

**COMM8030-001 Survey of Communication Technology Studies  
Fall 2015 Dr. Travers Scott M/W 2:30-3:45 Daniel 207**

**CONTACT**

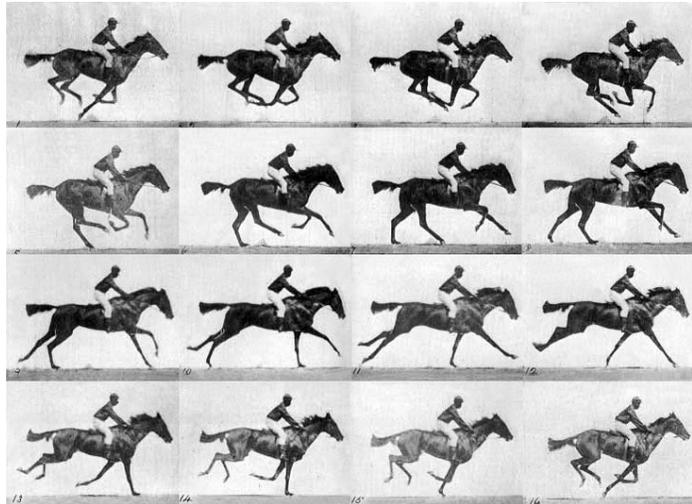
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**COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course introduces you to a variety of creative ways contemporary scholars research communication technologies. We will focus on the hybrid, interdisciplinary field of Communication Studies, as well as related fields with which it engages and intersects. We will examine scholarship from varied epistemologies and methodologies. In so doing, this class uses technology studies as an example to orient you to the diversity of scholarship in our discipline of Communication Studies.



Overall, we will consider communication technologies as socially embedded cultural processes. We will approach them as, not simply isolated machines or files of code, but phenomena that reflect, relate to, impact, and are entangled with various other aspects of the societies in which they are created, (re)developed, and used. The goals of the class are not simply to gain familiarity with variety of technology approaches in our field, but, through them, gain historically informed skills for creative, critical thinking about technological discourses in popular culture, news, and scholarship; designing original technology research, and participating as informed citizens with technological decisions and ethical dilemmas in lives, families, cultures, and communities.

Although you will use certain technologies in class assignments, this is not primarily a production or skills development class. Class time will not be devoted to training or lab work. However, many opportunities are available at Clemson for you to gain skills, if so desired.

**CRITICAL THINKING**

This class is a Clemson Thinks2 (CT2) seminar developed to increase and enhance your critical thinking skills. What is critical thinking? For this class, we will work with the definition from the Delphi report: "We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based" (Facione, 1990, 1998). The judgments we will focus on are those regarding technological knowledge claims in research, popular culture, and news.

Our critical thinking goals for this seminar, are for you to be able to:

1. Develop university-level competence at the activities that characterize critical thinking.
2. Describe the specific activities that characterize critical thinking and will reflectively report on their own use of these tools.
3. Apply critical thinking skills to solve problems that occur outside the academic classroom.

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What are critical thinking skills? Critical thinkers strive to:

1. Determine the relevance of information for evaluating an argument or conclusion.
2. Recognize flaws and inconsistencies in an argument.
3. Evaluate competing causal explanations.
4. Evaluate hypotheses for consistency with established facts.
5. Determine whether a popular culture narrative is supported by evidence contained in it.
6. Recognize the salient features or themes in a popular culture narrative.
7. Evaluate the appropriateness of procedures for investigating a question of causation.
8. Evaluate data for consistency with established facts, hypotheses, or methods.

CT2 Course Assessment: CT2 courses are assessed on the basis of their achievement of their learning outcomes, as measured by student improvement on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST). Taking the test is a mandatory requirement of the class, but your score will *not* have an impact on your course grade. The test will be administered at the beginning of the course (**Friday, August 23rd**) and near the end (**December 4th**).

Teaching/Learning Strategies: Critical thinking skills will be promoted through modeling (classroom experience), personal experience/reflection (essays), discourse (group exercises in class), and vocabulary (tests).

