

# CMNS 570-201

## Introduction to Digital Communication

Winter quarter 2018, 4 credit hours  
Thursdays, 5:45pm-9:00pm  
14 E. Jackson Room 1130, Loop Campus

Instructor: Nathanael Bassett  
Contact Email: nbassett@depaul.edu  
Office:  
Office Hours: Thursdays, 5:00pm-5:30pm, & via appointment (Skype, Google).

### Course Description:

This course will provide students with a detailed critical/cultural introduction to the field of digital media and communication. We will discuss what digital communication entails, the development of research in this area, as well as major debates and issues. This course works as an entry for students in the DCMA the program who have previously had little experience with either digital technology or the field of communication or media studies. It also provides an advanced foundation in digital communication for students from different disciplinary and educational backgrounds.

### Objectives:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Articulate a nuanced understanding of digital communication and its role in society, culture, and government.
- Explain the significance of personal identity and social structures in the historical and contemporary development of digital communication.
- Critically analyze the discourse and artifacts of digital communication and their relation to ethical concerns in society and culture.
- Research and develop a literature review to understand the existing scholarship around a particular topic.

### Required Texts:

All texts will be made available on D2L.

#### Secondary (supplemental, if you are stuck) texts:

Hill, S., & Fenner, B. (2010). *Media and Cultural Theory*. Routledge.

### Note on readings and themes:

This syllabus is subject to change and open to the suggestions of students. If there is a topic area or set of concepts you feel it is important to discuss, please discuss it with me and we can consider making changes to the schedule.

## Assignments & Grading:

### Written Assignments

Term Paper: 30

Midterm: 20

Reading Reflections: 10

Discussion leadership & reflection: 25

In-Class participation: 15

Total: 100 points

Grading Scale (please refer to the [Academic Handbook](#) on the significance of letter grades):

A	100-96	C+	75-73
A-	95-90	C	72-70
B+	89-86	C-	69-65
B	85-80	D	62-60
B-	79-76	F	59 and below

## Assignment Explanation:

### In-Class Participation

This class values and is built around input from students, based on their insights derived from the readings and personal experience. Sharing those views contributes to the overall learning of the class. Depending on the class size and dynamics, breakout sessions can help students to draw from one another and better understand the topic at hand. During class time your involvement is important to your success and others. Participation will earn you this portion of your grade.

### Discussion Leadership & reflection

Every week, selected students will lead discussion on the theme or topic of the class. Students should make a short presentation via case studies or outside examples that will draw out the material covered in the week's reading via critique, application, or conversation. Feel free to draw from current events or your own area of expertise. Students will then moderate the discussion of those examples by other students. Discussions will last approximately 45 minutes. Following your presentation, you should submit a 300-500 word reflection of their performance, describing your role in the presenting group and what concepts or ideas stood out or you felt were not adequately discussed (if any).

### Reading Reflections

To help prepare for discussion, students should identify between one and three key concepts from the readings that they want to go into more during class time. These could either be something particularly poignant or relevant to the student, something they would like to expand on or have questions about, or something that they have a critique of and would like to discuss. These can be submitted in the form of a single page of notes or a brief paragraph indicating the student's impressions of the text.

**Midterm (due week 6)**

The Mid-Term Exam will be a take-home essay exam. Three questions will be emailed to the course. You are to choose **one (1)** exam question to answer, in a 750-1000 word essay. You will also submit a brief proposal of a topic for your term paper.

**Term Paper**

There will be no final exam. Instead, a 2500-5000 word term paper is due on the day of our final exam. Paper topics can address any aspect of the topics and materials discussed in class. They can focus on the theories themselves, or in applying the theories to media phenomena/practices. Papers should include materials beyond what is directly covered in class, as appropriate for your topic. Class discussion and reflections should provide ideas for topics. A proposal is due with the midterm, but you should be thinking about possible topics throughout the semester.

