

Comm 490: Senior Seminar in Communication and Culture
Professor: Jeremy Hunsinger
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Course URL: <http://blackboard.uic.edu/>

Overview of Course

This is a course about Communication and Culture. It centers on the broad contexts of communication and culture in the globalizing world as a set of relations and constructions of creative industries, communities, and empires, both historically and currently. Thus we will explore the political economy and systems of communication and culture much more fundamentally than interpersonal perspectives. We will read cultural categories such as labor, class, ethnicity and alterity in relation to primary texts. The social, political, economic, and ethical aspects of communication will be discussed and detailed through the reading and discussion. This course is interdisciplinary and critically oriented. Strong reading and writing skills are central to success in this class.

Learning Objectives

- A. To explore conceptions of culture and cultural production in relation to communication.
- B. To develop an understanding of the history of communication.
- C. To think and write critical and comparative analysis of media.
- D. To develop an understanding of key themes in culture and communication in contemporary contexts.
- E. To develop and construct a well researched and documented paper

Books:
Imagined Communities Anderson
Society of the Spectacle Debord
Empire and Communication Innis
Convergence Culture Jenkins
Mapping World Communication Mattelart

Optional: Network Culture Terranova
Optional: Keywords Williams
Optional: Code 2.0 Lessig

Other Readings:
as assigned will be posted in blackboard

Grading:
Reading reviews: 30 points
Participation: 10 points
Research Paper Precis: 5 points
Research Paper Annotated Bibliography: 10 points
Research Paper Rough Draft: 5 points
Research paper: 20 Points
Research Paper Executive Summary: 10 points
Course Review: 10 points

Total: 100 points

Scale: a=93-100 a-=92-90 b+=89-87 b=86-83 b-=82-80, C=79-73 D=72-63 F=62 and below (You should aim for an A)

Assignments:
Reading reviews
Reading reviews are 250-500 word reviews of the days assigned readings. They are due by midnight on Monday the week for which the reading is assigned. They should demonstrate that you have critically approached the readings for the week, that you have questions about the readings, and that you have understood the readings.

Participation
It is real, it can be 'in class' or in blackboard. You can get a 0, and you won't automatically get a 10. The top 5 participants will get 10 points, and the bottom participants will get a zero. Participation is judged by quality of contributions to the discussion over the term of the semester. You can earn participation by commenting on other people's reading reviews.

Research Paper Precis
This is due in Week 4. A precis is a sketch of the argument that you seek to present in your paper. It should be in paragraph form, probably no more than 500 words. It should give the background of your research paper. It should have a clear statement of your paper's thesis. It should provide a clear model of the logic of your paper. It should be an intelligible, unified and coherent plan for your paper. It is a contract or letter of intent for what you think your final paper is. The only limit to your research paper is that it must be related to the Virtual Cultures, and probably that of Second Life.

Research Paper Annotated Bibliography
This is due in week 8. This annotated bibliography is a list of citations and sources that you are going to use in your paper. It should be approximately 20 solid sources. Each source should have a short description that addresses its content and contribution to your research paper.

Research Paper Rough Draft
This is due in week 12. It should be about 15 pages long. It should be a rough draft, it should be readable, understandable, and capable of being shared with your colleagues.

Research Paper
This is due the last week of class. It should be 20 to 25 pages long (200-250 words per page is expected), be directly related to the rough draft. It should be of the highest quality that you can produce.

Research paper Executive summary

With your completed research paper in hand. I want you to write a summary of it addressed to a completely different audience. In the past, students have addressed their executive summary to the President of the Sony, the Executive Director of the World Wildlife Fund, and the Director of their Children's preschool. The key is to make sure it addresses the needs of that particular audience.

Course Review

The course review is your opportunity to demonstrate what you have learned in this course. You should write 8-10 pages describing what you have learned, what it means to you, and how you might apply it to your life and future career. You should focus on what we have read and discussed.

Extra Credit

Extra credit will only be offered to everyone. There will be no cases where an individual is offered extra credit or any credit for special work that other members of the class could not also pursue. It will be offered. However, no one will be able to earn more than 5 points of extra credit in this class.

Expectations:

I expect you to respect each other. To do that you need to be prepared for class, to be present in class, and to have thought about what you might say before you say it.

I expect you to respect your predecessors. You should do justice to the contributions of others, the originators of ideas, and the material that they have created.

I expect you to conform to the norms of academia. I expect that you will perform at your highest level of competence, to pursue your own intellectual interests, to do as much work out of class as you can beyond the assignments, and to share that work with your peers. This requires you to be in class, on time, and awake (if you can't stay awake, you should miss class; if it becomes an issue, see a doctor).

Note well:

You are going to be held accountable for all UIC policies and practices as appropriate. That includes the policy on academic integrity.

Note well:

Students with disabilities who require accommodation for access and/or participation in this course must be registered with the Office of Disability Services. (You need to have them contact me before you contact me.)

Note well:

Mobile Phones, Pagers, or other 'noisy devices' must be turned off in class. If you have something in your life that is important enough that you must deal with it as soon as it happens, then please take care of that before or outside of class. Class time is for the class, not for personal business or emergencies.

Note well:

The lectures and discussions in this course do not cover the reading material directly. They add to and extend the reading material. You are responsible for reading the material even if we do not cover it in class.

Note well:

All Readings are to be read before the class in which they are assigned meets.

Calendar:

Week 1 8/26

Read first third of Innis

Week 2 9/4

Read Hall, E.T. The silent language Ch. 3. The vocabulary of culture pp 34-59.

Finish Innis

Week 3 9/11

Read first two thirds of Mattelart

Week 4 9/18

Read Final third of Mattelart

Read Clifford, J (1986) Introduction: Partial Truths, In J. Clifford & G.E. Marcus (Eds), Writing Culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography (pp. 1-26). Berkeley, University of California Press

Precis due

Week 5 9/25

Read Debord

Read other Situationist readings as assigned

Week 6 10/2

Read Triandis, H.C. Individualism & Collectivism PP 1-18. from Blackboard

Read Anderson

Week 7 10/9

Read Adorno (Culture Industries) (from blackboard)

Read Gramsci selections from prison writings (From blackboard)

Week 8 10/16 No Class in room, meet in Second Life

Bibliography due

Week 9 10/23

Readings on Cosmopolitan Culture and Communication to be assigned

Week 10 10/30

Readings on Cosmopolitan Culture and Communication to be assigned

Week 11 11/6 Read first 1/2 of Jenkins

Week 12 11/13 Read second 1/2 of Jenkins

Research Paper Rough Draft due

Week 13 11/20

Read Whorf from Blackboard
Read Wittgenstein from Blackboard

Week 14 11/27

Katriel, T., and Philipsen, G (1981) "What we need is communication"; "Communication" as a cultural category in some American speech. *Communications Monographs*, 48 (4) 301 -317

Parks, M.R. (1982). Ideology in interpersonal communication: Off the Couch and into the world. *Communication yearbook* 5, pp. 79-107 Transaction books.

Week 15 12/3 Summary

Research paper due

Executive Summary due

Course Review in final exam period

extensions and clarifications to the syllabus will be posted in the blackboard site.