

**Communication 120/220**  
**Digital Media in Society**  
**Spring Quarter, 2006**  
**Lectures: T/Th 11-12:15, Cubberly 128**  
**Sections TBA**

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**Course Goals:**

The last twenty years have brought us an astonishing array of digital technologies and with them, a bewildering variety of new media forms. Web pages, multi-player online games, CD-ROMs, PDA's, cell phones – together, many argue, these and other forms of new media technologies are reshaping our understandings of how we live and work and of what it means to be human.

In this class we will explore these claims as we survey contemporary theories of the impact of digital media on the individual, the community and the state. Do digital media fundamentally alter the nature of the human self, as many claim? How do they alter the landscape? Our notions of what it means to be “at home”? The ways we do business? The ways we govern ourselves?

To answer these questions, we'll explore the dynamics of digital media and at the same time, the ways in which those dynamics shape – and have been shaped by – ongoing processes of social change. By the end of the course, you should have a sense of just what is and isn't “new” about new media. You should be able to critique and synthesize the ways others have characterized the social impact of digital media. And most important of all, you should have begun to build your own theories of how digital media and social life interact.

**Readings:**

*Required readings* are available at the bookstore and on line.

*At the Bookstore, you should buy:*

Edward Castronova, *Synthetic Worlds: The Business and Culture of Online Games*.  
University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Lisa Nakamura, *Cybertypes*, Routledge, 2002.

William Gibson, Neuromancer. New York: Ace Books, 1984.

Lawrence Lessig, Code: and Other Laws of Cyberspace. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1999.

Howard Rheingold, Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2002.

Ellen Ullman, Close to the Machine: Technophilia and Its Discontents. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1997.

### Course Reader

*Recommended readings* are just that: recommended. I've listed them here as a way for you to dig deeper into topics that interest you.

### **Assignments:**

Please note that the assignments for Communication 120 (Undergraduate students) and Communication 220 (Graduate students) are somewhat different.

### ***Communication 120 (Undergraduates):***

#### *Response Papers:*

You will be asked to write two “response” papers of 2-2 ½ double-spaced pages (700-750 words). In these papers, you will draw on the course readings and discussions to craft a brief, focused argument in response to an assigned statement. For instance, you might be asked to respond to the statement: “Cyberspace is an open stage for identity play.” You could then agree with the statement, disagree with it, or take a position in the middle. Your position would need to be well-supported and would need to take account of opposing points of view. What will determine your grade will not be the position you take so much as the sophistication and rigor with which you support it.

First Response Paper First Draft Due: At the start of class, **April 27**.

First Response Paper Final Draft Due: **May 11**.

Second Response Paper First Draft (optional) Due: to your TA by **May 18**.

Second Response Paper Final Draft Due: At the start of class, **May 25**.

### *Presentations:*

As a way to focus discussion and give you practice applying some of the theories we explore in class to various media, section meetings will feature a 15-minute presentation by a student team. The teams will choose a digital media artifact, introduce it, and use it to support and/or challenge theories from that week's readings. Teams will also produce a 2-3 page written summary of their presentation.

You will sign up for teams and dates in the second week of class. Presentations will begin in week three. Every member of the team will receive the same grade.

### *Final Paper:*

You will be asked to choose among several possible topics and write an essay of approximately 8-10 double-spaced pages (2400-3000 words). The questions will ask you to synthesize course readings and link them to issues and/or artifacts we have discussed in class.

Due Date: TBA (exam week)

### **Expectations:**

#### *Participation:*

While formally a lecture course, our class meetings will in fact be quite interactive. You'll need to come to both lecture and section with the reading done and with the ability to participate in a class discussion.

To participate effectively, you should aim to speak in a way that moves a discussion forward and increases the learning for the whole group. Contributions can include questions, insights, and responses to other comments. They can also include provocative mistakes. Being "wrong" but intellectually adventurous can often help jump-start everyone's thinking. One powerful comment or question is worth more than many less powerful remarks.

#### *Writing:*

Your writing needs to come in on time and should represent your best work at every level. Papers that come in late or with errors of fact, grammar or spelling will be penalized. As ever, the Honor Code applies to all your work.

