MCOM 358.01 – NEW MEDIA PRACTICES
SUNY Oneonta, Department of Communication & Media
Spring 2020

Class Meetings: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 1:00–1:50 PM, IRC Lecture Hall 8

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Bottomley
Office Location: IRC B-9
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 12:00–12:45 PM and 2:00–3:00 PM, or by appointment
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Course Description

The unparalleled rate at which digital and "new" media are emerging makes the study of contemporary media culture highly exciting but also intensely challenging. This course seeks to slow this pace down by turning a critical eye towards how new media color our experiences of modern communication, culture, politics, and social life. Acknowledging that all media were at one time new media, this course uses "newness" as a frame through which to examine the practices, uses, and meanings surrounding emergent and developing media technologies. This is a critical media studies course, <u>not</u> a media production class – though multiple assignments will invite you to use digital media tools and technologies as a form of cultural critique. The primary focus of the course will be on the social, political, and cultural dimensions of computers, the internet, and social media networks.

From the 2019-2020 Undergraduate Catalog: The interactive nature of technology-enriched new media has changed the relationship between the individual and the larger society and has raised questions about the traditional relationship between audiences and media producers. This course will examine the ways that new technologies are changing the global political, economic, and social contexts surrounding today's media. Emphasis will also be placed on comparing and contrasting what's "new" about new media and technology with traditional media. Students will be expected to engage with and critique new media technologies. A-E only. Offered fall and spring. LA. *Prerequisite(s): SoS and 12 s.h. of 200-level MCOM courses.*

This course was previously listed as MCOM 258 New Media. *It fulfills the same Mass Communication major requirements as 258 did previously. If you have already taken 258, do <u>not</u> take 358 unless you intend to repeat the course. Speak with your advisor if you have questions.*

Course Objectives

- Teach you to question the idea of newness and link new media to their precedents.

- Introduce you to major concepts, facts, and issues related to contemporary media existing beyond the traditional mass media paradigm of film, broadcasting, and print.

- Provide you with a general understanding of the methods that critical media studies researchers use to explore social phenomena related to the internet and digital culture.

- Help you to critically examine your own experiences of new (and not-so-new) media.

Learning Outcomes

- o Define key terms and concepts related to the internet and digital culture, as well as deploy them in classroom discussions, written and multimedia work, and everyday life.

- o Respond critically to contemporary debates surrounding media technology and society.

- o Reflect on the adoption process of new media technologies, paying special attention to their social and cultural implications.

Required Materials

There is one required textbook for this course. It can be purchased on campus at Damascene Book Cellar or online through Amazon and other retailers, for approximately $35 brand new.

Simon Lindgren, *Digital Media & Society* (SAGE Publications, 2017, 1st Edition).

All other readings are available online or as PDFs through the course's *my*Oneonta Blackboard site. Always bring the assigned readings with you to class when they are listed on the schedule.

The other main hub for this course is the class Yammer group, an online social network platform for team collaboration that is integrated into your campus Office 365 account. Most assigned course materials will be linked into Yammer and this platform will also be used heavily for class discussions and activities, both inside and outside the classroom. For these reasons, it is essential that you have an active presence on Yammer, visiting the site often and making frequent contributions to it. This online activity will be a major component of your Class Engagement assignment (described below). **Since Yammer and other participatory online assignments will be regularly worked into class lectures/discussions, it is mandatory that you bring a laptop or tablet computer to <u>every</u> class meeting.** Smartphones will not be adequate devices in most cases – you'll need to have a laptop or tablet to participate fully. If you don't have a laptop/tablet computer or there's some other circumstance that makes computer-based participation difficult for you, please speak with me immediately.