#### STUDENT LEARNING & CRITICAL THINKING OUTCOMES

By the end of this class, students should be able to:

- Explore complex challenges associated with researching impacts, meanings, and uses of communication technologies.
- Analyze communication technology research, news, and narratives using multiple lenses and perspectives.
- Identify historical patterns in technology research, news, and narratives.
- Communicate complex ideas effectively.
- Identify, recognize, and describe various approaches to studying communication technologies.
- Design a proposal for an original research project to answer questions regarding communication technologies.
- Succinctly summarize and present scholarship.
- Demonstrate uses of selected multimedia communication tools.
- Apply class concepts to current events, popular culture, and news.

#### TEXTS

Required:

- Technology + Culture: A Primer, Jennifer D. Slack & J. MacGregor Wise, Peter Lang, 2005.
- The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media, José Van Dijck, Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Readings on Box folder: <https://clemsan.app.box.com/files>

Suggested:

- Handbook of New Media, Updated Student Ed. Lievrouw & Livingstone. Sage. 2006.
- The Everyday Writer 4th Ed. with 2009 MLA and 2010 APA Updates: A Pocket Reference, Andrea A. Lunsford, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010.

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Used and rental textbooks: Amazon, Alibris, Powells, Chegg, Campusbookrentals

**REQUIREMENTS**

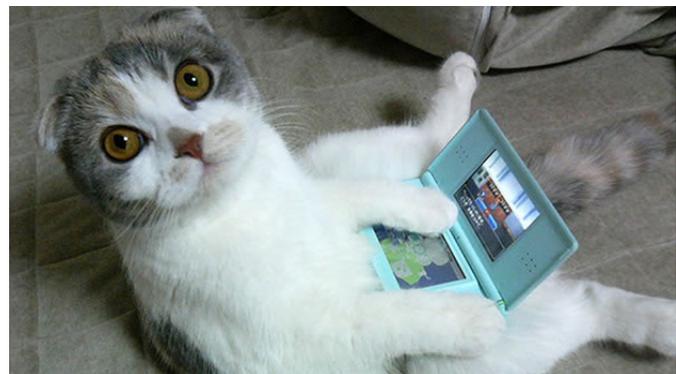
You must complete **ALL** requirements to pass. Details of assignments will be provided.

1. *Research Analyses*: Use the critical thinking questions provided to analyze research presented in class readings and by guest speakers, your responses to it, and respond to your peers. We will develop these in a Trello project management board integrated with integrated Google Apps. You will choose 10 individual readings or guest speaker presentations. Each analysis is due posted to Trello the Monday after a reading was assigned or the guest speaker visited. See assignment guidelines for details. (30% of final grade, average of all 10).
2. *Research Proposal*: You will design a technology research project, delivered in 4 written stages: Topic, Literature Review, Research Design and Method, and Complete Proposal. You will peer-review each other's papers after the method stage, and then will write response letters to your reviewers' comments. See assignment guidelines for details. (40% of final grade, average of 4 grades)
3. *CT2 Artifact Assignment—Thesis Evaluation Videos*: You will create a 10-minute video in which you assess a master's thesis on communication, technology, and society to the class. The evaluation presentation will require you to exercise *analytical critical thinking skills* in the assessment of the knowledge claims presented in the research as well as *synthetic critical thinking skills* in relating it to current social matters. See assignment guidelines for details. (20% of grade)
4. *Participation*: Discussion and sharing including class, email, discussion board, MACTS social media; taking CCTST. Your participation grade is based on demonstrated *significant* engagement with the course readings and media, instructor, guest speakers, and peers through thoughtful discussion and debate with meaningful, substantive comments. Therefore, you MUST complete ALL readings in order to participate meaningfully. In addition to multiple online options, taking the initiative to bring materials to class to share, as well as other student-initiated participation activities, are most welcome: Do not hesitate to come to me with your ideas! (10% of grade).



**POLICIES**

See this year's [Graduate Announcements](#)



<http://www.registrar.clemson.edu/html/catalogGrad.htm> and CU Gradspace wiki <http://gradspace.editme.com/>

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**Sustenance:** You are welcome to bring food or beverage to class, just clean up after yourself.

**Quality of work:** All written assignments must be printed and of professional quality (**thoroughly proofread**, clean, and legible) and submitted as a PDF! Points will be deducted for any errors in accuracy of information, spelling, formatting, APA style, or grammar!

