

COMM 309
Communication and Technology
Summer 2019

Instructor: Rachel E. Moran, PhD Candidate – Annenberg School
Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2pm-6:10pm, June 26th – August 6th
Location: ANN 209
Office Hours: By appointment – contact rachelm@usc.edu

Course Description

Much of our daily communication is now done via digital technologies—you could spend a whole day in silence and still be up-to-date on all the news, share your opinions on last night’s game and set up a date for the weekend. But what is “technology” – how do we define it? Do we all have access to the same technologies? Do we use them the same ways? Is technological advancement always for the better? In this introductory course we will examine the cultural, political, social and economic dynamics of communications technologies. Through an exploration of key texts and real-life examples we will look at a broad range of issues associated with the communications technologies we use everyday. These issues include; privacy & surveillance, networked journalism & misinformation, online & offline activism; and big data & algorithms.

The first half of the course will introduce key theories and texts from across academic disciplines to equip us with useful terminology and a historical understanding of technological change in order to examine real-life examples of our own technology use. In the second half of the course we will focus on the issues listed above and critically assess the role of communications technologies in modern life and highlight potential future issues.

About the Instructor

I am a fourth year PhD Candidate in the Annenberg School. I am currently writing my dissertation on trust and engagement in online news. I received a BA and MA in Social and Political Science from Cambridge University and an MA in Political Communication from Goldsmiths College, University of London. Before joining Annenberg I worked as a political consultant in London, England. My research interests include the decline and renewal of journalism online, fake news and the spread of misinformation, and issues of social and economic justice in communications policy. I have published articles in the *International Journal of Communication, Information, Communication & Society*, and *Telecommunications Policy*. Please be warned that I have a delightful English accent, if you do not understand something I say please don’t hesitate to ask me to repeat it.

The Best Way to Get An “A” in this Class

The summer session will go quickly, please try to keep up! I have endeavored to set a reasonable amount of reading and writing across the few weeks we will spend together. I am here to help you get the best possible grade you can and, more importantly, get the best learning experience from this course. We will spend our hours together mostly chatting, so please come ready to share your thoughts, opinions and questions. The afternoon can drag so we will stop briefly for coffee each session and if you need to eat during the class please feel free (but be courteous of your classmates).

The best way to do well in class is to ask questions and make friends. If you miss a class, and try not to, your classmates will be your best bet for getting back on track. Try to start assignments before the day they are done and do reach out to me if you need help. Although this class will be talking about all things digital, try to stay off your phone and your Instagram page during class time. Do the readings! They are interesting I promise!

How your course grade will be calculated

Your grade will be calculated as a percentage of 1,000 points and your letter grade will follow the following grading scheme.

A	94-100	B-	80-83.9	D+	67-69.9
A-	90-93.9	C+	77-79.9	D	64-66.9
B+	87-89.9	C	74-76.9	D-	60-63.9
B	84-86.9	C-	70-73.9	F	0-59.9

Participation (100 points)

Please come to class ready and willing to participate. Participation means different things to different people, so there will be plenty of opportunities to engage in class time whether you're more introverted or extroverted.

Autobiographical Essay (100 points)

Respond to one of the writers we read in the first few classes with your perspective on your own technology use – has technology made you a smarter, better person? How has it challenged you? Can you imagine life without it? Or maybe you wish you could have lived in a generation before everything was digital. Draft a short (5 pages max.) essay exploring your own relationship to new communication technologies and practices. We will talk about this more in our second class together. **DUE TUESDAY 7/9 – emailed before class.**

Technological Artifact Presentation (250 points)

You will work in pairs to deliver a 20 minute presentation on a technological artifact, technology-related event or phenomenon. Please produce an accompanying slide show (please NO PREZI!!) to introduce the topic and critically engage with its impact and meaning. This may be a certain technology or platform, or recent changes to a platform (think the impact of Instagram Stories on Snapchat), a technological event (remember when everyone was glued to their phones searching for Pokemon Go!), a news story about the impact of technology in everyday life (have communications technologies led to new types of crime? Helped us catch criminals? Disadvantaged certain populations?). Please also prepare two to three questions to pose to your classmates in order to lead a 10 minute discussion after your presentation. I will pick presentation order out of a hat (unless there is a legitimate reason you must present on a certain day) **PRESENTATIONS TUESDAY 7/16 and THURSDAY 8/16.**

