

New Media and Communication

Spring 2016

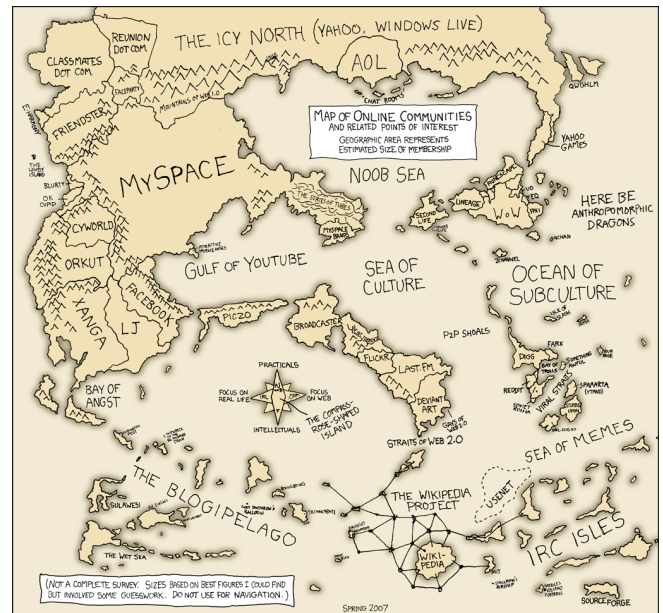
TR 230-345p Corboy 305

Dr. Meghan Dougherty

mdougherty@luc.edu

SOC 223D

Office Hours by appointment,
always available via email



Course Description

xkcd.com/256

Technology can shape our experiences of language, reality, time, memory, and knowledge. The diffusion of innovative tools can alter the experience of daily life dramatically. We can all appreciate a sense of technology's power as a central agent of change. The collective memory of Western culture is stocked with stories of communication's technological revolutions. Whether we tell stories about the printing press and Gutenberg's Bible spreading literacy, or the computer described in a 1993 documentary series as "The Machine that Changed the World" our stories feature before-and-after narratives that set technology and invention at center stage.

In this course we will investigate the ways in which new communication technologies challenge our inherited ideas about what it means to think, act, and relate to others. We will draw on examples from all eras of communication history to explore how new technologies are introduced, the consequences of adopting new technologies, the biases built into new technologies, the deterministic nature of technology, the social construction of technology, and our relationship with ourselves through technology.

Students will leave this course having learned and applied several critical analytical perspectives, questioned society's relationship with technology, and gained an understanding of how to be savvy consumers and producers of media.

By the end of this semester, you will be able to:

- (1) Describe and analyze the ways we tell stories about digital communication technology;
- (2) Explain and critique how we are shaping and are shaped by digital communication technology;
- (3) Discuss how these new digital technologies are impacting our identities, our communities and our environment;
- (4) Reflect on the role technology plays in your own sense of identity and community;
- (5) Create artifacts that demonstrate your role as a responsible, and ethical producer/consumer of media.

If you have questions or concerns, please see me before there is a problem!

Attendance/Lateness

Attendance counts. Missed work cannot be made up or excused except in the case of severe illness, death in the family, or religious holiday - these absences must be documented if you'd like to make up missed work.

Classroom Citizenship

Students are expected to respect each other. When you enter a classroom, you are a member of a cohort - a community of learning. Your success depends on your neighbors' success. Learning is a collaborative effort - understanding is co-produced. Strive to do better on your own, but also strive to help your classmates to elevate the level of conversation in the classroom.

Technology in the Classroom

Use of technology in the classroom is encouraged! Bring laptops, smartphones, tablets, etc. Use note-taking software; use bibliographic software; use the Internet. Take your discussion, questions, exploration online - look up definitions and more information as we discuss and share that with the class. Use Twitter to post class related comments (use #comm200 to mark your class-related tweets). With a wifi connection you have a world of resources to help you learn - use them! Using technology is a privilege - **do not take advantage of this privilege**. The presence of technology in the classroom does not give you an excuse to be physically present in the room but intellectually absent. Technology can be a distraction to you, me and your classmates. Learn to make choices about your own media use. Give yourself a break from the always-on mentality of today's new media landscape! Let this class be the one time you are allowed to turn off.

