

GBDA 203: Introduction to Digital Culture

Syllabus

Fall Term 2019

University of Waterloo Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business
Global Business and Digital Arts

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Office: DMS 3014, TBA

Course Description

This course provides students with an historical overview of various digital technologies and their impact on society and the human condition. Students will be introduced to research methods and theoretical concepts from media theory and cultural studies that will enable them to think, speak, and write critically about technology in an historical and global context. Students will also continue to develop their professional skills.

Time and location

Class schedule: Thursdays, 9:00–11:50
Location: DMS 2024 (Section 3: Class 4037)

Contact information

Instructor: Ray Drainville
Office location: DMS 3014, Stratford School
Office hours: Thursdays, and by appointment at the main campus
Teaching Assistant: Amy Qi Cooper (aqcooper@edu.uwaterloo.ca)

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Develop an understanding of “culture” and some of the most vital issues facing “digital culture”
 - Participate in discussion and debate both in class and online to formulate conclusions and analyze more than one viewpoint
 - Identify and evaluate their own bias and the bias of others
- Students will acquire methodological and conceptual tools to engage in in-depth analysis of digital technologies and cultures
 - Acquire new skills via self-directed learning
 - Understand historical and cultural context and apply principles to contemporary problems in digital culture

- Students will understand the complexity of the relationship between digital technologies and the communities of practice that employ those technologies and shape the scale and nature of their diffusion through society.
 - Analyze and interpret theory
 - Examine the ethical implications in the creation of new tech/digital culture
- Students will develop their capacity to think critically and to analyse complex theoretical concepts and construct and communicate arguments in written and multi-modal form.
 - Students will develop their capacity to write an analytical paper grounded in theoretical concepts, and additionally summarize complex topics to communicate them effectively
 - Work in a variety of media to increase their understanding of concepts and theory
- Students will further develop their professional skills (teamwork, oral and written communication, problem solving).
 - Solve problems and complete assignments in the same groups all semester
 - Apply themselves to the professionalism rubric in all assignments

Main Texts

There will be no required text to purchase. All readings will be available on LEARN.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation		Weighting
1.Podcast Assignment	Outline	Oct 3	(2.5)
	Draft	Oct 31	(7.5)
	Final	Nov 14	(7.5)
	Reflection	Nov 14	(2.5)
	Total assignment weighting:		20%
2.Analytical Essay	Topic Proposal	Sept 26	(2.5)
	Outline	Oct 10	(2.5)
	First Draft	Nov 7	(7.5)
	Final Draft	Nov 28	(7.5)
	Total assignment weighting:		20%
3.In-Class/LEARN Assignments	Ongoing		30%

4.Final Exam	TBD	20%
5.Attendance & Participation	Ongoing	10%
	Total:	100%

NB: All assignments are due at the beginning of class

1. Podcast Assignment (20%)

- Groups of four will be assigned one of the readings and each group will record and produce a podcast episode that is a summary of the reading including all of the main points of the reading. See LEARN for more details
- *Podcast assignment is due in four parts:*
 - 1. Podcast Outline DUE Oct 3**
This is an outline for your podcast episode that includes the following components: The summary of your article, the podcast format, each group member's responsibility, additional music or sound, etc. (using provided podcast production plan template). Outline will receive instructor feedback.
 - 2. .mp3 Draft DUE Oct 31**
Your first draft will be given instructor feedback. Due on LEARN in .mp3 format.
 - 3. Final DUE Nov 14**
Due on LEARN in .mp3 format with one-page handout in .pdf.
 - 4. Reflection DUE Nov 14**
(in-class using template)

2. Analytical Essay 20%

- 5 pages Times New Roman 12-point font double-spaced with original margins, Chicago style
- *Essay is due in four Parts:*
 - 1. Topic Proposal DUE Sept 26**
This is an informal proposal no more than one page describing the specific topic you would like to focus on and which two of the class readings you are using and why.
 - 2. Outline DUE Oct 10**
This is a rough document outlining your thesis, the supporting points and at least one opposing point to your thesis, and the citations you will be using.
 - 3. First Draft Peer Review DUE Nov 7**
We will use LEARN to anonymously peer review your classmate's first draft. Using the grading rubric you will be assigned a grade by one of your peers, in addition to constructive feedback.
 - 4. Final Draft DUE Nov 28**

You will submit a digital copy to LEARN and submit a printed copy at the beginning of class on the date it is due. Essays submitted after class has started will be subject to late penalty of 2% per day or 10% per week.

