NEW MEDIA THEORY

CTL 595
Spring 2017
Professor Jessica Pressman

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course serves as an introduction to the critical and historical study of digital media and culture. Situating "new media" in technical and cultural histories that precede and inform our own, we recognize "the digital" as having a history that deserves analysis. We approach this topic through paradigms provided by literary and cultural criticism, reading central texts from the history of computing and the development of digital culture: from Vannevar Bush's 1945 description of the Memex to Alan Turing's 1950 "imitation game" essay that inspired Artificial Intelligence to Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto" and more. We follow Internet historian Janet Abate, who writes, "The fact that the network [the Internet] became so successful is not something to be taken for granted, but rather something to be explained." Seeking to understand the history of new media, we become critical thinkers about—and not just users of-- digital technologies.

Learning Objectives:
1) You will be able to understand that computing and computing culture has a history
2) You will be able to recognize and explain seminal texts and ideas in the history of new media
3) You will be able to trace the influences of seminal thinkers on current discourse about computing and digital media
4) You will be able to apply cultural theories to the critical analysis of the digital

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Email: jpressman@mail.sdsu.edu *Do not* expect a response within 24 hours	Course Website: spring2017-ctl595.jessicapressman.com
Office: AL 261 Office hours: Tuesday 10-12 and by appointment	T/Th 12:30-1:45 Room: LSS 246
English Subject Librarian: Markel Tumlin	<mtumlin@rohan.sdsu.edu>

REQUIRED READING: Available in the SDSU Bookstore
-*The New Media Reader*. Eds. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort (MIT Press, 2003)

--Films should be viewed **before** class, either at home or in the Library Media Center, where they will be on reserve for our class:
Blade Runner (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982)
The Matrix (dirs. Larry and Andy Wachowski, 1999)

ASSIGNMENTS

Participation: 15%
Weekly Blog Responses: 25%
Midterm Exam: 30%
Final Essay Project: 30%

Attendance and Participation: 15%
This is *your* class, and your attendance and participation is vital to its success.
Attendance matters and counts towards your grade. Come to class prepared to discuss the novels in depth; this means having read the *entire* text assigned *before* the first class meeting dedicated to that text.
-Your participation grade includes attending all classes
-Your participation grade includes speaking in class. If you have trouble speaking in public, please come see me early in the semester.
-**Your participation grade includes an in-person meeting with the professor**.
-**Your participation grade includes a *3-minute presentation* on one of the texts**. This presentation should serve to start the class's conversation for the day. You will point us to a question from the day's reading and to the specific passage in the text that sparked that inquiry for you. You will get the discussion rolling…

Weekly Blog Responses: 25%
You will write (300-500 words) **blog responses to the reading *and* each provide a comment on a peer's blog each week**. These short critical responses and comments will be posted to the course blog *before the second-class* meeting of the week. They
will serve to extend the conversation and coverage of the course by allowing you to 1) express, share, and comment upon interests, questions, and concerns related to the readings and also to 2) enable the professor to address or incorporate these topics in that week's lecture. The blog is intended to extend the space for learning and discussion.
* Late posts do not receive credit.
-You will be given an *overall* grade for blog posts, based on completion and content, not a grade for each post. Rubric for grading is available on our website.

Your Blog Grade is based on 2-parts: 1) a completion grade, and 2) a content grade.

The completion component of the blog grade requires you to have the following number of posts:	The content component of the blog grade is based on the following grading rubric
A= 10-13 posts B= 7-9 posts C= 5-6 posts D= 3-4 posts F= 2 or less	A= Post contains a focused thesis or question and close reading of a passage, B= Post contains a close reading of content but no focused question or thesis C= Post contains no analysis of text (no close reading), just summary and undirected ideas D=Post contains little substantive thinking as content

Midterm Exam: 30%
The exam covers all readings and lecture material in the form of 1) definitions, 2) identifications, 3) short answers, and 4) a short essay.
There will be no make-ups for the exam.

Final Essay (5-6 pages): 30%
This essay provides an opportunity to explore your primary interests from the course in an analytical (i.e. thesis-driven) essay that approaches *one or more* of the texts from the syllabus.
-The essay should be 5-6 pages (double-spaced) and posted to our course blog.
-Late essays are docked 1/3 of a grade for each day late.
**Graduate students will write an 8-10 page essay

Extra Credit (Total of 1%)
There are multiple ways to earn extra credit in this class, all of which will be listed on our website but include the following:
-Attend the scholarly lecture by Professor Seth Lerer (UCSD) in "Year of the Book" program series, 2/7 at 4pm in Love Library 431
-Attend the Twine Workshop, 2-4pm in LARC lab (Storm Hall, second floor)
-Attend the Electronic Literature Reading Events on January 23 and/or April (date TBD)
**To receive credit for any of these events, you must not only attend but also write a blog post that situates that event (the reading, the literature, the discussion) in the context of our class

READING SCHEDULE
**NMR* refers to our textbook, *The New Media Reader*
**All other readings are offered as PDFs from our website