Students with Disabilities

Any student that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. It is dishonest to borrow text, images, or videos from the Web without crediting the original creator or the site from which you borrowed the work. It is also dishonest to turn in the same work for two classes, to turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or to copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam.

Late work/ Lost work

Late work will not be accepted. Extensions will not be granted. Incompletes will not be assigned. Make-up work will not be assigned unless pre-arranged, or due to an authorized documented absence. If you anticipate you will miss an assignment, please discuss it with the professor early in the semester to arrange an alternative.

Grading

The grade you earn in this class will be based on sets of bundled assignments. Choose the level at which you'd like to engage in the class, choose assignments you'd like to complete, and earn a grade for each assignment in that bundle to earn an overall grade for the course.

Assignments are bundled by learning objective, and help you earn a specific grade for the course.

C	B	A
Gain Factual Knowledge Learn Basic Principles	Develop Critical Analytical Skills Gain Writing/Expression Skills	Practice Critical Application Develop Digital Skills
Quiz 1	Behind the Screen	Digital Artifact Project
Quiz 2	Reading Responses	My Digital Life Project
Quiz 3	Behind the Web	Project Presentation
Midterm Exam	Web Evolution	
Quiz 4	Glitch	
Final Exam	My 2025: Future Technology	

C-Level Assignments help you Gain Factual Knowledge. These assignments are quizzes and exams. To earn a C for the course, you must earn a 77% on all C-Level Assignments.

B-Level Assignments help you learn and practice Critical Analysis of course content. These assignments build on the factual knowledge you've gained, and ask you to practice critical analysis by writing essays in response to a reading or a writing prompt. Each assignment has a strict set of requirements and are graded Pass/Fail. To earn a B for the course, you must successfully complete the C-Level Bundle AND earn a Pass on 2/3 of the assignments in the B-Level Bundle.

A-Level Assignments help you practice Critical Application of course content. These assignments build on factual knowledge and require critical analysis so you may apply concepts to build a project. These assignments are long-term projects you will develop over the course of several weeks. Each assignment has strict requirements and is graded Pass/Fail. To earn an A for the course, you must successfully complete the C-Level and B-Level bundles AND earn a Pass on 2/3 of the assignments in the A-Level Bundle (e.g., complete one of two projects and present it).

Grades earned for each assignment will be posted on Sakai. It is your responsibility to keep track of your work and your grades. You must choose the level with which you'd like to engage with the class and complete the work necessary to meet that goal. I will not send you prompts to participate more or to work harder. Again, it is your responsibility to keep track of the grades you earn. Students may meet with me at any time to discuss their approach to bundled grading, or assessment of their work.

If you would like to discuss a grade on an assignment you must make an appointment with me. Bring the assignment, and a written explanation of how your work met the requirements of the assignment, and showed impressive achievement above the average. You have two weeks from the day I post the assignment grade to dispute my assessment of that work. After two weeks, I will assume you are satisfied with my assessment, and I will not reconsider the assessment for any reason.

Assignments

C Bundle

Quizzes

Take four short quizzes throughout the semester. See Schedule or course website for Quiz dates.

Exams

Take a Midterm Exam and a Final Exam on Sakai. See Schedule or course website for Exam dates.

B Bundle

Behind the Screen: Command Line Interface (due 26 Jan)

Learn to interact with your computer using the Command Line Interface. Complete a workbook assignment. Post a 500 word essay about interfaces, and your Cheat Sheet on Medium.

Behind the Web: HTML & CSS (due 02 Feb)

Learn basic HTML and CSS in Codecademy. Post a 500 word essay on Medium.

Web Evolution (due 11 Feb)

Use the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine to trace the evolution of a website. Write a 500-750 word essay critically analyzing the evolution of your website on Medium.

