

# JTC 413: New Communication Technologies and Society Fall 2009

**Meetings:** Mondays & Wednesdays, 4:00 – 5:15 p.m., Eddy 7

**Professor:** Dr. R.M. Martey

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**Office Hours:** Clark C-218, Tuesdays, 11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

**Course Wiki:** <http://commtech413.pbworks.com/>

**PLEASE NOTE:** *In the event that this syllabus changes, the web version will be the updated and correct one. Check it regularly!*

**Course Description:** This upper level course explores the structures, institutions, cultures, and impacts of digital communication technologies. Through lectures, class discussions, homework assignments, and group research projects, students will develop an understanding of the major social issues in this area. Students are expected to gain a greater appreciation of the relations between science, technology, economics, culture and law in the field of communication as a result of their participation in the course.

**Readings will be available online, assigned throughout the semester.**

## Assignments

1) Starting in the sixth week of the semester, one class each week will be dedicated to discussion on a specific technology led by groups of five students (20% of grade). Each group member will choose a perspective from which to discuss the technology selected. After about 40 to 50 minutes of presentation, groups will lead a class discussion based on presentations and assigned readings. Presentation order will be randomly determined.

Assignments	
Presentation	20%
Paper	20%
Homework	20%
Mid-term	10%
Final exam	15%
Participation	15%

2) On the day s/he presents, each group member will submit a five-page (~1,600 words) research paper (20% of grade) on his/her technology from one of five perspectives: **Regulation; Identity/Representation; Consumption; Production; or Technology**. The paper must be original work, clearly written, and properly cited, using **APA citation style**. Do not use outline format, and pay close attention to length: over-long papers indicate lack of focus. *This class does not require use of AP style.*

3) Brief (300 word) homework assignments (20% total) based on readings and class discussion are due in class on Mondays throughout the semester. These assignments are graded (0, 0.5, 1, or 1.5), and completing homework with excellence entitles the well-prepared student to an additional 0.5 points extra credit. Students may drop or skip one homework. Late homework will not be evaluated.

4) Comprehensive exams will be held mid-semester (10%) and during finals week (15%) that cover readings and lectures for the semester. The mid-term exam will be on material covered to date, and the final will draw on material from throughout the semester, emphasizing the latter half. All exams must be independent work.

## **Class Presentations**

### **Selecting a technology & perspective**

Select a technology from the list and identify the perspective from which you wish examine the technology. Groups will be created by the professor. Select a technology you are interested in and with which you have some basic familiarity. You do not need to be expert in the technology, simply comfortable with it. Groups will meet with the professor to discuss the direction, focus, and content of their research and presentations.

#### **Technologies**

##### **Telephony**

Cell phones, skype, etc.

##### **Television**

HDTV, digital TV, cable, etc.

##### **Digital video**

YouTube, podcasts, streaming, etc.

##### **Radio**

Satellite, digital, internet, etc.

##### **Film**

Movies, DVDs, streaming, online, etc.

##### **PDA's**

iPhone, Blackberry, etc.

##### **Music**

iPods, downloads, etc.

##### **Computers**

Apple, PCs, laptops, desktops, etc.

##### **Internet general**

ISPs, servers, broadband, etc.

##### **Software**

Microsoft, LINUX, UNIX, Apple, open source, etc.

##### **Internet: News**

Magazines, newspapers, blogs, etc.

##### **Internet: Social networks**

MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.

##### **Internet: Video games**

WoW, TSO, Second Life, etc.

##### **Troublemakers**

Griefers, P2P, pirate radio, hackers, warez, phishing, identity theft, etc.

#### **Research perspectives**

##### **Regulation**

Legal, political, cultural boundaries and control. Formal and informal ways that the technology and its content are regulated

##### **Identity & Representation**

Content, messages, images and ideas about people communicated by the technology; influences, consequences, effects

##### **Consumption**

Who audiences are; how they use the technology; social impact of that use

##### **Production**

Economics, ownership, and market for the technology, locally and globally

##### **Technology**

History, changes, and development of the technology. How it works, standards, new directions and developments

### **Presentations & class discussion**

Each student's 8 to 10 minute presentation should be coordinated with the others in the group to avoid overlap and ensure a focused 40 to 50 minute session. Aim to provide a clear summary of the main conceptual and factual points that will help class members understand your research and the key issues from your perspective. Part of your responsibility is to generate class discussion about the technology you have chosen. It is highly recommended that you use visual aids (slides, video, images, etc.) in your presentation.