Attendance & Participation

It is expected that you will attend all class meetings. Your attendance and participation are integral to the success of this course, as well as your own individual achievement in it. A good grade is impossible to achieve without regular attendance, since much of the assessment is based on your understanding of materials covered in the classroom. Nevertheless, stuff happens, so if you need to miss class then reach out to me – the sooner, the better. For illnesses, doctor appointments, field trips, and other non-emergencies, you must always notify me in writing beforehand (via email); do not miss class and expect that your absence will be excused retroactively. Maintaining clear communication about your (non-)attendance is key.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is not graded of itself; that is, there are no dedicated points for attendance alone. However, being in this class means being in the classroom, and participation in classroom activities significantly impacts your Class Engagement assignment grade (see below). Acceptable attendance in this course means three (3) or fewer unexcused absences and three (3) or fewer tardies. Anything over five (5) unexcused absences or tardies is deemed excessive absence, and it will greatly reduce your chances of success in this course.

Tardiness: A tardy is anything that pulls you away from active engagement in the entire class period: arriving late; departing early; leaving the classroom any time during the period without instructor permission; and displaying distracted or disruptive behavior such as talking to neighbors out of turn, using your smartphone, and sleeping. Coming to class any time after attendance is taken or leaving before the class is dismissed is considered tardiness.

Excused Absences: Of course, excused absences are exempt from the above policies. As per the College Handbook, religious holidays, official university activities (field trips, intercollegiate athletics, etc.), serious illness or injury, jury duty, and military leave are all considered legitimate excused absences. Other excusable absences are exceptional or unpredictable events that significantly impact your ability to complete work. Realize that giving me an excuse does not automatically mean the absence is counted as "excused." Absences are only excused with my consent, meaning you must talk with me directly if you encounter hardships affecting your attendance. Face-to-face chats about attendance are welcome, though I request that you communicate the reason for your absence to me in writing (via email) – that way we both have a searchable record of it for later reference. If you experience a prolonged absence of multiple classes, please visit me during office hours or schedule an appointment so we can have a conversation to ensure that you do not fall behind in the course. You will never be excused for work, including media production or schoolwork for another course.

Late or Missed Work: If you are absent, get in touch with a trusted classmate to help you get caught up. Lecture slides are posted to Blackboard, and you are encouraged to obtain related lecture notes from a classmate. You are personally responsible for everything that happens in class, including any announcements and exam or assignment overviews presented in the classroom. Ignorance of announced examination, assignment, and/or schedule instructions or changes will not be accepted as an excuse for missing or incomplete work in this course. Nevertheless, life happens. You are therefore allowed one 48-hour extension on written assignments/projects, no questions asked. To take advantage of this opportunity, you must inform me ahead of time via email; only when you get written approval from me may you submit your assignment late. Late work submitted without prior approval will be graded at a penalty of 10-points per day late. There is no extension or make-up permitted on exams and quizzes.

Grading

Grades in this course are calculated on a 1,000-point scale. The breakdown is as follows:

Grade Letter	Points	Percentage
A	930-1,000	93-100%
A-	900-929	90-92%
B+	870-899	87-89%
B	830-869	83-86%
B-	800-829	80-82%
C+	770-799	77-79%
C	730-769	73-76%
C-	700-729	70-72%
D+	670-699	67-69%
D	630-669	63-66%
D-	600-629	60-62%
E	0-599	59% and below

Your final grade in this course will be determined according to the following scale:

Assignment	Possible Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Class Engagement	150	15%
New Media Diary	100	10%
Obsolete Media Project	100	10%
Quizzes	200	20%
First Exam	150	15%
Second Exam	150	15%
Final Exam	150	15%

Each assignment will be evaluated based on the specific criteria outlined below and in the individual assignment sheets. Generally speaking, the letter grades translate as follows:

A/A-   Outstanding, thoughtful, and enthusiastic work
B+/B   Average to above-average work, demonstrating good insight into assignment
B-/C+   Needs improvement on ideas, argument, and follow-through
C & below   Fails to fulfill the basic requirements and shows only a rudimentary
            understanding of the material