Media 2025 (due 23 Feb)

Learn about critical design by writing a brief scene of design fiction. Describe a new communication device in 2025. Write a 750-1000 word story and post it in Medium.

Glitch (due 22 Mar)

Use a Glitch Art method from class to create your own. Write a 300-500 word essay on Medium.

Reading Responses (ongoing - repeat up to 4x for the B Bundle)

Post a thoughtful 1500-2000 word response essay to readings of your choice on Medium.

A Bundle

My Digital Life Project (due 26 Apr)

What is your experience of everyday digital life? Spend time observing, collect and analyze field notes. Reflect on the role that digital/new media play in your everyday life (online and offline). Write a 4000-4500 word research paper. Post your paper to Medium, and present your work in class.

Digital Artifact Project (due 28 Apr)

Create a new media artifact (podcast, mashup, glitch art collection, etc.) that critically explores a topic from class. Write a 4000-4500 word statement explaining your work. Post your paper to Medium, and present your work in class.

Project Presentation*

Present your project to class on the day the project is due.

*To successfully complete the A-Level Bundle, you must choose one of two projects suggested, and present that project to class. One project, plus a presentation of your work is 2/3 of the A-Level Bundle.

Schedule

All readings will be linked from coursereadings.wordpress.com.

week one	T J19	Introductions
	R J21	Bias of Communication Technologies
week two	T J26	Computer History Quiz 1: Readings
	R J28	Code
week three	T F02	Web History Quiz 2: HTML, CSS & Code
	R F04	Writing Web History
week four	T F09	What's New About New Media
	R F11	Everyday Life Online
week five	T F16	The Googlization of Everything (or Is Google Making Us Stupid?)
	R F18	Critical Design: Stories About New Media
week six	T F23	Race, Class, and Gender Online
	R F25	Race, Class, and Gender Online
week seven	T M01	Open class: students' choice
	R M03	Midterm Exam
week eight	T M08	Spring Break
	R M10	—

week nine	T M15	Technology Fail
	R M17	Glitch
week ten	T M22	VR vs. RL: Technology's Toll on the Earth
	R M24	E-Waste
week eleven	T M29	Politics Online
	R M31	Data Science and Democracy
		Quiz 4: Readings
week twelve	T A05	Privacy, Surveillance & Sousveillance
	R A07	Easter Break
week thirteen	T A12	Digital Content and Copyright
	R A14	Remix Culture
		Quiz 4: Copyright and Remix
week fourteen	T A19	Data Culture/Data Anxieties
	R A21	Open Class: students' choice
week fifteen	T A21	My Digital Life Presentations
	R A23	Digital Artifact Presentations

Final Exam on Sakai

Assignment Evaluation (Pass/Fail)**B-Level Assignment Essays**

Each of the B-Level assignments (details for each at course readings.wordpress.com) requires responding in some way to a prompt or a reading and writing a response or reflection essay. Regardless of the style or length of the essay for the B-Level Assignment you are tackling, your essay must be well-organized, well-written, and thoughtful.

All B-Level Assignments are graded Pass/Fail, and are evaluated using the following 4 criteria:

	Pass	Fail
Organization	<p>Begins with a strong, interesting, and sensible title that suggests the point of the essay.</p> <p>Has a clear introduction, developing paragraphs, and a conclusion.</p> <p>Has a clear thesis statement.</p> <p>Uses good transitions between supporting points.</p> <p>Has a good pace, and presents ideas and evidence in a sensible order.</p>	<p>Begins with a confusing title, or no title.</p> <p>Is disorganized, or does not flow well.</p> <p>Has no clear thesis statement.</p> <p>Does not use transitions between ideas.</p> <p>Poor pacing, or poor ordering of ideas.</p> <p>Does not identify a clear argument or problem.</p>
Focus	<p>Has a strong thesis identifying the main idea.</p> <p>Develops an argument.</p> <p>Demonstrates critical evaluation.</p> <p>Has a main point that is limited in scope - a discrete idea that can be addressed in an essay.</p> <p>There is a clear motive for writing; strongly intimates an answer to the reader's question, "So what?"</p> <p>Insightful,</p>	<p>Does not clearly identify a main idea.</p> <p>Reads like a rant rather than an argument.</p> <p>Summarizes or reviews rather than critically evaluates.</p> <p>Has a main idea that is too broad to be handled in an essay.</p> <p>Has no clear motive for writing; provides no hint to the reader's question, "So what?"</p>

