

The Ohio State University

COM 341

SOCIAL EFFECTS OF NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES
(Introduction to Telecommunications and Electronic Media Theories and Policies)

Spring 2005

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Office hours: Tuesdays 12:30-2:30 pm and by appointment

Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 3:30-5:18 pm

Location: ML 0131

Course website: www.class.osu.edu

Note. This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking assistance in a timely manner. Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodations based on disability should contact the instructor to discuss your specific needs, or contact the Office for Disabilities at 292-3307 in Room 150 of Pomerene Hall to coordinate your documented disabilities.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is a lower-level undergraduate introduction to the study of social effects of new communication technologies. The course is designed to examine the current and potential effects of widespread use of new communication technologies. This discussion includes the roles and models of communication technologies in a society; the nature of new communication technologies; adoption and use of new communication technologies; and individual and societal level effects of news communication technologies. The course illuminates psychological, social, industrial, and policy implications of the use of new communication technologies.

REQUIRED READINGS

A book and supplemental readings are required for this course.

Bucy, E. (Ed.). (2005, 2nd ed.). *Living in the information age: A new media reader*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth. (a.k.a. LIA)

Students can purchase the required text book at Ohio State University Bookstore.

SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVE LEARNING AIDS

The course will run a discussion board and a question & answer section online to encourage active learning in and out of the class. The lecture slides and assignment guidelines will be also provided in the same site. Students are strongly encouraged to take an advantage of this supplemental venue for their active learning.

SOME SUGGESTION FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

The main focus of this course will be the lecture and in-class discussion. To best understand the lecture and to actively participate in discussion, students should read the **textbook** *before* each class. It is fun, easy, and serves well for a preview of the lecture. When necessary, the instructor will provide supplemental materials through the class website. Students may read the supplemental materials *after* class to grasp the details of the lecture.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course will be conducted in a lecture and discussion format. Attendance and in-class participation, one written assignment, and two exams are required to receive the course credit.

Attendance and in-class participation. Students should be prepared in advance to participate in discussion of key topics from the required readings. Students are required to actively engage in each class. A portion of the final course grade will be assigned on the basis of participation in class discussions (see **Grading**). To facilitate attendance and participation, about 10 impromptu one-minute-thought-papers will be collected during the class throughout the quarter.

Written Assignment: The use and effect of a new medium (a journal +5 page paper). Student will use a new medium throughout this quarter in their choice and analyze the psychological, social, political, industrial, or policy implications of the use of the new media. Student, for example, can join in a virtual community, read an online newspaper, write on a weblog, play a video game regularly (once a week) and observe and experience the use of the new medium. Students will need to provide a journal of medium usage as documentation. Students will analyze the potential effect of the use of a new medium based on their own experience. A good portion of this course will discuss issues of psychological, social, political, industrial, or policy implications of new communication technologies. Students should use the course readings as references. The detailed guidelines of this assignment will be provided in the lecture.

Exams (mid-term and final exam). There will be two exams, a mid-term exam and a final exam. Detailed information about the exams (e.g., format, etc.) will be provided in the lecture. Extended special office hours will be provided before each exam to help students prepare for the exam.

GRADING

Course grades will be determined on the basis of attendance and in-class participation, a written assignment, and two examinations. *Late assignments or missed examinations will receive reduced grades (a letter grade drop for every day of delay). Students should notify the instructor about any problems as soon as they occur.* Below is the detailed grading allocation.

Attendance and participation 20 %

Assignment 30 %

2 Exams (Mid-term and final exams) 50 % (25% for each)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students at the Ohio State University are bound by the Code of Student Conduct (see <http://www.osu.edu/units/staff/csc/php>). Violations of the code in this class, especially pertaining to 3335-23-04 Section A on Academic Misconduct, will be taken through the procedures the university has set up to deal with violations of the Code. Academic misconduct is any activity that compromises the academic integrity of the institution or subverts the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- a) Violation of course rules as contained in this course syllabus or other information provided
- b) Providing or receiving information during examinations or providing or using unauthorized assistance on individual assignments.
- c) Plagiarism, including the use of information from any uncredited source.
- d) Alteration of grades or marks in an effort to change the earned grade or credit.
- e) Failure to report incidents of academic misconduct.

Any evidence of academic misconduct will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct in accordance with the Ohio State University Code of Student Conduct and the rules of faculty governance.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Introduction

March 28 (M)	Course instruction No reading
March 30 (W)	Overview of course topics No reading

Part I: Define New Communication Technology

- April 4 (M) The role of communication technology in society
LIA, pp. 1-32.
- April 6 (W) The role of communication technology in society (continued)
LIA, pp. 1-32.
- April 11 (M) Convergence and concentration of media
LIA, pp. 65-114.

Part II: Adoption and Use of New Communication Technologies

- April 13 (W) Forecasting the adoption of new communication technologies
**Medium selection (for the assignment) due*

Dickson, E. M., & Bowers, R. (1973). Technology assessment. *The video telephone: Impact of new era in telecommunications* (pp.1-8). NY: Praeger.

Noll, A. M. (1992). Anatomy of failure: Picturephone revisited. *Telecommunications Policy*, 16, 307-316.

- April 18 (M) The adoption and use of the Internet
LIA, pp. 163-180.
- April 20 (W) Mid-term exam review
- April 25 (M) MID-TERM EXAM

Part III: Effects of New Communication Technologies

- April 26 (W) New media theories: Overview
LIA, pp. 33-64
- May 2 (M) The self and new communication technologies
LIA, pp. 117-138.

May 4 (W) Identity and new communication technologies

Burkhalter, B. (1999). Reading race online: Discovering racial identity in Usenet discussions. In M. A. Smith & P. Kollock (eds.), *Communities in cyberspace* (pp.60-75).

Turkle, S. (1997). Constructions and reconstructions of self in virtual reality: Playing in the MUDS. In S. Kiesler (ed.), *Culture of the Internet* (pp.143-156).

May 9 (M) Virtual community

Baym, N. K. (1995). The emergence of community in computer-mediated communication. In S. G. Jones (ed.), *Cybersociety: Communication and community* (pp.138-168). London: Sage.

Galston, W. A. (1999). (How) Does the Internet affect community? Some speculation in search of evidence. In E. C. Kamarck, & J. S. Nye, Jr. (eds.), *Democracy.com? Governance in a networked world* (pp. 45-61). Hollis, NH: Hollis.

May 11 (W) New communication technologies and social life

LIA, pp. 139-161. (Media saturation and human mind)

LIA, pp. 188-217. (Information society)

May 16 (M) Politics and new communication technologies 1: Political information

LIA, pp. 239-254. (Information access)

LIA, pp. 255-282. (Information use)

May 18 (W) Politics and new communication technologies 2: Political participation

LIA, pp. 219-238.

May 23 (M) Privacy, surveillance, and new communication technologies

LIA, pp. 308-332.

May 25 (W) Regulation of new communication technologies

* *Written assignment due*

LIA, pp. 283-307.

May 30 (M) NO CLASS

June 1 (W) Course conclusion; Final exam review

No reading

June 6 (M) FINAL EXAM