3. In-Class Assignments 30%

- Blinkist Assignment: Summary
- Analytical Assignment: Fake News
- Infographic: Choose a controversial event or topic, in groups of 4
- Timeline Assignment: History of Digital Culture
- 3 other graded in-class assignments
- Learn Discussions: 4 discussions in your groups of 4 created on LEARN, in the style of “Save the last word for me”. September 23-27: The Digital Divide; October 21 -25: Fake News; November 4-8: Social Media Influencers; November 18-22: Singularity

4. Final Exam: Date TBD by Registrar 20%

The final exam will be scheduled by the Office of the Registrar. It will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer and short essay questions. Length: 2.5 hours.

5. Attendance and Participation 10%

Participation accounts for your contributions to discussion, group activities and the general classroom atmosphere, which in turn are vital in determining what knowledge and skills you take from this course. Showing up on time, having properly prepared for class is considered the minimum requirement.

Asking thoughtful and informed questions, offering reasoned answers, and facilitating others’ opportunities to contribute will be taken into account in the assessment.

Students who do not attend class will receive no participation credit for missed days. A respectful attitude towards your classmates is required. At the same time, engaging in debates and discussions is encouraged. Punctuality is important. Late arrivals will not be able to sign the attendance sheet.

Course Outline

Week	Date	Topic	Readings & Due
1	Sept. 5	Intro to Digital Culture	Week 1 readings: 1. TURKLE, <i>Alone Together</i> Introduction 2. MILLER, <i>Understanding Digital Culture</i>
2	Sept. 12	1. History of Digital Culture 2. Privacy, IP & Copyright	Week 2 readings: 1. MILLER, <i>Understanding Digital Culture</i> (Ch 1)

			2. GARDNER, <i>The Future Starts Here</i> (iPhones)
3	Sept. 19	1. Information Revolutions 2. Big Data	Week 3 readings: 1. FANG, <i>History of Mass Communication</i> (What are Information Revolutions?) 2. EISENSTEIN, <i>The Printing Press as an Agent of Change</i>
4	Sept. 26	1. The Digital Divide 2. Efficiency	Week 4 readings & assignments due: 1. MILLER, <i>Understanding Digital Culture</i> (Ch 4 Digital Inequality) *Essay Topic Proposal DUE
5	Oct. 3	1. Social Media 2. Activism/Slacktivism	Week 5 readings & assignments due: 1. TUFEKCI, <i>Twitter and Tear Gas</i> (Intro & Ch1) *Podcast Outline DUE
6	Oct. 10	1. Networked community 2. Social media concerns	Week 6 readings & assignments due: 1. TURKLE, <i>Alone Together</i> (Ch 9 & Epilogue) *Essay Outline DUE
7	Oct. 24	1. Bias, Tech and Media 2. Fake News *Essay Peer Review in-class	Week 7 readings & assignments due: 1. ENTMAN, "Framing: Toward Clarification of the Concept of Framing" 2. CHOMSKY, <i>Manufacturing Consent</i> (Sunstein) *First Draft Essay DUE
8	Oct. 31	1. Media Disruptions 2. Cyborgism	Week 8 readings & assignments due: 1. KNIGHT COMMISSION, <i>Report on Media</i> 2. MCLUHAN, <i>The Medium is the Message</i> *Podcast Draft DUE
9	Nov. 7	1. The New Economy 2. Influencers	Week 9 readings: 1. GERE, <i>Digital Culture</i> (Ch 5 Digital Resistance) 2. RETTBERG, <i>Seeing Ourselves Through Technology</i>
10	Nov. 14	1. Ethics in tech	Week 10 readings & assignments due:

