able to understand the implications of more fully. We're not focused on papers here, but citizenship.

Things to Buy

1. A few course readings aren't available for free – so you can either buy the books, borrow them from the library, or W.H.Y. Most of the rest of the readings are available online.
2. Ideally a portable digital device for creating and consuming media (iPod, tablet, laptop, etc.) (optional but highly recommended). Obviously, it doesn't have to be new or just for this course.
3. You NEED a USB stick that is designated JUST FOR THIS COURSE to store some of your work. I'd suggest something in the range of 4 to 8 gigs but more never hurts.

Suggested Books (you don't have to buy them)

Kembrew McLeod & Peter Di Cola. (2011). *Creative License: The law and culture of digital sampling* Duke University Press.

Cathy N. Davidson. (2011). *Now You See It: How the Brain Science of Attention Will Transform the Way We Live, Work, and Learn*. Duke U. Press

David Gauntlett, (2010) *Making is Connecting*, 2011

Sherry Turkle (2012) *Alone Together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. Basic Books (available as an e-book from the library)

Good On-going Resource:

CBC Podcast: Spark (<http://www.cbc.ca/spark/>)

Evaluation

Assignment 1: Live Digitally: In-class tweets / posts / sharing / circulation / leadership / self-reflection on your digital practice – Due all the time for sharing purposes with a summary LOG/REFLECTION due at the end of the semester.

You can provide in-situ feedback during lectures – you can even earn credit by setting up a twitter feed and/or building venues for discussion, you can post or create a class blog, share stuff you find that is helpful, circulate your work for the comments of others, and offer suggestions and examples.

You can earn credit for living digitally – supposedly what you are already doing, EXCEPT to 'cash in' on it, you have to think about it, actively harness your digital powers for the good of the class, and figure out what it all means in a recurring log that starts day one and should continue (in some form) for the rest of your life.

YOU must keep an auditable log of all of this and that's what I'm going to grade – so keep track from the beginning, it will be easier than trying to remember everything at the last minute.

You can think about this as a participation grade, but instead of me grading your participation in class, I'm asking you to tell me about how YOU are participating in the world digitally and to reflect on it and what it all means.

WHAT YOU HAND IN: While you will keep track of your digital life over the course of the semester, what you hand-in will be a 'log' that quantifies your digital practices over the semester (e.g. how many hours/day, how many different sites, how much money, etc.) AND reflects on the intersection of these practices on your perception of the how the world works and how your own life works. This can be presented in a range of ways that we will discuss in class but must be, in part, a written assignment.

DUE FINAL WEEK: 30%

Part 1: Context

Week 1: How digital are you?

What is this 'digital culture' thing that people keep talking about, where did it come from and where is it going?

Reading: Read the online version of the syllabus – it's a bit different than this version.

Recommended: Nicholas Negroponte, *Being Digital*. 1996, Vintage (as a book or from online excerpts: <http://archives.obs-us.com/obs/english/books/nn/bdcont.htm>)

TASK: Create an 'avatar' that represents YOU as a person who uses media. Also include a short description of your media use in an 'about me' format. Share it in-class by or before week 3.

TASK: Start your digital log.

TASK: Consider the final assignment as explained in the syllabus to be discussed next week.

Week 2: What does it mean to 'be digital'?

Who is more 'natively' digital – you or your parents? What is the basis of your assumptions? What does this tell us about media as harbingers of culture?

Readings: Mark Prensky, *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants. from On the Horizon*;
<http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/prensky%20-%20digital%20natives,%20digital%20immigrants%20-%20part1.pdf>

Siva Vidyanathan, *Generational Myth*, Chronicle for Higher Education, September 19, 2008 (link via library online search portal)

INCLUDE "white paper" on best practices for social media.

Activity: Try and change the background of your Facebook page (if you have one – and if you don't, *what's wrong with you? How do you even live in the world today without Facebook!?! – okay, maybe you have Instagram, try that instead*).

TASK: Pick a practice/object for the final assignment and develop a rough sketch of how it could work.

