COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT 533: 
EMERGING COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism
University of Southern California
[Spring 2015]

MEETINGS
Wednesdays, 6:30pm-9:20pm | ANN-305

INSTRUCTOR
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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 4:30-6pm (or email for appointment)
Office Location: ANN-310B

There are no required books to purchase. All readings are provided through Blackboard.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This masters-level survey course equips future communication managers with the critical skills necessary to interpret and create new networked communication technologies. The course defines ‘communication technologies’ as not only devices and tools – but also as the practices, institutions, and values that shape their emergence and power. Each week’s materials are organized into “foundations” and “applications”, helping students see broad arcs of technological innovation and how particular examples fit within them.

The course starts with a short introduction to foundational ideas in the study and design of communication technologies and proceeds as a thematic tour of contemporary systems and controversies, including: networked information algorithms, “big data”, and the quantified self; encryption tools and networked privacy techniques; drones, digital mapping, and location-based apps; public sphere technologies, networked journalism, and online activism; net neutrality, common carriage, and the right to be forgotten; online currencies and networked financial systems; online labor markets; tools and strategies for disconnection; online counter-cultures and networks of resistance; and ethical tensions in the design and field study of emerging information technologies.

By the end of the course, students should be able to describe the social and technological dynamics of new communication technologies. They should leave the course ready to see tools, institutions, practices and values within broad patterns of innovation and power – able to say not only what a particular communication technology is (its features and dynamics) but also why it matters (its social and political power).
Mike Ananny is an Assistant Professor at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism, Affiliated Faculty with USC’s Science, Technology and Society research cluster, and a Faculty Associate at Harvard’s Berkman Center for Internet & Society. He studies the public significance and sociotechnical dynamics of networked news systems. He has held fellowships and scholarships with Stanford’s Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, the LEGO Corporation, and Interval Research. He was a founding member of Media Lab Europe’s research staff, a postdoc with Microsoft Research’s Social Media Collective, and has worked or consulted for LEGO, Mattel, and Nortel Networks. His PhD is from Stanford University (Communication), SM from the MIT Media Lab (Media Arts & Sciences), and BSc from the University of Toronto (Human Biology & Computer Science). He has published in a variety of venues including Critical Studies in Media Communication, International Journal of Communication, the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, American Behavioral Scientist, Television & New Media, and the proceedings of the ACM’s conferences on Computer-Human Interaction and Computer Supported Collaborative Learning. He is writing a book on a public right to hear in an age of networked journalism (under contract with MIT Press).

THE BEST WAY TO GET AN ‘A’ IN THIS CLASS

- do all the assigned readings before the class (doing so will help the lecture make sense and I’ll draw on both the required and recommended readings in my lectures);
- turn your phone off during class and don’t wander off to social media while using your laptop (you’ll take the best notes and increase your grade if you stay focused on class);
- make friends with fellow students, trade notes, form study groups, and write 3 practice exam questions after each class;
- leave yourself time to edit and revise your responses to the ‘reflection’ assignments (i.e., don’t leave it until the night before to write them);
- participate often and thoughtfully in discussion sections, and come to my office hours (this will help you stay connected to the course);
- practice applying the concepts we discuss in class immediately as you use and encounter new communication technologies.

This course is designed not only to expose you to a variety of ideas and controversies associated with communication technologies, but also the varied ways that people communicate about and debate communication technologies.

I’m asking you to consider a variety of materials in this class – everything from videos, podcasts, and long-form popular press articles to easily accessible book chapters and more challenging scholarly pieces published in academic journals. Part of being a reflective practitioner or engaged observer of these issues is integrating scholarly articles with popular press accounts to come to your own opinion. This class will give you practice doing this. Each class has a list of materials you are required to read and make notes on – but you are not responsible for readings labeled ‘Recommended/Background’.

Some readings are more challenging or longer than others. At a masters level, part of what you’re learning is how to consider a significant amount of material in a relatively short period of time. Give yourself sufficient time to read and flag difficult bits for us to talk about in lecture, discussion sections, or office hours. A class like this works best if everyone has done the reading ahead of time and you come to class with questions and I’ll be keeping track of participation. The best kind of comment or question helps move the conversation forward.
**ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING**

**Weekly Questions, Attendance, Participation (60 points)**
You are expected to do all of the assigned readings, come to class prepared to participate, and actively contribute to each week’s discussion. To that end, you must submit via the Blackboard ‘Discussion’ link one question on that week’s assigned materials by Wednesday at 12noon. The best questions will help open the conversation and start good discussions (e.g., “What kind of privacy rules should algorithm designers follow?”) and not be simple definitional questions (e.g., “What’s an algorithm?”) Individual questions will not be graded but must be completed each week. Failure to submit questions will result in a low grade on this component.

