

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:

Goldsmith, Jack, and Tim Wu. 2008. *Who Controls the Internet? Illusions of Borderless World*.

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.

A = 94-100

B+ = 87-89

C+ = 77-79

D+ = 67-69

A- = 90-93

B = 84-86

C = 74-76

D = 64-66

B- = 80-83

C- = 70-73

F = 63 and below

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)

Student resources

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for students with disabilities (<http://www.nyu.edu/csd/>)

Writing Center: 411 Lafayette, 3rd Floor

(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 ****

Lev Manovich. 2001. "What is New Media?" In *The Language of New Media*. Cambridge: MIT Press. pp. 19-48.

Ginsburg, Faye. 2008. "Rethinking the Digital Age." In *The Media and Social Theory*. David Hesmondhalgh and Jason Toynbee, eds. New York: Routledge. pp. 127-144.

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?

Bolter, David, and Richard Grusin. 1999. Introduction and Chapter 1. In *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Available online at <http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?tttype=2&tid=3468&mode=toc>

Recommended: Cohen, Kris. 2005. "What Does the Photoblog Want?" *Media, Culture & Society* 27 (6): 883 -901.

Recommended: Gitelman, Lisa, and Geoffrey Pingree, eds. 2003. *New Media, 1740-1915*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Thu - Novelty and obsolescence

Sterne, Jonathan. 2007. "Out with the Trash: On the Future of New Media." In *Residual Media*. Charles Acland, ed. pp. 16-31.

Parks, Lisa. 2004. "Kinetic Screens: Epistemologies of Movement at the Interface." In *MediaSpace: Place, Scale and Culture in a Media Age*, ed. Nick Couldry and Anna McCarthy. London: Routledge. pp. 37-57.

Small group presentation: "eDump," available online at <http://michaelzhao.net/eDump/>

In-class screening: Baichwal, Jennifer. 2006. "Manufactured Landscapes." Clips.

Recommended: YesLab and MolleIndustria. 2011. "Phone Story." <http://yeslab.org/project/phone-story>

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 ****

Turner, Fred. (2006) "How Digital Technology Found Utopian Ideology: Lessons from the First Hacker's Conference." In *Critical Cyberculture Studies*. David Silver and Adrienne Massanari, eds. New York: NYU Press. pp. 257-269.

Goldsmith, Jack, and Tim Wu. 2006. *Who Controls the Internet? Illusions of Borderless World*. Oxford University Press US. Read Prefaces and Chapters 1, 2, 4, 6.

Recommended: Haraway, Donna. 1991. "A Manifesto for Cyborgs." In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge. Available online at <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Haraway/CyborgManifesto.html>

Recommended: Stallman, Richard. (1984) "The GNU Manifesto." Available online at <http://www.gnu.org/gnu/manifesto.html>.

Recommended: Barlow, John. 1996. "Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace." Available online at <http://homes.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html>

Recommended: Bush, Vannevar. 1945. "As We May Think." *The Atlantic*. Available online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/194507/bush>

Thu - 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 ****

Goldsmith, Jack, and Tim Wu. 2006. *Who Controls the Internet? Illusions of Borderless World*. Oxford University Press US. Read Chapters 7, 8, 10, 11.

Week 4: Feb 14, 16

Tue - Other histories of digital media

Edwards, Paul. 1996. "Why Build Computers?: The Military Role in Computer Research." In *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. pp. 43-73.

Light, Jennifer. 1999. "When Computers Were Women." *Technology and Culture* 40: 455-483.

Recommended: Abbate, Janet. 1999. *Inventing the Internet*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Recommended: Turner, Fred. 2006. *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thu - Ambiguities of copying

Powers, Richard. 2001. "The Artist's Bedlam." In *Iconoclasm: Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art*. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, eds. Boston: MIT Press. pp. 476-477.

Meiselas, Susan and Joy Garnet. 2007. On the rights of Molotov Man: Appropriation and the art of context. *Harper's Magazine* 53-58.

Small team presentation: Bad Lip Reading's YouTube channel, available at <http://www.youtube.com/badlipreading>

Recommended: John Berger. 1972. "Ways of Seeing." Part One.

Recommended: Walter Benjamin. 1968 (1936). "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Week 5: Feb 21, 23

Tue - Digital archives

Bowker, Geoffrey, and Susan Leigh Star. 1999. "What a Difference a Name Makes: The Classification of Nursing Work." In *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. pp. 229-254.

Christie, Michael. 2008. "Digital Tools and the Management of Australian Aboriginal Desert Knowledge." In *Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics, and Politics*. Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart, eds. Durham: Duke University Press. pp. 270-285.

Small team presentation: "Digital Dynamics across Cultures," available online at <http://vectorsjournal.org/projects/index.php?project=67>

Recommended: Manovich, Lev. 2001. "Database as a Symbolic Form." Available online at http://transcriptions.english.ucsb.edu/archive/courses/warner/english197/Schedule_files/Manovich/Database_as_symbolic_form.htm.

