

CMST 4344: Media Ecology

Instructor: Dr. Dennis Cali

Office Hours: Mondays 2:30-4:30 p.m. (*Please email ahead*); and by appointment

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IMPORTANT NOTE: I ask that any email correspondence from you be from your uttyler email address, not your personal or other email. Thanks.

Seminar Description

This seminar will examine the influence of media on culture and consciousness. Such media could include traditional ones such as television, radio, print, and writing as well as “new” ones such as email, instant messaging, blogs, Websites, and the like. The focus of the seminar is on the exploration of how media technologies shape how people and cultures think, value, and feel.

Course Objective

This course satisfies the Communication Studies Learning Outcome of **Theoretical Application:** The student is able to appropriately apply theory to solve a communication problem, or to communicate rules, norms, interactions, and contexts. The theory is not only understood and correctly applied, but it is properly addressed within the literature review, and logical conclusions are made following the application.

Seminar Framework

Microscopic orientation to primary figures in media ecology

Telescopic orientation to media environments and their role in shaping culture and consciousness

“Probes” into New Media

Gestalt analysis of New Media/Research Paper on Media Ecology

Required Readings

Nicholas Carr. 2010. *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (New York: W. H. Norton & Company).

Dennis D. Cali. 2017. *Mapping Media Ecology*. New York: Peter Lang, pub.

(See also documents that will be posted on Canvas)

Recommended Readings

Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. 25th anniversary edition with a new foreword by the author and an afterword by George F. Will. New York: Atheneum, 1987; New York: Vintage, 1992

James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989; Reprint, New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

Edmund Carpenter, *Oh, What a Blow That Phantom Gave Me!* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973 (Out of print, but available online).

Gilles DeLeuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*. Trans. Brian Massumi. London and New York: Continuum, 2004. Vol. 2 of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 2 vols. 1972-1980. Trans. of *Mille Plateaux*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1980.

Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, John Wilkinson, Trans. New York: Knopf, 1984.

Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, Konrad Kellen and Jacques Lerner, Trans. New York: Knopf, 1965.

Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*. Cambridge, England and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977.

Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato*. Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press of the Harvard Univ. Press, 1963.

Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951.

Harold Innis, *Empire and Communications*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950.

Susanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957.

Marshall McLuhan. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994.

Marshall McLuhan. *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962.

Marshall McLuhan and Eric McLuhan, *Laws of Media: The New Science*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.

Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1934; Reprint with a new introduction by the author, New York: Harvest,

Lewis Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine, Vol. I: Technics and Human Development*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967; New York: Harvest, 1971.

Walter J. Ong. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. New York: Methuen, 1982.

Walter J. Ong. *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967.

Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1990; New York: Vintage, 1991.

Neil Postman. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. New York: Viking, 1985; New York: Penguin, 1986.

Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*. New York: Knopf, 1992; New York: Vintage, 1992.

Benjamin Whorf. *Language, Thought, and Reality*. Cambridge, MA, 1956.

Other Useful Sources:

The Media Ecology Association: <http://www.media-ecology.org/>

Figure-Ground Blog: <http://www.media-ecology.org/>

Marshall McLuhan Speaks: <http://www.marshallmcluhanspeaks.com/>

McLuhan Galaxy: <https://mcluhangalaxy.wordpress.com/>

Thus Spoke the Spectacle: <http://thespectacle.net/synopsis.html>

Other required or suggested readings are available through the library/Interlibrary Loan, on Canvas (check "Course Documents" and "External Links") or by handout.

Student Learning Objectives

The SLO that corresponds with the objects of the CMST degree program is:

SLO 3: Theoretical Application: The student will be able to appropriately apply theory to solve a communication problem, or to communicate rules, norms, interactions, and contexts. The theory is not only thoroughly understood and correctly applied, but it is properly addressed within the literature review, and logical conclusions are made following the application.

The signature assignment that will be used to assess fulfillment of this SLO is the "Gestalt Assignment."

Toward achieving these objectives, students should:

1. Become familiar with major works in media ecology through reading, presentation, and discussion of these works.
2. Conceptualize media ecology in discussion and in a research paper as a discipline or line of inquiry.

3. Assess in media ecology “probes” how new media enhance, reverse, retrieve, and obsolesce previous media.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

(Guidelines for each of the assignments will be provided at the appropriate time.)

The primary difference between graduate and undergraduate expectations are that graduate students will write a substantial research paper while undergraduate students will write a paper that synthesizes their media probes; grad students and undergrad students read and report on different books, and final exams will be different.

Presentation: (Undergrad students): <i>What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains</i> (Grad Students): <i>Alone Together</i>	10%
Presentation of Major Media Ecologist	20%
Media Probe (1)	10%
Media Environment Analysis and Presentation (Probe 2)	10%
“Gestalt” Analysis (Probe 1+2+3)	20%
Final Exam (Objective for Undergraduates; Essay for Grad Students)	20%
TOTAL:	100%

The category of “Participation” has not been given a percentage value. This is because active engagement in class proceedings is expected both in graded assignments and in preparations and discussions. It refers to class presentations, such as chapter reports, discussion in class, and attendance. Failure to participate actively in class proceedings and absences can result in the class grade being lowered, up to the point of failing the class, even if the student’s score were passing on all graded assignments.

