

## **COMM 202: Communication and Technology**

11:00-12:20 Tuesday, Thursday  
ASC G26

### **Instructor:**

[Douglas Thomas](#)

310 Kerckhoff Hall (734 West Adams) 213-743-1943

(Office Hours: 12:00-1:00 Monday and Wednesday)

### **Texts:**

Course Readings available on Blackboard

Douglas Thomas and John Seely Brown, *A New Culture of Learning*

Douglas Thomas, *Hacker Culture*

Douglas Thomas, [Rhetoric of Code](#)

### **Goals:**

This class is designed as an introduction to contemporary issues in communication technology. Beginning with the earliest technology (writing) we will explore the various social, political, cultural, and economic impacts of new communication technology. The course goals are threefold:

- To help students build a technical vocabulary to better understand new communication technology
- To provide a sense of background, history, and origins of new communication technologies, particularly computers
- To have students engage with technology in a series of hands-on exercises which will familiarize students with new technology

### **Assignments:**

Students will be expected to attend class and discussion sections and complete all assignments. In addition, there will be two midterm examinations and a final (non-cumulative) exam, each worth 25% of your grade. Exams will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

There will also be four discussion section assignments, worth a total of 10% of your grade. These are "hands-on" assignments, where you will be expected to apply course concepts.

Students will also participate in mandatory study groups and complete 3 assignments related to the group, worth 15% of the final grade

Grades will be computed using a basic scale (97-100 = A+, 94-96 = A, 90-93 = A-, etc.). Unfortunately, there is no credit for effort, except as evidenced in your work.

No late assignments will be accepted. Make up exams will be scheduled only in cases of documented physical illness or in case of emergency.

### **Academic Integrity:**

The School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. It endorses and acts on the SCampus policies and procedures detailed in the section titled: "University Student Conduct Code." See especially Appendix A: "Academic Dishonesty Sanction Guidelines." The policies, procedures, and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They protect your rights, as well as those of the faculty.

It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating data for a project, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone but yourself. If you have doubts about any of these practices, confer with a faculty member.

## **SCHEDULE**

### **WEEK ONE**

1/15 INTRODUCTION

Reading: None

1/17 SELF, TECHNOLOGY AND IDENTITY

Reading: Boellstorff, "Coming of Age" (BB)

## **WEEK TWO**

1/22 DIGITAL PRESENCE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Reading: Donath and boyd, "Public Displays" (BB)

1/24 DEFINING RELATIONSHIPS

Reading: Ellison, "The Benefits of Facebook 'Friends'" (BB)

## **WEEK THREE**

1/29 CULTURES OF LEARNING

Reading: *A New Culture of Learning*, pp. 1-55

1/31 PLAY AND GAMING

Reading: *A New Culture of Learning*, pp. 90-118

## **WEEK FOUR**

2/5 TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNOCRACY

Reading: Castells, "Information Technology Revolution" (BB)

2/7 UTOPIAN VISIONS

Reading: Sturken and Thomas, "Technological Visions" (BB)

## **WEEK FIVE**

2/12 SCIENCE FICTION

Reading: Haigh, "Technology's Other Storytellers"

2/14 REVIEW SESSION

## **WEEK SIX**

2/19 EXAM ONE

2/21 THE NATURE OF TECHNOLOGY

Reading: *The Rhetoric of Code*, pp. 1-20

## **WEEK SEVEN**

2/26 ALPHABET TO COMPUTER

Reading: "Relay computers of George Stibitz" (BB)

## 2/28 CODES AND ENCRYPTION

Reading: from *The Victorian Internet* (BB)

## WEEK EIGHT

### 3/5 PRIVACY AND ANONYMITY

Reading: boyd and Hargettai, "Facebook Privacy Settings"

### 3/7 TECHNOLOGY AND THE BODY

Reading: *The Rhetoric of Code*, pp. 43-67

## WEEK NINE

### 3/12 GAMES AND IDENTITY

Reading: *The Rhetoric of Code*, pp. 68-103

### 3/14 MINDS AND MACHINES/AI

Reading: Turkle, "AI as the New Frontier" (BB)

## WEEK TEN

SPRING BREAK

## WEEK ELEVEN

### 3/26 REVIEW SESSION

### 3/28 EXAM TWO

## WEEK TWELVE

### 4/2 THE CHANGING NATURE OF PUBLICS

Reading: Thomas, "From Community to Collective"

### 4/4 WIKI LEAKS AND ANONYMOUS

Reading: Benkler, "A Free Irresponsible Press"

## WEEK THIRTEEN

### 4/9 VIRUS CULTURE

Reading: *The Rhetoric of Code*, pp. 105-151

4/11 COPYRIGHT AND CENSORSHIP

Reading: *The Rhetoric of Code*, pp. 21-42

## **WEEK FOURTEEN**

4/16 DATABASE CULTURE

Reading: Garfinkle "Database Nation" (BB)

4/18 OPEN SOURCE

Reading: Raymond "The Cathedral and the Bazaar"

## **WEEK FIFTEEN**

4/23 HACKING CULTURE

Reading: *Hacker Culture*, pp 3-110

4/25 SOCIAL ENGINEERING

Reading: *Hacker Culture*, pp 115-171

## **WEEK SIXTEEN**

4/30 HACKING AND THE LAW

Reading: *Hacker Culture*, pp 175-237

5/2 EXAM THREE