### **Grades:**

Presentation = 10%

Participation = 10%

First Draft of First Response Paper = 10%

Final Draft of First Response Paper = 15%

Second Response Paper (only final draft graded) = 20%

Final Paper = 35%

***Communication 220 (Graduate Students):***

**Assignments:**

*Response Papers:*

You will be asked to write two “response” papers of 5-8 double-spaced pages (1500-2400 words). In these papers, you will draw on the course readings (including the recommended readings), class discussions, and where appropriate, your knowledge of digital media, to craft a focused argument in response to an assigned statement. For instance, you might be asked to respond to the statement: “Cyberspace is an open stage for identity play.” You could then agree with the statement, disagree with it, or take a position in the middle. Your position would need to be well-supported and would need to take account of opposing points of view. What will determine your grade will not be the position you take so much as the sophistication and rigor with which you support it.

First Response Paper due: At the start of class, **May 11.**

Second Response Paper due: At the start of class, **May 25.**

*Final Paper:*

You will be asked to choose among several possible topics and write an essay of approximately 8-10 double-spaced pages (2400-3000 words). The questions will ask you to synthesize course readings and link them to issues and/or artifacts we have discussed in class.

Due Date: TBA

*Discussion Sections:*

Optional. You will not be required to give a presentation, even if you decide to attend section.

**Grades:**

Participation = 10%

Response Paper 1 = 25%

Response Paper 2 = 25%

Final Paper = 40%

**Course Schedule:**

Note: This schedule is subject to change.

**Part 1: What Are Digital Media and How Do They Matter?**

**Tuesday, April 4:** Introductions

No Readings

**Thursday, April 6:** What *ARE* digital media?

*Required readings:*

- Lev Manovich, The Language of New Media: “What is New Media?” pp.19-61 (reader).
- Vannevar Bush, “As We May Think,” on line:  
<http://www.ps.uni-sb.de/~duchier/pub/vbush/vbush.shtml>.
- Kevin Kelly, “The Computational Metaphor,” on line:  
[http://www.kk.org/thetechnium/archives/2006/02/the\\_computation.php](http://www.kk.org/thetechnium/archives/2006/02/the_computation.php)

*Recommended Readings:*

- J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin. Remediation: understanding new media. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999: Ch. 3 “Networks of Remediation.”
- George Landow, Hypertext and Critical Theory, 98-108 in Trend, David. Reading digital culture. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

*Key Questions:* How are digital media different from other media? How are different digital media artifacts similar to one another?

**Tuesday, April 11:** Connecting Cyberspace and Social Space: Industrialism and Cold War Computing

*Required Readings:*

- Paul Edwards, “The closed world: systems discourse, military policy and post-World War II US historical consciousness.” Cyborg Worlds: The Military Information Society. Eds. Les Levidow and Kevin Robins. London: Free Association Books, 1989. 135-158. (reader)

- Norbert Wiener, “Cybernetics in history,” The Human Use of Human Beings, Ch.1 (reader)

*Recommended Readings:*

- William Hollingsworth Whyte, The Organization Man. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956.
- Norbert Wiener, The Human Use of Human Beings; Cybernetics and Society. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1954.
- David Harvey. The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry Into The Origins of Cultural Change. Oxford England ; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1989: Ch. 2 “Modernity and Modernism,” Ch. 7 “Introduction,” Ch. 8 “Fordism”

*Key Question:* How were conceptions of computing related to conceptions of social and psychological order during the Cold War?

**Thursday, April 13:** Connecting Cyberspace and Social Space: Postindustrialism and Networked Computing

*Required Readings:*

- William Gibson, Neuromancer

*Recommended Readings:*

- David Harvey. The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry Into The Origins of Cultural Change. Oxford England ; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1989: Ch. 3, “Postmodernism,” Ch. 9 “From Fordism to Flexible Accumulation,” Ch. 10 “Theorizing the Transition”

*Key Question:* How have visions of computing and social order changed since the Cold War? And why?

**Part 2 Digital Media and the Self: New Bodies, New Minds?**

**Tuesday, April 18:** Digital Bodies

*Note: Team Presentations Begin*

*Required Readings:*

- Kevin Robins, “Cyberspace and the World We Live In”, in Bell, David, and Barbara M. Kennedy. The cybercultures reader. London New York: Routledge, 2000. pp. 77-95 (reader)

- John Perry Barlow, “Being in Nothingness”  
[http://www.eff.org/Publications/John\\_Perry\\_Barlow/HTML/being\\_in\\_nothingness.html](http://www.eff.org/Publications/John_Perry_Barlow/HTML/being_in_nothingness.html)
- Sherry Turkle, “Who Am We?” Online at:  
<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/4.01/turkle.html>

*Recommended Readings:*

- N. Katherine Hayles, How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- J. David Bolter, “Identity” in Swiss, Thomas. Unspun: key concepts for understanding the World Wide Web. New York: New York University Press, 2000., 17-29

