

English 4008/5008-020, COMM 4050, AMST 4050, & WGST 4050/5050-020

New Media: Gender, Culture, and Technology

Summer Session II—2013

Dr. Aaron A. Toscano Office: Fretwell 280F Office hours: MTWTh 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm 4:00 pm – 5:00pm (and by appt)	Classroom: Fretwell 210 Time: Mon. & Wed. 6:30 am - 8:30 pm Hybrid Class—Online portion Tues. & Thurs.* http://clas-pages.uncc.edu/aaron-toscano/
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*Hybrid course delivered through a combination of face-to-face classroom instruction and Moodle. Classroom instruction will be Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:30PM-8:30PM in Fretwell 210. Learn to use Moodle at <http://distanceed.uncc.edu/new-current-student-guide#orientation>.

Course Description

The term "new media" is an interesting subject for the twenty-first century student and a study that has an evolving definition. Currently, new media refers to the digital technologies that have inundated contemporary society—video games, webpages, digital photography, and numerous multimedia texts. This course will explore the ways in which new media reflect larger cultural myths, values, and attitudes. We will approach the study of new media by analyzing various media (TV, films, commercials, printed texts, webpages, video game sequences, etc.) and locating the cultural values incorporated within media to help us evaluate capitalism, militarization, fragmented realities, patriotism, the individual hero, gender roles, and even manifest destiny. Recent scholarship on new media reveals complex narratives that complicate traditional notions of textuality, so our study won't be just about the technologies behind new media, but also about how cultures mediate these new "texts." Additionally, the course will consider theories from rhetoric/composition, feminism, and cultural studies to enrich our analysis of new media. This is a hybrid course, so students will meet in a traditional classroom and have online activities and resources.

Course Objectives and Biases

I have a bias that drives my pedagogy, and I want to make this absolutely clear: I believe that education for the sake of education is good in and of itself. I don't make any claim that you will learn anything practical that you may directly apply to a 9-to-5 job, and I hope we engage only in abstract theoretical endeavors. This is a theory rich course that questions the "truths" with which the media bombard us. There are no correct answers, but, as a rhetorician, I have a bias that your discussions will be sound, well-thought out, and resemble a commitment to logical reasoning. Another huge bias I hold is that a university education is not about reinforcing student beliefs; instead, students should consider how their own biased perspectives/experiences have constructed their tastes, convictions, and opinions as they synthesize a new (preferably broader) intellectual appreciation of new (and traditional) media texts and technologies. In this course, students should push themselves to engage in critical thinking by developing their analytic faculties as well as field-specific vocabularies for talking about new media and theories surrounding new media. Special to this class is that we will view media and discuss as a class

their "meanings." Therefore, ALL students will have to articulate an understanding of the material that reflects the rhetorical sophistication and level of commitment to pursuing knowledge expected in a 4000/5000-level course. Ideally, students will contemplate the role of media consumer or "critic" as that position relates to socially constructed norms and tastes.

Text and Materials

Required	Baudrillard, Jean. <i>The Gulf War did not Take Place</i> . {978-0253210036} Fisher, Mark. <i>Capitalism: Is There No Real Alternative?</i> {978-1846943171} Malpas, Simon. <i>Postmodernism</i> . {978-0415280655} Coursepack from CoursePacks Etc. Check Moodle for instructions (full citations for readings given in course calendar) Willingness To Learn
Recommended	A membership to Netflix, Blockbuster, or other Film repository Having used (at least once) a Joystick, Controller, Keyboard, or Mouse to manipulate an Avatar Having been to any social media site A good dictionary