Week 3: Touched by data

Where did the Internet smiley face come from and what does it tell us about the Internet, communication, the digital and the analog world?

Readings: The History of Emoticons and Smileys <http://www.sherv.net/emoticon-history.html>

Daantje Derks, et al., *Emoticons and social interaction on the Internet: the importance of social context*; Computers in Human Behavior, Vol. 23, 1, January 2007:
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563204002079>

Activity: Poke around an online dating site and figure out how people/emotions become data. If you feel brave, sign up for an account and see if the questions reflect the 'real' or 'total' you.

Week 4: Keeping up, or, What has your phone done for/to you lately?

Considering how much we use technology, how does technology use us?

Reading : William Deresiewicz, *The end of Solitude*, The Chronicle for Higher Education; January 30, 2009; <http://chronicle.com/article/The-End-of-Solitude/3708>

Chris Anderson, "The Long Tail": <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html>

Activity: Leave your phone at home for the day and observe what you miss/gain. If you don't have a phone, borrow some sort of thing that makes random noises at unpredictable times and then see how your day changes. Or, keep the phone with you and go to a 'dead zone' and take your pulse at intervals throughout and see if your body changes the longer you are disconnected.

Assignment: Make a 'collage' such as described by Kembrew McLeod – an assembly of media objects, physical, digital or a combination of the two. Provide a write up of the process of making it, what laws you had to infringe upon, how much you considered the previous owner of the idea, and what you think about the ownership of the final product. Hand in the collage and the write up.

Week 5: Game changers or dealing a new (but same) hand?

If communication has the concept of 'shared' or 'common' at its base, how does digital culture impact what we *all* know in common, or, is your status up to date?

Reading: Ted Friedman, *Tweeting the Dialectic of Technological Determinism*, FlowTV 10.02, vol 4; June 27th, 2009: <http://flowtv.org/2009/06/tweeting-the-dialectic-of-technological-determinism%2%A0%2%A0ted-friedman%2%A0%2%A0georgia-state-university-atlanta%2%A0%2%A0/>

danah boyd & Nicole Ellison (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), article 11.
<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>

Activity: Go online and find out something about your neighbourhood.

Week 6: Where's Waldo?

What skills do we need to get ahead in the digital age? Do we as many of them as we think we do? Does a person still exist if they can't be found on google?

Reading: Siva Vidyanathan (interview) on The Googlization of Everything, May 2, 2011;
<http://www.cbc.ca/spark/2011/05/full-interview-siva-vaidhyanathan-on-the-googlization-of-everything/>

Recommended: Cathy N. Davidson, *Now You See It: How the Brain Science of Attention Will Transform the Way We Live, Work, and Learn*. Duke U. Press, 2011 (exerpts)

Activity: Go online and find my friend Rebecca E. A. Finn – not just ANY Rebecca E. A. Finn, but the one I'm looking for OR go online and find yourself – who are you? Who does google say you are?

TASK & ASSIGNMENT: How good are you at searching? You will be given a short list of things to find online. You will have 24 hours to find them and then you will write up your experiences around 'searching' and 'information' and the relationship between information, 'culture,' and 'society.'

Part 2: Tools/content/users

Week 7: Objects – media technologies and the everyday

Does technology change society or is it shaped by social and economic structures?

Reading:

Leslie Haddon (2011). *Domestication Analysis, Objects of Study, and the Centrality of Technologies in Everyday Life*. Canadian Journal of Communication. Vol 36, No 2
<http://cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/2322/2244>

Thomas Berker, et al. *Introduction: Domestication of Media and Technology*. Open University Press, 2005. (I'm working on getting a copy)

Activity: Watch TV on a TV set when a show is on, no PVR, download, stream or DVD. What takes the place that the TV used to occupy?

Week 8: Experiences – media content, new genres, new worlds

How do you classify the famous YouTube 'unboxing' video stuff? Is there a FAQ for life? How do you win at [Second] Life? Who is online – that we can see and that we can't?