Surveillance Ethnography + Reflection (150 points)

In weeks Four and Five we will discuss the downsides of communications technologies specifically how they aid surveillance culture, break down boundaries of personal privacy and lead to the differential discrimination of vulnerable populations. To reflect on this I am asking you to undertake your own ethnographic study of surveillance technology. Spend an hour or so in a public space of

your choosing (this could be anywhere—School, the bank, the gym, Disneyland). Take a notebook or use your phone to take notes. Look around you and observe, what technologies do you see? Are they being used by the public or are they part of the space you are in? How do they impact people's behaviors? If you are with people you know, what technologies are they using? How does it impact how you behave? Write notes about everything and everyone you see and hear for an hour, do not worry if these are messy. After the fact, write a short (max. two page) reflection of the space you went to, the kinds of technologies being used and how they were being used, and how you think this impacted the people there. **DUE TUESDAY 7/30 - emailed before class**

Term Paper + Presentation (350 points + 50 points)

This is an individual assignment. Once again you will engage with a technological artifact, technology-related event, or phenomenon and relate this case to the theories and readings we cover in class. You can use the same topic from your technology presentation, but please work on your own for the paper. The paper should be 12-to-15 pages with references (APA style). Please talk to me before Thursday, 7/25 about your chosen topic and I will be happy to answer any questions or concerns you have. I realize presenting isn't everyone's cup of tea so grading for the presentations will be loose, if you make an effort but are a nervous presenter you can still expect to get 50 points, if you are lazy but confident however... **PRESENTATION + FINAL PAPER – TUESDAY 8/6. Presentations in class. Paper emailed to me by midnight.**

Late Submission

Unless there is a valid, documented medical / family reason communicated prior to the assignment due date you will be penalized for late submissions. **One partial letter grade will be subtracted for every 24 hours the assignment is late.**

Attendance + Class Policies

The summer session has limited classes, please do not (unless you really, truly have to) miss classes. Attendance is not mandatory, but do not expect to gain full points for participation if you miss more than one class. Remember to participate in class you first need to be there.

Email Policy

I will answer all emails within 24 hours. If you email after 5pm on Friday I will answer you Monday am. Please mark your emails with COMM309 in the subject line. I expect some level of formality in your emails, full sentences at the least. Please refer to me either as Rachel or Ms. Moran if you wish to be formal. I am not yet a Professor so Prof is not required!

Laptop policy

Everyone is allowed, and encouraged, to bring laptops to every class. Please try to stay off of social media and all other distracting sites while in class. I shouldn't have to ask this but I've had to numerous times in the past, but please refrain from wearing headphones during class.

Academic accommodation

Any students requiring academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please send me a copy of the letter ideally before the second class of the course, so I can ensure you are provided with everything you need. DSP is open Monday through Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm. The office is in the

Student Union room 301 and their phone number is 213-740-0776. If you are struggling to get hold of DSP within the truncated time of the semester do let me know so I can try to assist.

Academic conduct

The Annenberg School of Communication maintains a commitment to 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 be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School of Communication. There are no exceptions to the school's policy (University of Southern California Catalogue, 2016-2017).

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 an 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. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles as set forth in *SCampus*.

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> or to the *Department of Public Safety*, <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/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> describes reporting options and other resources.