Expectations

I expect students to be prepared to participate in class discussions; therefore, students should finish all readings before the class meets. Participation means you must thoughtfully engage in class discussions. Merely showing up will not get you participation credit—you must speak. Starting July 6th, there are 8 face-to-face participation days—which exclude computer lab “workshop” days. Obviously, I don't expect you to comment multiple times every class period, but I do expect you to articulate an understanding of the course material many times during this five-week class. There is no magic number of times to participate and not all contributions are equal—some contributions are more thoughtful than others—but you should strive to be an active participant whenever possible. If you're not in class for discussions (whether they be small group discussions or class-wide ones), you can't receive credit, so your participation grade will be affected. I will note your participation (or lack thereof) daily. Thoughtful participation means that you engage critically in our discussions or ask engaging questions about the subject. I WILL OFFER YOU ALTERNATIVES, but please see me ASAP if you're concerned about your participation grade because you're shy or if you don't understand these requirements. Telling me at the end of July that you didn't participate because you're the quiet type or because you didn't understand what "thoughtful" meant will be too late. I emphasize participation as a way to assess your understanding of the course materials in conjunction with online posts. This class doesn't simply measure what you "read" and can regurgitate; instead, I try to evaluate how you negotiate the course material through discussions. The material might not be new to you—TV shows, video games, commercials, etc.—but this course asks you to rethink your ways of knowing in order to become more culturally aware critics of new media and society in general. Students can't show their critical faculties if they don't participate in class discussions.

Work Requirements

The ability to read college-level texts critically is a major requirement. The coursepack (available at CoursePacks Etc.) has all of our class readings not included in the books listed above. Students must have the readings read prior to coming to class and must bring the readings with them to class. Although some might claim to be able to "get by" without having read, don't assume that you can get a decent participation grade without having read. Your participation grade may be lowered for not having read for class. For students who choose not to buy the coursepack, you must still have the readings with you on the days we discuss them. The full citations are given in the calendar section of the syllabus, but don't wait to find them the day before the class discussion because many are not available through Atkins Library. In addition to participation, students will complete two written essays, a multimodal essay/project, online posts/responses, and a presentation (5000-level students have an additional presentation as well as more involved requirements for their essays).

This is a hybrid class, so, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, I will have prompts for you related to our readings or class discussions. In order to facilitate beyond-the-classroom-discussion, I'll ask you to post and respond to a classmate's post on the days we aren't in class. In addition to readings (see course calendar below) there will be material on [moodle](#) and the class webpage for you to read, watch, listen...contemplate.

The final presentations will be during the regularly scheduled final exam time: Wednesday, August 7, 2013 6:30-9:00 pm.

Assignments/Grade Distribution

ENGL, COMM, AMST, & WGST 4000-level	Pts.	ENGL & WGST 5000-level	Pts.
Critical Analysis of a Technology Essay	100	Critical Media Analysis Essay	100
Critical Media Analysis Essay	100	Critical Analysis of a Technology Essay	100
Multimodal Essay	200	Leading Class Discussion	100
Participation	300	Multimodal Essay	200
Discussion Board Posts/Responses	300	Participation	300
Final Presentation	100	Discussion Board Posts/Responses	300
		Final Presentation	100
Total	1100	Total	1200

All of the above must be completed to receive a passing grade in the course.

Grading Policy

Your final grade is supposed to reflect your entire work for the semester and will be based on the percentages below:

Grading Scale for Graded Assignments and Final Grade:				
A= 90 - 100	B= 80 - 89	C= 70 - 79	D= 60 - 69	F=Below 60

Definition of A, B, C, D, and F Grades

Remember, your final grade is a combination of the five areas above in the assignment percentage table. An 'A' means your work was excellent—not mediocre, average, or just good. A 'B' means your work was good—not quite excellent but definitely above average and thoughtful. A 'C' means your work was barely adequate enough to satisfy the assignment—showing a lack of effort or thought for the assignment guidelines. A 'D' or 'F' usually means assignments were late, missing, or incomplete—often this work does not demonstrate appropriate college-level work for a 4000- or 5000-level course.

Late Work

An assignment is due at the beginning of the class for which it was assigned. All late work will reduce the assignment by 10% for each class period it is late. Therefore, an assignment worth 100 points that is one class meeting late will not be able to have a grade higher than 90. If you will not or cannot be in class on the day an assignment is due, you should make arrangements to get the assignment to me via another student or put it in my mailbox. Remember, I will not accept assignments attached to e-mails.