Part I: Introduction

Week 1: Introduction
1/19: Introduction to course

Week 2: Introductions to *The New Media Reader*
1/24: Janet Murray, "Inventing the Medium" (*NMR* 3-11)
1/26: Lev Manovich, "New Media from Borges to HTML" (*NMR* 13-25)

Week 3: Media Studies
1/31: Marshall McLuhan, "The Galaxy Reconfigured" (1962, *NMR* 193-202)
2/2: Marshall McLuhan. "The Medium is the Message" (1964, *NMR* 203-209)

Part II: Early Theories and Visions

Week 4: The Memex and The Docuverse
2/7: Vannevar Bush, "As We Might Think" (1945, *NMR* 35-48)
2/7 Extra Credit event: Professor Seth Lerer (UCSD) lecture, 4pm in Love Library 431
2/9: Ted Nelson, selections from *Computer Lib/Dream Machines* (1974, *NMR* 301-338)

Week 5: Hypertext and Elit
2/14: Robert Coover, "The End of Books" (1992, *NMR* 705-710)
2/16: Deena Larsen, *Disappearing Rain* (2000), online
2/16 Extra Credit event: Twine Workshop with Professor Adam Hammond

Week 6: Visions of Cyberspace
2/21: Jorge Luis Borges, "The Library of Babel" and "The Garden of Forking Paths" (1945, *NMR* 29-34)
William Gibson, selections from *Neuromancer* (1984) PDF
2/23: Professor Away: Screening of "The Matrix" (dirs. Larry and Andy Wachowski, 1999)

Part III: Inventing the Internet

Week 7: ARPANET to Internet
2/28: J.C.R. Licklider, "Man-Computer Symbiosis" (1960, *NMR* 73)
3/2: Alan Kay and Adele Goldberg, "Personal Dynamic Media" (1977, *NMR* 391)
Watch: Douglas Englebart "The Mother of All Demos" video (1968), online

Week 8: Internet to WWW

3/7: Tim Berners-Lee, et. al. "Information Management: A Proposal" (1989, NMR 791)
3/9: Janet Abbate, introduction to *Inventing the Internet* (MIT Press, 1999): pp. 1-6, PDF
Chris Anderson and Michael Wolff, "The Web is Dead, Long Live the Internet" (2010),
online

Additional: Alexander Galloway, "Protocol vs. Institutionalization" pp. 187-198, PDF

Week 9: Interface and Interactivity
3/14: Steven Johnson, excerpt from *Interface Culture: How New Technologies Transform
the Way We Create and Communicate* (1999), pp. 14-21. PDF
3/16: Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, excerpt from *Remediation: Understanding
New Media*

Week 10: Midterm
3/21: Midterm Review/ Prep for Midterm Exam
3/23: MIDTERM EXAM *in class*

SPRING BREAK

Part III: AI & The Cyber-Self

Week 11: Artificial Intelligence
4/6: Alan Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" (1950)
4/6: Katherine Hayles, "Prologue" to *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in
 Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago UP, 1999), pp. ix-xiv

Week 12: Chatbots
4/4: Joseph Weizenbaum, from "Computer Power and Human Reason" (1976, NR 367)
Chatbots: Play ELIZA
4/6: *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982)

Week 13: Cyberfeminism
4/11: Donna Haraway, "The Cyborg Manifesto" (1991)
4/13: Sadie Plant, "On the Matrix: Cyberfeminist Simulations"

Week 14: Identity Tourism
4/18: Lisa Nakamura, "Race In/For Cyberspace: Identity Tourism and Racial Passing on
              the Internet" PDF
4/20: Julian Dibbell, "A Rape in Cyberspace" (1993)

Additional: Sherry Turkle, "TinySex and Gender Trouble" from *Life on Screen*: *Identity
in the Age of the Internet* (1995)

Week 15: Student's Choice & Student Presentations
4/25: Students' choice of reading from *NMR* or elsewhere
4/27: Workshop of Final Projects

Week 16: Conclusion
5/2: Student Presentation of Final Projects
5/4: Conclusion

5/6: FINAL ESSAY DUE @ midnight, posted to the blog

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change.

SDSU as "safe space"
The CSU has affirmed its commitment to 'protecting access, affordability, intellectual freedom, inclusivity, and diversity for all students . . . including supporting DACA students.' Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against students, faculty, and staff on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, immigration status and other categories of identity is prohibited. If you have concerns about your status at the university, please visit http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/EOP/ for information or contact the Dean of Students or the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in your College."

ACADEMIC HONESTY
I take teaching seriously, and I expect you to take seriously your work as a student. That means that academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonest includes, but is not limited to: (a) using assignments that you wrote for another class, (b) representing work done by someone else as your own (i.e., plagiarism), and (c) copying someone else's work on an assignment, basic cheating. Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be referred to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities for further action. If you have questions at all, you should consult me immediately.

DISABILTY STATEMENT
If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.