Class Meeting Schedule

Week One	<p><u>Thursday, 6/27:</u></p> <p>Introductions and Syllabus Review</p> <p>How to get an A in this class: (no need to read before class)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hicks (n.d.), Learning How to read better • Purdue Online Writing Lab – APA Style Workshop • UoM – Critical Reading Strategies <p>Defining key terms: What is “technology”? What is a “digital” object? (*skim before class*)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baym, N. (2010) Making New Media Make sense. In <i>Personal Connections in the Digital Age</i>. Polity. Can be found here • Hui, Y. (2012). What is a digital object? <i>Metaphilosophy</i>, 43, 380–395. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9973.2012.01761.x 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marx, L. (2010). Technology: The emergence of a hazardous concept. <i>Technology and Culture</i>, 51(3), 561-577 	
<p>Week Two</p>	<p><u>Tuesday, 7/2:</u></p> <p><i>Technology in everyday life (*read before class*)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steven Shapin. "What Else Is New?" <i>The New Yorker</i>, May 14, 2007. Nicholas Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" <i>The Atlantic</i>, August 2008. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/306868/ Clay Shirky, "Does the Internet Make You Smarter?" <i>The Wall Street Journal</i>. June 4 2010. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704025304575284973472694334.html. Jocelyn Silver, "Millennials and Privacy: How much do they really care?" <i>Medium</i>. Jan 3 2018 https://medium.com/permissionio/millennials-and-privacy-how-much-do-they-really-care-3e824e4063fd <p><i>Autobiographical Essay – talk about in class</i></p> <p><u>Thursday, 7/4:</u></p> <p>NO CLASS – Independence Day</p>	<p>Pair up with a classmate for Week Four presentations (please email Rachel your presentation topic)</p>
<p>Week Three</p>	<p><u>Tuesday, 7/9:</u></p> <p><i>Living and Learning in a digital world</i></p> <p>Are you a digital native?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mark Prensky, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants," <i>On the Horizon</i> 9(5) (2001), http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf Henry Jenkins, "Reconsidering Digital Immigrants," <i>Confessions of an Aca-Fan</i>, December 5, 2007, http://henryjenkins.org/2007/12/reconsidering_digital_immigran.html <p>Being a digital student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subhash Kak, "Will Traditional Colleges and Universities Become Obsolete?" <i>Smithsonian Mag</i>, Jan 10, 2018 https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/will-traditional-colleges-universities-become-obsolete-180967788/ Paul Barnwell, "Do Smartphones Have a Place in the Classroom?" <i>The Atlantic</i>, April 27 2016 	<p>Autobiographical Essay Due (100 points)</p>

