

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 481 01
Advanced Studies in New Media and Society

Winter 2020

Tue., Jan. 14 – Tue. Apr. 14 (excluding Feb. 17-21)

TuTh 9:30-10:45

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Course Description

Examines the nature, origins and social implications of new media with a focus on the Internet. Evolving forms of interpersonal, group and public communication based on the Internet will be assessed in terms of the role they play in identity formation, cultural integration, learning, political participation, commerce and work.

The theme of this course is “online participation and civic engagement.” Topics covered will include the lasting influence of libertarian ideology on online participation, the pervasiveness of surveillance, the reconceptualization of the public sphere, the effects of echo chambers, the personalization of civic engagement online, the reconfiguration of body politics through digital aggregations, hacking, tactical inefficiency and the incorporation of activism through communicative capitalism.

The changes introduced to accommodate a remote delivery of this class are the following:

1. The lecture will be uploaded on Tuesday as a narrated ppt.
2. Optional video conferences will be scheduled for every Thursday beginning at 10 AM.
3. Discussion threads will be available for students to share their comments about the content discussed in the lectures and in the group presentations.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- identify the main themes linked to contemporary civic engagement online,
- critically assess contemporary discourses about online participation and civic engagement,

- analyze civic engagement online from a critical perspective,
- critically engage with the literature in the area of new media and social media research on political participation,
- work effectively in groups.

Textbooks and Readings

The following is the list of mandatory readings for this class:

- Andrejevic, M. (2019). Automating surveillance. *Surveillance & Society*, 17(1/2), 7-13. <https://doi.org/10.24908/ss.v17i1/2.12930>
- Bakardjieva, M. (2012). Subactivism: Lifeworld and politics in the age of Internet. In A. Feenberg. & N. Friesen (Eds.), *(Re)Inventing the Internet: Critical case studies*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ualgary.ca/lib/ualgary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3034695>.
- Barbrook, R. & Cameron, A. (2015). The Californian ideology. In R. Barbrook & A. Cameron, *The Internet revolution: From dot-com capitalism to cybernetic communism*. https://ualgary-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1p0s7n7/TN_narcishbo:oai:hbokennisba nk.nl:amsterdam_pure:oai:pure.hva.nl:publications/9de1d9c2-bb91-4ee5-a4e8-1b941fe895c5
- Bucher, T. (2012). Want to be on the top? Algorithmic power and the threat of invisibility on Facebook. *New Media & Society*, 14(7), 1164-1180. https://ualgary-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1p0s7n7/TN_sage_s10_1177_146144481244_0159
- Chouliaraki, L. (2010). Self-mediation: New media and citizenship. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 7(4), 227-232. <http://ezproxy.lib.ualgary.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=53921691&site=ehost-live>
- Coleman, G. (2017). From Internet farming to weapons of the geek. *Current Anthropology*, 58(15), 91-102. https://ualgary-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1p0s7n7/TN_ucpj10.1086/688697
- Dean, J. (2005). Communicative capitalism: Circulation and the foreclosure of politics. *Cultural Politics*, 1(1), 51-74. Retrieved from https://ualgary-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1p0s7n7/TN_pubtecberg/cpij/2005/0000_0001/00000001/art00006
- Gladwell, M. (2010). Small change. *The New Yorker*, 86(30), 42. Retrieved from <https://link-gale->

com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/apps/doc/A238577621/AONE?u=ucalgary&sid=AONE&xid=397a0bad

Gordon, E. & Walter, S. (2016). Meaningful inefficiencies: Resisting the logic of technological efficiency in the design of civic systems. In E. Gordon & P. Mihailidis (Eds.). *Civic media: Technology, design, practice*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=4573752&ppg=238>

Schäfer, M.T. (2011). Promoting utopia/selling technology. In M. T. Schäfer, *Bastard culture! How user participation transforms cultural production*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=672992&ppg=26>

Sharma, S. (2012). Black Twitter? Racial hashtags, networks and contagion. *New Formations*, (78). Retrieved from <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A344948813/AONE?u=ucalgary&sid=AONE&xid=f46383a1>

