University of Wisconsin-Madison
CA 200: Introduction to Digital Communication
Fall 2019
Lecture: 12:00- 12:50 (T/Th); Grainger 2120

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Office Hours: 10:00 – 11:00am, T/Th

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Office Hours: 1:00- 3:00pm, Th

Course Description

This course challenges students to think critically about digital technologies, practices and cultures. Students will 1) demonstrate their understanding of major theories and concepts in the study of digital communication;
2) apply critical thinking and analysis to case studies with attention to self-presentation in social media, community involvement, and cultural empowerment;
3) learn effective methods for producing digital communication with attention to audiences and technological affordances;

> **This is a 3-credit course.** This class meets for three 50-minute class periods each week over the fall semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course activities (reading, studying, working on videos, discussion posts etc.) for about 2 hours out of classroom for every period. The syllabus includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

4) learn basics of producing video and demonstrate these skills by creating two videos;
5) mentor and support their peers through two peer-reviews for each video; they will also learn to evaluate and incorporate feedback as they revise their own video projects;
6) experiment with and challenge their own digital media/technology usage and draw conclusions based on their experiences.

Throughout the semester, we will return to the central question of this course:
"How does the internet change how we communicate?"

Readings
All readings are available for download via the course page on Canvas. Readings should be completed by the date listed on the schedule at the end of this syllabus. All readings, even those not covered in lecture, are fair game for exam and discussion material.

Policies & Help

Classroom Climate
Respect: Communication in the classroom involves risk. Try to understand, not judge, other people. Our classroom needs to be a safe place to explore communication contexts and an open

place to reconsider our preconceptions of digital communication, its power, and its use in our everyday lives. This means that everyone should be referred to by the name they prefer, the correct pronunciation of their name, and the pronoun they prefer (like she, ze, he, or they). Please be respectful throughout the course. If you feel uncomfortable, do not hesitate to talk to your instructor or TA privately during office hours.

Online Contexts: In this class you are expected to engage in communication both in class and online. For example, your video projects will be posted publicly on YouTube. If you are uncomfortable with this, or if you require special considerations, please contact me during the first week of the semester.

Accessibility Statement
I understand that each of us learns in different ways, and that the organization of any course may accommodate each student differently. If you find that the course design impedes your participation in any way, please reach out to me about your individual learning needs and how this course might be tailored to best accommodate them. I recommend that you approach the McBurney Disability Resource Center on Campus to any request disability-related accommodations or if you have specific accessibility requirements for participating in this course. Early meetings with faculty can be used to discuss the structure of the course and the delivery of the course content to identify accommodations and accessibility features that you may need. I am committed to creating a learning environment that can accommodate the needs of all students in this class.

Web: How to Become a McBurney Client
Phone: (608) 263-2741
Email: mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu
Text: (608) 225-7956

Inclusiveness
This course encourages the exploration of different perspectives and communicative experiences relating to gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and other relevant cultural identities. The course seeks to foster understanding, awareness and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating. We will read about and discuss the experiences of people across a range of identity groups some of which may reflect your own experiences and others not; maturity, mindfulness and conscientiousness are *expected* from your language choices and the way you participate in the classroom.

Illnesses and Other Personal Emergencies
If you experience an unavoidable personal situation that prevents you from completing work on time, you must take responsibility for informing the instructor *prior* to the date the work is due. We can work through issues you may encounter, but post-facto excuses do not work well.

Religious Holidays
If there are religious holidays that interfere with completing course material, please notify the instructor in writing during the first week of class what days/assignments interfere so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

Grade Appeals

There is a 24-7 policy for grade appeals in this class, which means that you must *wait 24 hours* after receiving the grade with written comments and *appeal within 7 days*. Appeals should consist of a written explanation in a Word document or PDF emailed to the TA that explains the specific elements of the assignment that you believe meet the assignment requirements and thus need re-evaluation. In the appeal, please provide evidence for your request for a re-assessment, drawing on both the wording of the assignment guidelines and your work to support your argument. *It is generally recommended that you frame these appeals as requests for re-assessment and phrase your requests with a courteous and respectful tone.*

Attendance Policy

Attendance at all meetings is mandatory. Each student gets one excused absence that may be used for any reason (sickness, funerals, personal reasons, etc.). Lateness may be counted as a partial absence at the instructor's discretion. Students arriving more than 15 minutes late may be considered absent. Students must attend the section for which they are registered.

Incompletes

As per university policy, incompletes are reserved for students who are earning a passing grade but are unable to complete the course due to illness or conditions beyond their control. If you feel you may be in a situation that warrants an incomplete, please contact the professor of the course to discuss your options.

