

COMM 306

Innovation, Entertainment, and the Arts

Prof. Michelle C Forelle
Spring 2018

Monday and Wednesday | 12:00 – 1:50pm in ANN 210

Office hours:
TBD
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will map various media industries through the innovations and disruptions that define their history, determine their present, and shape their future. “Innovation” and “disruption” are two of the most celebrated—but perhaps least understood—terms used in the entertainment and arts industries. Rather than take these ideas for granted, this course will cover a number of critical frameworks that can be used to understand them. Then, we will trace the innovations and disruptions that occurred over the course of the history of print, radio, television, film, music, games and marketing. We examine these changes so we can go beyond *what* happened and uncover the *how* and the *why*. Students will then be able to take this knowledge and apply it to the development of their own innovations, working together to generate and present new ideas that build off what came before to address something that is needed now (or will be needed soon). Although the focus will be on the American media and communications industries, the end of the course will provide some future-facing and global outlooks on entertainment and the arts.

REQUIRED TEXTS

TBD

All other texts to be read in this course will be available either in PDF format or as a link to the original piece on Blackboard

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING BREAKDOWN

- **10% - Class Participation and Attendance** – Students are expected to make informed contributions to class discussions and in-class activities. Students are expected to attend every lecture and screening. Attendance will be taken. Missing more than *three* classes will result in an automatic reduction of a full point from the final grade. Missing more than *six* classes will result in an incomplete or failing grade.
- **15% - Weekly Blackboard Posts** – Every week you will be required to post on the Blackboard discussion board. These posts should be a reflection on the week’s

readings, and work to connect the ideas from those readings to some contemporary phenomenon. This could be the release of a new technology or service, an advertising campaign for a movie or television show, an ongoing fan engagement activity, or a news report or thinkpiece on a technological trend. Posts must be minimum 300 words.

- **25% - Innovation assessment** – In a 1200-1500 word paper, each student will analyze an innovation in the realms of entertainment and the arts. Students will choose the innovation themselves, which can be recent or historical. They will then apply the analytical framework we will have developed over the first month of class to assess the historical, economic, cultural and technological components of their chosen innovation.
- **50% - Original innovation concept** – Using lessons learned from the assessment assignment, students will then develop a proposal for an innovation of their own. Students may work on their own or in groups. This project will be graded in three parts:
 - 10% on an initial proposal due in mid-March
 - 20% on the final in-class presentation given during the last class of the semester
 - 20% on the final written proposal submitted during exam week

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

The Annenberg School for communication is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and may be dismissed as a major.

In addition to the formal academic integrity policy, our pedagogical policy is based on mutual respect; all students are encouraged to use the classroom as a space in which to speak and to voice their opinions. Our expectation is that you will respect not only the professors but also your fellow classmates when they are participation in discussion.

Laptop requirement and use

Effective fall 2014, all undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors will be required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the Annenberg Virtual Commons for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's Information Technology Services website. Annenberg students also have access to the full Adobe Creative Cloud, which provides access to a variety of Adobe apps and products; more information at <http://www.annenbergdl.org/tutorials/installing-adobe-creative-cloud/>

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that use of computer in the classroom is a privilege. You may use a computer in the classroom ONLY for taking notes or for class presentations. If you abuse this privilege by checking email or going on the Internet, updating Facebook profiles, IMing friends, or playing computer games, you will be marked as absent for that class period. All other electronic devices (smart phones, etc) must be put away during class time. If this kind of activity gets to be a problem, laptop computers will not be allowed in the classroom.

Plagiarism

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by the instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. Presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is considered plagiarism and is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" <https://policy.usc.edu/student/scampus/part-b>. 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>.

Sexual Assault and Harassment Policy and Resources

Discrimination, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and harassment are prohibited by the university. You are encouraged to report all incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity/Title IX Office* <http://equity.usc.edu> and/or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://dps.usc.edu>. This is important for the health and safety of the whole USC community. Faculty and staff must report any information regarding an incident to the Title IX Coordinator who will provide outreach and information to the affected party. The sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> fully describes reporting options. Relationship and Sexual Violence Services <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp> provides 24/7 confidential support.

Stress Management

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711, open between 8:30am and 5pm on weekdays. The service is confidential, and there is no charge. Student Counseling Services also offers support groups on a variety of topics.

Students with Disabilities

The Office of Disability Services and Programs <http://dsp.usc.edu> provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 830am – 5pm, Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, 213-740-0776 (phone), 213-740-6948 (TDD only), 213-740-8216 (fax), ability@usc.edu

Scholarly Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more.

- Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://ali.usc.edu>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.
- The USC Writing Center is free for all students <http://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter>. The Writing Center offers 25-minute individual sessions with writing consultants who are available to assist students with all the steps of producing a piece of writing, as well as a variety of 50-minute group workshops that focus on specific topics related to writing. This is *not* a proof-reading service, but a center to help students develop and refine their writing skills.
- If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

SCHEDULE (Readings subject to change)

Week 1 – Introduction to Innovation & Disruption

Jan 8

- ➔ Introduction & syllabus review

Jan 10

- ➔ Benoît Godin, “Innovation: A Conceptual History of an Anonymous Concept,” 2015
 - <http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/WorkingPaper21.pdf>

Week 2 – Critical approaches to the ideology of innovation

Jan 15 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no class

Jan 17 –

- ➔ Nick Ishmael Perkins, “Q&A: How the ideology of innovation harms development,” *SciDevNet*
 - <https://www.scidev.net/global/innovation/feature/langdon-winner-tyranny-new.html>
- ➔ Jill Lepore, “The Disruption Machine,” *The New Yorker*
 - <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/06/23/the-disruption-machine>