Attendance

I will take attendance each day of class starting July 8th. It is very important that you attend every class in order to keep up with the work and reading. Your grade will be lowered by a full letter grade for each day missed beyond 3 absences. After 6 absences you will receive a failing grade for the course. Please make an effort to come to every face-to-face class and to get here on time. Please discuss any problems you may have regarding attendance or work before class if at all possible. Don't just skip class because you feel you have three "free" days. Save your absences for emergencies. I'll have links to videos for you, but not everything is available online. Therefore, I'll show you videos during our face-to-face classes. If you miss a class, don't expect to borrow the videos. There are no such things as excused absences. Only students participating in UNCC sponsored activities (with the proper documentation) will not be penalized for missing class. Cars break down, parking is limited, students get sick, and traffic is brutal, but class still happens. Also, please be respectful of the other students and get to class on time. If you are absent, get the information from another student. Do not expect me to e-mail the class notes to you. Of course, never e-mail me and ask, "so...like, Dr. Toscano, man...did we...like...you know...do anything the other day in class?"

Important Dates and Administrative Information

The syllabus schedule below has important dates marked. Students are responsible for not only knowing course deadlines but also knowing UNCC deadlines (drop/add, billing, vacation, etc.). Please visit the following link for the registrar's calendar: http://registrar.uncc.edu/calendar?tid_1=10&tid=40.

Academic Integrity

All UNC Charlotte students have the responsibility to be familiar with and to observe the requirements of The UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity. This Code forbids cheating, fabrication, or falsification of information, multiple submission of academic work, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials (such as Library books on reserve), and complicity in academic dishonesty (helping others to violate the Code). Any further specific requirements or permission regarding academic integrity in this course will be stated by the instructor, and are also binding on the students in this course. Students who violate the Code can be punished to the extent of being permanently expelled from UNC Charlotte and having this fact recorded on their official transcripts. The normal penalty is zero credit on the work involving dishonesty and further substantial reduction of the course grade. In almost all cases, the course grade is reduced to 'F.' If you do not have a copy of the Code, you can view it on UNC Charlotte's Academic Integrity Web site at <http://integrity.uncc.edu/>. Standards of academic integrity will be enforced in this course. Students are expected to report cases of academic dishonesty they become aware of to the course instructor who is responsible for dealing with them.

If you try to pass off any work in full or part as your own without proper credit being given to the original source, you will receive an 'F' in this course.

In addition to the above identification of Academic Dishonesty, students should be aware of technology-mediated concerns related to Academic Integrity. The Oxford English Dictionary defines "integrity" as "The condition of having no part or element taken away or wanting; undivided or unbroken state; material wholeness, completeness, entirety." A second definition states that integrity means "The condition of not being marred or violated; unimpaired or uncorrupted condition; original perfect state; soundness." Therefore, anything that draws students' attention away from course activities and goals is a violation of academic integrity because it corrupts the soundness and condition of learning. For instance, engaging in critical thinking/awareness is a sound, perfect state activity for this course; on the other hand, devoting attention to facebook, instant messaging, non-class-related Web surfing or e-mailing, etc. violates or corrupts the learning goals of this course. Although we may point to the Internet in general and social media sites specifically in our discussions of 21st-Century communication, engrossing oneself in them during class to "catch up with friends" divides your attention and may be distracting to members of this class. This violation is as serious as plagiarism and will result in an 'F' in participation the first time and an 'F' in this course for a subsequent violation. This syllabus section is your warning.

You may also receive an 'F' in the course for other academic integrity violations specified on the UNCC Integrity Web site. Do not expect another warning--this is it. Please see me if you need further clarification regarding cheating, fabrication or falsification of information, multiple submission of academic work, plagiarism, complicity in academic dishonesty, or other violations of academic integrity.