		2. Unintended Consequences	1. MILLER, <i>Understanding Digital Culture</i> (Ch 9, The Body and Information Technology) *Podcast Final DUE
11	Nov. 21	Singularity	Week 11 readings: 1. KURZWEIL, <i>The Future is Now</i> (Ch 1 & 2)
12	Nov. 28	What's Next? FINAL EXAM REVIEW	Week 12: No readings; assignments due: *Essay Final DUE

Contacting your Instructor

1. **LEARN:** "Ask Your Prof" Discussion board: If you have a question about an assignment, the location of something, or if something just isn't clear, please post it here. Chances are if it is unclear to you, it may also be unclear to your classmates.
2. **Email:** The following guideline for emailing your instructor may come in handy.
<https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087>.
3. **In Person:** Some things are much easier to deal with in-person, and in lieu of multiple emails, your instructor may insist the discussion must take place in-person.

Course Modification Warning

The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. Please note that due dates will be consistent with our clients' time schedules, as such there may be changes to due dates and deliverable outputs. If a modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her University of Waterloo email and course website on LEARN daily during the term and to note any changes.

Late Work

Late work will be accepted at any time. The grade deduction of 2% per day/maximum of 10%/week will be deducted for a late assignment submission.

Attendance and Illness

Success in this course is dependent on regular class attendance and participation. You are expected to attend every class, and attendance will be taken. *Students with 4 or more unexcused absences will not be able to pass the course.*

Students who are unable to meet assignment due dates or write a test must provide documentation verifying the events that have precluded them from meeting their academic deadlines. When illness is the cause of a missed deadline, students should seek medical treatment and **provide confirmation of the illness to the instructor(s) within 48 hours by submitting a completed [University of Waterloo Verification of Illness form](#)** to support requests for accommodation due to illness.

In addition, your instructor reserves the right to accept said documentation to excuse you from graded assignments. *False claims of illness and/or the submission of false supporting documentation of extenuating circumstances constitute an academic offence that will result in disciplinary action under [Policy 71](#).*

Plagiarism Detection: Turnitin.com

Text matching software (Turnitin®) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. Students will be given an option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin®. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course.

Electronic Device Policy

Students are expected to use classroom, lab, and project time productively. Student use of laptops, mobile phones and tablets for any purpose other than approved coursework during classroom, lab, and project time is prohibited. This includes social media, instant messaging, personal correspondence and surfing for unrelated content. Students shall not unduly interfere with the study, work or working environment of their peers.

Academic Integrity

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [Office of Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

Discipline

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71: Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Equipment and Media Servicers

- Loan Agreement [Loan Agreement link](#)
- Reserve Equipment [Webcheckout link](#)
- Media Services hours: 9am - 4pm Monday-Friday
- Tuesday/Friday Check-outs not available until 10:30am

- You can borrow Canon T5i, T6i, 60D, 70D, Panasonic, Nikon, Sony: A6500, A7iii, RX0, RX100 Vlogging cameras, brand new lenses (wide, portrait, telephoto), gimbals, audio kits, lighting (new ring lights)]
- **Late fees PER DAY:** Laptops \$50, iPads/Cameras \$25, Mics/Lenses/Kits \$20, Other \$5. Average replacement cost is \$1500 for a camera
- If your equipment is due at 9:00am, bring it back for 9:00am. (one-hour grace period)
- Email if you are sick (in advance if possible)
- Make sure your equipment comes back with all of its pieces
- Your reservation will be cancelled if you don't pick it up within an hour of your reservation time. If you're going to be late let them know

Media Services Questions

Please email (preferred): stratford.digitalmedia@uwaterloo.ca, or call 519-888-4567 ext. 23014

Grievance

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals

A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70: Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities

The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (NH 1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Important Dates, Fall 2019

First Day of Class	Sept. 4
Reading Week	Oct. 14-18
Classes End	Dec. 3
Pre-Exam Study Days	Dec. 4, 5
Exams End	Dec. 21