Description

This course examines the role of new communication technologies – especially digital media and the Internet – in transforming our cultural, economic, political, ethical and epistemological systems. Specific areas we will cover include cultural antecedents to the digital revolution, the Internet economy, hacking, gaming, intellectual property, and “configurable” culture, such as remixes, mash-ups and modding.

Class will be conducted as a seminar. Students will be responsible for leading discussions on the readings, and are encouraged to critically engage the readings and class conversations.

Methods of Evaluation

Attendance and Participation       30%
Because this class is a graduate seminar, attendance and participation are of paramount importance: they are the best way to demonstrate what you have been learning as well as fine tune your ideas in dialogue with your classmates. This means regular and prompt attendance, coming to class having done the work, speaking when you have something to say, and listening respectfully when you don’t. An excess of three absences over the course of the semester will negatively impact your grade.

Reading Presentations        15%
Each text we read will be presented to the class by a student. This means that each student will be responsible for several reading presentations over the course of the semester. Please come equipped with notes/synopses on paper, to hand out to your classmates.

Reading Blog          15%
Prior to each class meeting, you should post 1-2 paragraphs to the reading blog (http://nyutopics08.blogspot.com/), asking questions or making observations about the readings and/or class discussions thereof. These will be due by the night before class. They will be used frequently to guide our discussions. These assignments are not graded individually, and you cannot make them up.

Final Paper and Presentation       40%
The final paper, due on December 15, will be 15-20 pages (or 5,000-6,000 words). You will be responsible for generating your own paper topic, related to our readings and class discussions. However, I will be available to consult on the paper topic, and to evaluate
early drafts. Your final presentation, which will last roughly 10 minutes during the last
two weeks of class, will be based upon an early draft of your final paper. Part of your
presentation grade is the active participation (questions, respectful listening, attendance)
in the presentations of others.

Written Work
All submitted work must be typed, double spaced, and paginated in 12-point Times New
Roman font, and submitted digitally, to my email address, in Microsoft Word,
WordPerfect, or OpenOffice format. The student's name, date, and essay title should
appear on the first page, and pages should be numbered. Consult the American
Psychological Association (APA) formal style manual or Chicago Manual of Style for
proper citation and quotation formatting.

Online and encyclopedic sources such as Wikipedia are excellent starting points for your
research. They offer a valuable overview of specific subjects, and link to vital primary
and secondary sources for your work. However, you are not permitted to quote or cite
the Wikipedia pages themselves as references in your work.

Free writing help is available through the Writing Center, 269 Mercer Street, 2nd Floor.
The telephone number is: (212) 998-8866.

Plagiarism
Regardless of the cultural value of “creative reappropriation,” academic plagiarism is a
serious offense. If you do it, in any form, you will fail the entire course. Just to be clear,
this includes every unacknowledged use of materials written by others (even sentences or
obvious paraphrases without quotes). Please see the University’s guidelines for further
information on this matter.

Late Assignments
Late assignments will be marked down one letter grade for every day they are overdue. If
you think you are going to be late with an assignment, you must notify me before the
assignment is due (and this does not mean an email an hour before class). Please respect
yourself and me. Lame excuses and lying will not be tolerated.

Students With Disabilities
Any student attending NYU who needs an accommodation due to a chronic,
psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard
of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities
at 212 998-4980, 240 Greene Street, http://www.nyu.edu/csd

Evaluation

A=Excellent
Outstanding work in all respects. This work demonstrates comprehensive and solid
understanding of course material, and presents thoughtful interpretations, well-focused
and original insights, and well-reasoned commentary and analysis. Includes skillful use
of source materials, illuminating examples and illustrations, fluent expression, and no grammar/typing errors.

B=Good
This work demonstrates a complete and accurate understanding of course material, presents a reasonable degree of insight and broad levels of analysis. Work reflects competence, but stays at a general or predictable level of understanding. Source materials, examples, illustrations, are used appropriately and articulation/writing is clear. Paper has been carefully proofread.

C=Adequate/Fair
This work demonstrates understanding that hits in the ballpark, but which remains superficial, incomplete, or expresses some significant errors or weaknesses. Source materials may be used inadequately or inappropriately, and arguments lack concrete, specific examples and illustrations. Writing/articulation may appear vague, hard to follow, or loaded with typos and other technical errors.

D=Unsatisfactory
This work demonstrates a serious lack or error in understanding, and fails to express the most rudimentary aspects of the course. Sources may be used entirely inappropriately or not at all, and writing/articulation appears deficient.

F=Failed
Work not submitted or attempted.

Plus (+) or minus (-) grades indicate your range within the aforementioned grades. In other words, B+ means very good.

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\begin{align*}
A & = 94-100 & B+ & = 87-89 & C+ & = 77-79 & D+ & = 67-69 \\
A- & = 90-93 & B & = 84-86 & C & = 74-76 \\
& & B- & = 80-83 & C- & = 70-73
\end{align*}
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**Texts:**

Most of the texts on our syllabus are available freely on the Internet. Some of the other short texts will be emailed to you in PDF format, a week prior to the class discussion. Additionally, The following books will be read in their entirety. While they are not available at the NYU bookstore, they can easily be purchased online. Please purchase them as quickly as possible, to avoid last-minute delays.


**Schedule:**

*The following is a “working schedule.” Class materials are subject to change based on the interests, understanding, and general pace of the class. It is your responsibility to*
keep on top of any schedule changes, whether you are in class or not. If you have a concern about any of the materials, please speak to me.

September 4: Introduction

I. Visions of the Digital Future

September 11: Utopia

September 18: Dystopia

II. Hackers and Gamers

September 25:
- Thomas, D. Hacker Culture

October 2:
Guest speaker: Biella Coleman
- Stallman, R. GNU manifesto
- 2600 editorial tk

October 9:

III. dot-com and Web 2.0

October 16: Dot-com and the “new” economy
Guest speaker: Gene DeRose (tentative)
• CNET, Top 10 dot-com flops

**October 23:** Social Networks and Web 2.0
**Movie: Startup.com**
- boyd, d. (2007). *Viewing American class divisions through Facebook and MySpace*.

**IV. Governance and Policy**

**October 30:** Content

**November 6:** Access and privacy
**Guest speaker: Andrew Rasiej (tentative)**

**V. Mixing and Mashing**

**November 13:**

**November 20:**
- Sinnreich, A. (2007). *Configurable Culture*

**November 27:** THANKSGIVING

**December 4:** Presentations

**December 11:** Presentations

**December 15:** Final Paper Due