COM 251: Communication, Information, and Society
Course Syllabus

Instructor:
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Spring 2014

Class Schedule:

Tuesday and Thursday
9:00 a.m. - 10:15a.m.
MTHW 301

Office Hours:
Tuesday, 10:30 - 12:00
Thursday, 12:00 - 1:30
BRNG 2155

Required Readings and Texts:

All readings will be in a shared Dropbox folder at `http://tiny.cc/com251`

Course Overview:

This course provides an introduction to information and communication technologies, including media and computer-related technologies such as the Internet, WWW, blogs, social networks, mobile technologies, virtual reality, and robots. Basic information and technical literacy skills are developed, while discussing fundamental concepts of mediated communication in 21st century contexts.

Course Objectives:

The objectives for this course are:

1. To enhance your understanding of and exposure to media technologies, including discussion of the implications for individuals, institutions, and society;
2. To develop basic technical and information literacy skills through hands-on experience with new media technologies;
3. To build your critical thinking and analysis of the impact of media technologies, and to understand how technologies are meaningful to communication and communicative behavior;
4. To sharpen your research, analysis, writing, and presentational skills.

Requirements & Expectations:

You will be graded on a mix of in-class assignments, short writing assignments, exams, and presentations. Students are expected to prepare for each class session by completing the assigned readings, and are assumed to be familiar and comfortable with these technologies: email, WWW, Blackboard Vista, MS Word and PowerPoint (or equivalent tools). If you're not, talk with the instructor and we will direct you to resources that will get you up to speed. During the course of the semester we will explore additional technologies, but prior familiarity or experience with these is not required.

Evaluation:

You will be graded on the following required elements:

1. **Attendance, Participation, and Discussion (8%)** – Your attendance and participation are essential to your learning and to the overall success of the course. Each student should come to class ready to contribute thoughtfully and frequently to class discussion. This means having read the material in advance of class and being prepared to engage in a critical analysis of the ideas put forth in the readings.

   Students with extended illnesses or problems that relate to attendance should meet with the instructor, rather than risk loss of points.

   Discussion Leading (4%) – As part of participation, every student will lead one discussion session with a partner based upon the assigned case or reading about an emerging technology issue. Discussion leaders are responsible for leading a critical analysis and discussion of the material.

You will be evaluated on your preparedness and your ability to engage the students.

2. **Tech Tool Checklists (20%)** – Throughout the session, you will be asked to explore ten different emerging technology tools as an individual exercise. You will be given a checklist to complete using the tool, but few instructions for how to use the tool (you must use Google or other online resources to learn on your own). Many of these activities will be started or done in class, but some will be homework.
3. **Blog Posts (20%)** – You will be asked to set up a blog at the beginning of the semester, and write one blog post (about 250 words) at the end of each section of the class. You will be evaluated on your critical analysis skills, the strength of your arguments, and your writing. Each blog post should reference at least one of the readings from that section.
4. **Exams (24%)** – There will be one midterm and one final exam, each worth 12%.
5. **Research Presentation (16%)** – You will give a presentation, which incorporates original researh, in the context of the topics discussed in class. More details will be given later in the semester.

Grades

Your course grade will be based on the following (500 points possible):

Attendance and Class Participation (8%)	40 pts
Discussion Leader (4%)	20 pts
10 Tech Tool Checklists (20%; 10 pts each)	100 pts
7 Blog Posts (28%; 20 pts each)	140 pts
1 Research Presentation (16%)	80 pts
2 Exams (24%; 60 pts each)	120 pts
Extra credit	up to 10 pts

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

97–100	A+
94–96	A
90–93	A-
87–89	B+
84–86	B
80–83	B-
77–79	C+
74–76	C
70–73	C-
67–69	D+
64–66	D
60–63	D-
< 60	F

Note for all COM Majors & Minors

If you are planning to count this class toward your requirements for either the COM major or the COM minor, you must earn at least a C- in this course.

Extra Credit

Students can receive up to 2% extra credit participating in research studies sponsored by the School of Communication, or through assigned extracurricular events. Additional information will be posted online and announced in class.