A Note to Students from UNC Charlotte's English Department, Statement on Diversity (April 2009)

The English Department strives to create an academic climate that respects people of varied cultural backgrounds and life experiences. As a community of scholars and teachers who study language,

literature, and writing, we are committed to nurturing intellectual and aesthetic diversity. In all our activities, we invite participation by diverse groups, including, but not limited to, those who define themselves in the following terms: race and ethnicity; gender; political orientation; sexual orientation; special health needs; age; religion; country of origin; and socio-economic status. Finally, by fostering multiple perspectives in our coursework, we can help our students prepare to participate in our increasingly diverse society, as well as in the global community.

The Department of English is committed to the centrality of writing in our curriculum.

Instructional Modifications

Students who have a condition that may impair their ability to complete assignments or otherwise satisfy course criteria are encouraged to meet with me to identify, discuss, and document any feasible instructional modifications or accommodations. Please inform me about circumstances no later than the second week of the semester or as soon as possible after a disability or condition is diagnosed, whichever occurs earliest. For information and assistance, contact the Disabilities Resource Center.

Statement of Academic Freedom

I strongly encourage students to use class as a place for free inquiry and intellectual growth. Although we as a class will not always agree or be comfortable with the views of others, every student has the right to his or her own tastes and convictions. I promise to be fair and always support your right to look at the world from your own position, but I encourage all students to branch out and consider multiple perspectives. I will not tolerate any harassment or abuse (emotional or physical) or any instance where others adversely affect students' learning.

Building "Issues" and Inclement Weather

Some buildings have A/C problems and class have to be canceled because it's too brutally hot to remain inside. If the A/C "issue" cancels class, keep up with the syllabus. We'll pick up where we left off on the syllabus when we return to class. Also, if anything else (i.e., weather) causes us to miss class, we'll pick up where we left off.

Right to Make Changes

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus when necessary to meet learning objectives, to compensate for missed classes, or to make our lives easier.

Schedule for Readings and Assignments

(have readings and assignments done before class—including our online days, Tuesdays and Thursdays)

Face-to-face classes (nearly all Mondays and Wednesdays) are highlighted in gray

WEEK 1	
July 1	<p>Introduction to the course</p> <p>Freire, Paulo. "Chapter 2: The Banking Concept of Education." <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i>. New York: Continuum, 1990. 57-74.</p> <p>Conniff, Richard. "In the Name of the Law: How to Win Arguments without Really Trying." <i>Smithsonian</i> 38.7 (Oct. 2007): 128.</p> <p>Fricke, David. "The E Street Band Keep Rolling in '09." <i>Rolling Stone</i> 1070 (22 January 2009). 14.</p>
July 2* online	<p>Mervin, David. "The News Media and Democracy in the United States." <i>Democratization and the Media</i>. Ed. Vicky Randall. London: F. Cass, 1998. 6-22.</p> <p>Bazerman, Charles. "The Production of Technology and the Production of Human Meaning." <i>Journal of Business and Technical Communication</i> 12.3 (1998): 381-387.</p>
July 3	<p>Habermas, Jurgen. "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article." <i>Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords</i>. Eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Keller. Trans. Sara Lennox and Frank Lennox. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001. 102-107.</p> <p>Fraser, Nancy. "What's Critical about Critical Theory? The Case of Habermas and Gender." <i>Feminist Interpretations and Political Theory</i>. Eds. Mary Lyndon Shanley and Carole Pateman. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1991. 252-256.</p> <p>Jefferson, Thomas et. al. "The Declaration of Independence." <i>An American History</i>. Vol. 2. Rebecca Brooks Gruver. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1972. A7-A8.</p> <p>You should begin reading</p> <p>Malpas, Simon. <i>The Postmodern</i>. London: Routledge, 2005.</p>
July 4 & 5	No Classes —4 th of July Holiday
*July 2 nd : Last Day to Add or Drop a Class with no grade by 11:59 PM	
WEEK 2	
July 8	<p>Remember, you should be reading Malpas, Simon. <i>The Postmodern</i>. London: Routledge, 2005.</p> <p>Williams, Raymond. "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory." <i>Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords</i>. Eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Keller. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001. 152-165.</p> <p>Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich. "The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas." <i>Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords</i>. Eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Keller. Trans. Richard Dixon et. al. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001. 39-42.</p>
July 9* online	<p>McLuhan, Marshall. "The Medium is the Message." <i>Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man</i>. New York: Signet, 1964. 7-21.</p> <p>Federman, M. (2004) "What is the Meaning of the Medium is the Message?" Retrieved 2 June 2011 from http://individual.utoronto.ca/markfederman/MeaningTheMediumistheMessage.pdf.</p>
July 10	Critical Analysis of a Technology DUE

