Introduction to Digital Cultures

Summer 2017
Tuesdays, 6:00p, PAVL 050
Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:45-5:45p, LSAX 240

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Catalog Description

This course is required during the first quarter of your course of study. It serves as your introduction to the interdisciplinary field of Digital Cultures. You can think of this course as setting a foundation for the rest of the courses in the major. This course will familiarize you with the basic critical vocabulary and interdisciplinary methods used to analyze how digital technologies intersect with and transform the human experience. We will discuss current topics in the field (topics such as technological determinism, the digital divide, and participatory culture) and gain a foundational understanding of what we mean when we talk about digital rhetoric, literary analysis, and cultural studies. You will also study key concepts related to digital spaces, technologies, and artifacts and construct your Digital Cultures e-portfolios, which you will use in every class throughout your course of study.

Course Outcomes

This course has been designed with the intent of building skill sets and knowledge within the arena of ethical reasoning and analysis. When you are done with this course you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate awareness of key disciplinary conversations and debates about digital technologies and their impact on society and culture,
2. Become familiar with primary technological modes of production and practice using digital tools and languages,
3. Describe (both verbally and in clear, articulate writing) contemporary forms of social and cultural engagement that use digital technologies,
4. Evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of research sources, digital tools, technologies, interfaces, and artifacts,
5. Examine how technologically mediated identities reflect and transform cultural ideologies of gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, and social class,
6. Engage in collaborative critical thinking and reflect on your contribution, role, values, and identity as you engage in activities and debates about digital culture.
Program Level Outcomes this Course Supports

I  EXPLAIN KEY CONCEPTS IN COMPUTING: This outcome focuses your ability to explain key concepts in computing, technological modes of production, and information/data flow.

II  EVALUATE RESEARCH SOURCES & DIGITAL TOOLS: This outcome focuses on your ability to evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of research sources, digital tools, technologies, interfaces, and artifacts.

III  ANALYZE TECHNOLOGY USING INTERDISCIPLINARY THEORIES & METHODS: This outcome focuses on your ability to analyze media, technology, and digital artifacts using interdisciplinary theories and methods.

IV  EXAMINE TECHNOLOGICALLY MEDIATED IDENTITIES: This outcome focuses on your ability to examine how technologically mediated identities reflect and transform cultural ideologies of gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, and social class.

V  DESIGN MULTIMODAL PROJECTS: This outcome focuses on your ability to design multimodal projects that demonstrate an engagement with and advocacy for social justice issues and are informed by digital rhetoric and an understanding of audience.

VI  REFLECTION: This outcome focuses on your ability to reflect upon your own work, roles, values, and identities related to digital culture.

Assignments

Weekly

- Class Participation
  - Weekly peer reviews, discussions, questions, and idea sharing count for 60% of this grade. The other 40% are based on quality and consistency in your class contributions both online and face-to-face.

- Reading Quizzes
  - These track your progress with the readings and encourage deep engagement with the class content.

Weekly

- Topic Proposal
  - Week 5
  - To help you decide on a topic for your class project, as well as to build skills in writing a rationale, you’ll write a short paper describing a particular digital phenomenon/artifact and make a case for why that phenomenon/artifact should be studied.
Week 6: **Image Analysis**
This project is for gaining basic skills in digital image analysis, manipulation, and web-tracking.

Week 7: **Textual Analysis**
To gain skills and ideas for your final project, you’ll write a short analysis that employs close description and research (with appropriate citation-use) to deeply examine the “stories” of your particular digital artifact/phenomenon, its cultural situation, and its audience(s).

Week 8: **Annotated Bibliography and Outline**
These will help you finalize research and organize your ideas.

Weeks 9-10: **Final Project Draft**
Building on each earlier assignment, you’ll identify, situate, and analyze a digital technology or phenomenon in relation to culture. Your project will include a 4-5 page (double-spaced) research analysis and relevant media such as images, video, data visualization, and/or audio that contribute significant meaning to your analysis as well as illustrate key points in your written work. This should demonstrate your mastery of course content in relation to your personal interests/goals and be a piece of scholarship you’re proud of. Finally, you’ll write a reflection essay on your experience and learning throughout the quarter. Your final project will be built in your ePortfolio and, should you make it public, become a resource for future students studying digital cultures.

