

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
COMS 481 (S01): Advanced Studies in New Media and Society
FALL 2022: September 6 to December 6 (excluding Nov. 8 & 10)
Lecture: TuTh 11:00 to 12:15

This course is in-person.

Instructor:	Maria Victoria Guglietti
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Office Hours:	Friday 9:30-11:30 (Zoom or in person) or by appointment

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 platforms and the darknet, the personalization of civic engagement online, hacking, tactical inefficiency and the politics of repair.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L.

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

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,
- evaluate and reflect on civic engagement online from a critical perspective,
- 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*.
<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/reader.action?docID=3034695&ppg=95>
- Barbrook, R. & Cameron, A. (2015). The Californian ideology. In R. Barbrook & A. Cameron, *The Internet revolution: From dot-com capitalism to cybernetic communism*.
https://ucalgary.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UCALG_INST/15o3ob6/cdi_narcis_primary_hbo_oai_hbokennisbank_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://ucalgary-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1p0s7n7/TN_sage_s10_1177_14614448_12440159
- Cammaerts, B. (2015). Technologies of self-mediation: affordances and constraints of social media for protest movements. In J. Uldam, J. & A. Vestergaard (Eds.). *Civic engagement and social media: political participation beyond protest*, (pp. 97-110). Palgrave Macmillan. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/62089/>
- Coleman, G. (2017). From Internet farming to weapons of the geek. *Current Anthropology*, 58(15), 91-102. https://ucalgary-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1p0s7n7/TN_ucpj10.1086/688697
- Couldry, N. & Mejias, U. A. (2019). Data colonialism: rethinking big data's relation to the contemporary subject. *Television & New Media*, 20(4), 336-349.
https://ucalgary.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UCALG_INST/15o3ob6/cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_1527476418796632
- Gehl, R. & McKelvey, F. (2019). Bugging out: darknets as parasites of large-scale media objects. *Media, Culture & Society*, 41(2), 219-235.
https://ucalgary.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UCALG_INST/15o3ob6/cdi_proquest_journals_2170232287
- 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=240>
- 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>

van Dijck, J. & Poell, T. (2018). The platform society as a contested concept. In *The platform society: Public values in a connective world*. Oxford University Press.
https://ucalgary.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UCALG_INST/18okcos/cdi_oup_oso_oso_9780190889760_chapter_2

Velkova, J. & Kaun, A. (2021). Algorithmic resistance: media practices and the politics of repair. *Information, Communication & Society*, 24(4), 523–540.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1657162>

Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection, and a current and updated web browser;
- A webcam (built-in or external), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone (for online synchronous courses only).

If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

If you have technical difficulties, contact IT support services. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

The use of smartphones or other electronic devices is strictly limited to activities connected with the class.

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
36%	<p>Group activities: in groups of max. 5 members, students will complete four problem solving activities that require the analysis of different aspects of online participation phenomena considering the critical studies discussed in class. The activities will be completed in class and handed in via dropbox submission. Students will typically have a week time to complete the activity. Each group activity is assigned a grade per group worth up to 9% of the final grade.</p> <p>Group members will receive the same grade on assignments; however, the instructor reserves the right to award differential grades based on group peer</p>	Sep. 22, Oct. 6 & 27 AND Nov. 24 th by 11:59PM (D2L)

	<p>reviews or information indicating significantly uneven contributions by group members.</p> <p>Group activities are open book. The instructions will become available the day the assignment is introduced in class.</p>	
29%	<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 6 (included). Further instructions will be posted on D2L on October 4th.</p>	Oct. 19th by 11:59PM (D2L)
35%	<p>Final project: auto-ethnography- design of a critical digital media experience (individual- tripartite multimedia project)</p> <p>Students will plan and take part in a digital media experience (i.e. producing and disseminating online content, withdrawing from digital media venues and/or content, participating in online venues and/or events, etc.) and analyze, evaluate and reflect on this experience in the following way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Documentation of the experience</i> (15%): Students will produce a photo or video essay (approx. 10 images and 1000 words or 7' audiovisual narrative) documenting the critical media experience that they planned and took part on. The goal of this report is to identify and describe how the theory discussed in class informed the experience. b. <i>Analysis</i> (15%): Students will produce a written theoretical analysis (approx. 2300 words) that will examine the experience from three distinct theoretical approaches studied in class. For instance, students will ask: how does the notion of platform help explain the experience I took part in? Was I affected by surveillance? Could my experience be understood as a mediation? (Note that these questions are just examples!!!). The analysis will conclude by discussing the limitations and contributions of the theories to the student's understanding of the experience. c. <i>Critical reflection</i>: Students will discuss the main learnings associated with the experience, from its conceptualization to its analysis. The critical reflection is an individual written assignment of approx. 500 words worth 5% of the final grade. <p>Further instructions will be posted on D2L</p>	Dec. 6 th by 11:59PM (D2L)