	<p>https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/04/do-smartphones-have-a-place-in-the-classroom/480231/</p> <p>Technology Presentation – talk about in class</p> <p><u>Thursday, 7/11:</u></p> <p><i>Loving and Leaving in a digital world</i></p> <p>Intimacy in a digital age (*read before class*)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiroz, P. A. (2013). From finding the perfect love online to satellite dating and “loving-the-one-you’re near”: A look at Grindr, Skout, Plenty of Fish, Meet Moi, Zoosk and Assisted Serendipity. <i>Humanity & Society</i>, 37, 181–185. doi:10.1177/0160597613481727 • Hobbs, M., Owen, S., & Gerber, L. (2016). Liquid love? Dating apps, sex, relationships and the digital transformation of intimacy. <i>Journal of Sociology</i>. doi: 10.1177/1440783316662718 (1) <p>Would you break up online? (*read before class*)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain Moylan, “This May Be the Most Annoying Online Dating Break-Up Email Ever” Gawker, July 7th 2011 https://gawker.com/5819049/this-may-be-the-most-annoying-online-dating-break-up-email-ever • Sirin Kale, “From ghosting to oversharing: the new rules of breakups” <i>The Guardian</i>, November 15 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/nov/15/new-rules-of-breakups • Lisa Damour, “How Technology Changes Teen Romance” <i>New York Times</i>. September 21 2017 https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/21/well/family/the-love-lives-of-digital-natives.html • Nellie Bowles. “Thermostats, Locks and Lights: Digital Tools of Domestic Abuse”. <i>The New York Times</i> June 23 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/23/technology/smart-home-devices-domestic-abuse.html 	
<p>Week Four</p>	<p><u>Tuesday, 7/16:</u></p> <p>5 x 30min presentations</p> <p><i>How much of us should we share online? (*skim before class*)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • danah boyd, “Privacy: Why Do Youth Share So Publicly?” <i>It’s Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens</i> (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 54-76. 	<p>5 teams to present Technological Artifact (250 points)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marwick, A. E., & boyd, d. (2014). Networked privacy: How teenagers negotiate context in social media. <i>New Media & Society</i>. doi:10.1177/1461444814543995 <p><u>Thursday, 7/18:</u></p> <p>5 x 30min presentations</p> <p><i>How much of us can people access online? (*skim before class*)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jasmine McNealy (n.d.), “What is doxxing, and why is it so scary?” The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/what-is-doxxing-and-why-is-it-so-scary-95848 • Vegas Tenold, “To Doxx a Racist” <i>The New Republic</i>. July 26 2018. https://newrepublic.com/article/150159/doxx-racist 	<p>5 teams to present Technological Artifact (250 points)</p>
<p>Week Five</p>	<p><u>Tuesday, 7/23:</u></p> <p><i>Perpetuating Injustice online (*read before class*)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moran, R. E., & Bui, M. N. (2018). Race, ethnicity, and telecommunications policy issues of access and representation: Centering communities of color and their concerns. <i>Telecommunications Policy</i>. • Safiya Noble, “Google Has a Striking History of Bias Against Black Girls” <i>Time Magazine</i>. March 26 2018. http://time.com/5209144/google-search-engine-algorithm-bias-racism/ • danah boyd, “Is the Oculus Rift sexist?” Quartz. March 28 2014. https://qz.com/192874/is-the-oculus-rift-designed-to-be-sexist/ • Steve Lohr, “Facial Recognition Is Accurate, if You’re a White Guy” <i>The New York Times</i>, Feb 9th 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/09/technology/facial-recognition-race-artificial-intelligence.html <p><u>Thursday, 7/25:</u></p> <p><i>Challenging Injustice online (*read before class*)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jenkins, H. (2014). Fan activism as participatory politics: The case of the Harry Potter Alliance. In M. Ratto & M. Boler (Eds.), <i>DIY citizenship</i> (pp. 65–73). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. • Christensen, H. S. (2011). Political activities on the Internet: Slacktivism or political participation by other means?. <i>First Monday</i>, 16(2). 	<p>Email Rachel with your term paper topic.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelly Garrett, R. (2006). Protest in an information society: A review of literature on social movements and new ICTs. <i>Information, communication & society</i>, 9(02), 202-224. 	
Week Six	<p><u>Tuesday, 7/30:</u></p> <p><i>Networked + Participatory Journalism (*read before class*)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van der Haak, B., Parks, M., & Castells, M. (2012). The future of journalism: Networked journalism. <i>International journal of communication</i>, 6, 16. • Marantz, A. (2017, December 11). The Live-Streamers who are challenging traditional journalism. <i>The New Yorker</i>. Retrieved from: https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/12/11/the-live-streamers-who-are-challenging-traditional-journalism • Hermida, A. (2010). Twittering the news: The emergence of ambient journalism. <i>Journalism practice</i>, 4(3), 297-308. • Mortensen, T. B., & Keshelashvili, A. (2013). If everyone with a camera can do this, then what? Professional photojournalists' sense of professional threat in the face of citizen photojournalism. <i>Visual Communication Quarterly</i>, 20(3), 144-158. <p><u>Thursday, 8/1:</u></p> <p><i>Fake News, Misinformation and Disinformation (*read before class*)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nielsen, R. K., & Graves, L. (2017). News you don't believe": Audience perspectives on fake news. <i>Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism</i>, Oxford, Oct, 2017-10. • Clare Wardle, "Fake News, Its Complicated. First Draft. Feb 16 2017. https://firstdraftnews.org/fake-news-complicated/ • Oscar Schwartz, "You thought fake news was bad? Deep fakes are where truth goes to die" <i>The Guardian</i>. November 12 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/nov/12/deep-fakes-fake-news-truth • Nicole Karlis, "How YouTube became a powerful far-right propaganda organ" Salon. September 18 2018. https://www.salon.com/2018/09/18/how-youtube-became-a-powerful-far-right-propaganda-organ/ 	Surveillance Ethnography Due (150 points)
Week Seven	<p><u>Tuesday, 8/6:</u></p> <p>Presentation Day</p> <p>LAST DAY OF CLASSES</p>	Term paper (350 points) + Presentation (50 points)