Week 3 – Convergence culture & future screens

Jan 22 –

- ➔ Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*:
 - “Introduction: ‘Worship at the Altar of Convergence’”
 - “Conclusion: Democratizing Television? The Politics of Participation” (PDFs on BB)

Jan 24 –

- Francesca Marie Smith, “The New Screens,” *The Edison Project*
 - <https://www.annenberglab.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Edison-Project-Book.pdf>

Week 4 – The Visual Arena

Jan 29 –

- Ken Auletta, “Outside the Box: Netflix and the future of television,” *The New Yorker*, February 3, 2014
 - <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/02/03/outside-the-box-2>
- Aymar Jean Christian, “Web TV Networks Challenge Linear Business Models”
 - <http://www.carseywolf.ucsb.edu/mip/article/web-tv-networks-challenge-linear-business-models>

Jan 31 –

- Henry Jenkins, Joshua Green, and Sam Ford, “Chapter 3: The Value of Media Engagement,” *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*, 2013 (PDF on BB)

Week 5 – The Audio Arena

Feb 5 –

- Ken Doctor, “An island no more: Inside the business of the podcasting boom,” *NiemanLab*, September 12, 2016
 - <http://www.niemanlab.org/2016/09/an-island-no-more-inside-the-business-of-the-podcasting-boom/>

Feb 7 –

- Rawiya Kameir, “How Chance The Rapper & The Social Experiment Couple Change The Grammys Forever,” *The Fader*, May 13, 2015
 - <http://www.thefader.com/2016/05/13/chance-the-rapper-social-experiment-coloring-book>
- Andrew Friedman, “Why Chance The Rapper is not a truly independent artist,” *Fact Mag*, May 20, 2016
 - <http://www.factmag.com/2016/05/20/chance-the-rapper-independent/>

Week 6 – Pro-am and alt producers

Feb 12 –

- Tony Zhou, “Postmortem: Every Frame a Painting,” *Medium*, December 2, 2017
 - <https://medium.com/@tonyszhou/postmortem-1b338537fab>
- Richard Brody, “Our dated model of theatrical release is hurting independent cinema,” *The New Yorker*, April 26, 2016
 - <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/our-dated-model-of-theatrical-release-is-hurting-independent-cinema>

Feb 14 –

- Zoe Quinn, “Punk Games,” *BoingBoing*, March 16, 2015
 - <https://boingboing.net/2015/03/16/punk-games.html>
- TBD

Week 7 – Live and in-person

Feb 19 – President’s Day, no class

Feb 21 –

- Robinson Meyer, “The Museum of the Future Is Here,” *The Atlantic*, January 20, 2015
 - <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/01/how-to-build-the-museum-of-the-future/384646/>

→ TBD

Assignment due: Innovation assessment

Week 8 – Algorithms in entertainment and the arts

Feb 26 –

- Clive Thompson, “If You Liked This, You’re Sure to Love That,” *The New York Times*, November 21, 2008
 - <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/23/magazine/23Netflix-t.html>
- Blake Hallinan and Ted Striphas, “Recommended for you: The Netflix Prize and the production of algorithmic culture,” *New Media & Society*, 18(1), 2016 (PDF on BB)

Feb 28 –

→ TBD

Week 9 – Formats and infrastructures

Mar 5 –

- Jonathan Sterne, “Chapter 4: Making a Standard,” *MP3: The Meaning of a Format*, 2012 (PDF on BB)
- Andrew Flanagan, “The MP3 is officially dead, according to its creators,” *NPR*, May 11, 2017
 - <https://www.npr.org/sections/therecord/2017/05/11/527829909/the-mp3-is-officially-dead-according-to-its-creators>

Mar 7 –

→ TBD

SPRING BREAK, Mar 11-18

Week 10 – Technology and aesthetics

Mar 19 –

- Patrick Davison, “Because of the Pixels: On the History, Form, and Influence of MS Paint,” *Journal of Visual Culture*, 13(3), December 2014 (PDF on BB)

Mar 21 –

→ TBD

→ **Assignment due: Original innovation proposal**

Week 11 – Intellectual property

Mar 26 –

- Adam Rogers, “Art fight! The pinkest pink versus the blackest black,” *WIRED*, June 22, 2017
 - <https://www.wired.com/story/vantablack-anish-kapoor-stuart-semple/>
- Siva Vaidhyanathan, “Introduction,” *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How It Threatens Creativity*, 2001 (PDF on BB)

Mar 28 –

- Michael A. Carrier, “Copyright and innovation: the untold story,” *Wisconsin Law Review*, 2012 (PDF on BB)

Week 12 – Consolidation, monopolies, and government intervention

Apr 2 –

- Jonathan Taplin. “Is It Time To Break Up Google?” *New York Times*, April 22, 2017
 - <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/22/opinion/sunday/is-it-time-to-break-up-google.html>
- TBD

Apr 4 –

- TBD

Week 13 – Globalization and Social Change

Apr 9 –

- Erich Schwartzel, “Hollywood’s New Script: You Can’t Make Movies Without China,” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 18, 2017
 - <https://www.wsj.com/articles/hollywoods-new-script-you-cant-make-movies-without-china-1492525636>
- Manuel Castells, “Opening” & “Changing the World in the Network Society,” *Networks of Outrage and Hope*

Apr 11 –

- TBD

Week 14 – After Innovation: Maintenance, Repair, and Decay

Apr 16 –

- Andrew Russell and Lee Vinsel, “Let’s Get Excited About Maintenance!” *The New York Times* (2017)
 - <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/22/opinion/sunday/lets-get-excited-about-maintenance.html>

Apr 18 –

- Susan Liataud, “Ethical Innovation Means Giving Society a Say,” *WIRED*
 - <https://www.wired.com/story/innovation-ethically/>

Week 15: Student presentations

FINAL DUE FRIDAY MAY 4