**Make-up policy:** It is critical that you meet all deadlines throughout the semester. If you anticipate at any time that you will not be able to meet a deadline, notify me immediately. Alternative arrangements will only be made for legitimate reasons, at my discretion. Repeatedly missing deadlines will result in deductions from your participation grade. In the case of an absence, arrange to acquire class notes, recordings, etc. You are still responsible for all deadlines.

**Instructor absence:** I will make every effort to begin our meetings on time and as scheduled; however, prior commitments or other emergencies may result in our occasionally having to begin shortly after the scheduled start time. If I am not present for a class, please check your email and Blackboard. Wait 15 minutes after our start time; if I have still not arrived, you may leave.

**Grading:** This class is graded on the letter system. Your grade reflects completion of requirements, significant understanding of concepts, and effective communication of that understanding. Grades of A, B, C, F, I, and W will be given in accordance with academic regulations: Note that the grade of 'D' is not considered appropriate in the Graduate School. Graduate students may not request graded courses to be converted to the pass/fail option. **A minimum grade of B is required to avoid Academic Probation. A minimum grade of C must be earned for this course to apply toward your degree.** Students who receive a grade of Incomplete (I) while enrolled in Graduate School remain ineligible for graduation, including earning a master's degree en route to a doctorate degree, until the incomplete work has been made up and a letter grade submitted to the Registrar's Office: <http://gradspace.editme.com/AcademicRegulationsDthruZ#grading>



**A = 90-100%** Above and beyond. Outstanding work that goes far beyond requirements of assignment, demonstrates exceptional critical thinking, and is engaged with class materials. Excellent writing ability and is clean, properly formatted, and nearly error-free.

**B = 80-89%** Solid performance. Meets the specified requirements of an assignment and attempts to critically engage the topic. Good writing ability. Constructs a well-developed argument and appropriately applies key concepts.

**C = 70-79%** Safe minimum. Meets some of the requirements of an assignment, but exhibits no serious effort to engage with the material, offers little to no original thinking, and seems to be merely trying to "get by." A "C" can also be earned by assignments that may have B or A level intellectual work, but are marred by not meeting all assignment requirements.

**F = 0-69%** Did not meet significant requirements of assignment, and / or did so too poorly to receive credit.

**Extra credit:** None.

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**Grade challenges:** There is a 24-hour cool-down period after receiving a grade. You then have 10 calendar days to voice concerns. After that, grades are final. If just you want to discuss how to improve on a future assignment, or have my comments clarified, visit office hours. If you are challenging a grade, submit in writing a *detailed* explanation of what seems wrong and why. Challenging a grade is requesting a re-grade: a revised grade may be higher or lower.

**Communication:** Discussing questions in class benefits all students, so that should be our primary venue for communication. In addition, feel free to visit my office hours. I am happy to schedule additional meetings. I will read and respond to paper outlines or up to a page of double-spaced text. I will not read paper drafts or give preliminary estimate grades. Available contact modes, in order of preference:

1. *In class.* Hey, you'll get participation credit for it!
2. *Office hours.* I am available six hours a week. Appointments are not required, but appreciated. If you are unavailable during regular office hours, contact me to schedule another time.
3. *Email.* Please allow up to 36 hours for response. No guarantee of response less than 24 hours before an assignment is due.
4. *Phone.* I do not have an office phone. You may use my cell phone — wisely —for immediate call or texting. **Texting is generally the best way to get an immediate response from me. I like texting.**
5. *Social media.* A direct message on Twitter is another good way to reach me. However, do NOT expect a timely reply on Facebook Messenger, Snapchat, or other social media. I will respond to friend requests, etc. from graduate students but I will not contact them initially. I do not link to undergraduates on social networking sites until after they have graduated. If you need my reference on LinkedIn or a similar professional site, contact me first before asking for a link or recommendation.

**In-class technologies:** Playing around during class is super obvious, disrespectful, and WILL have an adverse effect on your participation grade. Continued abuse will ban all devices from class.

**Intellectual Humility, Intellectual Curiosity :** F. Scott Fitzgerald said, "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." In this class, we may debate and delve into controversial and sensitive topics involving ethics, power, identity, and inequality. Moreover – do not be freaked out by this – your instructor is a human being. This means he has opinions and perspectives, and he may express them. You are encouraged also to do so, even if they are contrary to my or other students' opinions.

