New York University
Department of Media, Culture, and Communication
Introduction to Digital Media
MCC-UE 1003

Course description
This course will survey digital media in their constitutive technical, cultural, historical, economic and environmental dimensions. By considering digital media practices amid other contemporary media such as print publications, broadcasting, film and music, the course will equip you with the principal vocabulary necessary for understanding technological changes and shifts in media forms. We will also investigate how people around the world in their use of digital media reconfigure—and sometimes reconstitute already existing—relationships, identities, creative expression and possibilities for political engagement. The purpose will be to broaden our notions of what counts conceptually and geographically—in understanding the new regimes of circulation and power introduced by digital technologies.

Evaluation

- Blog portfolio consisting of ten of your best posts to the course blog (25%)
- Participation in class discussions and exercises (10%)
- First paper assignment (10%)
- Small group presentation (5%)
- Draft of your research paper, submitted for peer review (10%)
- Peer review of one of your colleagues’ proposals (5%)
- Oral presentation of your research project at the student conference (5%)
- Final draft of your research paper (30%)

Written assignments

- One or more weekly blog posts, posted at the latest by 11 p.m. the day before the class.

Please talk to me in order to obtain a login and password for the blog.

✓ Your blog posts should formulate an open-ended question about the readings assigned for the class. Frame this question so as to demonstrate that you have actively thought about the main issues in the reading and developed your own critical insights. Your open-ended questions will contribute to make our class discussions more interesting.

✓ You are also welcome to comment on a colleague’s post, comment on a newspaper article or an online resource related to our course, or elaborate on any other thoughts that you want to share with me and your classmates. If you are linking to another text that you consider important, in your blog post discuss how the link that you are making is relevant to our discussions in the course.
✓ Print out ten of your best blog posts and submit them to me in hard copy as your blog portfolio (due April 26).

➢ First paper assignment will be based on a study of an online archive of your choice (4 pages, due February 28). The paper should demonstrate your understanding of issues discussed in class (up to, and including, Week 5) by addressing course readings along with your analysis of the online archive.

➢ Draft of your research paper for peer review (8 pages, due April 10). Please submit two copies of your proposal, one for your peer reviewer, and one for me. The draft should include at least two required and/or recommended course readings.

➢ Peer review of another student's proposal (500 words, due April 17).

➢ Research paper (8 pages, due May 3) will be a research paper on a case study of your choice related to digital media. The final paper should include at least three required and/or recommended course readings.

Required texts

One book is required for the course and available for purchase at the NYU bookstore:


Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The other required texts will be available as links or via Blackboard. Please bring a copy of the required readings to class each week.

Recommended texts can be found in the library and sometimes online as well.

Class discussions

I expect that you will come to class having read all the required readings and having carefully thought about them. Your independent, analytical, and critical thinking is required and will be highly valued—in class discussions as well as in writing assignments.

I will take note of, but may not call you on: coming to class late, leaving class early, sleeping in class, playing on your laptop or other electronic device, doing work for other courses in class. These activities will negatively affect your participation grade.

Absences and lateness

More than two unexcused absences will automatically result in a lower grade. Regardless of the reason for your absence, you will be responsible for any missed work.

No late papers will be accepted without written permission from the instructor.

Religious observances

Students who follow special religious holidays that may interfere with the class schedule need to see me at the beginning of the semester to talk about your schedule.

Evaluation

A = Excellent. This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.
**B = Good.** This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

**C = Average.** This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is inarticulate.

**D = Unsatisfactory.** This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic.

**F = Failed.** This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments.

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**Grade appeals**
Please allow two days to pass before you submit a grade appeal. This gives you time to reflect on my assessment. If you still want to appeal your grade, please submit a short but considered paragraph detailing your concerns. Based on this paragraph I will review the question and either augment your grade or refine my explanation for the lost points.

**Proper attribution**
You are expected to observe and uphold the NYU’s code of academic integrity and the rules against plagiarism. Do not submit someone else's work as your own. Use quotation marks to cite words that are not your own. Learn proper ways to attribute and frame source materials in your text.

