HU 3870: Communication Technologies and Culture

Meeting: MWF 4:05 - 4:55 pm in Fisher 230
Professor: Jnan Blau
E-mail: jablau@mtu.edu
Office: Walker 344
Office Hours: MWF 12:45 - 2:45 pm
Telephone: Office, 487-1084; Dept. of Humanities, 487-2008

Required Texts:
Anderson, M. T. Feed. Cambridge: Candlewick, 20024

Additional readings, including web-based readings, may be assigned, with sufficient advance time.

Course Description:
What does it mean to say that how we communicate and how we live our lives are inextricably tied to each other? This course explores this very question, as well as many others related to it. We will take seriously the notion that the way we live our lives—i.e., what we do and how we do it; what we think, feel and sense; even what we believe to be true, right, and/or good—cannot be considered separately from our communicative actions.

More specifically, the course will examine the ways in which technology, as a means of communication, plays its role in our lives as cultural beings. Through focused readings and engaged in-class dialogue, we will ponder the human-technology interface, learning about and asking after how that interface matters. In other words, we will think critically together about how the human-technology interface influences culture, politics, and the environment in which we live our lives.

Course Goals:
- To learn about the relationship between humans and communication technologies
- To think into the future about the relationship between humans and communication technologies
- To increase understanding of the relationship between communication and culture
- To ponder what is meant by the word/concept “culture”
- To promote self-awareness of self as a cultural being
**Course Graded Requirements:**

There are three components that factor into the grade you earn in this course:

1. One take-home Exam that will ask you to thoughtfully engage and demonstrate your understanding of the class material
2. Three Short Reflection Papers designed to allow you to reflect upon and demonstrate your continuing engagement with the class material
3. APPTitude: Attending class; being well prepared for class by closely reading and thinking about the assigned materials; Participating in class discussions and activities; and being thoughtful both in class discussions and in written work

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Reflection Papers</td>
<td>three @ 100 pts. = 300</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>APPTitude (including In-Class Presentation)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Scale**

- 900-1000 = A
- 600-699 = D
- 800-899 = B
- 0-599 = F
- 700-799 = C

**Exam:**

The Exam will take place approximately two-thirds of the way through the course. It will be a take-home essay. Within this exam, you will demonstrate your engagement of the material by responding to one or more questions I will pose to you. More details will accompany the Exam's assignment later this semester. See the Weekly Schedule for the exact date of the Exam.

**Three (3) Short Reflection Papers:**

These three papers (SRPs) will be based on your critical/analytical responses to the readings and other stimulus materials used for our course. These brief papers will average 3-5 pages in length. Time allowing, you may share some of the ideas in your papers in informal discussions in the classroom. See the Weekly Schedule for SRP due dates.

**Attendance and Participation Policy (more on APPTitude):**

Punctual, consistent attendance is essential for this class and for a fully realized learning environment. Attendance will be taken daily.

Students are allowed two "free" absences throughout the semester. Additional absences will be reflected negatively in your APPTitude grade.

As part of your APPTitude grade, you will be asked, toward the end of the semester, to offer an In-Class Presentation. The Presentation will not be graded per se, but it will be factored into your overall APPTitude grade. Your Presentation will be an opportunity for you to learn from you, as you share findings and insights about current cultural-technological phenomena related to our class content and discussions. More details on this assignment are forthcoming.

I understand that, for personal and/or cultural reasons, different people participate differently in a class. I will try to account for this as much as possible. Nevertheless, I am quite aware that attendance does not necessarily equal participation. In order to derive the
best learning experience from/for our class, it is absolutely essential that students always come to class having read the assigned material and prepared to engage it in the classroom.

I am a pretty good judge of participation in my classes—by which I mean, I can usually tell, from your in-class participation, writing assignments, etc., if you are putting the necessary energy into this class and the readings. Ultimately, it is in your best interest to take this class and its content seriously, as APPTitude is one-fifth of your final grade.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE:
The best way to do well in this class, especially on the Exam, is to not only read all the materials assigned but to take notes as you do so. Write down important points, interesting ideas, and lines of argument. Also, note anything that may be unclear to you (what is not clear is often as useful to your learning as what is). Be sure to bring these notes to class every day. Please, do not be shy: regarding our readings and class material, share with us not only what excites you but also what confuses you—chances are you will help more than just yourself!

A NOTE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (i.e., please, no plagiarism):
Presenting others' work as your own or failing to properly credit and cite any and all resources used in your school work is dishonest and is considered plagiarism in U.S. academic culture. Plagiarizing will very likely be detected by me and can lead to serious consequences for you, including, but not limited to, academic probation. If you ever have any questions about this issue, please do not hesitate to talk to me or to consult a writing coach at the Writing Center (their phone number is 487-2007).

A FEW OTHER NOTES:
You must complete all assignments to pass this class. The Exam cannot be made up and must be turned in on time, unless you suffer some unforeseen and major life emergency (and I sincerely hope you don't), which can only be excused and validated by the Dean of Students. All writing assignments are due by their due date, at the start of the class period.

If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please inform me and contact the Student Affairs Office (their phone: 487-2212) so that we may make appropriate arrangements. Please do this early in the semester—do not wait until problems arise.

THE LAST (AND AN IMPORTANT) NOTE:
Unless you come and talk to me and indicate otherwise, I will assume that you have carefully read this syllabus and that you have understood and are willing and able to abide by its content.
Escriba sus iniciales (initials) o nombre, o ponga su firma para verificar su asistencia a clase! Gracias!

ANDERSON, JESSICA
BAS, DEREK
BOUTCHER, ANDRÉS
BRANT, ALEJANDRO
COUILLARD, David
EDWARDS, Brian
HECKSEL, COREY
HERRICK, JULIA
JANSE, TRAVIS
KITURKES, ALEJANDRO
MOURA, FELIPE
PELHANK SOCTT
RECKER, JARED
RUBIO CODY
SIPE, MARCOS
TILLMAN, JASON
TOMASI, ANGELA
WINKLER, DAN
Escriba su nombre o iniciales (initials); o ponga su firma ara verificar su asistencia a clase! Gracias!

BORNHORST, ELENA
BUZZO, JUAN
CROSSE, CHELEY
EDEL, ZACARÍAS
GLOWCZEWSKI, MIGUEL
HAMMOND, TIMOTEO
KINNUNEN, SARA
LITTLE, MATEO
MARTINAC, LINDSEY
OMAN, LAURA
POOLE, NATHAN
PRYSTALSKI, KASSIA
ROSSOW, JOHANNA
SPRENGER, KELSEY
STOLBERG, ENRIQUE
WAGNER, RAQUEL
WILLIAMS, HANNAH
WOODBECK, LAURA