ENGL 293 Introduction to Digital Media Studies
2:30-4:00 T/Th HH 280
Professor Beth Coleman
bcoleman@uwaterloo.ca
office hours Tuesdays 11:30-1:30 and by appointment, HH 323

Syllabus Fall 2014: Media Systems

In this class, our focus is to analyze several forms of media systems, from McLuhan’s electronic “global village” made possible by the medium of television to the networked engagement we have experienced with the internet as a world wide web. Primarily, we will be working with critical texts from a humanist media studies tradition. Nonetheless, our analysis of media systems will extend past the exclusively theoretical, taking into account technical affordances, cultural standards, and disruptive interventions that affect the formation of a media system. The work produced for the course will be primarily analytical research papers. We will also, though, include creative, speculative, and applied projects. In order to participate in the course, students must read all assigned materials (provided in e-reader), complete writing and media projects, and prepare the network assets to participate in a networked classroom (we will use the Google suite for winter).

All reading assignments are to be completed for the class on the day they are listed. Similarly, assignments are due by 5pm on the Wednesday preceding Thursday class. Tuesdays will be lecture days and Thursdays will be structured discussion days; three discussion leaders will be selected for each topic.

Course requirements:

The course is made up of reading, media materials, discussion, short form and long form writing assignments, and an in-class presentation Research Project.

Online Resources: All class reading and assignments will be posted to the course Google Drive. For access to the drive, email andreea.perescu@gmail.com with your @gmail.com address. If you do not have a @gmail.com address, please create one https://accounts.google.com/signup?service=mail.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. One unexcused absence is allowed. If you expect to miss more than one class meeting, please email Professor Coleman or Andreea Perescu.

Grading:
10% class participation (attendance, discussion, etc.)
65% paper + final project
25% reading response papers + Research Project presentation

Academic standards: students are expected to produce high quality, original work and master the materials on the syllabus. If you have any questions about research procedures, issues of plagiarism, or other matters in producing original, critical content, please address them with Professor Coleman. University policy on plagiarism: http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ait/values.html

Assignments
ASSIGNMENTS DUE WEDNESDAYS AT 5PM; weekly response papers are to be posted to class Google Drive; Research Paper and Research Project are to be posted to class Drive.

Week 1 Sept 10: Media Self-Portrait
Week 2 Sept 17: 500-word discussion of “Privacy As Contextual Integrity”
Week 3 Sept 24: 500-word proposal for Research Paper
Week 4 Oct 1: 500 words participatory culture
Week 5 Oct 8: Paper 1 due (post to Google Drive)
Week 6 Oct 15: Topic Proposal Research Project
Week 7 Oct 22: 500-word discussion of Game Worlds
Week 8 Oct 29: 500-word discussion of “The Rhetoric of Video Games”
Week 9 Nov 5 500-word discussion of “What is an Avatar”
Week 10 Nov 12: 500-word discussion of “Small Change”
Week 11 Nov 19
Week 12 Nov 26
Research Project due Monday Dec 1,12pm (post to Google Drive)

Research Project presentation dates
Thursday Oct 30 (6)
Thursday Nov 6 (6)
Thursday Nov 13 (6)
Tuesday Nov 18 (6)
Tuesday Nov 25 (6)
Thursday Nov 27 (6)

CLASS CALENDAR

Week One: Sept 9-11 Networked Subject
Tuesday Sept 9 “Is Facebook Making us Lonely?”
Stephan Marche, The Atlantic, May 2012
Assignment Sept 10: Media Self-Portrait; Google Drive as applied study of network tools
Thursday Sept 11: review of Media Self-Portrait

Week Two: Sept 16-18 Privacy in Context
Tuesday Sept 16 “Privacy As Contextual Integrity”
Helen Nissenbaum
Assignment Sept 17: 500-word discussion of “Privacy As Contextual Integrity”
Thursday Sept 18: Discussion Research Paper and Research Project; presentation date sign-up

Week Three: Sept 23-25 Wealth of Networks
Tuesday Sept 23 Wealth of Networks
Yochai Benkler chapt 3; p.71-102 of pdf; p.59-90 of manuscript
Assignment Sept 24: 500-word proposal for Research Paper
Thursday Sept 25: Discussion “Wealth of Networks”

Week Four: Sept 30-Oct 2 Participatory Culture
Tuesday Sept 30 “Quentin Tarantino’s Star Wars?: Digital Cinema, Media Convergence, and Participatory Culture”
Henry Jenkins
Assignment Oct 1: 500 words participatory culture
Thursday Oct 2 fan fiction highlights (gifs, lol cats, memes, etc.)

Week Five: Oct 7-9 Social Machines/Internet of Things
Tuesday Oct 7: No Reading assignment
Assignment Oct 8: Paper 1 due (post to Google Drive)
Thursday Oct 9: Gamification/World building exercise

Week Six: Oct 14-16 The Medium is the Message
Tuesday Oct 14: Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man
Marshall McLuhan
2. Media Cold and Hot (30-41)
31. TELEVISION (340-372)
18. THE PRINTED WORD Architect of Nationalism (190-199)
Assignment Oct 15: Topic Proposal Research Project
Thursday Oct 16: Project peer review

Week Seven: Oct 21-23 Games and Game Worlds
Tuesday Oct 21
Ready Player One
Ernest Cline, Chapt 6-8, pp. 69-84
Assignment Oct 22: 500-word discussion of Game Worlds
Thursday Oct 23 Discussion of augmented reality, ARGs, and pervasive Game Play

Week Eight: Oct 28-30 Games and Game Worlds II
Tuesday Oct 28:
“The Rhetoric of Video Games”
Ian Bogost
Guest lecture Neil Randall, Games Institute
Assignment Oct 29: 500-word discussion of “The Rhetoric of Video Games”
Thursday Oct 30: PRESENTATIONS I

Week Nine: Nov 4-6 Hello Avatar
Tuesday Nov 4:
“What is an Avatar”
Beth Coleman
Assignment Nov 5: 500-word discussion of “What is an Avatar”
Thursday Nov 6: PRESENTATIONS II

Week 10: Nov 11-13 Politics of Networks
Tuesday Nov 11: “Small Change”
Malcolm Gladwell
Assignment Nov 12: 500-word discussion of “Small Change”
Thursday Nov 13: PRESENTATIONS III

Week 11: Nov 18-20 Presentations
Tuesday Nov 18: workshop final presentations in class PRESENTATIONS IV
Thursday Nov 20: PRESENTATIONS IV continued

Week 12 Nov 25-27 Presentations
Tuesday Nov 25: PRESENTATIONS V
Thursday Nov 27: PRESENTATIONS VI

Final paper/project due Monday Dec 1, 12pm (post to Google Drive)