

Syllabus: GBDA 203 Introduction to Digital Culture, Fall 2020

We acknowledge that the Stratford School is on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Ojibway/Chippewa peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties. Our actions toward reconciliation take place through our research, teaching, learning, and community events, with guidance from the University's [Indigenous Initiatives](#) office.

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Daniel Harley
Email: dharley@uwaterloo.ca

Announcements

I will use the **Announcements** widget on the Course Home page during the term to communicate new or changing information regarding due dates, instructor absence, etc., as needed. You are expected to read the announcements on a regular basis. To ensure you are viewing the complete list of announcements, you may need to click Show All Announcements.

Ask your Prof

We have provided an **Ask your Prof** discussion forum for you to use when you have a question about the course that may benefit the whole class. Check this forum to see if your question has already been answered before reaching out to the instructor or your TAs.

Contact Us

Who and Why	Contact Details
<p>Instructor and TA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course-related questions (e.g., course content, deadlines, assignments, etc.)• Questions of a personal nature	<p>Post your course-related questions to the Ask your Prof discussion topic*. This allows other students to benefit from your question as well. Questions of a personal nature can be directed to the instructor.</p> <p>Instructor: Dr. Daniel Harley, dharley@uwaterloo.ca</p> <p>TAs: Ainsley Andres, amandres@uwaterloo.ca; Jacquelyn McColl, jmamccoll@uwaterloo.ca; Paige Wohlschutz, paige.wohlschutz@uwaterloo.ca</p> <p>The instructor checks email and the Ask your Prof discussion topic frequently and will make every</p>

Who and Why	Contact Details
	<p>effort to reply to your questions within 48 hours, Monday to Friday. When emailing the instructor, please indicate the course code in the subject line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please use your official UW email address • Please address your email to your instructor appropriately (e.g., Dr. Harley, Professor) • Please sign your email with your first and last name <p>*Discussion topics can be accessed by clicking Connect and then Discussions on the course navigation bar above.</p>
<p>Technical Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical problems with Waterloo LEARN 	<p>learnhelp@uwaterloo.ca</p> <p>Include your full name, WatIAM user ID, student number, and course name and number.</p> <p>Technical support is available during regular business hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM (Eastern Time).</p> <p>LEARN Help Student Documentation</p>
<p>Student Resources</p>	<p>Student Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic advice • Student success • WatCards • Library services and more

Course Description and Learning Outcomes

Course Description

This course provides students with a 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 which will enable them to think, speak, and write critically about technology in an historical and global context.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:

- Develop an understanding of some of the key concepts and debates that shape digital culture.
- Acquire methodological and conceptual tools to engage in an in-depth analysis of digital technologies and cultures.
- Analyze and remediate key concepts through online discussion and multimedia digital production.
- Apply course concepts to critically analyze the social and cultural implications of digital technology.
- Further develop professional skills (teamwork, communication, problem solving).

Grade Breakdown

The following table represents the grade breakdown of this course (see Course Outline on LEARN for more detail).

Assessment	Evaluation	Date	Weight (%)
Beginning of term reflection	Blog	Week 1	5%
Discussion Posts (30% total)	Post 1	Week 2	5%
	Post 2	Week 4	5%
	Post 3	Week 5	5%
	Post 4	Week 7	5%
	Post 5	Week 9	5%
	Post 6	Week 10	5%
Digital Culture Production (40% total)	Media Production	Week 3	10%
	Autoethnography	Week 6	10%
	Interaction Review	Week 8	10%

	Design Fiction	Week 11	10%
Podcast assignment [groups of 5] 20% total	Outline	Week 7	5%
	Final + Summary	Week 12	15%
End of term reflection	Blog	Week 12	5%
Total			100%

Assignment Breakdown

The following table represents the assignment breakdown of this course. Use this table for **quick reference only**. Refer to the Assignment section on LEARN for further submission details.

Beginning of term reflection (due week 1) – 5% **Due: Sunday, September 13th, 2020 at 5:00PM**

This assignment is a blog post (max 500 words) in which you will respond to the following question: *“How does digital culture impact my life?”* The goal of this assignment is for us to get a sense of your writing as an early benchmark that we will return to at the end of the course.

Discussion posts (due at the end of week 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10) – 30%

These discussion posts (max 300 words) are a **direct response to the assigned readings for that week**. Once you finish reading the article(s) for that week, you will write a short, structured blog posts using the format provide to you in the assignment section on LEARN.

Digital Culture Production 40% (due at the end of week 3, 6, 8, 11)

The four digital culture production activities are a **direct response to the lecture for the assigned week**. It is an opportunity to express your perspective on the topics in a variety of creative formats. Refer to the assignment descriptions on LEARN for full details.

1. Media Production (10 points), week 3 - Sunday, September 27th, 2020 at 5:00PM.
2. Autoethnography (10 points), week 6 - Sunday, October 18th, 2020 at 5:00PM.

3. Interaction review (10 points), week 8 - Sunday, November 1st, 2020 at 5:00PM.
4. Design fiction (10 points), week 11 - Sunday, November 22nd, 2020 at 5:00PM.

Podcast assignment (groups of 5) 20% - Outline due end of week 7; final due end of week 12.

