Communications Studies (COMS) 481 L01
Advanced Topics in Media & Society:
Understanding the Internet
Fall 2015
TuWeThFrSa 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Class dates: 01.09.2015 – 05.09.2015

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Course Description

Per McLuhan, the Internet has been "working on us" since the 1970s, shaping us intellectually, cognitively and socially. It has also reconfigured the very substrate of economic value and activity, generating extreme concentrations of wealth, ownership and control among a small and almost exclusively young, white and male caste that enjoys near cult-like status. For many, this represents a corruption of the original spirit of an unrestricted Internet. For others, the 'net remains what one makes of it, allowing for free choice and expanding opportunities in the areas of collaboration, innovation and social entrepreneurship. This course comprises a critical assessment of the Internet, from its early days of democratic utopianism to what many critics in the early 21st century describe as the era of digital feudalism. Topics for discussion include:

Cognitive and social impacts – distraction, interaction, shifting notions of literacy

Education and learning – MUDs to MOOCs: whither knowledge in the 21st C?

Policy and Regulation – freedom of access; net neutrality; Bill-C51; Internet as critical infrastructure

Social innovation and entrepreneurship – the upside of networked networking

e-democracy – social media, activism and civil society

Advanced applications and the future of the Internet – the Internet of Things; smarts systems; next generation artificial intelligence; net stewardship

Pre-session study: it is imperative that students read all of Andrew Keen's *The Internet is NOT the Answer.* Students should also read through and be familiar with the assigned article "Digital Feudalism: Enclosures and Erasures from Digital Rights Management to the Digital Divide."

Guest lectures: Course content will be augmented through presentations by experts and innovators in their fields, including J.F. Amiot of Cybera, social entrepreneur and digital economy leader James van Leeuwen, social media activist Moe S. Esfahlani and others.

Primary objective of the Course

To advance critical thinking skills by building students' theoretical and historical knowledge of the complex relationships involved in the conception, development and evolution of the Internet.

Textbooks and Readings

> *The Internet is NOT the Answer.* By Andrew Keen. Atlantic Monthly Press, 2015. (Ordered in hard copy available through the U of C Bookstore but also available as an inexpensive Kindle download).

> "Digital feudalism: Enclosures and erasures from Digital Rights Management to the Digital Divide." By Meinrath, Sacha D., Losey, James W., & Pickard, Victor W. In *CommLaw Conspectus*, Vol. 19, 2011. Accessible here: (http://scholarship.law.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1470&context=commlaw)

Further selected readings from the web or made available in class. Consult D2L for details and links to external documents.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students need to bring a network-enabled laptop, tablet or other word-processing capable device to class, as they will be required to complete in-class assignments and work on final project topics.

Assignments and Evaluation

September 1- 4: Daily in-class group assignments (10% each x 5 = 50%) – Students will work in randomly assigned groups of 4 to complete a daily in-class short essay assignment requiring responses to questions provided in-class. Question topics will follow closely on class lectures and the textbook readings and in-class discussion.

September 5 am: Quiz (10%) – students will write a short, in-class quiz covering all topics discussed over the week. **September 5, pm**: Research colloquium (10%) – Students will work collaboratively in topic area groups (social media; Bill-C51; etc.) and

make short group presentations in the afternoon that identify key issues and approaches to researching those topics as final project topics.

October 30: Final project (40%) – Students will submit a final research paper or report that covers in depth an Internet topic of their choosing that covers new ground or builds on course work already completed.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

You do not need to complete all assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Submission of Assignments: Please hand in your essays via email to: mwolfe@ucalgary.ca. Students MUST use the following file naming convention: SunameAssignment.doc. Examples: SmithAssign#1.doc; WessonFinalPaper.doc

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

Policy for Late Assignments
Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Students with Disabilities
If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of the course.

Policy regarding engineering exams scheduled during STAS 325 class times

There will be NO make-up assignments or final project allowances for engineering students whose professors schedule exams outside of their own class times and that consequently conflict with STAS 314 class times.

Writing Skills Statement
Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see

http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support

Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale
Work in this course will be graded using percentage grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	00 - 49.99%	0%

Plagiarism
Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or book a consultation in the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing_support/consultations)

Academic Misconduct
For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html

Research Ethics
Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY • **Calgary Police Service** • **Emergency Text Messaging** • **Emergency Evacuation & Assembly** • **Safewalk Program**	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ **403-220-5333** **403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911** http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (**220-5333).** For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support • **IT help line**	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE • **Writing Support Services** • **Student Services Mobile App**	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS • **Faculty of Arts Reps** • **Student Ombudsman**	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE • **Counselling Services** • **Health Services** • **Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE** • **Online resources and tips**	**403-210-9355** (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health **403-266-HELP (4357)** http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings
Will be posted to D2L