A class is like a vacation: You are taking a trip, a journey through a specific field of knowledge. When you visit a new town or country, it is helpful to have a tour guide who not only points out facts (e.g., "Here is a restaurant"), but also shares a personal perspective. (E.g., "Here is a restaurant. I don't think it is very good. I only ate there once, but I found a gerbil in my gazpacho.")

A point of graduate education is, not to convert you to any particular point of view, but to teach you how to develop and share your own point of view through conducting research, generating knowledge, and joining in scholarly conversations. Ultimately, I am less interested in *what* you think; my larger interest is in *how well* you can think and present your perspective. (Although, of course, there are certain facts and concepts you are expected to master in this class.) Learning how to appreciate and understand ideas different from your own is key to learning how

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to think critically, present your arguments, engage in ethical deliberation, and respond to others' arguments in an articulate manner that will earn you their respect. Regardless of your position on particular issues or problems, you first must understand all sides in order to respond intelligently and intervene effectively—and to get people to listen to you. All students will show one another respect and be sensitive to diverse perspectives: You grow and learn through critically through encountering the unfamiliar, not just repeating and reinforcing what you already know.

**Online technologies:** Check Blackboard for announcements, grading, and file sharing.

**Readings:** Course readings are one of the most important factors in your success in this class. My job is not to summarize and annotate readings for you. You will be expected to arrive in each class able to discuss, analyze, and answer questions about the readings.

**Assignments:** Written components of assignments must be typed and turned in **as a PDF**, unless indicated otherwise. All files should contain your name in the document file name and inside the document. If there are Blackboard problems, email your assignment. If you cannot email, put a hard copy in my mailbox or bring to class. Technological problems will NOT be accepted as an excuse for late assignments. There are computers across campus, at public libraries, and on many smartphones. You will still need to submit an electronic version. Assignments are due by the start of class on the day they are due, regardless of whether you are in class or not. If you are unable to attend class, check your syllabus to see if an assignment is due. You will receive a 10% deduction in grade for each day the assignment is late. In rare cases and for legitimate personal or medical reasons, I may grant extensions, but they must be requested 24 hours BEFORE due date.

**Attendance:** I will not take attendance. However, clearly, if you are not in class, you are unable to participate fully. Also, students who enter class late disrupt the class. Students will be held responsible for all course readings, assignments, and information given in class, whether or not they are present. I do not post presentations or lecture notes. It is your responsibility to inquire about what you have missed. In the case of inclement weather or power outages, class be be closed following official University closure notices and/or direct notification by instruction email announcement. If this impacts assignment due-dates or turn-in, I will notify you of revised schedule and procedures.



**Academic Integrity.** Acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated: *As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a 'high seminary of learning.' Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form. In instances where academic standards may have been compromised, Clemson University has a responsibility to respond appropriately and expeditiously to charges of violations of academic integrity: <http://gradspace.editme.com/AcademicGrievancePolicyandProcedures#integrityphilosophy>*

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**Withdrawals/Incompletes:** Consult the academic calendar for deadlines on drops and withdrawals. Please consult the academic calendar for deadlines on drops and withdrawals. Students wishing to file for “Incomplete” or “I” grades must meet with me prior to taking any action. All requests will be handled on a case-by- case basis, and I have final say on whether any such grade will be assigned. I am opposed to assigning such a grade except under the direst of circumstances. A student’s anticipated failure to achieve the grade she or he wishes to earn is not considered just cause for an Incomplete.

**Welcoming Students with Disabilities:** Student Disability Services coordinates the provision of reasonable accommodations for students with physical, emotional, or learning disabilities. Accommodations are individualized, flexible, and confidential and are based on the nature of the disability and the academic environment, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students are encouraged to consult with Disability Services staff early in the semester, preferably prior to the first day of class. Current documentation or appointments are available from Student Disability Services, Suite 239 in the Academic Success Center, 656-6848. Details on policies and procedures are at [www.clemson.edu/sds](http://www.clemson.edu/sds) If you need assistance accessing the written, auditory, or visual material in the class, please contact me directly and we will work with Disability Services to arrange equivalent alternatives.