Thu - Digital archives, continued: The politics of search

Introna, Lucas, and Helen Nissenbaum. 2000. Shaping The Web: Why the Politics of Search Engines Matters. *The Information Society* 16: 169-185.

Stalder, Felix, and Christine Mayer. 2009. The Second Index: Search Engines, Personalization and Surveillance. In *Deep Search: The Politics of Search beyond Google*, ed. Konrad Becker and Felix Stalder. Innsbruck: Studienverlag. Available at <http://remix.openflows.com/node/113>

Darnton, Robert. 2009. Google & the Future of Books. *The New York Review of Books* 56 (2). Available online at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/22281>.

Recommended: Grimmelmann, James. 2009. *The Google Book Search Settlement: Ends, Means, and the Future of Books*. American Constitution Society for Law and Policy. Available online at http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=james_grimmelmann

Week6:Feb28,Mar1

Tue - Network

**** Your first paper assignment is due ****

Zittrain, Jonathan. 2008. Preface, Introduction, and Chapter 2 in *The Future of the Internet--And How to Stop It*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pp. ix-x, 1-5, and 19-35. Available online at <http://yupnet.org/zittrain/>

Future of Music Coalition. 2010. Network Neutrality: Fact Sheet. Available online at <http://futureofmusic.org/article/fact-sheet/network-neutrality>.

Benkler, Yochai, and Christian Ahlert. 2006. Mining the Wealth of Networks with Yochai Benkler. Available online at http://www.opendemocracy.net/media-copyrightlaw/benkler_3487.jsp

Burgess, Jean. 2008. "All Your Chocolate Rain Are Belong to Us"? In *Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube*, ed. Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer, 101-109. Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures. Available at http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/portal/files/2008/10/vv_reader_small.pdf.

Recommended: Baker, Nicholson. 2008. The Charms of Wikipedia. *The New York Review of Books* 55 (4). Available online at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/21131>

Recommended: Albert-László Barabási. 2002. *Linked: The New Science of Networks*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus.

Thu - Networked journalism

Klinenberg, Eric. 2005. Convergence: News Production in a Digital Age. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political & Social Science* 597:48-64.

Lemann, Nicholas. 2006. Amateur Hour: Journalism without Journalists. *The New Yorker*, August 7. Available at http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/08/07/060807fa_fact1

Benson, Rodney. 2010. Futures of the News: International Considerations and Further Reflections. In *New Media, Old News: Journalism and Democracy in the Digital Age*, ed. Natalie Fenton, 187-200. London: SAGE Publications.

Recommended: Boczkowski, Pablo. 2004. *Digitizing the News: Innovation in Online Newspapers*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

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

Recommended: Allan, Stuart, and Einar Thorsen. 2009. *Citizen Journalism: Global Perspectives*. New York: Peter Lang.

Week7:Mar6,8

Tue - Networked journalism: global perspectives

Zuckerman, Ethan. 2004. Making Room for the Third World in the Second Superpower. In *Extreme Democracy*, ed. Jon Lebkowsky and Mitch Ratcliffe. Available at <http://extremedemocracy.com/chapters/Chapter13-Zuckerman.pdf>

Khatchadourian, Raffi. 2010. "No Secrets: Julian Assange's Mission for Total Transparency." *The New Yorker*, June 7. Available at http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/06/07/100607fa_fact_khatchadourian?currentPage=all.

Check out Wikipedia page on Wikileaks, available at <https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/WikiLeaks>

Small group presentation: Global Voices In English, available at <http://globalvoicesonline.org>

Thu - Networked activism

York, Jillian. 2010. The False Poles of Digital and Traditional Activism. Available at <http://jilliancyork.com/2010/09/27/the-false-poles-of-digital-and-traditional-activism/>

Giridharadas, Anand. 2010. Africa's Gift to Silicon Valley: How to Track a Crisis. *The New York Times*, March 12. Available at <http://anand.ly/articles/taking-stock-in-the-testimony-of-the-crowd>

Zuckerman, Ethan. 2007. Mobile Phones and Social Activism. *My Heart's in Accra*. Available at <http://www.ethanzuckerman.com/blog/2007/04/09/draft-paper-on-mobile-phones-and-activism/>
Recommended: Scholz, Trebor. 2008. Where the Activism Is. In *Digital Media and Democracy: Tactics in Hard Times*, ed. Megan Boler, 355-365. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

**** Spring Recess, March 12-17 ****

Week8:Mar20,22

Tue - Networked justice

Shirky, Clay. 2008. "It Takes a Village to Find a Phone." In *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations*. New York: Penguin. pp. 1-25.