*Key Question:* How do digital media disrupt “modern” categories of “the body” and “the self”

**Thursday, April 20:** Cyborgism and Gender: Liberating Women?

*Required Readings:*

- Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” from Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature (New York: Routledge), 149-181. In reader and on line at:  
<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Haraway/CyborgManifesto.html>

*Recommended Readings:*

- Sandra Lee Bartky, “Foucault, Femininity, and The Modernization of Patriarchal Power.” Feminism and Foucault. Eds. Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988. 61-86. (reader)
- Anne Balsamo, Technologies of the gendered body: reading cyborg women. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996 (esp. Ch.1, “Reading Cyborgs, Writing Feminism: Reading the body in contemporary culture”).
- Judith Squires “Fabulous feminist futures and the lure of cyberculture” in Bell, Cybercultures Reader
- Chela Sandoval “New sciences: cyborg feminism and the methodology of the oppressed” in Bell, Cybercultures Reader

*Key Question:* Do digital media challenge the modern category of femininity?

**Tuesday, April 25:** Cyborgism and Gender: Enlisting Men?

*Required Readings:*

- Tim Lenoir, “Fashioning the Military-Entertainment Complex,” online at: [http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/TimLenoir/Lenoir\\_FashioningMEC.pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/TimLenoir/Lenoir_FashioningMEC.pdf)
- Chris Hables Gray, “The Cyborg Soldier: The US Military and The Post-Modern Warrior” in Cyborg Worlds, 43-71 (reader)

*Other Requirements:*

- Download and play around with “Army Operations” from <http://www.americasarmy.com>

*Recommended Readings:*

- Kathleen M. Clayton, National Simulation Superstructure.” Online at [http://www.dau.mil/pubs/pm/pmpdf97/ms\\_super.pdf](http://www.dau.mil/pubs/pm/pmpdf97/ms_super.pdf)
- James William Gibson. Warrior dreams: Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America. New York: Hill and Wang, 1994.
- Tim Lenoir, “All But War is Simulation: The Military-Entertainment Complex.” At: <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/TimLenoir/allbutwar.pdf>
- Tim Lenoir, “Programming Theatres of War: Gamemakers as Soldiers.” At: [http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/TimLenoir/Lenoir\\_TheatresOfWar.pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/TimLenoir/Lenoir_TheatresOfWar.pdf)
- Tim Lenoir and Henry Lowood, “How They Got Game: The History of Videogames and Interactive Simulations.” At: <http://poweredge.stanford.edu/videogames/>
- Turner, Fred. Echoes of Combat: Trauma, Memory, and the Vietnam War. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

*Key Question:* Do digital media challenge the modern category of masculinity?

**Thursday, April 27:** Virtuality and the Performing Self

***Due: Draft of First Response Paper***

*Required Readings:*

- Brenda Laurel, “Computers as Theater” in Trend, David. Reading digital culture. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.109-114. (reader)
- Julian Dibbel, “A Rape in Cyberspace; or How an Evil Clown, a Haitian Trickster Spirit, Two Wizards, and a Cast of Dozens Turned a Database into a Society” on line at: <http://www.juliandibbell.com/texts/bungle.html>.
- Poster, Mark. The second media age. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1995: Ch. 2, “Postmodern Virtualities.” Online at: <http://www.humanities.uci.edu/mposter/writings/internet.html>.



*Recommended Readings:*

- Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass. The media equation: how people treat computers, television, and new media like real people and places Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Erving Goffman. The presentation of self in everyday life. New York N.Y.: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1990.
- Sherry Turkle, “What are we thinking about when we think about computers?” Online at: [http://web.mit.edu/sturkle/www/routledge\\_reader.html](http://web.mit.edu/sturkle/www/routledge_reader.html)

*Key Questions:* How do digital media shape the performance of “self”? Who or what has “agency”?

**Tuesday, May 2:** Virtuality and Race

*Required Readings:*

- Lisa Nakamura, Cybertypes, chapters 1,2, 5, and conclusion.
- Jonathan Sterne, “The Computer Race Goes to Class” in Nakamura, et al. Race in Cyberspace 191-212 (reader)

*Recommended Readings:*

- Nakamura, Lisa, Gilbert B. Rodman, and Beth E. Kolko. Race in cyberspace. New York: Routledge, 2000.

*Key questions:* How does “race” shape on-line experience? How do various on-line experiences shape our ideas of race?

