

Film and Media Studies 85C: New Media and Digital Technologies

Summer 2021

Fully asynchronous online lecture, twice weekly

Instructor

[Kelly Donahey, MFA](#)

Contact via Canvas Inbox, Ed Discussion, email

Teaching Assistant

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Zoom office hours are available by appointment. Please allow up to 48 hours for a reply.

Course Overview

FLM&MDA 85C. New Media and Digital Technologies is an introduction to the study of digital media, computer mediated communication, and internet cultures from historical and theoretical perspectives. Together, we will look at contemporary media applications like Google, WeChat, Discord, and TikTok; computer networked technologies like our cell phones, tablets, and even refrigerators; and popular digital entertainment like video games and social networks through the interdisciplinary lens of new media scholarship.

This is an introductory course for both majors and non-majors. Together, we will review a variety of approaches to new media scholarship in anticipation of your final paper. Even if you are a non-major, this work will encourage you to apply the analytical skills relevant to other fields; help you to interpret news media and scholarship on digital culture; and support you in developing a critical attitude towards the digital technologies that we collectively engineer, design, and consume. Your personal knowledge and interests will be relevant to your work in this class.

Note: Criticality, as it is used in the context of this class, refers to the practice of skepticism and careful analysis; it is not a condemnation of media or media practices. As new media scholars we will consider the good, the bad, and the ugly of the digital technologies that we use on a daily basis.

- Satisfies GE requirement IV Arts and Humanities and departmental requirement for Film and Media Studies Major and Minor
- Asynchronous Class Sessions - course material will be released weekly on Tuesdays at 2pm PST

Guest Lectures

[Josh Awesome](#) - Art and Experience Director at Electronic Arts for popular video game franchises such as [UFC](#), [Need for Speed](#), [NBA Live](#) and [Plants vs Zombies](#).

[Siyang Duan, PhD](#) - Media art and theory scholar whose work focuses primarily on the study of media arts from the perspective of Chinese Aesthetics. She is also host of the Mandarin language

podcast (introductions in English) [Elephant Says: Art, Asia, Technology.](#)

Other possible guest speakers TBA

Course Load

Tuesdays: weekly course material will be released at 2pm PST. Coursework will be organized in modules and include readings, lectures, and self-guided engagement with digital media platforms. You are completed to expect all assigned readings and assignments. Readings will be provided, no textbook.

DUE Sundays by 11:59 pm PST

- Reading and lecture quiz 5-10 questions, 10 points extra credit (2% total possible)
- Discussion board post 350-500 words - Each week, you will be asked to critically reflect on a digital media phenomenon. While more informal than your final paper, your discussion should go beyond simple impressions to also consider the implications and possible applications of the ideas being presented. These discussions will offer you a chance to practice the critical writing skills required for the final analysis paper. No discussion post Week 5. Discussion posts will be graded via a simple 10 point rubric.

DUE Tuesdays by 11:59pm PST

- Comments for 2 classmates on the discussion board

Midterm, topic, draft thesis, and source list for final paper. 2 peer review comments.

Final, Critical Analysis Paper - This paper (750-1000 words) will require you to build an argument by researching a digital media phenomenon, writing a thesis (making a claim) about your object of study, summarizing your object of study, providing detailed impressions of the object, and drawing broader conclusions about the media phenomenon as related to your thesis. Secondary sources will provide support for your claims. This paper will formalize the mode of critical writing undertaken in your weekly discussions.

Midterm and Final will be graded via a simple 100-point rubric.

Week 1 – Introduction to New Media Studies

Lecture 1: What is New Media Studies?