DUE	Jenkins, Henry. "Introduction: Worship at the Altar of Convergence." <i>Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide</i> . New York: New York UP, 2006. 1-24 and 261-262. 5000-level class lead
July 11 online	Catch up on Malpas, Simon. <i>The Postmodern</i> . London: Routledge, 2005.
*July 9 th : Last Day to Withdraw from a Course and Retain Others by 11:59 PM	
WEEK 3	
July 15	Baudrillard, Jean. <i>The Gulf War Did not Take Place</i> . Trans. Paul Patton. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1991. 5000-level class lead
July 16 online	Responses to Classmate Presentations
July 17	Fisher, Mark. <i>Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?</i> Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2009. 5000-level class lead
July 18 online	Steinem, Gloria. "Why Young Women are More Conservative." <i>Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions</i> . New York: Henry Holt, 1995. 229-237. Le Guin, Ursula. "A left-Handed Commencement Address." <i>Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places</i> . New York: Grove Press, 1989. 115-118. McRobbie, Angela. "Feminism, Postmodernism, and the 'Real Me.'" <i>Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords</i> . Eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Keller. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001. 598-610.
WEEK 4	
July 22	Movie day, <i>Killing Us Softly 4</i> Wolf, Naomi. "The Beauty Myth." <i>The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women</i> . New York: William Morrow, 1991. 9-19. 5000-level class lead (possibly)
July 23 online	Vance, Carole S. "Social Construction Theory and Sexuality." <i>Constructing Masculinity</i> . Eds. Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, & Simon Watson. New York: Routledge, 1995. 37-48. Seidman, Steven. "Sex Work." <i>The Social Construction of Sexuality</i> . New York: Norton, 2003. 114-122 and 144-145.
July 24*	Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." <i>Screen</i> 16.3 (1975): 6-18. Cowlshaw, Brian. "Playing War: The Emerging Trend of Real Virtual Combat in Video Games." <i>American Popular Culture Online Magazine</i> . January 2005. http://www.americanpopularculture.com/archive/emerging/real_virtual_combat.htm 5000-level class lead (possibly)
July 25 online	Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Experience." <i>Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society</i> 5.4 (1980): 631-660.
*July 24 th : Last Day to Withdraw from All Classes by 11:59 PM	
WEEK 5	
July 29 **DUE**	Critical Media Analysis DUE Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." <i>Theatre Journal</i> 40.4 (Dec. 1988): pp. 519-531.

	Barthes, Roland. "Novels and Children." <i>Mythologies</i> . New York: Hill and Wang, 1972. pp. 50-52. 5000-level class lead
July 30 online	Miedzian, Myriam. "The Culture of Violence." <i>Boys Will Be Boys: Breaking the Link between Masculinity and Violence</i> . New York: Anchor Books, 1991. 173-179. Frasca, Gonzalo. "Videogames of the Oppressed: Critical Thinking, Education, and Other Trivial Issues." <i>First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game</i> . Eds. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2004. 85-94.
July 31	Work on Final Project and Presentation
August 1 online	TBA
WEEK 6	
August 5	Presentation Workshop
August 6 online	LAST DAY of Summer Session 2 CLASSES TBA
August 7 6:30-9:00*	Final Exam Day—Presentations

*Slightly longer class.