Assignments & Exams

Class Engagement (15%): This is a hybrid lecture-seminar course, and as such class time requires the total attention and involvement of all participants. Routinely throughout the semester, you will be called upon to participate in a variety of classroom activities that will reinforce key concepts and allow you to demonstrate your knowledge of the lectures and readings. Sometimes these will be quick writing activities prompting you to reflect on the day's lesson. Frequently you will pair with your neighbors to express your thoughts on a discussion question. Other times you will engage in extended group exercises inviting you to critically analyze a media text as a team. Additional forms of Class Engagement include participating in whole-class discussions, asking questions, and listening attentively. Trust that I will help everyone participate, even those of you who experience anxiety when speaking in public. Your responsibility here is to offer regular, informed contributions to class meetings – contributions that may be delivered in a variety of forms. Emphasis is placed on the Yammer social networking platform, where you can ask questions and make comments online at any time. You should make a habit of posting to Yammer <u>at least</u> one to two times per week.

Grading for this Class Engagement assignment is holistic. Individual items will be tracked but they will not be formally graded or returned, as they are intended to reinforce your understanding of course material and to provoke classroom conversations. I will assess the whole of your activity at the very end of the semester and determine your grade then. If you have a satisfactory attendance record (i.e. no more than 3 unexcused absences), you post to Yammer regularly (i.e. weekly), and you make a meaningful contribution to every class session (e.g. active and thoughtful speaking, writing, listening), then you are guaranteed at least a "B" grade on the Class Engagement assignment. If you are frequently absent and/or you display a pattern of inattention, disruption, or otherwise unsatisfactory work, then you will earn a Class Engagement grade of "C" or lower. Your grade here is up to you.

New Media Diary (10%): Identify the digitally networked platforms, sites, and services ("new media") you use every day (e.g., Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Google, YouTube, Netflix, Amazon, text messaging, email). Begin by logging your use of these new media for a minimum of 3 days straight, responding to these questions for 3 of the new media: How often do you use each one? What do you do on them? What do you use them for? Who do you communicate with? About what? In what way? Then, follow that by identifying and describing the affordances, constraints, and norms of each new media. What type of uses does each one encourage or discourage? What are the designed or perceived "rules"? You must deliver the analysis of your digital media use via either an audio podcast or video essay (3+ minutes long), or another type of innovative multimedia project. You cannot submit a standard written essay. Rather, you are urged to think about creative ways in which the media you already use daily can be manipulated to make an interactive, artistic form of critical self-analysis.

Obsolete Media Project (10%): The inverse of new media is, of course, old media. If all media is at one time new, then it will at some point also become "old" and outdated, either passé or completely extinct. For this project, your task is to locate and analyze a recently "obsolete" media technology, such as audio or video cassette, corded landline telephone, fax machine, floppy disks, MP3 player, or film camera. Your assignment is to answer the question: Is this still a useful object? To do so, you must create a brief multimedia project (e.g., a blog post with images/audio/video, a digital story, a web comic, a series of memes or GIFs). You are invited to be adventurous and use a medium of expression that is new to you (i.e., media tools you have little or no previous experience using). In addition to your critical analysis of the obsolete media object, you will also share a few thoughts reflecting on your use of an unfamiliar technology to express yourself. No exact length is specified because of the flexibility of the format; however, as the point value indicates, this is meant to be a short assignment and as a rule of thumb you should aim to create something that can be consumed in approximately 2-3 minutes.

Quizzes (20%): There will be weekly online quizzes designed to gauge your comprehension of the assigned reading materials. Administered through Blackboard, these are open-book, untimed quizzes. **These quizzes must be completed <u>before</u> each Friday (F) class period.** They will cover all the assigned materials for that week, including those materials assigned for the Friday class, meaning you'll need to make a habit of reading on schedule. In total, **10 quizzes will be given and the 8 highest scores will be counted** toward the final assignment grade. In other words, the 2 lowest scores will be dropped, making each of the 8 graded quizzes worth up to 25-points. No late quizzes will be permitted under any circumstances.

First and Second Exams (15% each): There will be two (2) in-class written exams given during the regular semester. Each exam will ask you to answer a combination of short-answer identification questions and essay questions. Additional instructions and grading criteria will be provided closer to the exam date.