Watch: “This is Marshall McLuhan: The Medium is the Message”

Read: “What is New Media” in Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (2001)

Lecture 2: Computer learning

Research Object: Student Learning Analytics on Canvas

Watch: “Are Computer Technologies Just Tools?,” Humanities & Technology Lecture Series 2018 | N. Katherine Hayles

Read: “Hijacked: The Division of Learning in Society” in Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (2019)

Week 2 – Online Communities

Lecture 3: Social media, or the community as database

Read: “The Culture Industry Reconsidered” by Theodor Adorno (1975); “Native Americans, Networks, and Technology” in Ramesh Srinivasan, *Whose Global Village: Rethinking How Technology Shapes Our World* (2017)

Lecture 4: Participatory culture: sub-cultures, fandoms (and trolls)

Read: “Interactive Audiences? The Collective Intelligence of Media Fans” in *Fans, Bloggers, Gamers*, Henry Jenkins (2006); “Fandom as Free Labor” in *Digital Labor: The Internet as Playground and Factory*, Abigail De Kosnik (2013)

Week 3 – Cyber-territories

Lecture 5: Crossing the digital border: from governance to #gatekeep

Research Object: “A Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace,” John Perry Barlow

Read: “From #GamerGate to Donald Trump: Toxic Masculinity and the Politics of the Alt-Right” in *Gaming Masculinity: Trolls, Fake Geeks, and the Gendered Battle for Online Culture*, Megan Condis (2018); “The Dark Web Dilemma,” in *Cyber Security in a Volatile World*, Eric Jardine (2017)

Lecture 6: IRL: On the matter of server farms and clouds

Read: “The Environmental History of Computing,” Nathan Ensmenger (2018); “Blood on Your Mobile?,” Dev Nathan and Sandip Sarkar (2010)

Week 4 – The art and design of video game experience

Lecture 7: Josh Awesome guest lecture on experience design at Electronic Arts

Read: “Between the Paddles: Pong, Between Men, and Queer Intimacy in Video Games,” in Bonnie (Bo) Ruberg, *Video Games Have Always Been Queer* (2019); “#TechFail: From Intersection (In)Accessibility to Inclusive Design,” in Kishonna L. Gray, *Intersectional Tech*; “From harmony to intensity: the reconstruction of ‘body’ in Chinese New Ink Art,” in Siying Duan, *A Body of Knowledge conference proceedings*; “Infinity and Accident: Strategies of Enfoldment in Islamic Art and Computer Art,” in *Leonardo*, Laura U. Marks (2006)

Week 5 – Computational bodies

Lecture 9: My fridge thinks I’m fat: the quantified self, or life in the internet of things

Read: “The automated states, automated government, and self-automation of the ‘smart’ appliance: three questions about refrigerators,” James Hay

Lecture 10: Artificial ethics: algorithms, machine learning, bots, and autonomous machines

Read: “The Madness of Algorithms: Aberration and Unreasonable Acts,” in Louise Amoore, *Cloud Ethics: Algorithms and the Attributes of Ourselves and Others*

Class Resources

UCI Library Film and Media Studies Resources <https://guides.lib.uci.edu/film/homepage>

Subject Librarian Jenna Dufour dufourj@uci.edu

Google Scholar - Allows you to search academic publications by keyword, can be linked to UCI Library resources through settings <https://scholar.google.com/>

UCI Center for Excellence in Writing and Communication

<https://www.writingcenter.uci.edu/> — The UCI writing center offers email consultations, writing specialist appointments, peer tutoring, and other resources for student writers.

Citation help from the UCI Library <https://guides.lib.uci.edu/citations>

Collaboration with your peers, including group study sessions and notes, are welcome; all quizzes are "open book." However, the copying of other student's work or the failure to cite sources in writing assignments is plagiarism. Violations of the school's academic integrity policies, including plagiarism, may result in a failing grade or educational sanctions. Please take steps to avoid academic misconduct. Reach out if you are struggling, falling behind, or otherwise need help! <https://aisc.uci.edu/students/academic-integrity/index.php>

Grading Schema

25% - Weekly Discussions, Peer Comments, and Quizzes

25% - Midterm, and Peer Comments

50% - Final Critical Analysis Paper

10/100 Point Grading Rubric - Please email to request detailed feedback on assignments

Late Policy - sometimes we need a few extra hours

With the exception of peer comments, assignments will be accepted with a .12% deduction per hour, or 3.12% per 24-hour day for a maximum of 2 weeks (14 days) past the due date. No late peer comments accepted without an approved extension prior to the submission date.

If there is a family or medical emergency, please reach out. Extensions can be given on a case-by-case basis.

If you are already aware of a conflict. Reach out asap.