

CMGT-515  
Innovation and the Information Economy  
Dr. Andrew Schrock

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Schrock // [aschrock@usc.edu](mailto:aschrock@usc.edu)  
Semester: Spring 2020  
Credits: 4  
Class Time: Mondays 2 – 4:50 PM  
Website: See Blackboard  
Office Hours: Online – please see <https://aschrock.youcanbook.me/>

**Description**

“Innovation” is a seemingly ever-positive word that bundles ideas about improving and shaping society. In this class we will take a culturally based and critically-engaged perspective on what innovation means and its relationship with communication. How do people invoke “innovation” through communication? What does employing “innovative” communication practices mean? Why do these efforts succeed, or often fall short, resulting in conservative notions of progress that empower the already privileged? In this course, we will explore these questions by tracing three specific thematics in innovation across history: *regional* innovation, *organizational* innovation, and *technological* innovation. Throughout, we will consider innovation to be constituted through communication. That is, it is not solely a technological or economic process—a purely instrumental way to find new “markets” for consumer products. Rather, innovation is brought about through powerful rhetoric, visuals, and models that show new ways of being. By coming to a historically-situated understanding of how we communicate about innovation, and how it leads to societal change, we will come to more comprehensive understanding of how innovation can enable or inhibit cities, organizations, technologies—even entire countries.

**Learning Objectives**

- Compare and synthesize cultural and critical perspectives on innovation.
- Engage in contemporary debates about the benefits and drawbacks of invoking innovation.
- Apply material from readings to unpack examples of innovation.
- Use innovation and critiques of it to suggest ways to ethically improve society.

**Use of Class Time**

Generally, we will spend the first hour on a presentation reviewing the key themes emerging from our readings for this week. Depending on the week, the remainder of the class will be taken up by a combination of activities, presentations, and discussions that cover a given week’s concepts. There will be a 15-minute break halfway through. Please expect to fully use class time each day, and try not to arrive late or leave early.

## **Readings**

All readings will be available online as open-access articles or provided as PDFs.

## **Virtual Office Hours**

If you have a *quick* question, please email me or see me immediately before or after class. If you would like a *longer* discussion, I hold office hours online through the video chat program Zoom (<https://zoom.us>). Offering “virtual office hours” enables me to office a wider range of meeting times that fit with students’ schedules.

**You do not need to ask me ahead of time to meet**—simply reserve a half-hour slot on <https://aschrock.youcanbook.me/>. I have set aside a range of morning and evening meeting times for your convenience.

## **Work Expectations**

In a typical week, students will be required to:

- Read 3-4 readings, typically a mix of lay press and academic articles, totaling approximately 100 pages.
- Post a 250-word response in a shared discussion reflecting on a question posed by your instructor. This question will involve synthesis—applying ideas from readings in context—often by putting two or more authors in conversation with one another.
- See below for final paper and four reflection paper assignments.

Students are expected to take notes and annotate articles to prepare for class activities and cement their understanding of key points. We will go over helpful note-taking strategies in class in the first class. Please be prepared each class to discuss new terms in articles, summarize the author’s arguments, and synthesize their perspectives on communication technologies. Assignments are due on the class website by 11:59 PM the evening before class.

## **Grade Assessment**

Weekly responses	20%
Module papers	30% (7.5% for each paper)
Final project	35% (5% proposal, 30% paper/project)
Participation	15%

## **Grading Scale**

Final grades are assigned according to the following scale. Final grades are “rounded up” (higher than .5 will be rounded to the next highest whole number). Individual and group assignments are not.

<b><i>Grade</i></b>	<b><i>Range</i></b>
A	93.50% or higher
A-	89.50%-93.49%
B+	86.5%-89.49%
B	83.5%-86.49%

B-	79.5%-83.49%
C+	76.5%-79.49%
C	73.5%-76.49%
C-	69.5%-73.49%
D	60.0%-69.49%
F	59.9% or lower

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must appeal it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate, within one week of receiving the graded assignment. No late appeals will be accepted for review.

### **Module and final papers**

Each of the four teaching module in this class will last 3-4 weeks and culminate in a 1000-word (approximately 4 pages double-spaced) paper. The modules will be around themes of: fundamentals, cities, organizations, and technologies. The final paper will ask you to expand one of your papers from modules 1-3 to 3000 words (approximately 12 pages double-spaced). A rubric for both the module papers and final papers will be posted on Blackboard.