<p>Development</p>	<p>Has strong, convincing evidence supporting the thesis.</p> <p>Stays on point.</p> <p>Language use is appropriate, precise, authoritative, crafted, and scholarly.</p> <p>Includes at least two properly formatted citations to scholarly works.</p>	<p>Has weak, unconvincing, or no evidence to support the thesis.</p> <p>Relies on author’s opinion.</p> <p>Wanders off point.</p> <p>Language use is conversation, casual, or carries little authority.</p> <p>Does not include two references to scholarly works, or citations are not properly formatted.</p>
<p>Mechanics</p>	<p>Takes advantage of the Web medium by including images, videos, or links when appropriate AND embeds those elements properly.</p> <p>Posted to the Class Collection on Medium ON TIME.</p> <p>Meets the word or page count requirements.</p> <p>No grammar or spelling errors.</p> <p>Follows the directions of the prompt.</p>	<p>Does not take advantage of the Web medium to include images, videos, or links when needed OR does not embed those elements properly.</p> <p>Was not posted to Medium properly, or was late.</p> <p>Does not meet word or page count requirements.</p> <p>Has grammar or spelling errors.</p> <p>Does not follow the directions, or is missing parts of the assignment.</p>

A response essay *is not* a summary, a book review, (i.e. "I really enjoyed the...") or a rehashing of the content or story (i.e. "First this happened, and then...").

A response is a critical evaluation or analysis of another author's work, or critical consideration of an idea. Unlike a simple summary, it is composed of your opinions *in relation to* the article or ideas being summarized. It examines ideas, contextualizes those ideas with concepts from class. It identifies and explains the author’s strengths and weaknesses in reasoning and logic, in quality of supporting examples, and in organization and style. A good response is persuasive; therefore, it should cite facts, examples, and concepts from class that either refute or support the article you're responding to, depending on your stance.

Assignment Requirements

A-Level Assignment

Digital Artifact Project

This final project will give you the opportunity to synthesize a number of different concepts we've discussed in class by creating an artifact (a web site, digital movie, video or audio mash-up, a podcast, an infographic, an interactive story, a body of glitch art, a data journalism story etc.) that relates to the course themes (characteristics of new media, dystopian/utopian narratives, identity, community, embodiment, politics, representation, etc.). You will produce your artifact and present it to the class.

You can find examples of past successful assignments in the class Box drive.

Steps:

1. Decide on the issue you'd like to tackle in your project.

Consider all class readings, discussion, current events, etc. for ideas. Come up with your own idea, or choose from one of these:

- #GamerGate
- Issues in race, class, and gender in technology (beyond the games industry)
- Anonymous, Reddit and vigilante justice in online communities
- Authentic identities online, and the controversy over the push for Real Names in social networks
- Integrity in online communities
- Issues in computer and information ethics
- **Privacy online**, The EU's ruling on the "Right To Be Forgotten" and **how Google is handling it**
- Copyright and creativity online and the alternative systems of **Creative Commons**
- Open Government and the efforts to hack publicly accessible City data to benefit citizens
- Utopian and Dystopian visions of our cyborgian, tech-driven world
- Deception, reality, and our expectations in social media
- Controversy over how technology is interfering with offline interpersonal interactions
- Internet addiction with different devices
- Big Data, and Data Journalism
- Net Neutrality
- The impact of the digital world on the real world environment