Instructor Office Hours and Contact

I check email once a day, every day. Except for holidays or other absences (which you will know about), I check email in the afternoon. If you want a response, you should plan to send an email before 12pm. If you don't hear from me within 24 hours, please email again, as this is likely an error. Please make sure to follow emailing ethics (i.e. subject line, signing off, etc.). Finally, if my office hours do not work for you, please schedule an appointment with me via email.

Assignments

Your final grade in this course is based on two major video projects, two peer review assignments, two exams, and *active* in-class participation (in lecture, discussion, and the course padlet). Because of the size and pace of this class, <u>late assignments will not be accepted.</u>

Video 1.0

This assignment asks you to create a short (2-3-minute) video-pitch on a campus issue of your choosing. Your video should have a clear concept and be targeted to effectively communicate with a particular institutional audience in mind (UW Board of Regents, Admissions Committee, Chancellor Rebecca Blank, Rec Sports etc.). The audience is of your own choosing, and you will be evaluated based on how well you have enacted the strategies you develop to address that audience. The video should be well-prepared, thoughtfully composed, and clearly presented. This is an "everyday" video—use the devices you own or are able to borrow from Campus resources, turn your attention to your daily campus environment, and finally, frame the video

to articulate the importance of that issue to the institutional authority of your choosing. You must use some original footage that you have captured including a minimum of 30-seconds of your own appearance in the video. You should include additional media (visual aids, slides, other clips, music, effects etc.) and use YouTube's platform affordances for closed-captioning. You will post your video to YouTube and provide your TA with a working URL and a short description of your intended audience and the imagined medium/platform to communicate with this audience by 5 p.m. on the due date. Video 1.0 is worth 20% of your final grade.

Video 2.0

This assignment asks you to adapt your work from the first video assignment in a way that takes advantage of the affordances of digital media. Using editing techniques, you will edit and remix Video 1.0 to now *shift* and/or *widen* your target audience and produce a second video (3 to 4 minutes). Imagine a vernacular community on campus (an existing student group or community, students who you think should/would be interested in your video, all Badgers, Alumni, students who work at the Union etc.). *Adapt* your communicative strategies to effectively speak to this imagined audience, articulate the importance of your topic to them, and speak to what action this target audience might participate in. You will post your video to YouTube and provide your TA with a working URL and a short description of how your editing choices heightened the video's impact by 1 p.m. on the due date. Video 2.0 is worth 20% of your final grade. Make sure to use (and check!) YouTube's platform affordances for closed-captioning.

Peer Review
This course has two peer review assignments. For both Video 1.0 and Video 2.0 each student will review two of their peers' initial video project drafts. You will upload these peer reviews to the appropriate dropbox on Canvas by 1 p.m. on the due date. Each peer review is worth 5% of your final grade.

Exams

This course has a midterm (10/17, in-class) and a final (12/14). Both exams are multiple choice, with questions drawn from lecture and the assigned course readings. A review sheet listing key terms and ideas will be provided a week prior to each exam. Please make sure you do not have conflicts on these dates; make-up exams will not be offered. Each exam is worth 20% of your final grade.

Participation

Participation grades are based on active engagement during class discussions, activities, course padlet, tutorials, and lecture. Students who are absent are unable to receive participation points for the meeting(s) they miss. Active and consistent participation is required in order to receive a participation grade above a B. Participation is worth 10% of your final grade.

Point Breakdown (500 points possible)
Video 1.0 Assignment: 100
Video 2.0 Assignment: 100
Peer Review 1.0: 25
Peer Review 2.0: 25
Midterm Exam: 100

Final Exam: 100
Participation: 50

Grade Scale:

Percent Range	Grade
93-100	A
88-92.9	AB
83-87.9	B
78-82.9	BC
70-77.9	C
60-69.9	D
59.9-Below	F

Extra Credit

DesignLab
DesignLab is a campus resource for students working on digital media projects. Located on the second floor of College Library, DesignLab focuses on conceptual, aesthetic, and overall design of media projects and can be used for class assignments, student organizations, independent projects, and personal professional development. All students are encouraged to schedule and attend a consultation with DesignLab before the rough draft of Video 1.0 is due. A second consultation for Video 2.0 is also strongly recommended. Students who schedule and attend a meeting with the DL, and receive verification of their attendance, will receive up to 5 points extra credit on each video. The verification should be scanned/photographed and uploaded to the appropriate dropbox on canvas up to two days prior to when final videos are due (i.e. by 10/30 for video 1.0 and 12/9 for video 2.0). For additional information or to schedule an appointment, visit: https://designlab.wisc.edu/

SONA
Students may earn up to 1 percentage point of extra credit in this course, by participating in research. A half hour of research participation corresponds to ½ % point added to your final score in the class.
A detailed student guide to accessing studies via SONA is posted on the course website. The SONA site, which will be available for student log in starting **September 27**, is http://wisc-commarts.sona-systems.com.
   • Questions: contact Julian Mueller-Herbst muellerherbs@wisc.edu