**Academic dishonesty and plagiarism**
“Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do...you violate the principle when you: cheat on an exam; submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors; receive help on a take-home courses without prior permission from your professors; receive help on a take-home that calls for independent work; or plagiarize. Plagiarism, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following: copy verbatim from a book, article, or other media; download documents from the Internet; purchase documents; paraphrase or restate someone else’s facts, analysis, and/or conclusions…” (see [http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity](http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity))

**Student resources**
Henry and Lucy Moses Center for students with disabilities ([http://www.nyu.edu/csd/](http://www.nyu.edu/csd/))
Writing Center: 411 Lafayette, 3rd Floor ([http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html](http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html))
Schedule of Classes, Readings and Assignments

**Week1: Jan24,26**
**Tue - Introduction.**
**Sign up for class blog**
No assigned readings.

**Thu - What do we mean by digital media?**
**Sign up for small group presentation**

**Week2: Jan31, Feb2**
**Tue - Novelty of digital media**
**Blog kick-off assignment** Discuss one example of a digital medium that remediates an older media technology. What features of older technology are being remediated? How does the new medium hypermediate the older technology? How does it claim greater immediacy than the older technology? How so?

**Thu - Novelty and obsolescence**
Small group presentation: “eDump,” available online at http://michaelzhao.net/eDump/

**Week3: Feb7,9**
**Tue - Utopianism and histories of digital media**
**Make an appointment with me to discuss your interests and ideas for the final project in this course**
**Thurs - Digital media, global infrastructures and governance**

**Workshop on library research about digital media, led by Alexa Pearce, the Librarian for Journalism, Media, Culture & Communication at NYU**


**Week 4: Feb 14, 16**

**Tue - Other histories of digital media**


**Thu - Ambiguities of copying**


**Small team presentation: Bad Lip Reading’s YouTube channel, available at**

http://www.youtube.com/badlipreading


**Week 5: Feb 21, 23**

**Tue - Digital archives**


**Small team presentation: “Digital Dynamics across Cultures,” available online at**


**Thu - Digital archives, continued: The politics of search**

**Week5:Feb28,Mar1**

**Tue - Network**

**Your first paper assignment is due**


**Thu - Networked journalism**


**Recommended:** Gillmor, Dan. 2004. *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People*. O'Reilly Media.

Week 7: Mar 6, 8
Tue - Networked journalism: global perspectives
Small group presentation: Global Voices In English, available at http://globalvoicesonline.org

Thu - Networked activism

** Spring Recess, March 12-17 **

Week 8: Mar 20, 22
Tue - Networked justice

Thu - Redefining ownership: emerging business models

Week 9: Mar 27, 29
Tue - Class visit to Democracy Now! Meet at 207 W. 25th St, 11th floor, at 2 p.m.
View one broadcast of the show beforehand, available at http://www.democracynow.org
Complete a brief assignment to prepare for the visit, available at
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3RZTC26

**Thu - Redefining ownership: intellectual and civil rights**


**Small team presentation: “Everything is a Remix,”**
http://www.everythingisaremix.info/watch-the-series/

Recommended: Morfoot, Leigh and Jason. 2010. “Citizen 3.0: Copyright, Creativity and Contemporary Culture.” Available online at http://www.kinobserver.com


**Week 10: Apr 3, 5**

**Tue - The blurring of labor and leisure**


Check out the filmmaker Ge Jin's website, www.chinesegoldfarmers.com


**Thu - New media labor and transnational mobility**


**Week 11: Apr 10, 12**

**Tue - Remaking identities through digital media**

**A complete draft of your research paper is due for peer review**


Thu - Remaking personhood: online profiles
**In-class film screening:** Matulick, Shelley. 2006. “Our Brilliant Second Life.”

**Week12:** Apr17, 19
**Tue - Remaking personhood: Activist strategies**
**Your peer review is due in class (along with the copy of the paper that you reviewed) **
Small group presentation: Amanda Baggs' blog, available at https://ballastexistenz.wordpress.com/

Thu - Digital intimacy and surveillance

**Week13:** Apr24, 26
**Tue - Student conference**
**Your blog portfolio is due **

Thu - Student conference

**Week14:** May1, 3
**Tue - Student conference**

Thu - **Your final paper is due **