Downey, Tom. 2010. "China's Cyberposse." *The New York Times*. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/07/magazine/07Human-t.html?pagewanted=1&ref=magazine>

Zittrain, Jonathan. 2008. "Meeting the Risks of Generativity: Privacy 2.0." In *The Future of the Internet--And How to Stop It*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pp. 200-234. Available online at <http://yupnet.org/zittrain/>

Thu - Redefining ownership: emerging business models

Rodman, Gilbert, and Cheyanne Vanderdonckt. 2006. "Music for Nothing or, I Want My MP3: The Regulation and Recirculation of Affect." *Cultural Studies* 20 (2): 245-261.

Future of Music Coalition. 2009. "New Business Models Spreadsheet." Available at <http://futureofmusic.org/sites/default/files/newbusinessmodels.pdf>

Small group presentation: The Future of Music Coalition website, available at <http://futureofmusic.org>

Week9:Mar27,29

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

Stanford University Libraries & Academic Information Resources. 2007. "Chapter 9: Fair Use." Read especially the sections "What is Fair Use?" and "Measuring Fair Use: The Four Factors."

Available online at

http://fairuse.stanford.edu/Copyright_and_Fair_Use_Overview/chapter9/index.html

Vaidhyathan, Siva. 2003. "Copyright and American Culture: Ideas, Expressions, and Democracy," in *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How It Threatens Creativity*. New York: NYU Press. pp. 17-34.

Paley, Nina. 2009. "Frequently Asked Questions," available at <http://www.sitasingstheblues.com>

Small team presentation: "Everything is a Remix,"

<http://www.everythingsaremix.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>

Recommended: Aufderheide, Patricia, and Peter Jaszi. 2004. *Untold Stories: Creative Consequences of the Rights Clearance Culture for Documentary Filmmakers*. Washington, D.C.: Final Report to Center for Social Media.

Week 10: Apr 3, 5

Tue - The blurring of labor and leisure

Postigo, Hector. 2003. "Emerging Sources of Labor on the Internet: The Case of America Online Volunteers." *International Review of Social History* 48: 205-223.

Dibbell, Julian. 2007. The Life of the Chinese Gold Farmer. *New York Times*, June 17, 2007.

Available online at <http://www.juliandibbell.com/texts/goldfarmers.html>

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

Small team presentation: "Games for Change," <http://www.gamesforchange.org>, and **"Grow-a-game,"** <http://www.bettergamecontest.org/>

Recommended: von Ahn, Luis. 2006. *Presentation for Google TechTalk on Human Computation*.

October 26. Available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtFroEJN1nI>

Thu - New media labor and transnational mobility

Xiang, Biao. 2005. Gender, Dowry and the Migration System of Indian Information Technology Professionals. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 12: 357-380.

Recommended: Freeman, Carla. 2000. *High Tech and High Heels in the Global Economy: Women, Work, and Pink-Collar Identities in the Caribbean*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Week 11: Apr 10, 12

Tue - Remaking identities through digital media

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

Hargittai, Eszter. 2008. The Digital Reproduction of Inequality. In *Social Stratification*. Ed. David Grusky. Boulder: Westview Press. pp. 936-944. Available online at <http://www.webuse.org/the-digital-reproduction-of-inequality/>

Kendall, Lori. 2002. Hanging Out in the Virtual Locker Room: BlueSky as a Masculine Space. In *Hanging Out in the Virtual Pub: Masculinities and Relationships Online*. University of California Press. pp. 71-108.

Nakamura, Lisa. 2007. Measuring Race on the Internet. In *Digitizing Race*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. pp. 171-201.

Thu - Remaking personhood: online profiles

Malaby, Thomas. 2009. "1_The Product: Second Life, Capital, and the Possibility of Failure in a Virtual World." In *Making Virtual Worlds: Linden Lab and Second Life*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. pp. 17-45.

Humphrey, Caroline. 2009. "The Mask and the Face: Imagination and Social Life in Russian Chat Rooms and Beyond." *Ethnos* 74 (1) (March): 31-50.

Recommended: Reed, Adam. 2005. "My Blog Is Me': Texts and Persons in UK Online Journal Culture (and Anthropology)." *Ethnos* 70 (2): 220-242.

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) ****

Ginsburg, Faye. 2007. Found in Translation. In *Media Res: A Media Commons Project*.
<http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/imr/2007/03/28/found-in-translation>.

Orgad, Shani. 2005. The Transformative Potential of Online Communication: The Case of Breast Cancer Patients' Internet Spaces. *Feminist Media Studies* 5 (2): 141-161.

Small group presentation: Amanda Baggs' blog, available at <https://ballastexistenz.wordpress.com/>

Thu - Digital intimacy and surveillance

Madianou, Mirca, and Daniel Miller. 2011. "Mobile phone parenting: Reconfiguring relationships between Filipina migrant mothers and their left-behind children." *New Media & Society* 13 (3) (May 1): 457 -470.

Gershon, Ilana. 2010. "Breaking Up in a Public." In *The Breakup 2.0: Disconnecting over New Media*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. pp. 165-196.

Recommended: Thompson, Clive. 2008. Brave New World of Digital Intimacy. *The New York Times*, September 7, 2008.

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 **