Reading: Mimi Nguyen, *Tales of an Asiatic Geek Girl: Slant from Paper to Pixels*, In *Technicolor: Race, Technology and Everyday Life*, edited by Thuy Linh Tu and Alondra Nelson. New York: New York University Press, 2001. pp. 177-190. (I'm working on getting a copy)

Nonnecke, B. and Preece, J. (1999) *Shedding light on Lurkers in Online Communities. Ethnographic Studies in Real and Virtual Environments: Inhabited Information Spaces and Connected Communities*. 24-26 January, Edinburgh. Ed. K. Buckner. 123-128:
http://folders.nottingham.edu.cn/staff/zlizrb/2009_IC_NMW/Nonnecke_1999.pdf

Activity: Post something, anything, somewhere (on a PHYSICAL wall maybe, in public), then browse the bulletin board and see what you like. Consider the difference between being online and participating and being online and lurking. Maybe you could post a draft of your collage.

Week 9: Making is connecting

If we are now content consumers and co-producers/distributors, what's the point and what are the implications of it all?

Reading: David Gauntlett, *Introduction to Making is Connecting*, 2011:
<http://www.makingisconnecting.org/gauntlett2011-extract1.pdf>

Nicholas Diakopoulos, et al. *The evolution of authorship in a remix society*, HT '07 Proceedings of the eighteenth conference on Hypertext and hypermedia ACM New York, 2007
<http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1286272>

Activity: Make something, digital or physical. How are other people involved in what you make? Does making connect? Is digital making different than physical making?

Week 10: Remix culture

Reading: Kembrew McLeod & Peter Di Cola, *Creative License: The law and culture of digital sampling* (2011) Duke University Press (experts)

Watch: (a variety of short video clips) Prospero, Books, Arts & Culture (Economist blog), *Just a Sample*, December 15, 2011, <http://www.economist.com/node/21540676>

Listen: Discussion of how the 'Amen Break' changed music and advertising and is "the most important 6 second drum beat in the world": <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SaFTm2bcac>

Week 11: Free as in beer

How do you get paid in a free-flow-of-information world? Can you have an economy based on gifts? How did **you** make Zuckerberg and google billionaires?

Reading: Raymond Shi & Ray Ku, The Creative Destruction of Copyright: Napster and the New Economics of Digital Technology, The University of Chicago Law Review, Vol. 69, No. 1 (Winter, 2002), pp. 263-324: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/1600355>

Joel Oliphint (2014) Wax & Wane: The tough realities behind vinyl's comeback
<http://pitchfork.com/features/articles/9467-wax-and-wane-the-tough-realities-behind-vinyls-comeback/>

Lawrence Lessig (founder of the Creative Commons movement) *Free, as in beer*, Wired, 14.09 Sept. 2006: <http://www.wired.com/2006/09/free-as-in-beer/>

Resource: Visit the Missionary Church of Kopimism (a recognized religion in Sweeden based on the free copy and transfer of information): <http://kopimistsamfundet.se/english/>

Resource: Open Source Initiative; Definition of Open Source:
<http://www.opensource.org/osd.html>

Activity: Time to let your collage go (physical or digital). Give it away, for free. How does it feel? What benefit does it offer? Does it result in beer?

Week 12: Novelty, newness, overlap, or, how to make money at a rave.

How do people in changing societies take up changes in media content and use, figure out where they fit and then make a living?

Reading: Christina Goulding, Avi Shankar, Richard Elliott (2001), "*DANCE CLUBS, RAVE, AND THE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF A SUBCULTURAL PHENOMENON*", in European Advances in Consumer Research Volume 5, eds. Andrea Groeppel-Klien and Frank-Rudolf Esch, Provo, UT : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 203-208.
<http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/display.asp?id=11594>

Daren C. Brabham, *Moving the crowd at iStockphoto: The composition of the crowd and motivations for participation in a crowdsourcing application*, First Monday, Volume 13 No. 6, 2 June 2008 <http://www.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2159/1969>