University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 481 L01
Advanced Topics in New Media & Society

Winter 2018

Mon., January 8 – Mon., April 9 (excluding Mon., February 19)

Mondays 12:00-2:45pm

Instructor:	Tamara Shepherd
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Web Page:	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours:	Mondays 2:45-3:45pm, or by appointment

Course Description

This course examines the nature, origins and social implications of new media with a focus on the internet. The theme of this course is "societies of control" – the way internet technologies promise new freedoms in exchange for new modes of control. Topics covered include internet infrastructure, the technology industry, surveillance capitalism, algorithms, encryption, and cyberviolence.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should be able to
- demonstrate familiarity with critical approaches to the internet.
- explain how key internet-enabled technologies work
- apply critical theories to new media examples
- work effectively and cooperatively in groups, and hand work in on time
- develop presentation style and other research and writing skills

Textbooks and Readings

All readings will be posted to D2L; see reading list below. Students are expected to have all readings completed **prior** to scheduled class times in order to contribute effectively during class discussions and activities.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops are permitted for note taking only. **iPods, cellphones and gaming devices may not be used at all during class.** Please respect the instructor and your fellow students.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
20%	**Writing prompts** These are in-class writing assignments that take place five times throughout the term. They will last from 15 to 30 minutes. Students will be given a notebook to write in, which will be collected at the end of each class. Students can choose their best four out of five entries to count for the 20% (each entry = 5%).	Throughout the term
20%	**Internet news presentations** In groups of 4, students will present for 20 minutes on an internet-related topic in the news, which will be determined by the group in consultation with the instructor. This presentation should be well rehearsed, organized, give a coherent overview of the news story and provide an analysis: critique the story by finding an academic article on the topic and applying it to the news story. At the end of the presentations, groups will run a discussion activity that is creative and involves the whole class.	Throughout the term
15%	**Data detox** For the week of January 22-29, students will engage in a set of "data detox" activities to be explained in class. On February 5, students will submit a 2-3 page report reflecting on the data detox week, describing what they learned from it, why it was important, and how it will or won't change the way they approach the internet in the future.	February 5
15%	**Social media profiles** In groups of 4, students will set up two new, unique profiles on the same social media site (such as Twitter or Reddit). For one profile, they will create an identity that is clearly female, of a non-white ethnicity, a non-Christian religion and/or non-heteronormative. For the other profile, they will present as a young, heterosexual, white Christian male. Students will spend at least half an hour using each profile to publicly express political opinions, using common hashtags if appropriate: use identical language to express identical opinions for both profiles. These opinions may be at any point on the political spectrum from left to right, but not explicitly abusive or offensive. Students will submit a written report of 3-4 pages (800-1200 words) after this activity that: collects the responses each of the two profiles receives; analyzes their similarities and differences; and discusses how they relate to cyberviolence.	March 26
30%	**Take-home exam** By 4pm on April 9, students will submit an 8-10 page set of responses to a series of exam questions based on course readings that will be given out on April 1. More details and a review for the exam will be provided in class.	April 9

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments: Please hand in your essays directly to your instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.   Please include your name and ID number and your instructor's name on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. 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 may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations: Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.
Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework 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) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.

- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.

- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calenda*r at http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html and http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Course components will also be graded as letter grades. The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

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.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will 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. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library). Visit the website for more details: http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support

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. 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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436. Research and citation resources are also available on the website of the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/ If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library, at http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support).

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 (e.g., 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

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY • **Calgary Police Service** • **Emergency Text Messaging** • **Emergency Evacuation & Assembly** • **Safewalk Program**	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ **403-220-5333** **403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911** http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (**220-5333).** For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support • **IT help line**	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE • **Writing Support Services** • **Student Services Mobile App**	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS • **Faculty of Arts Reps** • **Student Ombudsman**	 https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE • **Counselling Services** • **Health Services** • **Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE** • **Online resources and tips**	**403-210-9355** (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health **403-266-HELP (4357)** http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings   (all readings are on D2L)

1	Jan 8	**Societies of Control**	
	Reading:	Deleuze (1992), "Postscript on the Societies of Control"	
2	Jan 15	**Californian Ideology**	**Prompt 1**
	Reading:	Barbrook & Cameron (1996), "The Californian Ideology"	
3	Jan 22	**Internet Infrastructure**	**Presentation 1; Prompt 2**
	Reading:	Starosielski (2016), "Introduction" in *The Undersea Network*	
4	Jan 29	**Tech Labour**	**Presentations 2, 3**
	Reading:	Van Doorn (2017), "Platform Labour"	
5	Feb 5	**Tech Consolidation**	**Data Detox due; Prompt 3**
	Reading:	Taplin (2017), "Digital Destruction" & "Monopoly in the Digital Age"	
6	Feb 12	**Surveillance Capitalism**	**Presentations 4, 5**
	Reading:	Zuboff (2015), "Big Other"	
-	Feb 19	**NO CLASS: Reading Week**	
7	Feb 26	**Algorithms**	**Presentations 6, 7**
	Reading:	Bucher (2012), "Want to Be on the Top?"	
8	Mar 5	**Hacking**	**Presentations 8, 9**
	Reading:	Coleman (2014), "Introduction" & "LulzSec"	
9	Mar 12	**Encryption**	**Presentations 10, 11; Prompt 4**
	Reading:	Gehl (2016), "Power/Freedom on the Dark Web"	
10	Mar 19	**NO CLASS: Independent work period**	
11	Mar 26	**Cyberviolence**	**Social Media Profiles due**
	Reading:	Massanari (2017), "#Gamergate and The Fappening"	
12	Apr 2	**The Future**	**Prompt 5**
	Reading:	Manjoo & Roose (2017), "How to Fix Facebook?"	
13	Apr 9	**NO CLASS: Take-home exam due by 4pm on D2L**	