**Instructions for assignments**

**Turn in all written assignments electronically via D2L, or by email (using the subject "CMNS570\_*[assignment name]*\_*[last name]*") substituting the name of the assignment and your last name). Please use doc, docx, or pdf format and save your work as "*[assignment name]*\_*[last name]*".**

**All written assignments should be double space, 10pt Times New Roman font, with standard 1" margins, with the authors name and date present. Deviations from these requirements may result in grade penalties. Use a consistent citation/reference style (APA, Chicago, etc).**

## Course Policies:

### Absences and Late Work

Absences (including tardiness and leaving early) are heavily discouraged. That said, life happens. Students are allowed one absence throughout the quarter with no explanation. Reading reflections are still required, unless the student chooses that week to use their one “no penalty” skip. Late assignments will be penalized 1/10th of the possible points for that assignment per day that the work is overdue. The “new day” begins at 12:01AM. Late work will not be accepted more than one class period after it is due.

### Course Evaluations

Students will have the opportunity to provide formal feedback on the course during the later portion of the quarter. You will receive an email notification that will allow you to complete an online teaching evaluation. This is important to me because I take your input into how I teach will teach this class and others in the future. Additionally, the university uses these evaluations to determine which classes will be made available, assess the quality of courses, and maintain student enrollment. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

### Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that promotes the intellectual development of each individual within the community. The University seeks to maintain and enhance the educational environment of the community in a variety of ways including through the development of and promotion of standards for academic honesty. The University believes that all members of the community are responsible for adherence to these standards for academic honesty, and that all violations of academic integrity are detrimental to the intellectual development of individuals within the community and to the community at large. Violations include but are not limited to: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University for further details.

### Accessibility

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations:

Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002

Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center #370 – (773) 325-1677

Please feel free to contact me privately to discuss your challenges and how I can help to facilitate any accommodations you will need in this course. This is best done early as possible. Any conversation we have will remain confidential.

## Writing Center

The Writing Center provides free peer writing tutoring for DePaul students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Writing Center tutors work with writers at all stages of the writing process, from invention to revision, and they are trained to identify recurring issues in your writing as well as address any specific questions or areas that you want to talk about. Utilizing the writing center as a resource can have a direct impact on the quality of your work and your total grade. Visit [www.depaul.edu/writing](http://www.depaul.edu/writing) for more information.

## Sexual and Relationship Violence

As a DePaul community, we share a commitment to take care of one another. It is important for students to know that faculty are required to report information reported to them about experiences with sexual or relationship violence to DePaul's Title IX Coordinator. Students should also know that disclosing experiences with sexual or relationship violence in course assignments or discussion does not constitute a formal report to the University and will not begin the process of DePaul providing a response. Students seeking to report an incident of sexual or relationship violence to DePaul should contact Public Safety (Lincoln Park: 773-325-7777; Loop: 312-362-8400) or the Dean of Students and Title IX Coordinator (Lincoln Park: 773-325-7290; Loop: 312-362-8066 or [titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu)). Students seeking to speak confidentially about issues related to sexual and relationship violence should contact a Survivor Support Advocate in the Office of Health Promotion & Wellness for information and resources (773-325-7129 or [hpw@depaul.edu](mailto:hpw@depaul.edu)). More information is available at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/hpw/shvp.html>. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these services and to seek help around sexual and relationship violence for themselves as well as their peers who may be in need of support.

## On Course Content

Materials in the class will describe various ethically complicated scenarios and may touch on sensitive subjects. These may include the depiction of physical violence, sexual assault, invasion of privacy, hate speech and more.

If you are concerned that certain material or subjects will likely be emotionally challenging for you, I'd be happy to discuss any concerns you may have before the subject comes up in class. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to course material with the class or with me individually afterwards, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our classwork.

If you ever feel the need to step outside during a class discussion as a result of those concerns, you may always do so without academic penalty. However you will be responsible material and you may not be able to earn a participation grade. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually to discuss the situation.