2. Decide what form your project will take

Will you produce a podcast? A video blog? Maybe you will create an activist group or a guerrilla ad campaign to advocate for an issue. Will you create a series of infographics to illustrate your data-driven story? Will you build an interactive story? Maybe you'll consider a combination of these digital storytelling techniques. With free tools and templates, you can build some really creative and professional-looking digital stuff. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Twine** for interactive fiction (that you can repurpose for non-fiction)
- 20+ Infographic-making tools
- **Mozilla Web tools** for building websites, or interactive videos
- An app called **TimeLineJS** to make interactive chronological stories
- An app called Storyteller to make interactive photo essays
- Creative uses of Twitter to tell history
- An app called **iMashup** to make audio mashups and remixes
- Use the Internet Archive to examine the history of a website

3. Research your story

You'll need to do some research to understand the breadth and depth of the topic you've chosen, and how you want to build a particular story around it. Learn everything you can about the topic, and decide on an argument. You need to have a purpose for your digital artifact: will you advocate for something? Critically examine something? Introduce and describe the complexity of your topic in a basic primer for a general audience? Will you trace the history of your topic?

Do your research, cite readings from class, and expand your search outside of class. You must cite at least 6 scholarly sources outside of our class readings. It should be obvious from your artifact that you are applying and responding to the course and outside material.

4. Write your story

You must provide context for your artifact.

A. Write context into your artifact itself (a brief intro to a podcast series, a description of a video, an introduction for an interactive timeline, etc). A reader should be able to understand the entirety of your artifact, and read it without wondering why the thing exists or who made it, or why it matters.

Remember, you'll be posted in this on Medium - a public space - where people who aren't familiar with our class might read it.

B. Write a 4000-4500 word artist's statement explaining your work. This paper should introduce your topic, explain your perspective on it (your argument), detail why it is an important issue to address, and justify your choice of digital artifact format to present your argument. This statement will be posted on Medium with screenshots, videos, audio-embeds, and/or links to your artifact.

5. Present your work

26 April Formal Presentations*

During your presentation, you should demonstrate your artifact—You may not have time to show your entire artifact, so be sure to pick a portion of it that's the most interesting/provocative. Give a short presentation that outlines the project and connects it to concepts we've discussed throughout the course.

Prepare an outline and practice your presentation so that you do not go over time.

Consider the following questions to help you prepare for your presentation:

A. Why did you choose this topic? Why is it important that we examine it?

B. How did you decide what artifact to create? How does it relate to the material we've discussed in class? Outside materials?

C. Set up the artifact for us – what do you want your audience to understand about your topic after seeing/hearing your work? How is your artifact contributing to the ongoing conversation we've been having this semester about new media?

D. What surprised you about this experience? What did you find difficult or easy?

Your presentation length will depend on how many other students choose to complete this assignment.

A time limit and format will be announced later in the semester.

Evaluation

Your final project will be graded on its creativity, appropriateness of the topic, integration of class/outside resources into artifact/artist's statement, clear perspective/argument, and cohesiveness. See the Digital Artifact Project Rubric for details.

*I am happy to provide detailed feedback on your work in progress. Please send me an email no later than **05 April** to request comments.*

Assignment Requirements**A-Level Assignment****My Digital Life Project**

This final project will give you the opportunity to synthesize a number of different concepts we've discussed in class by conducting an auto-ethnographic study of your own day-to-day digital life. Each of us has our own experience of new media. We have many shared experiences, and shared meanings, but individual differences make big difference in understanding every day lived life in a digitally mediated communication environment. You will observe your own use of digital media throughout the semester using a variety of qualitative data collection strategies. You'll analyze your findings, and write a research paper that presents your work and constructs an ethnographic representation of everyday life lived digitally.

Steps:

1. Plan

This semester-long research project is going to take some planning. Get a calendar and plan out your work. Your final paper and presentation are due 21 April. Working backward from that date, give yourself ample time to write and edit your paper and prepare your presentation (about 2-3 weeks). Next block out some time to analyze the data you'll have collected (about 2 weeks). Finally, look to Step Two below and schedule time for each of the data collection exercises.

