

New Media PhD Area Exam

May 2012 (Exam 2)

This exam consists of THREE sections:

Part A: Core Texts	40%
Part B: [Sub-field 1]	30%
Part C: [Sub-field 2]	30%

Answer ONE question from each section, drawing on the required A list as provided, and supplementing it where appropriate with your B lists.

The exam is four hours long.

Part A: Core Texts

1. The 'posthuman' is a vexed--and fundamental--concept in new media studies. Define the parameters of this concept with reference to at least THREE writers on the Core List, and apply the concept by describing how a prosthetic device of your choosing might serve as an object-to-think-with for posthumanist studies.
2. The term "new media" is a problematic term in contemporary media studies scholarship. With reference to at least THREE writers on the Core List, explain the root of this problem, and discuss whether a fetal ultrasound video should or should not be considered as new media.
3. When Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin titled their 1997 book *Remediation*, they underscored a concept that was already quite familiar in media studies and that remains common in theorizations of new media. Discuss David Hockney's *Fresh Flowers* exhibition in the context of "remediation," drawing on at least THREE writers on the Core List.

Part B: [Philosophy of Technology]

1. In "Technology or the Discourse of Speed," David Wills draws on Bernard Stiegler's work to suggest that "The upright hominid stance inscribes a definition of the human that is utterly determined by the idea of exteriorization." Drawing on at least THREE writers from the reading lists, including at least TWO from the Philosophy of Technology A list, explain Wills' statement, and discuss its importance for understanding the relationship between the human and technology.
2. Contemporary biotechnologies are challenging our conception of nature and "the natural," let alone the very concept of "the human." By making reference at least THREE writers from the reading lists, including at least TWO from the Philosophy of Technology A list, describe how biotechnologies challenge the Enlightenment conception of humanism.
3. The notion of the archive is discussed widely in philosophical investigations of technology. By making reference at least THREE writers from the reading lists, including at least TWO from the Philosophy of Technology A list, explain why the archive has come to be a central component of philosophical investigations of technology.

Part C: [Social Media]

1. Sherry Turkle's 1997 book, *Life on the Screen*, suggests that the Internet has a wide-ranging, and mostly positive, impact on human identity. More recently, Turkle has corrected her enthusiasm in the book *Alone Together*, the title of which speaks for itself. Drawing on at least THREE writers from the reading lists, including at least TWO writers from the Social Media A list, discuss the relationship between social media and identity.
2. Various new media theorists deal with the question of embodiment in their scholarship. Referencing at least THREE writers from the reading lists, including at least TWO from the Social Media A list, discuss how theorists have viewed the body's relationship to social media, and explain why the concept of embodiment is central to understanding the philosophical, psychological and/or political dynamics of social media.
3. Several media theorists have described social media as a vehicle for individual empowerment, whether it is in the context of politics, interpersonal relationships, health, or

education. Drawing on at least THREE writers from the reading lists, including at least TWO from Social Media A list, discuss the concept of individual empowerment by making specific reference to at least TWO web-based social media sites.