## Course Schedule

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### Week 1 (January 4th): Definitions

- Peters, J. D. (1999) *Machines, Animals and Aliens: Horizons of Incommunicability*. In *Speaking Into the Air*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.
- Hansen, M. B. N. (2006). Media Theory. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 12(2-3), 297–306. <http://doi.org/10.1177/026327640602300256>
- McLuhan, M. (2001) *The Medium is the Message*. In Kellner, D. M., & Durham, M. G. (2001). *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks* (Rev. Ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Recommended Reading(s): —

- Manovich, L. (2006) What is new media?. In *The New Media Theory Reader*. Open University Press.
  - McQuail, D. (2000). *First Approaches*. In *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*. London: SAGE.
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### Week 2 (January 11th): Reviewing the History

- Williams, K. (2003). "Introduction and Developing the Field." In *Understanding Media Theory*. London: Arnold.
- Craig, R. T. (1999) "Communication Theory as a Field." In *Communication Theory* 9(2), 119-161.
- Carey, J. (1989). *A Cultural Approach to Communication*. In *Communication as Culture*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Recommended Reading(s): —

- Calhoun, C. (2011). Communication as Social Science (and More). *International Journal of Communication*, (5), 1479–1496.
  - Hall, S. (1982). The rediscovery of "ideology;" return of the repressed in media studies. In M. Gurevitch, et al. (Eds.), *Culture, Society and the Media*. London: Routledge.
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### Week 3 (January 18th): Mediation

- Lievrouw, L. A. (2009). New Media, Mediation and Communication Study. *Information, Communication & Society*, 12(3), 303–325. <http://doi.org/10.1080/13691180802660651>
- Livingstone, S. (2009). On the Mediation of Everything: ICA Presidential Address 2008. *Journal of Communication*, 59(1), 1–18. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.01401.x>
- Grusin, R. (2015). Radical Mediation. *Critical Inquiry*, 42(1), 124–148. <http://doi.org/10.1086/682998>

Recommended Reading(s): —

- Bolter, J. D., & Grusin, R. (2000) "Theory." In *Remediation*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
  - Couldry, N. (2008). Mediatization or mediation? Alternative understandings of the emergent space of digital storytelling. *New Media & Society*, 10(3), 373–391. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1461444808089414>
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## Week 4 (January 25th): Connectivity and Participatory Culture

- Papacharissi, Z. (2015). We Have Always Been Social. *Social Media + Society*, 1(1), 1–2. <http://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115581185>
- Schäfer, M. T. (2011). “Promoting Utopia/Selling Technology,” In *Bastard Culture!* Amsterdam University Press.
- Schäfer, M.T. (2011) “Claiming Participation,” In *Bastard Culture!* Amsterdam University Press.
- Schäfer, M.T. (2011) “Participatory Culture” In *Bastard Culture!* Amsterdam University Press.

Recommended Reading(s): ———

- Castells, M. (2007). Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society. *International Journal of Communication*, 1, 238–266.
- Carpentier, N. (2009). Participation Is Not Enough: The Conditions of Possibility of Mediated Participatory Practices. *European Journal of Communication*, 24(4), 407–420. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0267323109345682>
- van Dijck, J. (2015). After Connectivity: The Era of Connectication. *Social Media + Society*, 1(1), 1–2. <http://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115578873>

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## Week 5 (February 1st): Gender and Post-Colonialism (Midterm Posted)

- Haraway, D. (1991). A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century. In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature—A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century* (pp. 149–181). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Harding, A. (2011) Preface and “Introduction: Beyond Postcolonial Theory: Two Undertheorized Perspectives on Science and Technology.” In *The Postcolonial Science and Technology Studies Reader*.