**Thursday, May 4:** Virtuality as Ideology

*Required Readings:*

- Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, “Code Warriors,” on line at <http://www.t0.or.at/0ntext/warriors.htm>
- Ellen Ullman, Close to The Machine

*Recommended Readings:*

- Fred Turner, “Cyberspace as the New Frontier?: Mapping the Shifting Boundaries of the Network Society” Red Rock Eater News Service, 1999.
- Andrew Ross, No-collar: the humane workplace and its hidden costs. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2003.

*Key Question:* How should we think about the relationship between the ways we experience digital technologies and the nature of the industries that produce them?

**Tuesday, May 9:** No Class. Work on rewrites with TAs.

### **Part 3: Place, Community and State: Where Are We and What Are We Doing Here?**

**Thursday, May 11:** Landscapes of Information: the World Wide Web and the Post-Modern Metropolis

***Due: Final Draft of First Response Paper***

*Required Readings:*

- Mizuko Ito, “Mobile Phones, Japanese Youth, and the Re-Placement of Social Contact,” forthcoming, in Rich Ling and Per Pedersen, ed. Mobile Communications: Re-negotiation of the Social Sphere
- Manuel Castells, “The Space of Flows,” Ch. 6 of The Rise of Network Society
- David Morely, “Media, Mobility and Migrancy,” Ch. 7 of Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity

*Key Questions:* How can we understand the relationship between material place and digital media? How do identity, media and place interact?

**Tuesday, May 16:** Locating Virtual Communities

*Required Readings:*

- Howard Rheingold. “A slice of my life in my virtual community.” High noon on the electronic frontier: conceptual issues in cyberspace. Ed. Peter Ludlow. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992/1996. 413-436. (reader)
- humdog. “Pandora's Vox: On Community in Cyberspace.” High noon on the electronic frontier: conceptual issues in cyberspace. Ed. Peter Ludlow. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996. 437-444. (reader)
- Susan Leigh Star, “From Hestia to Home Page” in Bell, Cybercultures Reader, 632-643 (reader)

*Recommended Readings:*

- Phil Agre, “Designing Genres for New Media” in Steve Jones, CyberSociety 2.0: revisiting computer-mediated communication and community. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1998, pp.69-99, and online at: <http://dlis.gseis.ucla.edu/people/pagre/genre.html>
- John Coate, “Cyberspace Inkeeping: Building Online Community” (1992-1998) on line at: <http://www.cervisa.com/innkeeping.html>
- Greg Elmer, “The economy of cyberpromotion” in Herman and Swiss, eds. The world wide web and contemporary cultural theory. New York and London: Routledge, 2000. 161-170.
- Muniz, Albert M., Jr., and Thomas C. O'Guinn. “Brand community.” Journal of Consumer Research 27, March (2001): 412-432.

- Robert D. Putnam, Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American community. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.
- Peter Kollock and Marc A. Smith. Communities in cyberspace. London & New York: Routledge, 1999
- Fred Turner, “Where the Counterculture Met The New Economy: Revisiting the WELL and the Origins of Virtual Community.” Forthcoming, *Technology and Culture*.
- Chris Werry. “Imagined electronic community: representations of virtual community in contemporary business discourse.” firstmonday 4.9 (2001) (on line).

*Key Questions:* What are “virtual communities” and how do they connect to “material” communities?

**Thursday, May 18:** Game Worlds

***Last Day to Review Optional Draft of Second Paper***

*Required Reading:*

- Edward Castronova, *Synthetic Worlds: The Business and Culture of Online Games*, Chapters 1, 2, 6-11

Guest Lecture by Nick Yee, Ph.D. candidate and gaming researcher

*Key Questions:* What are MMORPGs and how do they matter?

**Tuesday, May 23:** Governing the Virtual State

*Required Readings:*

- Lawrence Lessig, Code: and Other Laws of Cyberspace. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1999: Ch. 1, “Code is Law” (3-8), Ch. 6 “Cyberspaces” (63-84), Ch. 7 “What Things Regulate,” (85-99).
- Cass Sunstein, “The Daily We” *The Boston Review*, Summer, 2001. Online at: <http://bostonreview.mit.edu/BR26.3/sunstein.html>
- Inrona, Lucas D., and Helen Nissenbaum. “Shaping the web: why the politics of search engines matters.” The Information Society 16.3 (2000): 169-186 (available online via library)

*Recommended Readings:*

- Timothy W. Luke, “Governance,” in Thomas Swiss, Unspun: Key Concepts for Understanding the World Wide Web. New York: New York University Press, 2000.
- Ananda Mitra, “Virtual Commonality: Looking for India on the Internet” in Bell

- John Perry Barlow, Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace (1996), online at: <http://www.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html>

*Key Question:* How can “cyberspace” be governed? And how does the nature of cyberspace shape the organization of political power in the material world?