### **Preparing the presentation materials**

**Two weeks** before your presentation, the group will work together to prepare presentation materials. All materials need to be **approved by the professor**. These are:

- 1) Meet with the professor to discuss the topic and focus
- 2) An outline from each person that provides an overview of the presentation materials
- 3) Two or three relevant readings to be assigned to the class
- 4) Between three and five discussion questions to be handed out to the class

If you wish, you may also submit PowerPoint slides or handouts to the professor one week before the presentation for feedback.

## Policies

### Points Earned & Grade (*subject to change if a curve is used*):

A+ =	100% +
A =	95% - 99%
A- =	90% - 94%
B+ =	87% - 89%
B =	84% - 86%
B- =	80% - 83%
C+ =	77% - 79%
C =	74% - 76%
C- =	70% - 73%
D =	60% - 69%
F =	59% and below

**Grading:** You will not only be graded on the content of your assignments, but also the focus, accuracy, clarity, organization, creativity, and readability of your writing. Group work evaluations and your presentation outline will also factor into your presentation grade.

**Note:** In order to receive an A in this course, students must exhibit truly exemplary work. Simply fulfilling all assignments and participation will earn about a B. It is not expected that more than about 15% of the class will earn an A.

**Attendance and participation:** Students are expected to attend lecture on time. Those who leave early will have points deducted from their grade for that day. No exceptions will be made for participation grades: if you are not present, you will not get credit for participation that day.

**Extra credit:** Throughout the semester, there will be several opportunities for extra credit. Among them, most homework has the opportunity for 0.5 points extra credit.

**Plagiarism and falsification:** All work in this course is to be independent, with the exception of assistance from the professor or group projects. Plagiarism is a violation of the fundamental principles of intellectual property and academic integrity. Plagiarism includes: failing to cite properly direct quotes or paraphrases of others' ideas; another person writing, editing, organizing, or otherwise significantly contributing to your work; turning in a project that you completed for another class. Students submitting any plagiarized or unacceptable assignments will receive an automatic grade of 0 for the full assignment or exam, other grade penalties, including a possible failing grade in the course, in addition to University disciplinary action. All cases of plagiarism and falsification will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and will be placed on record. All papers will be passed through the University's plagiarism service.

**Late Assignments and Incompletes:** Assignments turned in late will have an automatic reduction of 10% of its grade, NO exceptions. Incompletes will not be given for the course without a legitimate reason, to be determined by the professor. Legitimate reasons are extremely rare.

**Missed Exams:** Students who do not attend class the day of the exams may not take the exam later. Only students with a legitimate absence may make up the exam, and students must have documentation submitted to the professor before the exam to support their absence. Travel plans are not considered a legitimate absence.

**Grade Disputes:** Students who wish to dispute a grade may resubmit the assignment for consideration. If the student resubmits, the assignment will be re-considered, **which means the grade may go up, down, or stay the same.** Grade disputes will not be discussed over email. Students must make an appointment to meet with the professor to discuss grading issues.

**Syllabus Changes:** This syllabus is subject to change with sufficient notice to students.

## Tentative Course Outline

### Week 1

8/24 Overview

8/26 Media environment

### Week 2

8/31 New media theory

9/2 Technologies & perspectives

Homework 1: Perspectives

### Week 3

**9/7 Labor day - no class**

9/9 Convergence & technology

Homework 2: Media use log

### Week 4

9/14 Devices & determinism

9/16 Diffusion & distribution

Homework 3: Technological determinism

### Week 5

9/21 Digital divide

9/23 Ownership & control

Homework 4: Media use & ownership

### Week 6

9/28 Consolidation & concentration

9/30 *Student presentation*

Homework 5: Merger concerns

### Week 7

10/5 Markets & models

10/7 *Student presentation*

Homework 6: Response & issues

### Week 8

10/12 Regulation & copyright

10/14 Midterm review

Homework 7: Response & issues

***Midterm exam due 10/19 in class***

### Week 9

10/19 Media, identity and the self

10/21 Social influence & interaction

### Week 10

10/26 Privacy and society

10/28 *Student presentation*

Homework 8: Privacy matters

### Week 11

11/2 Politics & power

11/4 *Student presentation*

Homework 9: Response & issues

### Week 12

11/9 Global media flows

11/11 *Student presentation*

Homework 10: Response & issues

### Week 13

11/16 *Student presentation*

11/18 *Student presentation*

Homework 11: Response & issues

***Thanksgiving break***

### Week 14

11/30 *Student presentation*

12/2 *Student presentation*

Homework 12: Response & issues

### Week 15

12/7 *Student presentation: Troublemakers*

12/9 Re-cap and final exam review

Homework 13: Response & issues

***Final exam Wednesday, Dec. 16 1:30-3:30p***