Class Policies

Attendance & Participation

Attendance is required for lectures. There are 3 grace absences; after that, you will lose 5 points per absence. Grace absences include both unexcused and excused absences. In the event of the loss of a family member, the grace absences will be extended if needed to be consistent with the Purdue Grief Absence Policy for Students. Students in these circumstances should follow the procedures outlined in: `http://www.purdue.edu/odos/services/griefabsencepolicyforstudents.php`.

Late work

Students have up to two "late days" in the semester, which can be used for either critical analysis papers or Tech Tools. Assignments that are turned in up

to 24 hours late will use up one late day. Assignments turned in 24-48 hours late will use up both late days. Assignments more than 2 days late will not be accepted.

If there are extenuating circumstances, then contact me as early as possible.

Academic Integrity

As a student in this course, it is assumed that you have read and understood the Purdue University's policy on matters of academic misconduct, including plagiarism. If misconduct occurs in the context of this course, it will be handled according to the procedures specified in the University Regulations booklet. [See: the University Regulations booklet, www.purdue.edu/univregs, and other relevant materials, `www.purdue.edu/ODOS/osrr/brochures.htm`].

Special Needs and Accommodations

If you have special needs or require academic accommodations, please notify me so that I can accommodate you. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Adaptive Services in the Dean of Students Office to discuss procedures, resources, and accommodations that are available to students.

Class Schedule

Date	Lecture Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
The Information Society			
1/14/2013	Class Introduction	Syllabus	
1/16/2013	History of Technology and Information	Kelly (2007)	
1/21/2013	Information Overload	Anderson (2010)	Tech Tool 1 - Blogging
Communication and Information Infrastructures			
1/23/2013	History of the Internet	Jesdanun (2009); Zittrain (2008) p. 1-35	Blog Post 1
1/28/2013	Future of the Internet	Zittrain (2008) 235-246	Tech Tool 2 - RSS
1/30/2013	Information Literacy	Carr (2009); Kelly (2009)	
2/4/2013	Digital Divides	Corbett (2008), Crawford (2011), Richtell (2012)	Tech Tool 3 - Search

Mediated Identities and Relationships			
2/6/2013	Mediated Communication	Donath (2001)	Blog Post 2
2/11/2013	Digital Identity	Baym (2010)	
2/13/2013	Intro to social network analysis	Christakis & Fowler (2009)	Tech Tool 4 - Gephi
2/18/2013	Online Relationships	Turkle (2011), Ch. 8-10	
Online Cultures and Society			
2/20/2013	Digital footprint	Rosen (2010), Liptak (2013)	Blog Post 3
2/25/2013	Algorithms and Culture	Lessig (2006)	Tech Tool 5 - Filter Bubble
2/27/2013	IP and Copyright	Lessig (2002)	
3/4/2013	Collaboration and Crowdsourcing	Howe (2009), Schiff (2006)	Tech Tool 6 - Wikipedia
Mobility, Space, and Place			
3/6/2013	Mobility	Rheingold (2002)	Blog Post 4
3/11/2013	**MIDTERM EXAM**		
3/13/2013	Geography	Graham (2013)	Tech Tool 7 - Geocaching
3/18/2013	**SPRING BREAK**		
3/20/2013	**SPRING BREAK**		
3/25/2013	Security	Zittrain (36-61)	
3/27/2013	Privacy	Solove (2008)	Tech Tool 8 - Programming
Institutions and Technology			
4/1/2013	Surveillance	Landau (2011)	Blog Post 5
4/3/2013	SNA 2	Wellman (2002), Healy (2013)	
4/8/2013	Digital Politics	Talbot (2009)	Tech Tool 9 - Yelp
4/10/2013	Uprisings and Citizen Participation	Bennett (2011), Zuckerman (2013)	
Emerging Technologies			
4/15/2013	Big Data and Machine learning	Weinberger (2012)	Blog Post 6
4/17/2013	Internet of Things, AR	Wasik (2013)	
4/22/2013	Cyborgs, Robotics, AI	Naam (2006), Kelly (2012)	Tech Tool 10 - AR App
4/24/2013	**FINAL EXAM**		

4/29/2013	Project Presentations		
5/1/2013	Project Presentations		Blog Post 7

Schedule is subject to change!