Recommended Reading(s): ———

- Butler, J. (1999). Performativity's Social Magic. In R. Shusterman (Ed.), *Bourdieu: a Critical Reader* (pp. 113–128). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Mohanty, C. T. (2001) Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. In Kellner, D. M., & Durham, M. G. (Eds.). *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks* (Rev. Ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

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## Week 6 (February 8th): Power and Ideology

- Marx, K., Engles, F. (2001). “The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas”
- Foucault, M. (n.d.). Panopticism. In *Discipline And Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (pp. 195–228). New York: Vintage Books.
- Galloway, A. R., & Thacker, E. (2004). Protocol, control, and networks. *Grey Room*, 6–29.
- Stoddart, M. (2007). Ideology, hegemony, discourse: A critical review of theories of knowledge and power. *Social Thought & Research*. 28 <http://doi.org/10.2307/23252126>

Recommended Reading(s): ———

- Lears, T. J. J. (1985). The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities. *The American Historical Review* 90(3), 567–593.
- Gramsci, A. (2001) "History of The Subaltern Classes, and The Concept of 'Ideology'," In Durham M. G. and Kellner, D. M. (Eds.), *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*, Rev. Ed., Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001
- Horkheimer, M. Adorno, T. (2001) The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception In Durham M. G. and Kellner, D. M. (Eds.), *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*, Rev. Ed., Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001

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## Week 7 (February 15th): Postmodernity & New Media

- Benjamin, W. (2001). "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In Durham M. G. and Kellner, D. M. (Eds.), *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks, Rev. Ed.*, Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Poster, M. (2001) Postmodern Virtualities. In Durham M. G. and Kellner, D. M. (Eds.), *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks, Rev. Ed.*, Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Habermas, J., & Ben-Habib, S. (1981). Modernity versus postmodernity. *New German Critique*, (22), 3–14.

Recommended Reading(s): ———

- Jameson, F. (2001). Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. In Durham M. G. and Kellner, D. M. (Eds.), *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks, Rev. Ed.*, Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Baudrillard, J. (1972). Requiem for the Media. *Visual Studies*.

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## Week 8 (February 22nd): Agency (Determinism and Constructivism)

- Dafoe, A. (2015). On Technological Determinism: A Typology, Scope Conditions, and a Mechanism. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 40(6), 1047–1076. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0162243915579283>
- Pinch, T. Bijker, W. E. (1987). "The Social Construction of Facts and Artifacts: Or How the Sociology of Science and the Sociology of Technology Might Benefit Each Other." In Bijker, W. E., Hughes, T. P., & Pinch, T. J. (Eds.). *The Social Construction of Technological Systems*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Winner, L. (1980). Do Artifacts Have Politics? *Daedalus*, 109(1), 121–136. <http://doi.org/10.2307/20024652>

Recommended Reading(s): ———

- Wyatt, S. (2014). Technological Determinism Is Dead; Long Live Technological Determinism. In Scharff, R. C., & Dusek, V. (2014). *Philosophy of Technology*. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.
- Fuller, M. (2015) The Forbidden Pleasures of Media. In Ikoniadou, E., & Wilson, S. (Eds.). *Media After Kittler*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield International.

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## Week 9 (March 1st): Materiality

- Lievrouw, L. A. (2014). "Materiality and Media in Communication and Technology Studies: An Unfinished Project." In Gillespie, T. E., Boczkowski, P. J. E., & Foot, K. A. (Eds). *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Farman, J. (2013). Materiality of Locative Media. In Adey P., Bissell, D., Hannam, K., Merriman P., Sheller, M. (Eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities*. New York: Routledge Press
- Parikka, J. (2012). New Materialism as Media Theory: Medianatures and Dirty Matter. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 9(1), 95–100. <http://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2011.626252>

Recommended Reading(s): ———

- Galloway, A. R. (2015). A Questionnaire on Materialism. *October*, (155), 45–47.
- Hertz, G., & Parikka, J. (2012). Zombie Media: Circuit Bending Media Archaeology into an Art Method. *Leonardo*, 45(5), 424–430.

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## Week 10 (March 8th): What's Next?

- Seigert, B. (2015) *Media after Media*. In Ikonidou, E., & Wilson, S. (Eds.). *Media After Kittler*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Hayles, N. K. (2016). The Cognitive Nonconscious: Enlarging the Mind of the Humanities. *Critical Inquiry*, 42(4).
- Peters, J. D. (2015). Introduction: In Media Res and "Understanding Media." In *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media*. University of Chicago Press.