

new media: history and theory

This introduction to digital culture examines ways of thinking about new media, and investigates how information technologies are challenging and changing inherited ideas about thinking and acting in relation to others. As we live in a world of email and blogs, GPS and surveillance, data mining and cryptography, new media promise to transform our experience of language and reality, space and time, publicity and privacy, memory and knowledge. In digital media, we witness not only a new storage paradigm, but a transition to interactivity, to networks of computer and television screens, and to other systems of circulation and transmission – including computer disks, DVDs, on-line servers, and handheld devices. Your experience is mediated by interfaces – remotes, mice, keyboards, touch screens, joysticks, goggles and gloves and body suits. This course will examine how digital technologies alter our notions of presence and the real, transform our experience of the body and identity, contest our concepts of urban and architectural space, and produce new configurations of information and entertainment. From the earliest radio transmissions and interceptions to the commercial union of military technology and entertainment in television, and from the proto-computers of Bletchley Park to data mining on the Internet, media history defines the reality of the past century and a half. Topics discussed in this seminar include computer history and interface metaphors, digital cinema and special effects, the internet and cold war culture, game worlds and machinima, cryptography and hacktivism, surveillance and code, software art and net criticism. Students will analyze and situate the challenges of media technology among the often irreconcilable demands of privacy, security, trust in data integrity, freedom of speech, and human rights. No special expertise with computers or other gadgets is required.

Required Texts: All students should bring, to every meeting, their own copies of

N. Montfort, N. Wardrip-Fruin eds., *The New Media Reader* (MIT 2003)

L. Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (MIT 2001)

W. Chun, T. Keenan eds., *New Media, Old Media – History & Theory Reader* (Routledge 2005)

Course Requirements:

- Attendance: Students who wish to successfully complete this course are required to attend regularly and actively. Unexcused absences will affect your grade; lateness of more than 10 minutes is counted as an absence. Students who leave class early will be marked absent. If you fall asleep in class, you will be marked absent.
- Class Participation: This course requires substantial involvement in class discussions that demonstrate your familiarity with assigned readings. In order to pass, students MUST do the required readings before each class.
- Assignments: You will be required to write two papers.
 - The first paper prompt will be distributed week 4, on Jan 26. It is due week 7, February 23. Late papers will not be accepted, attempts to submit late will receive an F.
 - The second paper prompt will be distributed in week 10, March 16. It is due April 20, in our last meeting. Late papers will not be accepted, attempts to submit late will receive an F.

Incompletes will not be granted without certification from a doctor or lawyer. If you are having trouble meeting deadlines, speak to the instructor as soon as possible. Do not expect a grade for assignments that are turned in late; it is not fair to fellow students who work hard to get their assignments in on time. Do not complete your assignments at the last minute. Check your computers and printers to make sure that they are in working order on the week an assignment is due. If your computer is not working properly the week the assignment is due, use one of the computing labs on campus.

Grading:

- 33% Class Participation
- 33% Paper
- 33% Final

Academic Honesty:

Students are held responsible for refraining from cheating and plagiarism, for refusing to aid or abet any form of academic dishonesty, and for notifying professors and/or appropriate administrative officials about observed incidents of academic misconduct. The anonymity of any student reporting an incident of academic dishonesty will be protected. Acts of plagiarism, dishonesty, or cheating warrant a failing grade and disciplinary action. Please carefully review these policies and approach the instructor if you are encountering difficulties with the course materials, or with matters that are hindering your attention or abilities as a student. If you have any questions about the proper citation of sources, please discuss them with the instructor. We are sympathetic to the challenges confronting students, and open to addressing any problems or concerns you may have. We are also committed to ensuring equal opportunities and access to the educational process for all students. Please let us know if we can improve our teaching for students with disabilities.

Schedule: NMR numbers refer to the first page number for each reading assignment in *The New Media Reader*; NMOM numbers refer to *New Media / Old Media*; and LONM numbers refer to *The Language of New Media*. Please remember that you are expected to have read these texts **before class** – takes notes and prepare questions.

1	What's New about New Media?	LONM 18-61: Manovich, ch 1 NMOM 27: Batchen, Electricity Made Visible
2	Archeology of Multi-Media	NMR 35: Bush, As We May Think NMOM 85: Bush, Memex Revisited
3	From <i>Deskset</i> to <i>Tron</i>	LONM 212: Manovich, ch 5 NMR 133: Nelson, File Structure for the Complex
4	Net History	NMOM 105: Ernst, Dis/continuities NMOM 181: Kittler, Cold War Networks
5	Click Theory	NMR 301: Nelson, Computer Lib/Dream Machines NMOM 359: Krapp, Hypertext
6	Game Worlds	NMR 663: Farmer, Lessons of Lucasfilm's Habitat NMR 109: Sutherland, Sketchpad
7	Cyber Cultures	NMOM 317: Nakamura, Cybertyping NMOM 347: Hillis, Modes of Digital Identification
8	Digital Times	LONM 286: Manovich, ch 6 NMOM 251: Doane, Information Crisis Catastrophe
9	Secrecy / Surveillance	NMR 737: Agre, Surveillance and Capture NMOM 187: Galloway, Protocol
10	Rip Mix Burn	NMR 627: Nichols, The Age of Cybernetic Systems NMOM 209: Manovich, Generation Flash
11	Virus Culture	NMOM 219: Dibbell, Viruses are good for you NMR 73: Licklider, Man-Computer Symbiosis
12	Cyborgs	NMR 515: Haraway, A Cyborg Manifesto NMR 499: Turkle, The Second Self
13	Place & Power	NMR 781: CAE, Nomadic Power NMOM 265: Wark, Weird Global Media Event
14	Theory as Counterculture	NMR 259: Enzensberger, Media Theory NMR 277: Baudrillard, Requiem for the Media
15	Software as Art	LONM 176: Manovich, ch 4 NMOM 157: Hagen, Style of Sources