**‘Opening’ Readings (3 x 20 points = 60 points)**
Three times during the semester, you will individually ‘open’ one of the foundational readings. I’ll say more in class about what this means, but the ideal opening is very short summary of the paper’s key themes and then active leadership of a discussion that: stays close to the reading (does not divergence beyond what it says); compares it to other readings and the course themes; and generates new ways to help your fellow students understand and relate to it. It’s not required, but you may provide a hand-out or show supporting media if you think they’ll help the conversation about that reading.

**In-Class Case Studies (2 x 40 points = 80 points)**
Twice during the semester, individually or in pairs, you will lead a discussion on an emerging communication technology, organization, or event. You have considerable freedom to define the topic of the case study and I can provide ideas if necessary. You will make a very short (5-minute) presentation on the technology/organization/event and then lead a 20-30 minute discussion on it. I expect you to come prepared with discussion questions, a short activity, or other materials that engage your fellow students in the case.

**Reflections (2 x 75 points = 150 points total)**
Twice during the semester, you’ll submit a short written reflection (approximately 750 words) on some aspect of the course. Each reflection will be graded out of 75 points and I will announce the topics at least two weeks in advance. They will not require not reading or research beyond what is assigned in the class. Due dates:

- Reflection #1: Wednesday, February 25th
- Reflection #2: Wednesday, April 1st

**NOTE:** You can revise and resubmit ONE reflection assignment for re-grading. You must resubmit no later than 14 days after the reflection has been returned to you. No resubmissions will be accepted after 14 days. You do not have to revise and resubmit any reflection assignment; it is your choice.

**Final Paper Proposal (10 points): April 15**
In preparation for your final paper (see below), you will submit a short proposal that describes what you’re going to do, what questions or materials you’ll be working with, what your timeline is, and any resources you require. This is meant to be a small check-in so that you and I can understand what your final project will be and what you need to make it successful.

**Final Presentation (25 points): April 29**
In the final class you will give an individual 10-12 minute presentation on the current state of your final paper. Since the final paper is not due at that class (it is due May 8), the presentation should be a preliminary discussion of your analysis and an opportunity to have a class discussion about challenges you’re encountering and to get feedback from me and your fellow students.
**Final Paper (115 points): May 8**

You have considerable freedom to decide the topic of your final project (e.g., you might choose to expand on one of your reflection assignments), but I ask you to choose one of the following formats:

1. A traditional “deep analysis” (2,000-3,000 words) in which you closely analyze, compare, and synthesize at least 5 of the class’s “Foundations” readings;

2. A system evaluation (2,000-3,000 words) in which you apply at least 2 “Foundations” readings to an existing communication technology, using the readings to analyze the technology and suggest ways that it might be changed in light of the readings;

3. A system design in which you prototype a new communication technology (we can discuss different design approaches and prototyping materials) and write a paper (1,500 words) on how your prototype at least 2 of the class’s “Foundations” readings. For this third, system design option, you may work in groups to prototype a system, but each group member must submit his/her own paper.

For all formats and papers, you are encouraged to use the readings we’ve discussed in class, consult the “recommended/supplemental” reading list at the end of the syllabus, and find sources of your own. I will say more about this project in class. In the final class, you will give a 10-15 minute presentation on the state of your final project, getting feedback from the class that should feed into your final paper submission (due during the exam period).

**TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 500 points**

Final grades will be assigned to the following total point ranges:

- 500-467 = A
- 466-450 = A-
- 449-433 = B+
- 432-416 = B
- 415-400 = B-
- 399-384 = C+
- 383-367 = C
- 366-350 = C-
- 349-333 = D+
- 332-316 = D
- 315-300 = D-
- 299-Below = F

**Late Policies:**

Unless there is a valid, documented medical/family reason and the student has communicated with the instructor before an assignment’s due date, late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. If an assignment is submitted late, we will subtract one partial letter grade for every 24 hours the assignment is late. E.g., an assignment handed in 24 hours late can only earn a maximum possible grade of A-minus; 48 hours late, B-plus, etc. No assignment will be accepted more than 72 hours past the due date, unless discussed with the instructor before the original due date.

I’ll generally answer your email within about 24 hours, but I usually don’t answer email on weekends or after 7pm on weekdays. If it’s an urgent matter (e.g., an emergency that will prevent you from completing an assignment), please mark the subject line of your email ‘urgent’. If you have a longer question that would be best addressed in a conversation, please my office hours or make an appointment. I’m always happy to meet with students and more involved questions are often best addressed face to face.

Please make friends with your fellow students – they’re often your best first point of contact if you missed a class. I can’t summarize whole classes either in person or email so please be sure to have a few friends you can borrow notes from if you miss a class. It’s also a good idea to form small study groups to review material.
ACADEMIC CONDUCT & SUPPORT SYSTEMS

**Academic Conduct**

Plagiarism—presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words—is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* [https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions](https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

**Support Systems**

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* [http://equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu) or to the *Department of Public Safety*, [http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us](http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us). This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community—such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member—can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm) provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [http://sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.
## COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule and readings described below may change as the semester progresses. If it does I’ll be sure to give you plenty of notice, mention changes in class, and send an email summarizing the changes.