For each graded assignment, students will receive an A, B, C, D, or F. Each of these letter grades corresponds with a number value: an A carries a numeric value of 4, a B is worth 3, C is worth 2, D is worth 1, and F is worth 0. To calculate your grade, multiply 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0 that corresponds with your letter grade by the percentage value (above) of a given exercise. For example, if you receive a B for the “Presentation of Major Media Ecologist,” you would multiply 3—which corresponds with a B—by 20% and you would get a .60 for that assignment. At the end of the semester, to calculate your final grade, you would add each of the scores and divide by 100. Final grades will be awarded as follows:

<u>Numeric Value of Grades</u>	
A	= 4
	3

B	=	3
C	=	2
D	=	1
F	=	0

If your grade falls between two numbers (e.g., between a 3 and a 2), you will receive the grade corresponding with the lower number (in this case, a C, corresponding with 2) since technically you will not have achieved a B (a 3.0)

Seminar Policies and Procedures

Attendance: Students are permitted to miss three class hours throughout the semester without any consequence to their semester grade. Beyond 3, except under the most extenuating circumstance at the instructor's discretion, the student's seminar grade will be affected. Proof for excused absences must be documented within two weeks of the absence and must clearly state that the emergency required that the student miss the course on the date and at the time of the absence. Participation in Reading Reflections also counts as attendance.

Course Format

This course consists of lectures, essays ("probes"), discussion, individual presentations, and a final paper.

Course Assignments (Expectations of particular assignments will be provided at the announcement of each respective assignment).

Academic Integrity: Honesty and integrity are essential values in interpersonal and intercultural understanding, and you are expected to maintain these same ethical standards in all of your work in this class. Any betrayal of these values violates a basic expectation of the student's performance in this class. Therefore, a student engaging in ANY form of academic dishonesty shall receive an automatic F at minimum for that assignment or examination. For a statement of the University of Texas at Tyler's policy on academic integrity, see this link to the pertinent section of the Undergraduate/Graduate Catalog: <http://uttyler.cmsiq.com/2015-2016/Catalog/Student-Affairs/Student-Responsibilities>

Please see the brief video on the UT-Tyler Honor Code: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmKsbYwtrco>

Regarding Late Work: I DO NOT ACCEPT UNEXCUSED LATE WORK. Since one of the primary objectives expressed in the University's mission statement is that students "will act with honesty and integrity," I will enforce rigorous standards of honesty and personal responsibility. Work is considered late if work is not presented on the date assigned. Unexcused work receives a "O." Any exceptions to this policy—which would be very rare!—would be at my discretion; in this case, the student:

- must submit to me a written petition requesting that his/her absence be excused
- must show official documentation verifying the basis for absence
- must be prepared to present the missed work at the very first opportunity I make available after the student's return
- must provide appropriate documentation that his/her failure to complete the assignment on the assigned date was unavoidable
- may be penalized for failure to present work as assigned.

If you know in advance that you will not be able to be present on a particular date on which work has been assigned, please let me know. I will try to schedule your assignment accordingly.

Use of Cell Phone or Other Electronic Devices: Any use of cell telephones, pagers, Ipads, and all other electronic devices during class time is forbidden. It is the students' responsibility to make sure that their telephones or pagers do not ring, vibrate, or otherwise create the possibility of a class disruption. **A student whose telephone rings, vibrates, or otherwise creates a distraction during class will be counted as absent for that class period. A student using any electronic device during testing without prior approval shall be subject the policy on academic integrity.**

Laptops or Ipads. The use of laptops in class for any purpose other than taking notes (e.g., instant-messaging, emailing, surfing the Internet, playing Solitaire) is strictly forbidden. Students caught engaging in any forbidden laptop activity shall be counted as absent that day.

Audio/Video Recording of class lectures is prohibited without prior approval. However, on occasion the instructor may arrange recording for instructional purposes.

Oral and Written Work: Assignments may have an oral and/or written components. Especially since this is a communication class, grading of oral and written work will consider quality and thoroughness of analysis, style, adherence to format, and proper mechanics (grammar, spelling, organization, clarity, cohesiveness). All work submitted to me should be typed and double-spaced. All work should be stapled (Please! NO PLASTIC REPORT COVERS WITH SPINES, NO DOG EARS, NO FOLDED CORNERS, AND NO PAPER CLIPS! PLEASE STAPLE PAGES!) The quality of both your written and oral work will figure into your grade for the assignment.

Reading Assignments: In class lectures, I will ordinarily highlight portions—not the entirety—of the chapters assigned in your readings. However, you are responsible for the entire contents of all chapters and may be tested on any portions of those readings.

“Outside” Participation: Because much of what this course teaches is learned in personal reflection and application, some activities or preparation for in-class activities take place outside of class.