Final Exam (15%): The final exam for this course will take the form of a multiple-choice test. It is cumulative, covering material from across the entire semester. The Final Exam will follow the same basic format as the weekly quizzes, and some of the questions will even be repurposed directly from the quizzes. An overview of the exam will be given on the last scheduled class day.

Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct

According to SUNY Oneonta's Code of Student Conduct: "the term 'cheating' includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; or (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the College faculty or staff. The term 'plagiarism' includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials."

Academic dishonesty in this course will be addressed quickly and severely. If I find you responsible for misconduct, you will receive zero (0) points (grade letter "E") on the assignment and potentially an "E" for the entire course. A report of the incident will also be made to the Office of Community Standards and the Department of Communication & Media. For more information, refer to the College's Code of Student Conduct: http://www.oneonta.edu/communitystandards/documents/code.pdf

Classroom Accommodations / Accessibility Resources

If you have a disability or any circumstance that may impact your ability to perform in this class, you are encouraged to speak with me privately as soon as possible. Disclosure of a disability is always voluntary. In order to receive official academic services such as testing accommodations, however, you are required to provide documentation of a disability to the Office of Accessibility Resources (607-436-2137 or 133 Milne Library). All students with pertinent documentation will be provided the necessary accommodations as determined by Accessibility Resources. More information: https://suny.oneonta.edu/accessibility-resources

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

If there is an emergency in the IRC during class time, the prolonged evacuation site (ES) is the Fine Arts Theater. In the case of an evacuation, be sure to assist persons with disabilities, including visually impaired persons, people with hearing limitations, people using crutches/canes/walkers, or anyone else who has difficulty leaving the building on their own. Other general evacuation procedures are outlined at: http://www.oneonta.edu/security/documents/EmergencyEvacuationProcedures.pdf

Course Schedule

This schedule is a guide and it is subject to change. *DMS* refers to the Simon Lindgren *Digital Media & Society* textbook. Other materials are available on Blackboard or the open web, if a URL is provided. All assigned materials must be read <u>before</u> the designated class meeting.

Week 1: Living With(in) Media
W, January 15: Introduction

F, January 17: What is New Media?
        Read: John Durham Peters, "The Oldness of New Media" (2008)

Week 2: Understanding New Media
M, January 20: Technology and Social Change
        Read: *DMS* Chapter 1 "Digital Society"

W, January 22: Remediation, Part 1
        Read: Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, "Introduction: The Double Logic of Remediation" and "Immediacy, Hypermediacy, and Remediation" (2000)

F, January 24: Remediation, Part 2
        Due: Quiz #1

Week 3: New Media Debates
M, January 27: New Media Optimism
        Read: *DMS* Chapter 3 "Cyber Debates"

W, January 29: New Media Pessimism, Part 1
        Read: *DMS* Chapter 9 "Digital Power and Exploitation"

F, January 31: New Media Pessimism, Part 2
        Watch: *The Facebook Dilemma, Part One* (2018), https://youtu.be/T48KFiHwexM
        Due: Quiz #2

Week 4: Social Media
M, February 3: New Media Diary Workshop
        Read: Terry Sullivan, "A Beginner's Guide to Taking Great Video on Your Phone" (2018), https://goo.gl/t1qapj

W, February 5: Social Theory for Understanding Social Media
        Read: *DMS* Chapter 2 "Social Media," pp. 27-39

F, February 7: Memes and User-Generated Content
        Read: *DMS* Chapter 2 "Social Media," pp. 39-44
        Due: Quiz #3

Week 5: Communities and Networks

M, February 10: Networked Publics and Slacktivism
>Read: Jennifer Earl, "'Slacktivism' That Works: 'Small Changes' Matter" (2016),
>>https://goo.gl/bg5Vgd
>**Due: New Media Diary**

W, February 12: Online Communities
>Read: *DMS* Chapter 5 "Communities and Networks," pp. 85-94

F, February 14: Social Networks
>Read: *DMS* Chapter 5 "Communities and Networks," pp. 94-105
>**Due: Quiz #4**