**Anti-harassment and Non-discrimination:** See the full University statement here: <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/anti-harassment-policy.html> Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (amending the Higher Education Act of 1965) is a federal gender equity law that prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities that receive federal funding. Sexual harassment, which includes sexual violence and other forms of nonconsensual sexual misconduct, is a form of sex discrimination and is prohibited under this law. Title IX states: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal assistance. . . .” (20 U.S.C. section 1681). Clemson University is committed to providing a higher education environment that is free from sexual discrimination. Therefore, if you believe you or someone else that is part of the Clemson University community has been discriminated against based on sex or if you have questions about Title IX, please contact the Clemson University Title IX Coordinator, Mr. Jerry Knighton, who is also the Director of the Office of Access and Equity, at 110 Holtzendorff Hall, 864-656-3181 (voice) or 864-656-0899 (TDD). The Title IX Coordinator is the person(s) designated by Clemson University to oversee its Title IX compliance efforts. For more information, see <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/title-ix/>

**Academic Support Services:** Contact the Academic Success Center, 836 McMillan Rd. Phone (864) 656-6452 Fax (864) 656-6215 [asc@clermson.edu](mailto:asc@clermson.edu) Clemson Writing Center: <http://www.clemson.edu/centers-institutes/writing/> For other support, visit the Clemson Student Support Services website or Clemson Student Services menu.

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

(subject to change)

### Aug. 19 Introduction

- Socratic Dialogue - What does it mean “to know” something?
- Sign up on Discussion Board thread for your date to present you *CT2 Artifact Assignment—Thesis Evaluation Video*

### Aug. 24 Critical Thinking

- Nosich, “What is Critical Thinking?”
- Brookfield, *Teaching for Critical Thinking*, Ch 1, “What is Critical Thinking?”
- Facione, *Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts* (pp. 1-28)

### Aug 26 Communication

- James Carey, “A Cultural Approach to Communication”
- *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*, (skim to familiarize yourself)
- Visit Trello, familiarize yourself, join class organization. Come to class with any technical questions: <https://trello.com>

### Aug 31 Research & Creativity

- Cresswell, “A Framework for Design”
- Jick, “Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Triangulation in Action”
- Davis, “That’s Interesting!” (just focus on main idea and skim examples)
- Kutzer-Rice, “300 Exabytes: An Inventory of the World’s Information”
- Gomez, “What Do We Know About Creativity?”
- APA Style sample paper - find at Perdue Online Writing Lab and download for class

### Sept. 2 What is “technology” and how do we study it?

- John G. Burke, “Appendix B: Suggestions for Further Reading,” from *Technology and Change*
- Cutcliffe, “The Historic Emergence of STS as an Academic Field in the United States”
- Nash and Browne, “Queer Methods and Methodologies”
- Hanrahan, Interview with John Durham Peters
- Socratic Dialogue - What is “technology”?

### Sept 7 Perceiving and Describing Technologies

- 9/7 DUE: Research Proposal Topic due

- Bolter & Grusin, “Immediacy, Hypermediacy, and Re-mediation”
- Jenkins et al, Ch. 1, “Why Media Spread,” from *Spreadable Media*
- Pierce & Paulos, “A Phenomenology of Human-Electricity Relations”

### Sept 9 Patterns in Technology Discourses: Technological Determinism, Utopia/Dystopia, Technopanics, Youth, The End of Everything, Futurism

- Williams, “The Political and Feminist Dimensions of Technological Determinism”
- Kriss, “The ‘Paracetamol Challenge’ Is an Internet Teen-Suicide Craze That Doesn’t Actually Exist”
- Gershon & Bell, “Introduction: The Newness of New Media”
- Marwick, “The MySpace Panic”

### Sept. 14 Guest speaker(s)

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**Sept. 16 (Participant) Observation of Technology Users**

- Mayer, "When the Camera Won't Focus: Tensions in Media Ethnography"
- Wallis, "Mobile Phones without Guarantees: The Promises of Technology and the Contingencies of Culture"
- Hitchins, "Rhythm, Sound & Movement: The Guitarist as Participant-Observer in Jamaica's Studio Culture"

**Sept. 21 Guest speaker(s)**

**Sept 23 Users: Individuals, Groups, Organizations**

- Sullivan, "Gendered Cybersupport: A Thematic Analysis of Two Online Cancer Support Groups"
- Adams, Yina, Madrizb, & Mullena, "A phenomenology of learning large: the tutorial sphere of xMOOC video lectures"
- Heinz et al, "Perceptions of Technology Among Older Adults"
- Rice and Leonardi, "Information and Communication Technology Use in Organizations"