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 submit all assignments by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recording for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. An assignment received two days after the deadline will receive an automatic 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.

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. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

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 a medical note. For information on the use of a statutory declaration, see the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

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

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, final grades are reported as letter grades. All assignments will receive a percentage grade.

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%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: 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, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, 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.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>). 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 obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferral of term work, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please see <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, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/resources-for-students/>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

	Tuesdays 11:00 – 12.15 SS541	Thursdays 11:00-12:15 SS541
Week 1 Sep. 6 & 8	Introduction to the class and assignments.	Topic: The discourse of participation Reading: Schäfer (2011). Promoting Utopia/Selling Technology.
Week 2 Sep. 13 & 15	Topic: A foundational ideology Reading: Barbrook & Cameron (2015). The Californian ideology.	Assignment: time dedicated to group activity 1
Week 3 Sep. 20 & 22	Topic: Surveillance Reading: Andrejevic (2019). Automating surveillance. Assignment: discussion groups	Assignment: time dedicated to group activity 1 Group activity 1 due by 11:59PM
Week 4 Sep. 27 & 29	Topic: Algorithmic power Reading: Bucher (2012). Want to be on top?	Assignment: time dedicated to group activity 2
Week 5 Oct. 4 & 6	Topic: Platform society Reading: van Dijck & Poell (2018). The platform society as a contested concept. Midterm instructions posted on D2L.	Assignment: time dedicated to group activity 2 Group activity 2 due by 11:59PM
Week 6 Oct. 11 & 13	Topic: Data colonialism Reading: Couldry, N. & Mejias, U. A. (2019). Data colonialism.	Topic: Darknets Reading: Gehl, R. & McKelvey, F. (2019). Bugging out: darknets as parasites of large-scale media objects.
Week 7 Oct. 18 & 20	Q&A with instructor via Zoom or in-person NO CLASS- Time dedicated to midterm completion Assignment: Midterm due Oct. 19th by 11:59PM	Assignment: Introduction of group activity 3/ time dedicated to group activity 3
Week 8 Oct. 25 & 27	Topic: Subactivism Reading: Bakardjieva (2012). Subactivism.	Assignment: time dedicated to group activity 3 Group activity 3 due by 11:59PM
Week 9 Nov. 1 & 3	Topic: Self-mediation Reading: Cammaerts, B. (2015). Technologies of Self-Mediation: Affordances and Constraints of Social Media for Protest Movements	Assignment: introduction final project: auto-ethnography of a critical digital media experience. Discussion of format and method. Time for brainstorming and Q&A with instructor in class.
Week 10 Nov. 8 & 10	READING WEEK	
Week 11 Nov. 15 & 17	Topic: Hackerism Reading: Coleman (2017). From Internet farming to Weapons of the Geek. Assignment: discussion groups	Assignment: Time dedicated to group activity 4.
Week 12 Nov. 22 & 24	Topic: The politics of repair Reading: Velkova, & Kaun, A. (2021). Algorithmic resistance: media practices and the politics of repair.	Assignment: time dedicated to group activity 4 Group activity 4 due by 11:59PM
Week 13 Nov. 29 & Dec. 1	Topic: Meaningful inefficiency Reading: Gordon & Walter (2016). Meaningful Inefficiencies.	Assignment: time dedicated to final project, Q&A with instructor in-class
Week 14	NO CLASS	

Dec. 6	Assignment: Final project due by 11:59PM	
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