HU3871 Media and Communication Theory
Professor Jennifer Daryl Slack
2007

Office: 304 Walker
Hours: 11-12:30 Tue & Thur
Other times by appointment
487-3228 jdslack@mtu.edu

Course Description:
Examines relationships among changing communication technologies and communication theories. Emphasizes issues involving emerging technologies and emerging theory.

Course Goals:
1. To increase your understanding of changing communication theory in response to new media.
2. To increase your understanding of the changing communication environment.

Required Course Materials:
2. Other readings available at www.hu.mtu.edu/~jdslack/hu3871
   All readings should be completed by the day listed on course schedule

Grading:

While there are both formal and informal assignments, you will be graded on PROCESS as well as PRODUCT. By process I mean the following:
1. Your willingness to engage the material – to be mindfully present, to imagine, to concentrate, to contribute to a creative class environment, to produce assignments that take the issues seriously.
2. Regular class attendance (3 unexcused absences lowers your grade)
3. Completion of all assignments on time (required to pass class)
4. Academic integrity. Any instance of academic dishonesty (for example, plagiarism) will result in your being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

To assess process, I will evaluate each of you individually.

Grade: 40% Process 60% Product
(Breakdown:
Midterm - 30%
Final Project - 30%
Unannounced Quizzes (% of process))
HU 3871 Course Schedule (I reserve the right to respond to class needs and change this syllabus to enhance your learning experience)

Sept 4 & 6  
**Modes of Communication**  
Read: Slack and Wise, "Modes of Communication"  
Read: Walter Ong, "Orality, Literacy, and Modern Media"  
Read: Eric Havelock, "The Greek Legacy"

Sept 11-13  
**Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces—New Communities—Ritual**  
Read: James Carey, "Space, Time and Communication"  
Listen: Daniel Makagon, On Car Stereos

Sept 18 & 20  
**Digitization—Undoing the Modes—Converging Media—Embracing the Miscellaneous**  
Read: Henry Jenkins, "Introduction: 'Worship and the Altar of Convergence': A New Paradigm for Understanding Media Change"  
Read: Weinberger, Prologue and Chapter 1  
Assign: Midterm Exam

Sept 25 & 26  
**Organizing knowledge—Orders of Organization**  
Read Weinberger, chapters 2-6

Oct 2 & 4  
Review in class (Oct 2 - Career Day)  
**Midterm Exam Due - October 4**

Oct 9 & 11  
**Swarm Intelligence—Social Knowing**  
Read: Weinberger, Chapter 7  
Read: Andy Clark, "Global Swarming"

Oct 16 & 18  
**The Audience as Producer**  
Read: Lakshmi Chaudhry, "Mirror, Mirror on the Web"  
Read: Henry Jenkins, "Quentin Tarantino’s Star Wars? Grassroots Creativity Meets the Media Industry"
Oct 23 & 25  Exploring Wikis
Read: John Borland, “See Who’s Editing Wikipedia – Diebold, the CIA, a Campaign,”
Listen: NPR, Fresh Air, “Jimmy Wales on the User Generated Generation”
Assign: Wiki Project

Oct 30 & Nov 1  Mapping Meaning: New Structures of Control
Read Weinberger, Chapter 8-Coda
Read: Denis Wood, “The Interest the Map Serves Is Masked”
Read: Gilles Deleuze, excerpt on the control society from “Control and Becoming”

Nov 6 & 8  Design: New Structures of Control
Read: Harvey Molotch, “Corporate Organization and the Design Big Thing”
Read: Lawrence Lessig, “Introduction” to Free Culture”

Nov 13 & 15  No Class - Read and work on Wiki Project
Code: New Structures of Control
Read: Eugene Thacker, “Foreword: Protocol Is as Protocol Does”

Nov 20 & 22  Thanksgiving Break - no class

Nov 27 & 29  Surveillance-Privacy: New Structures of Control
Read: Something on Facebook (TBA)
Listen: This American Life, August 12, 2007, Rachael on blogging the London Bombing

Dec 4, 6, 11, 13  Final Wiki presentations-projects due
Full Citations for Readings


Makagon, Daniel. On Car Stereos [missing full citation]


Midterm Exam
Pick one of the following concepts:
- communication as ritual
- media convergence
- modes of communication
- the miscellaneous

Write a 4 page (typed, double spaced, 1,000 word minimum) essay in which you

1. Explain the concept
2. Explain how it is a useful concept for understanding new media
3. Explain the limitations of the concept - that is, the ways that it is not helpful or useful in talking about new media.

You must cite your sources with either APA or MLA format with full bibliographic references. When referring to someone's argument, drawing on a source, or quoting from a source, be sure to include page numbers.

Exploring Wikis
Visit a wikipedia entry and explore (at least several) ways it demonstrates bias. Do not limit yourself to content. It is fine, perhaps desirable to pick a controversial topic, but it could be an even more rewarding exercise to explore an overtly less controversial topic. Be careful: by "bias," I do NOT mean (necessarily) "wrong." In writing this essay I expect you to draw on and cite information we have covered on, mapping meaning, swarm intelligence, and new structures of control, etc. In addition you must do research appropriate to your topic to build your case for bias.

Write up your findings in a 6-8 page (typed, double spaced, 1,500 word minimum) essay using APA or MLA format with full bibliographic references. When referring to someone's argument, drawing on a source, or quoting from a source, be sure to include page numbers, etc. In addition to your essay, turn in the entry you analyze.