### **Attendance and class participation**

Attendance is required. In particular, **students must attend the first day of class**. If a student does not show up the first day without notifying their instructor, their spot will be given to the next interested student on the wait list. If a student is absent, their benefits received from classroom involvement are lost, as are contributions they would assist learning of fellow students. Students with unexcused absences over three classes will *automatically* receive a failing grade. Three tardy arrivals – arriving after the start of class – will count as an absence. In addition to attendance, participation will be graded based on attendance and regular participation in discussion and activities.

### **Excuse Policy**

Students are responsible for managing the usual range of life events. However, sometimes they can be outside our control and negatively impact our ability to do class work. **Please talk to me if you are confronted by an *exceptional and unpredictable* event that *significantly impacts* your ability to complete work.** Some examples of exceptional and unpredictable events include, but *are not limited to*:

- Death
- Illness
- Family emergency
- Car accident or workplace injury
- Recurrent mental health issues (e.g. depression, anxiety, PTSD)

*Exceptional and unpredictable* events do not include everyday events such as setting an alarm clock, accounting for traffic, or managing school workload.

### Late Work Policies

- Late assignments will result in a 10% reduction per day (24 hours). Lateness will be assigned on basis of each 24-hour period, not fractions.
- If you submit an assignment 25 hours late, it will be deducted 20% (two days).
- Work that is excused through the same policy above may be accepted late, typically by a day, although in exceptional circumstances I may extend an accommodation of up to a week.
- Assignments will not be accepted after three days late.
- Assignments are not accepted after the last day of the semester.

### Academic Honesty

Students must comply with the USC academic honesty policy, which can be found at <https://sjacs.usc.edu/students/academic-integrity/>. Academic honesty includes refraining from cheating, fabrication, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism – submitting your own work you have already submitted for an assignment for another class). Violations receive, at minimum, a zero for the assignment. Severe or repeat infractions will result in a failing grade for the course and be referred to the Dean’s office.

### Other Class Policies

- **Technology:** you may use laptops during lecture and discussion time only to take notes, read Blackboard posts, refer to PDFs, or for a class activity. That is, you should remain focused on the classroom – no chat programs, email, Facebook, Amazon, etc. unless that is part of the activity.
  - **If I find evidence that you are using other software, you will receive an immediate zero for that day’s participation grade (approximately 1% of your final grade for the class).**
  - If I sense that I do not have the class’s attention during class, I may ask you to put “lids down,” which is your signal to close your laptops.
  - If you are having difficulty concentrating, you are encouraged to bring paper and pen to take notes, and/or printed PDFs, as a backup.
- **Snacks/coffee:** You may bring a light snack (fruit, granola bar) or drink (soda, coffee) to class, but no noisy snacks (bags of chips) or full meals (burgers, full salads, etc.), please!

### Schedule

A tentative schedule for the semester follows – please refer to USC Blackboard for the updated weekly schedule of readings and assignments. What is on Blackboard will be most accurate.

#### Module 1: Fundamentals of Innovation

<b>Week 1</b> (1/13):	Introduction to innovation
<b>Week 2</b> (1/20):	<b>NO CLASS – MLK day</b>
<b>Week 3</b> (1/27):	Fundamentals of Innovation I
<b>Week 4</b> (2/3):	Fundamentals of Innovation II

## Module II: Regional Innovation

- Week 5** (2/10): Regional Innovation I: Silicon Valley  
**Week 6** (2/17): **NO CLASS – President’s day – Module I Paper Due**  
**Week 7** (2/24): Regional Innovation II: Shenzhen  
**Week 8** (3/2): Regional Innovation III: India

## Module III: Organizational Innovation

- Week 9** (3/9): Organizational Innovation I  
(3/16): **NO CLASS – Spring Break – Module II Paper Due**  
**Week 10** (3/23): Organizational Innovation II  
**Week 11** (3/30): Organizational Innovation III

## Module IV: Technological Innovation

- Week 12** (4/6): Technological Innovation I – **Module III Paper Due**  
**Week 13** (4/13): Technological Innovation II  
**Week 14** (4/20): Technological Innovation III  
**Week 15** (4/27): Wrap-up and discussion – **Module IV Paper Due**

**TBA** – Final paper due (usually during exam time over final exams week)

### Support Systems

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs* - (213) 740-0776  
[dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*Student Health Counseling Services* - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call  
[engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)* - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

[engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX* - (213) 740-5086  
[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students,

faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

*Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421*

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.