This will give you a loose schedule. Qualitative data collection and analysis happen concurrently - you'll be collecting, analyzing, adjusting your collection strategy, analyzing, writing, analyzing as you write, etc. It becomes a jumble, but a loose schedule will keep you moving forward through the semester. Meet with me if you need help planning a schedule.

2. Collect Data

Start observing your own new media uses. Use each of the following data collection strategies at least once (you'll attach all your data to your final paper in an appendix):

a. Tracking and Logging

Capture snippets of your new media use. You'll be surprised at what you find.

i. Use *tracking software* to track time spent with different websites. Firefox and Chrome have several plugins that will keep track of your browsing activities and analyze data for you.

ii. Use Camtasia (free trial software) to *create a video of your computer use*. Camtasia creates a full-screen screen capture video with a picture-in-picture video of your face using your built-in webcam.

iii. Create an audio or video walkthrough of your use of a particular new media tool. Sit with a friend, open recording device, and talk through your use of Facebook, or email, or Reddit, or a Google search for information. Slow down the process and talk through each and every action, and each and every decision you make.

b. Reflexive Writing

Writing is a great way to process ideas, activate memory, and make new connections.

Repeat these data collection exercise several times throughout your observation period.

i. Write a *short essay* reflecting on your new media use. Consider readings, discussions, and concepts from class as a prompt, and write a coherent essay about some aspect of your new media use. You may write about how using new media makes you feel physically, how you interact with friends online, your surfing habits, the places you use new media, the spaces you participate in

online, or write in response to your Camtasia video, or walkthrough—the topic is up to you.

- ii. Write *free-form journal entries* - Brain Dumps - that are short stream of conscious, deep reflections on specific aspects of new media use. Use this writing exercise to activate your memory, or mine your mind for forgotten moments, or deeper thoughts about specific events, actions, feelings, etc. related to your new media use. This writing should be unfiltered and unedited. Open a text file, set a timer for 15-25 minutes, and write without using the backspace button. Use this strategy several times throughout the semester.
- iii. Write *descriptions* of particular encounters in/on/with/through new media. Describe an encounter with a troll on Reddit, write a dialogue between you and Google as you perform a search, write a story about a reaction to a post on Facebook, or write a love letter to your iPhone. These descriptions can be fact or fiction, but should have some connection to *your* experience with new media.

2. Analyze Your Data

As you collect your data, you'll be analyzing it and adjusting your data collection strategies. But at some point you need to stop collecting data and move on. Use your schedule to help you decide when to move to this next stage.

Analyze your data by rereading and reviewing everything you've generated. Use colored markers and highlighters to identify common words, phrases, and themes across your data. Take notes on those commonalities. What do you think they mean - in light of readings, concepts, and discussions in class?

3. Write your Final Paper

As you analyze your data you'll start developing conclusions about your work. Focus on a particular concept from class that you think resonates with what you found in your data. This concept will guide your final paper. Your final paper should include:

- a. An introduction that identifies a clear problem, a definitive thesis, and articulates a clear argument;
- b. A discussion of concepts and readings from class that guided you in your analysis;
- c. A discussion of the data collection strategies you used, and the findings they produced;
- d. A discussion of your analysis (what you think the findings mean); and
- e. Conclusions reflecting on *your* experience in relation to a generalized comment on everyday life lived digitally.

4. Prepare your presentation for class.

You'll give a formal presentation of your project in class. Your presentation should follow the same format as your paper, using examples and illustrations. Your presentation length will depend on how many other students choose to complete this assignment. A time limit and format will be announced later in the semester.

Tips:

Create a study group with classmates who have also decided to complete the My Digital Life Project. Use your study group for feedback on writing, trade final drafts, to throw half-baked ideas around, and to compare and contrast your data and findings. Sharing information with others will help you get better perspective on your own experiences.