Course Information

This course asks students to consider how race and gender shape and are shaped by the uses and design of new Internet and social media technologies such as blogs, Twitter, and Facebook. As social media are becoming an ever more significant part of our social infrastructure and our everyday lives, it is crucial that we understand what norms and values are embedded within the technologies we use every day. How does the Internet and social media impact dominant and minoritized groups differently? How do they reproduce and/or challenge institutional systems of power and knowledge? In short, this course asks students to interrogate the assumptions behind technology’s utopian promises of democracy, efficiency, and progress. Examining the Internet as a complex assemblage of technology, technical practices, and people, we will consider the broader social, cultural, and political economic implications of their design, deployment, and use.

Course Requirements

I. Attendance/Class Participation (20%)

I expect your full and consistent attendance and participation all semester. You should come to every class prepared to discuss the readings. That means that all assignments are to be completed BEFORE, not during class meetings. I notice (and appreciate) when students make good contributions to the course. I also notice when students are routinely late and/or absent. More than 2 absences may result in a grade deduction.

II. Paper 1 (20%)

III. Paper 2 (20%)

IV. Online, Interactive Final Project (40%)

Required Materials

Reading assignments will be available online, accessible via URL, Cornell’s electronic database, or Blackboard

A computer with an Internet connection
COURSE SCHEDULE

Social Media Biographies

Thurs, 8/25
Introductions
Class Business – Discuss Web Project
- Applying the class assignments and discussions, students will choose one of three projects to complete:
  1. An online ethnography (study one online community)
  2. Your own technology community map (consider which community you belong to and what the conditions of access are);
  3. Or a community project (e.g., create a website for a nonprofit organization)
- Creating an online presence
- Posting
- Building your web project – (must launch before our next class meeting)

Class Blog

Tues, 8/30

Directed Blog Post (Post no later than Sunday, 3p EDT.)
Social Media Biography, part 1: Introduce yourself and your experiences with regard to the Internet and social media
Questions you might consider: What do you mostly use the Internet for? Do you access it from a computer or mobile device? How many hours do you spend on the Internet per day? How important is the Internet to you as a student?

Thurs, 9/1
http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/technocapitalism/fandomized

Directed Blog Post (Post no later than Wednesday, 8a EDT.)
Social Media Biography, part 2: Reflect on how your social history and identity (gender, race, class, sexuality, nationality, religion, etc.) affect your use and beliefs in technology. (Saying there’s no effect will indicate a lack of critical thinking and therefore constitute a failure of this assignment.)

What/Where is Internet Studies?

Tues, 9/6
Directed Blog Post (Post no later than Wednesday, 8a EDT.)


Thurs, 9/8

Technology and Racialization

Tues, 9/13

Thurs, 9/15


Tues, 9/20
Also published online: http://www.pochanostra.com/antes/jazz_pocha2/mainpages/virtual.htm


Thurs, 9/22
In-class screening: Copyright Criminals (2009)

Tues, 9/27

Thurs, 9/29


Gaming Difference

Tues, 10/4


Paper 1 due

Thurs, 10/6

(NB: Read the comments on the Kotaku article)
Techno-Social Constructions of Identity

Tues, 10/11
Fall Break – no class.

Thurs, 10/13


Tues, 10/18
http://stuffwhitepeoplelike.com/


Thurs, 10/20


Tues, 10/25


Belonging in Digital Space, Belonging in the Digital Age

Thurs, 10/27
No class meeting.

Tues, 11/1


America/ns Online

Thurs, 11/3
Direct ed Blog Post: How does American identity configure the Internet? What are the default values for American identity? (Post no later than Sunday, 3p EST.)

Tuesday, 11/8

Cybertypes

Thursday, 11/10

Tuesday, 11/15

The Digital Future of Difference

Thursday, 11/17

Tuesday, 11/22

Thursday, 11/24
Thanksgiving Break – no class meeting

WEEK FIFTEEN: Wrap-Up

Tuesday/Thursday, 11/29 and 12/1
Paper 2 due