**Participation**
- 8 Quizzes: 55 pts

**Final Project & Reflection Essay**
- Topic Proposal: 40 pts
- Annotated Bibliography: 60 pts
- Final Project Draft: 20 pts
- Final Project & Reflection: 250 pts

**Total Possible**
- 695 pts

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**Policies and Resources**

**University Resources**

**CANVAS HELP:**
The following policies govern this course and comply with Seattle University policies.

**Support for Students with Disabilities**

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an “invisible disability” such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff located in Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.

**DISABILITY SERVICES:**
https://www.seattleu.edu/disabilities-services/

**Academic Policies from the SU Registrar**

Be sure that you understand the following university academic policies, posted on the Registrar’s website:

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:**
https://www.seattleu.edu/media/redhawk-axis/registrar/registrar-policies/Academic-Integrity-2011-3.pdf

**ACADEMIC GRADING GRIEVANCE POLICY:**

**Incomplete Grades**

If you are unable to complete course requirements because of extenuating circumstances, please notify the instructor on or before the date the assignment is due and provide relevant supporting documentation (e.g. doctor’s note, note from
An agreement to receive an Incomplete (I) grade may be negotiated if your circumstances do not allow you to finish the course on time. The Incomplete Removal Policy of the university is available on the Office of the Registrar website: https://www.seattleu.edu/registrar/Policies.aspx (Links to an external site.)

Assignment Deadlines and Extensions

Assignment deadlines are visible on both the Course Syllabus and the Assignment List (as well as the individual Assignment pages themselves). You can always find links to those two pages in the left sidebar of the course.

Due to the nature of the work, and the online structure of the course materials, assignment deadlines will be automatically enforced. Generally, there will be no extensions to the assignment deadlines, primarily because falling behind on work in this course makes it exponentially more difficult to complete the course successfully.

Because our face to face sessions are limited, missing class sessions can have a negative impact on your learning experience, and that of your colleagues. If you feel you must miss a session, and you know beforehand, you will need to consult with me, schedule a 30 minute 1 on 1, and demonstrate prior completion of coursework.

If an emergency arises, please alert me as soon as you can to schedule a meeting to explore next steps. My goal is for you to succeed, so please communicate with me.

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Student Responsibilities for Learning

You are expected to budget 10 hours per week for this course. Most of the time, this will be adequate time to complete all of the requirements for each week. However, given the nature of the material in these courses, it is likely that some weeks will be more time-consuming than others due to complexity of concepts. Please communicate openly with your instructor about how the course is going and let your instructor know if you are regularly spending a lot more time to complete work. Additional tutoring or other assistance may be available depending on the nature of the issue. You are also encouraged to review the calendar at the beginning of the quarter to flag any weeks that seem to you to be especially full or challenging.

Schedule

Week 1: Does technology determine culture, or vice-versa?
Readings


Due

- Fill out the student survey
- Post self-introduction to discussion board
- Take the quiz

Week 2: History: what has shaped digital cultures?

Readings


Due

- Complete the digital research assignment
- Complete the quiz

Week 3: Computing: what is it and what for?

Readings


Due

- Complete your project ideas post
- Complete the quiz

Week 4: Digital rhetoric: What is “(e)-quipment for living”?

Readings


Due

- Post meme assignment
- Post topic proposal rough draft
- Take the quiz

Week 5: Multimodal communication: what's new about it?
Readings


Due

- Turn in the topic proposal
- Complete the image analysis rough draft
- Take the quiz

Week 6: Digital identities: who are we digitally?

Readings


Due

- Post your textual analysis rough draft
- Turn in the image analysis
- Take the quiz

Week 7: Global digital cultures: is everyone really connected?

Due

- Post your annotated bibliography rough draft
- Turn in textual analysis
- Take the quiz

Week 8: Social justice and digital media: are we "phoning it in"?

Readings


Due

- Turn in your annotated bibliography
- Take the quiz
Week 9: Coding and algorithms: what's "behind the scenes"?

Readings

2. Complete two block-coding "puzzles" in the org code studio: "Minecraft" and "Flappy Code." The main page is here, puzzles are in the Hour of Code section: https://studio.code.org/

Due

• Post a penultimate draft of your final project
• Complete the quiz

Week 10: Reflections on topics, teamwork and projects: what did we not cover?

Readings

1. N/A

Due

• Turn in your final project, and post for class