Course Schedule

Part I: Key Theories and Concepts in Digital Communication		
Week 1- Communication Strategies		
9/5 (Th)	Introduction; Communication Strategies	Belch and Belch, "The Communication Process"
Week 2- Technology and Society		
9/10 (T)	Everyday Digital & Institutional Media	Howard, "The Vernacular Web,"; Pettit, "The Gutenberg Parenthesis"
9/12 (Th)	Technological Affordances	Baym (Ch, 2), "Making New Media Make Sense"; Latour, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?"
Week 3- History of Digital Communication		
9/17 (T)	History of Computing and Code	Lessig, *Code 2.0* (Ch. 1, Ch. 4, & Ch. 5); Page, "Coding is the Language of Women"
9/19 (Th)	History of the Internet	Baym (Ch. 1), "Connections in the Digital Age"; Wellman, "Three Ages of Internet Studies"
Week 4- Political Economy of the Internet		
9/24 (T)	Selling the Internet	McChesney, *Digital Disconnect* (Ch. 4 & Ch. 5)
9/26 (Th)	DESIGN LAB Visit 1.0	
Week 5- Political Economy of the Internet continued		
10/1 (T)	The Long Tail	Hindman, *Myth of Digital Democracy* (Ch. 3); Benkler, *Wealth of Networks* (Ch. 6 and selected passages)
10/3 (Th)	Algorithms	Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression* (Intro); Gillespie, "The Relevance of Algorithms"
Week 6 Data Politics		
10/8 (T)	Privacy and Surveillance	Dencik and Cable, "Surveillance Realism,"; Rider, "Privacy Paradox" *Guest Lecture, Maryam Ahmadi*
10/10 (Th)	Big Data	*boyd and Crawford, "Critical questions for Big Data"*

Week 7 Digital "Platforms"

10/15 (T)	Platforms and Infrastructures	Plantin, "Digital Traces in Contextl Google Maps as Cartographic Infrastructure: From Participatory Mapmaking to Database Maintenance"
10/17 (Th)	MIDTERM EXAM in lecture	

Part II: Forms of Digital Communication

Week 8 Digital Labor

10/22 (T)	Connectivity	Van Djick, "Engineering Sociality in a Culture of Connectivity" Gerlitz and Helmond, " The like economy: Social buttons and the data-intensive web"
10/22 or 23 (T/W) Video 1.0 (Rough due in section) + Peer Review (on Canvas)		
10/24 (Th)	Shifting Cultural Consumption and Production	Brock, "From the Blackhand Side"; Morris, "Artists as Workers"

Week 9 Visual Cultures

10/29 (T)	Remix as Argument	Kuhn, "The Rhetoric of Remix"
10/31 (Th)	Memes	Shifman, "Memes in a Digital World";

Week 10 Activism and Participatory Culture

11/ 1 Video 1.0 Final Due (Canvas)		
11/5 (T)	Digital Video and Youtube	Burgess and Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture* (Ch. 1 and selected passages)
11/7 (Th)	Fandom and Activism	Jenkins et al, *Meaningful Participation* (Ch. 4); Hinck, "Fandom and Engagement"

Week 11 Media and Representation

11/12 (T)	Hacktivism and Art	Peck, "Photoshopping as Vernacular Practice"; Gal et al, "It Gets Better" *Guest Lecture, Marissa Fernholz*
11/14 (Th)	Gaming Cultures	Brock, "When Keepin' It Real Goes Wrong,"; Higgin, "Blackless Fantasy" *Guest Lecture, Ailea Merriam-Pigg*

Week 12 + 13 Digital Subjectivity		
11/19 (T)	TBA	App-based Networks *TBA*
11/21 (Th)	The Networked Self	Boyd, *It's Complicated* (Intro and Ch. 7)
11/26 (T)	Social Media Campaigns and Effects	Meraz and Papacharissi, "Networked Gatekeeping"; Toma and Hancock, "Self-Affirmation Underlies Facebook Use"
11/28	THANKSGIVING!	
Week 14 Digital Divides		
12/3 (T)	Digital Sociality	Boyd, *It's Complicated* (Ch. 6);
12/3 or 4 (T/W) Video 2.0 (Rough due in section) + Peer Review (on Canvas)		
12/5 (Th)	Digital Inequalities	TBA
Week 15 The Potentials and Possibilities of Digital Communication		
12/10 (T)	Communicating Effectively in the Digital Age	—
12/11 Video 2.0 Final due (Canvas)		
12/14 (S)	FINAL EXAM, 7.25pm to 9.25pm, Location TBA	

*Readings are subject to change. I will make announcements as necessary and please make sure to check the course page for updates each week.