Shirky, C. (2011). The political power of social media: Technology, the public sphere, and political change. *Foreign Affairs*, 90(1), 28. Retrieved from <https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/apps/doc/A250886159/AONE?u=ucalgary&sid=AONE&xid=72d5ee07>

Sunstein, C. (2017). The “Daily me” (pp. 1-30). In C. Sunstein, *#Republic: Divided democracy in the age of social media*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
A copy of this chapter will be made available on D2L.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops, tablets, and mobile phones may be used in class and tutorials only for course-related purposes and only if their use is not distracting others or negatively impacting the learning environment. No audio or video recording is allowed in any class without the instructor’s permission.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
35%	<p>Group activities: in groups of max. 5 members, students will complete five problem solving activities that require the analysis of different aspects of online participation phenomena in light of the critical studies discussed in class. The activities will be completed in class and handed in at the end of the day via dropbox submission. Students will typically have a week time to complete the activity.</p> <p>Group activities are open book. The instructions will become available the day the assignment is introduced in class.</p> <p>To complete the activity, students must be present in class.</p>	Jan. 23, Feb. 6, Mar. 5, 19 AND April 9.

10%	<p>Discussion groups: This grade will be assessed based in each student's documented participation in ten in-class group discussions. Students will form groups of up to 8 members to discuss and answer a question connected to the reading material scheduled for that day. To receive a discussion group grade, students must be present in class, access the question via D2L, collaborate with a group in answering a question from a list compiled by the instructor, and sign in their names next to the question answered as proof of participation. Each documented participation in a discussion group session is worth 1%.</p> <p>Note: given the transition to remote learning, participation during the last 4 weeks of class will be measured in the following way:</p> <p>Students are required to participate in two of the four discussion threads associated with the 4 remaining lectures until the end of the term in order to receive two points towards their remaining participation grade. Each contribution will be assigned one point.</p> <p>There is no minimum or maximum length to the contribution to this forum though students are asked to avoid one sentence responses. Students should make sure to participate sometime between the day the discussion thread is created until the day before the following lecture is posted.</p> <p>In addition, students are required to write two responses to group presentations to add two points to their final participation grade. Each response will be assigned one point. Responses must address the questions proposed by the group. There is no minimum or maximum length to the contribution though students are asked to avoid a single sentence response.</p> <p>The discussion forum will remain open until April 15 though students are encouraged to post responses to group presentations before that so that groups receive some feedback from peers in a timely fashion.</p>	Ongoing (see schedule below for more information)
10%	<p>Group presentation: 10 minutes each- all group members must present. In groups of four, students will plan and deliver a remote presentation that consists in the description and critical analysis of an online participation and/or civic engagement phenomenon. The presentation should address the topic of the week and establish three connections between the case study presented and the mandatory reading assigned for that week. In addition, groups are responsible for introducing two questions for audience discussion. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor to discuss appropriate formats for remote presentation (i.e. narrated ppt, video recording). The deadline will remain the same day and time of the</p>	TBD by groups during the first week of class. Dates available: Thursdays from January 23 to April 9.

	<p>previously scheduled oral presentation. A D2L dropbox has been created for digital submission.</p> <p>The presentations will receive a group mark. Further instructions will be posted on D2L.</p>	
20%	<p>Take-home midterm exam: individual assignment- open book, take-home. The midterm will consist in the analysis of a case study in light of the theories studied in class from Week 1 to Week 5 (included). Further instructions will be posted on D2L on February 11.</p>	Feb. 25 by 11:59 PM (D2L dropbox)
25%	<p>Take-home final exam: individual assignment- open book, take-home. The final exam will consist of two sections. The first part will require students to research and write a critical analysis of a phenomenon or discursive instance of online civic participation (1000-1200 words- worth 10%). A second part will consist in 4-6 short answer questions about the mandatory readings discussed in class. Further instructions will be posted on D2L on March 26.</p>	April 16 by 9:30AM (D2L dropbox)

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You do not need to complete all assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Submission of Assignments

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments and upload them to the D2L dropbox assigned.

Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

Note: It is the student’s responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline will receive a 0.

***The Day of Grace:** One day of grace is available to all students to cover unforeseen problems that prevent them from meeting a deadline such as computer crashes, vehicle breakdowns, lack of printer ink or money, unexpected family obligations, etc. Students may use this day ONLY ONCE during the semester. Students using this day of grace must upload the assignment by 4:30 pm the next calendar day to avoid a late penalty, and write “grace” on their subject line. It should be noted that assignments handed in this manner may be returned 1-2 classes later than those submitted on the due date.

Note that given the difficult circumstances we are living in, students are encouraged to discuss with the instructor **before the original deadline of the assignment** a potential extension of the day of grace.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

In this course, final grades are reported as letter grades. All other assignments (group activities, discussion group work, group presentations, midterm and final exams) will receive a percentage grade.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations* *
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%

2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. **In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin.** Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be

allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the *University of Calgary Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants, including surveys, interviews, or observations, as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

	Tuesdays 9:30 – 10:45 EDC284	Thursdays 9:30 – 10:45 EDC284
Week 1 Jan. 14 & 16	Introduction to the class and assignments. Topic: Participation and new media (class discussion)	Topic: The discourse of participation Reading: Schäfer (2011). Promoting Utopia/Selling Technology. ¹ Assignment: discussion groups
Week 2 Jan. 21 & 23	Topic: A foundational ideology Reading: Barbrook & Cameron (2015). The Californian ideology. Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: A foundational ideology (cont'd) Assignment: group presentations Group activity 1 due

¹ All texts' links will be available on D2L.

Week 3 Jan. 28 & 30	Topic: Surveillance Reading: Andrejevic (2019). Automating surveillance (2018). Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Surveillance Assignment: group presentations Group activity 2
Week 4 Feb. 4 & 6	Topic: Algorithmic power Reading: Bucher (2012). Want to be on top? Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Algorithmic power Assignment: group presentations Group activity 2 due
Week 5 Feb. 11 & 13	Topic: Public Sphere 2.0 Reading: Shirky (2011). The political power of social media. Assignment: discussion groups. Midterm instructions posted on D2L.	Topic: Public Sphere 2.0 Reading: Gladwell (2010). Small Change Assignment: discussion groups
Week 6 Feb. 18 & 20	NO CLASSES- READING WEEK	
Week 7 Feb. 25 & 27	Topic: Echo chambers Reading: Sunstein (2017). The “Daily Me”. Assignment: discussion groups Midterm take-home due (11:59PM dropbox)	Topic: Echo chambers Assignment: group presentations Group activity 3
Week 8 Mar. 3 & 5	Topic: Subactivism Reading: Bakardjeva (2012). Subactivism. Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Subactivism Assignment: group presentations Group activity 3 due
Week 9 Mar. 10 & 12	Topic: Self-mediation Reading: Chouliaraki (2010). Self-mediation: new media and citizenship Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Self-mediation Assignment: group presentations Group activity 4
Week 10 Mar. 17 & 19	Topic: Digital aggregations Reading: Sharma (2012). Black Twitter? Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Digital aggregations Assignment: group presentations Group activity 4 due
Week 11 Mar. 24 & 26	Topic: Hackerism Reading: Coleman (2017). From Internet farming to Weapons of the Geek. Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Hackerism Assignment: group presentations Final take-home exam instructions posted on D2L.
Week 12 Mar. 31 & Apr. 2	Topic: Tactical inefficiency Reading: Gordon & Walter (2016). Meaningful Inefficiencies. Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Tactical Inefficiency Assignment: group presentations Group activity 5
Week 13 Apr. 7 & 9	Topic: Incorporation Reading: Dean (2005). Communicative capitalism. Assignment: discussion groups	Topic: Incorporation Assignment: group presentations Group activity 5 due
Week 14 Apr. 14	NO CLASS CLASS DEDICATED TO FINAL PREPARATION/ End of term	Final take-home exam due: April 16 at 9:30 AM (dropbox)