All readings under **FOUNDATIONS** and **APPLICATIONS** are required, unless a choice is indicated. (Recommended readings are not required.)

### Week #1: January 14

**INTRODUCTION**

There is no required reading, but come to class prepared with:
- your own definition of “emerging communication technology”;
- one example technology you think fits your definition;
- reasons why you think it is important for someone in your program to study them;
- your learning goals for the semester.

### Week #2: January 21

**WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ‘EMERGING COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES’?**

**AFFORDANCES & CONSTRAINTS, SOCIAL VS. TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM, DOMESTICATION**

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<td><strong>FOUNDATIONS:</strong></td>
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Week #3: January 28
POLITICS OF EMERGING COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES & VALUE-SENSITIVE DESIGN

Reading / Listening Due

FOUNDATIONS:


APPLICATIONS: Watch/read both


Recommended:


Week #4: February 4
INFORMATION ALGORITHMS

Reading / Listening Due

**FOUNDATIONS:**


**APPLICATIONS:** Read at least two and come to class prepared to discuss.


**Week #5: February 11**

**BIG DATA, META-DATA, & THE QUANTIFIED SELF**

**Reading / Listening Due**

**FOUNDATIONS:**


**APPLICATIONS:** Read **at least two** and come to class prepared to discuss.


**Recommended:**

# Week #6: February 18
## PRIVACY, ENCRYPTION, & TRYING TO HIDE IN THE NETWORK

### Reading / Listening Due

#### FOUNDATIONS:


#### APPLICATIONS: Read at least two and come to class prepared to discuss.


Examine selected privacy and encryption tools and issues from the Electronic Frontier Foundation’s *Surveillance Self-Defense* project: https://ssd.eff.org/ & the *Radical Librarian* project: http://boingboing.net/2014/09/13/radical-librarianship-how-nin.html

#### Recommended:


Reading / Listening Due

**FOUNDATIONS:**


**APPLICATIONS:** Read at least two and come to class prepared to discuss.


Selected visualizations from the Oxford Internet Institute’s *Information Geographies* project: [http://geography.oii.ox.ac.uk/](http://geography.oii.ox.ac.uk/)


**Recommended:**


Week #8: March 4
NETWORKED JOURNALISM & PUBLIC SPHERE TECHNOLOGIES

Reading / Listening Due

FOUNDATIONS:


APPLICATIONS: Read at least two and come to class prepared to discuss.


## Week #9: March 11
### NET NEUTRALITY, THE RIGHT TO BE FORGOTTEN, & TECHNOLOGIES OF COMMON CARRIAGE

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| APPLICATIONS: Read **at least two** and come to class prepared to discuss. |

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## Week #10: March 18

**SPRING RECESS, NO MEETING**
**Week #11: March 25**

**ONLINE MONEY: NETWORKED TECHNOLOGIES FOR COMMODIFICATION & EXCHANGE**

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**FOUNDATIONS:**


**APPLICATIONS:** Read at least two and come to class prepared to discuss.


**Recommended:**


**Week #12: April 1**

**NETWORKED LABOR AND ONLINE WORK: VENTURE LABOUR & TECHNOLOGIES OF THE PRECARIAT**

--- REFLECTION #2 DUE ---

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<td><strong>APPLICATIONS:</strong> Read <strong>at least two</strong> and come to class prepared to discuss.</td>
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**Week #13: April 8**

**DISCONNECTION: WHEN & WHY COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES ARE NOT USED**

### Reading / Listening Due

- **FOUNDATIONS:**

- **APPLICATIONS:** Read at least two and come to class prepared to discuss.

The “Non Use Project”: [http://nonuse.org/](http://nonuse.org/)

### Recommended:

Week #14: April 15

HACKING, RESISTING, COUNTER-CULTURES, & BEING “ANTI-SOCIAL” ONLINE

--- PROPOSAL DUE ---

**Reading / Listening Due**

**FOUNDATIONS & APPLICATIONS:**


**In-Class Viewing (no need to watch before class):**


Luminant Films. (2012). *We are legion: The story of hacktivists*: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISqrTMe7Rw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISqrTMe7Rw)

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Week #15: April 22

**ETHICAL BOUNDARIES: DESIGNING, TESTING & UNDERSTANDING EMERGING COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES**

**Reading / Listening Due**

**FOUNDATIONS:**


**APPLICATIONS: Read all (they’re not long)**


NO FINAL EXAM.

FINAL PAPERS DUE: Friday, May 8