Week 6: Communities and Networks

M, February 17: Networked Individualism
>Read: Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman, "The Battle of Freedom and Control in a
>>Networked World" (2012), https://goo.gl/qMPtKq

W, February 19: Always-On Lifestyle
>Read: Sherry Turkle, "The Tethered Self: Technology Reinvents Intimacy and Solitude"
>>(2011), https://goo.gl/KiCAvT

F, February 21: **First Exam**

Week 7: Residual Media

M, February 24: Residual Media, Part 1
>Read: John Durham Peters, "Obsolescence in the Digital Era" (2016),
>>https://goo.gl/ot2BFl

W, February 26: Residual Media, Part 2

F, February 28: Analog Media Returns
>Read: David Sax, "Introduction" and "The Revenge of Vinyl" (2016)
>**Due: Quiz #5**

Week 8: Residual Media

M, March 2: Obsolete Media Project Workshop

W, March 4: Glitch and Old Media Nostalgia
>Read: Mallika Roy, "Glitch it Good: Understanding the Glitch Art Movement" (2014)

F, March 6: Obsolete Media Project Workshop
>**Due: Obsolete Media Project**

Week 9: Spring Break

M, March 9; W, March 11; F, March 13: **No Class** – Spring Break

Week 10: Interaction and Identity
M, March 16: Online Identity, Part 1
      Read: *DMS* Chapter 4 "Interaction and Identity," pp. 67-76

W, March 18: Online Identity, Part 2

F, March 20: Anonymity
      Read: *DMS* Chapter 4 "Interaction and Identity," pp. 76-84
      Due: Quiz #6

Week 11: Digital Visuality
M, March 23: Self-Presentation
      Read: *DMS* Chapter 6 "Digital Visuality and Visibility," pp. 109-120

W, March 25: Affinity Spaces
      Read: *DMS* Chapter 6 "Digital Visuality and Visibility," pp. 120-125

F, March 27: Visual Sociality
      Watch: *Black Mirror* "Nosedive" (Netflix; S3 E1)
      Due: Quiz #7

Week 12: Digital Life and the Politics of Emotion
M, March 30: The Affective Turn
      Read: *DMS* Chapter 7 "Feeling Digital"

W, April 1: Trolling and Internet Discourse
      Read: Adrienne LaFrance, "Trolls Are Winning the Internet, Technologists Say" (2017),
        https://goo.gl/0L5yxC

F, April 3: **Second Exam**

Week 13: Democracy and Digital Citizenship
M, April 6: Democracy 2.0
      Read: *DMS* Chapter 8 "Digital Citizenship," pp. 145-149

W, April 8: The Networked Public Sphere
      Read: *DMS* Chapter 8 "Digital Citizenship," pp. 150-162

F, April 10: Media Literacy and Digital Divides
      Read: Henry Jenkins et al, Excerpts from "Confronting the Challenges of Participatory
        Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century" (2006), https://goo.gl/Cepu6e
      Due: Quiz #8

Week 14: Digital Activism
M, April 13: Online Social Movements
    Read: *DMS* Chapter 10 "Digital Activism"

W, April 15: Hashtag Activism
    Read: Monica Anderson et al, "Activism in the Social Media Age" (2018),
    https://goo.gl/gtqgvp

F, April 17: Public Shaming and Call-Out Culture
    Read: Matthew Beard, "4 Arguments for Ethical Online Shaming (and 4 Problems With
        Them)" (2016), https://goo.gl/3sjLGc
    Due: Quiz #9

Week 15: The Materials of New Media
M, April 20: Software Studies
    Read: *DMS* Chapter 12 "Software, Algorithms, and Data"

W, April 22: Interfaces
    Read: Harry Brignull, "Dark Patterns: Inside the Interfaces Designed to Trick You"
        (2013), https://goo.gl/6ehDOI

F, April 24: Communication and Media Day Events
    Due: Quiz #10

Week 16: l8r
M, April 27: Final Exam Review

Final Exam
W, May 6, 11:00 AM – 1:30 PM (regular classroom location: IRC Lecture Hall 8)