**Sept. 28 Guest speaker(s)**

**Sept. 30 Networks or Communities of Technology Users?**

- Castells, "A Network Theory of Power"
- Roy, "From Kush List to Gay Bombay: Virtual Webs of Real People"
- Williams, "Afterword: An Historian's Take on the Network Society"

**Oct. 5 Guest speaker(s)**

**Oct 7 Technology Development, Diffusion, & Impacts**

- Opt, "The Development of Rural Wired Radio in Upstate South Carolina"
- Katz et al, "Traditions of Research on the Diffusion of Innovation"
- Chang, "A New Perspective on Twitter Hashtag Use: Diffusion of Innovation Theory"
- Lievrouw, "New Media Design and Development: Diffusion of Innovations vs Social Shaping of Technology"
- Eisenstein, "Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought"

**Oct. 12 Fall Break, no class**

**Oct 14 Historiographies of Technologies**

- 10/14: Research Proposal Topic due revised as an Introduction, with new Literature Review. Be prepared to informally discuss in class.

- Van Dijck, entire book
- Tom Standage, from *The Victorian Internet*
- Sterne, "Rearranging the Files: On Interpretation in Media History"
- Buchanan, "Theory and Narrative in the History of Technology"

**Oct. 19 Thematic and Narrative Analyses of Technology**

- Arceneaux and Schmitz Weiss, "Seems stupid until you try it: Press coverage of Twitter, 2006–9"
- Sullivan, "Gendered Cybersupport: A Thematic Analysis of Two Online Cancer Support Groups"
- Pace, "YouTube: An Opportunity for Consumer Narrative Analysis?"
- Rogers, "Old Games, Same Concerns: Examining First Generation Video Games Through Popular Press Coverage from 1972-1985"

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**Oct. 21 Guest speaker(s)**

**Oct. 26 Guest speaker(s)**

**Oct. 28 Cultural Studies of Technology**

- Slack and Wise, entire book

**Nov. 2 Representations of Technology**

- Berger, "Part I: The Foundations of Knowledge in Everyday Life (pp. 33-62), from *The Social Construction of Reality*
- Watch *The Ring (2002, US version)* - Available on Netflix DVD, or \$2.99 streaming on YouTube, Google Play, Vudu, Amazon Instant Video

**Nov 9-11 Discourse Analyses of Technology**

- Alvesson & Kärreman "Varieties of Discourse: Study of Organizations through Discourse Analysis"
- Gates, "Biometrics and Post-9/11 Technostalgia"
- Gladwell, "Small Change: Why the revolution will not be tweeted"
- Madrigal, "Gladwell on Social Media and Activism" by Alexis Madrigal
- Morozov, "The Google Doctrine"

**Nov. 16-18 Feminist, Gender & Queer Studies of Technology**

- Banet-Weiser, "Branding the Post-Feminist Self: Girls' Video Production and YouTube"
- Szulc, "Hyperlinked Identities of LGBTQ Websites: Towards a Qualitative Hyperlink Analysis"
- Akrich & Pasveer, "Embodiment and Disembodiment in Childbirth Narratives"
- Schwartz-Cowan, "The 'Industrial Revolution' in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change in the 20th Century"
- Bix, "Mrs. Fix-It"

**Nov. 18-20 Technologies and Race, Ethnicity, Nationality**

- Due 11/18: Revised Introduction and Literature Review, new Research Design and Method(s) section

- Everett, "The Revolution will be Digitized: Afrocentricity & the Digital Public Sphere"
- Gray, "Music, identity and New Technology" from *Cultural Moves: African-Americans and the Politics of Representation*
- Rafael, "The Cell Phone and the Crowd: Messianic Politics in the Contemporary Philippines"
- Watch - *High Tech Soul: The Creation of Techno Music* (link on BlackBoard)

**Nov. 23 Sound Studies of Technology**

- Hargittai, "Radio's Lessons for the Internet"
- Sterne, "Audible Technique," from *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*
- Scott, "Sound Studies for Historians of New Media"
- Douglas, "Introduction" from *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination*

**Nov. 25 No class, Thanksgiving**

**Nov 30-Dec. 2 Your Technology Research Proposals**

**Dec. 7 Exam Week** - Due: Complete proposal, all parts revised.

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I have read the contents of this syllabus and understand my responsibilities and expectations.

Name:

Date.