**Thursday, May 25:** Digital Economics: Networks of Production

***Final Draft of Second Paper Due***

*Required Readings:*

- Weber, Steven. “The political economy of open source software.” Tracking a transformation: e-commerce and the terms of competition in industries. Ed. BRIE-IGCC E-economy Project. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2001. 406-434. [HAND OUT]
- Tiziana Terranova, “Free labor: producing culture for the digital economy.” Social Text 18.2 (2000): 33-58. Available online at: [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/social\\_text/toc/soc18.2.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/social_text/toc/soc18.2.html)

*Recommended Readings:*

- Eric Raymond, “Homesteading the Noosphere,” firstmonday 3 (10): [http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue3\\_10/raymond/](http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue3_10/raymond/)
- Eric Raymond, “How to Become a Hacker,” <http://www.catb.org/~esr/faqs/hacker-howto.html>
- Walter Powell, “Neither market nor hierarchy: network forms of organization.” Research in Organizational Behavior 12 (1990): 295-336.
- Manuel Castells, The Network Society Vol. 1: “The Work Process in the Informational Paradigm” (pp.240-251)(Re: network labor) and “Information Technology and the Restructuring of Capital” pp.272-279 (re: network forms and reduction of income in US)
- Free Software Foundation web site: <http://www.fsf.org/>

*Key question:* What is a network form of production and what roles do digital media play in one?

**Tuesday, May 30:** Digital Economics: Digital Media and the Politics of Distribution

*Required Readings:*

- Tetzlaff, David. “Yo-ho-ho and a server of warez: internet software piracy and the new global information economy.” In Herman and Swiss, eds. The world wide web and contemporary cultural theory. New York and London: Routledge, 2000. 99-126 (reader)
- John Perry Barlow, “The economy of ideas: a framework for rethinking patents and copyrights in the digital age (everything you know about

intellectual copyright is wrong).” *Wired* 2.03 March, 1994: 84-90, 126-129.  
Online at: [http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/2.03/economy.ideas\\_pr.html](http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/2.03/economy.ideas_pr.html)

- Lawrence Lessig, *Code*, Ch. 10, “Intellectual Property,” 122-141

*Recommended Readings:*

- Richard Stallman’s GNU Public License, online at: <http://www.fsf.org/licenses/gpl.html>
- Robert McChesney, “So much for the magic of technology and the free market: the world wide web and the corporate media system.” *The world wide web and contemporary cultural theory*. Eds. Andrew Herman and Thomas Swiss. New York and London: Routledge, 2000. 5-36

*Key Question:* How does the nature of digital media shape how they can be distributed and regulated?

**Thursday, June 1:** Digital Economics: Consuming as Producing

*Required Readings:*

- Mark Andrejevic, “The work of being watched: interactive media and the exploitation of self-disclosure.” *Critical Studies in Media Communication*. June (2002): 230-248 (reader)
- Julian Dibbell, “The Unreal Estate Boom,” *Wired* 11.01, January, 2003, online at: <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/11.01/gaming.html>
- Howard Rheingold, *Smart mobs: the next social revolution*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2002. Ch. 5, “The Evolution of Reputation”

*Recommended Readings:*

- Neil Swidey, “A nation of voyeurs: how the internet search engine Google is changing what we can find out about each other -- and raising questions about whether we should.” *Boston Globe Magazine* February 2 2003. Available in full text via Lexis-Nexus database, Stanford Libraries.
- The Cookie Web Sites:  
<http://www.cookiecentral.com>

*Key Questions:* How do the production of identities and communities with digital media create economic value? And for whom?

**Tuesday, June 6:** The Future: Constant Mutual Surveillance?

*Required Reading:*

- Howard Rheingold, Smart mobs: the next social revolution. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2002. Introduction and Chapters 1,4, 7, 8
- John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, eds., Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy, RAND, 2001: Ch.1, “The Advent of Netwar (Revisited)” online at:  
<http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1382/MR1382.ch1.pdf>

*Key question:* How will the increasing mobility, ubiquity and integration of digital media shape the trends we’ve tracked so far in the course? If digital media and networked forms of social life are coevolving, where are they likely to lead us?