In the same group of 5 as your discussion posts, you and your team will record and produce a podcast episode that offers an examination of course themes. As a team, you must decide upon what course themes you wish to explore, and what format you want your podcast to adopt (e.g., interview, discussion, debate, documentary). Your sources can include your own experiences, but must specifically refer to at least two lectures, and at least two course readings. The final version of the podcast must be **10 minutes**. The work is graded in two components:

1. Outline (5 points): This is an outline for your podcast episode that includes the following components: A summary of the theme(s) you will be exploring, 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. Podcast (15 points): This will be uploaded to LEARN in .mp3 format with a one-page handout in .pdf where you will discuss your key ideas and what texts/lectures they relate to.

End of term reflection. 5%. Due end of week 12.

This assignment is a blog post (max 500 words) in which you will reread your beginning of term assignment, and reflect on your learning over the course of the term. Refer to the assignment description on LEARN for full details.

Materials and Resources

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	September 8–13	"Intro to Digital Culture"	(Optional) Chun, "Introduction: Habitual New Media, or Updating to Remain (Close to) the Same."
2	September 14–20	"Always Already Contingent"	Gitelman, "Introduction: Media as Historical Subjects." Zuboff, "Setting the Stage for Surveillance Capitalism."

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
3	September 21–27	"Big Data is Watching You"	Boyd & Crawford, "Critical Questions for Big Data" Zook et al., "Ten Simple Rules for Responsible Big Data Research"
4	September 28–October 4	"Looking Across a Digital Divide"	Miller, "Digital Inequality" Robinson et al., "Digital Divide 3.0: Emergent Inequalities in the Information Age"
5	October 5–9	"Sharing Social Change"	Harrison et al., "#BlackLivesMatter: Intersectionality, Violence, and Socially Transformative Art." Tufekci, "Censorship and Attention"
October 10–18 - READING WEEK			
6	October 19–25	"When Technology Stops Being Magic"	Pink et al., "Design Ethnography for Screenless Interaction Style: hands-on and no-hands in early morning routines" Victor, "A Brief Rant on the Future of Interaction Design"
7	October 26–November 1	"Who do you trust: Bias, news, and fakes."	Alba, "How Russia's Troll Farm is Changing Tactics Before the Fall Election" Chomsky, "Manufacturing Consent" (Summary)
8	November 2–8	"Virtual Worlds, Physical Bodies"	Nakamura, "Feeling good about feeling bad" Cross, "Ethics for Cyborgs: On Real Harassment in an 'Unreal' Place"
9	November 9–15	"Economies of Influence"	Johnson, "Inclusion and Exclusion in the Digital Economy" Poster, "Racialized Surveillance in the Digital Service Economy"
10	November 16–22	"Designed that Way: Ethics and"	D'Ignazio and Klein, "What Gets Counted Counts" Hassan and Gezahegn, "Addressing Racial Bias in AI: A Guide for Curious Minds"

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
		Unintended Consequences"	
11	November 23– November 29	"Designing the Future"	Dunne and Raby, "A Methodological Playground: Fictional Worlds and Thought Experiments" Haraway, "The Camille Stories: Children of Compost"
12	November 30– December 7	"Digital Culture"	No Readings

Important Dates

- **Sept. 8:** First Day of Class
- **Oct. 10-18:** Reading Week
- **Dec. 7:** Classes End

Resources

[Library COVID-19: Updates on library services and operations.](#)

Course and Department Policies

Deadlines and Late Assignments

All weekly assignments are due on Sundays at 5pm EST.

Late submissions of blog posts and discussion posts will be given a grade of 0.

The penalty for late submissions of the digital culture production assignments and podcast assignment is 5% per day (including weekends).

For all assignments, the instructor will consider granting an extension in the event of an officially documented extenuating circumstance (that is, serious personal illness, critical personal or family crisis, etc.). If a situation arises that may prevent you from completing an assignment, contact the instructor as early as possible.

Course Modification Warning

The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. 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 their University of Waterloo email and course website on LEARN daily during the term and to note any changes.

University Policies

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

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.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, 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 instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

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: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 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 AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit alternate assignment.

Coronavirus Information

[Coronavirus Information for Students](#)

This resource provides updated information on COVID-19 and guidance for accommodations due to COVID-19.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. We encourage you to seek out mental health supports when they are needed. Please reach out to [Campus Wellness and Counselling Services](#).

We understand that these circumstances can be troubling, and you may need to speak with someone for emotional support. [Good2Talk](#) is a post-secondary student helpline based in Ontario, Canada that is available to all students.

Off campus resources, 24/7

- [First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line](#): Immediate help for all Indigenous peoples across Canada. Phone: 1-855-242-3310 or online chat at hopeforwellness.ca. Service available in Cree, Ojibway, Inuktitut, English, and French.
- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- [Grand River Hospital](#): Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-433 ext. 6880
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): set of support services for queer teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Student Resources

[GLOW Centre for Sexual and Gender Diversity](#)

[Indigenous Student Centre](#)

[International and Canadian Student Network](#)

[Student Success Office](#)

[The Women's Centre](#)

[Writing Centre](#)

[Other Writing Resources](#)