

**Science, Technology and Society (STAS) 341 - Lecture 01**  
**New Media, Technology and Society**  
**Winter 2011**  
**Thursday: 14:00-16:50      Room: SB146**

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Office Hours: Thursday: 13:00 - 14:00

**Calendar Description:**

A study of the implications of information technology for political, social and economic organization, individual psychology, and concepts of knowledge. Historical, ethical and legal implications will be discussed.

**Course Description:**

In this course, we will focus on the social, political and cultural context of the internet. You will be exposed to the main authors reflecting on this problematic. Starting from both their work and our own experience with ICTs, we will reflect on the relations between ICTs and society. From a critical standpoint, we will investigate what it means to live in an 'information society'. We will try to expand and critically engage with our knowledge of the social context of ICTs, by using the theoretical and empirical cases provided in the reading package. Topics to be examined include: history of the internet, identity and gender on the internet; social networks and virtual communities; economic implications of media convergence; ICTs and the concentration of ownership; digitization and copyright; social networks and postindustrial economies.

You will be expected to do the required readings, participate in class discussions, and engage in group and independent research. Classes will combine lecture with student presentation and group work.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of the course, you will:

- be familiar with a number of theories about ICTs;
- be familiar with the history and development of ICTs in their social context;
- be able to think critically about the design, marketing, consumption and use of ICTs;
- develop some expertise on how ICTs are being conceptualized, designed and used in a particular field (e.g. health, personal identity, surveillance etc.).

**Internet and electronic communication device information**

All cell phones should be silenced for the entire duration of the class. Laptops can only be used for taking notes. Using a laptop for any activities not related to the course will affect your participation mark.

**Required texts:**

A reading package will be introduced during the first day of class. Most of the readings consist of journal articles that can be accessed/ downloaded via the University of Calgary Library.

**Recommended texts:**

Terry Flew (2008) *New Media. An Introduction* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Oxford University Press

**Required website:**

STAS 341 Student Website available at <http://wcmprod2.ucalgary.ca/stas341/>

(Note: you do not need to login).

**Assignments and Evaluation:**

You will be graded based on four components:

- Final Exam (35%)
- Group project (35%)
  - Proposal (5%)
  - Presentation (20%)
  - Report (10%)
- Class Participation (10%)
- Reading Response (20%)

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission outside of SS320 . Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes**

Please note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will make every attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

**Description of assignments****1. Final exam (35%) - date to be determined (registrar-scheduled)**

The final exam will cover all lecture material and assigned readings. The exam will last for two hours and it will consist of two sections: answering a set of factual and synthesizing questions, and writing an essay. This assignment will test both your knowledge of the readings and your capacity to synthesize the material and express the arguments in a coherent form.

**2. Group projects (35%)**

This assignment will give you the chance to explore the conceptualization, design or use of the internet in a particular field (e.g. health, identity, surveillance etc.). The presentation will make use of one of the required readings, explaining how it can be understood or applied in the context of the specific internet application and of the specific social field you have chosen. This assignment tests your understanding of a specific reading, including your

capacity to summarize and to explain how the arguments can be applied to the study of a particular application. Both formal presentation skills and writing skills will be evaluated.

You will work in small groups to create a proposal, a presentation and a report. You will be graded as a group; however, the group members will have the opportunity to evaluate each other. Should these peer-evaluations indicate any major problems within the group, each member will be graded individually.

**Group project proposal (5%):** The proposal should indicate the required reading you will use, the internet application/ aspect and the specific problematic you have chosen. You will also briefly explain the argument of the required reading with which you will engage in your presentation. You will receive feedback from the instructor before you start working on the presentation.

Length: 1-2 pages.

**Presentation (20%):** The group will give a 15 minutes presentation, followed by a Q&A session.

**Report (10%):** The report will summarize the main points of the presentation. In addition to that, the report will also incorporate 2 other academic articles dealing with either the arguments proposed in the required reading or with the specific internet application you have selected.

Length: 3-5 pages.

### **3. Class participation (10%)**

You are expected to be present for all classes, taken detailed notes and actively participate in class discussions. Opportunities to do small assignments and present them in class (such as summarizing the definition of certain concepts, reviewing the abstracts of a few academic articles, etc.), as well as small in-class or online activities will count towards your participation mark.

### **4. Reading response (20%)**

You will write a response to one of the readings for that week and you will prepare one question for further discussion. This assignment tests your understanding of the material, as well as your capacity to synthesize and to explain the argument.

Length: 1-2 pages.

### **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.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act**

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

## Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. 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: [www.efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca)

## Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

(Revised, effective September 2008)

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

## 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. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin.

This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (MacEwan Student Centre 4<sup>th</sup> floor, [efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://efwr.ucalgary.ca)) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

### **Academic Misconduct**

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link;

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

### **Students' Union**

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see

<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

### **Student Ombudsman**

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

### **Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points**

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

### **"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333**

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

### **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

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site:  
<http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics>

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/compliance/ethics/info/undergrad/>

### **Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

(The schedule of readings will be handed during the first day of class)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
January 13	Introductory class
January 20	Theory
January 27	Assignments workshop
February 3	History of the internet
February 10	History of the internet
February 17	Economic aspects
February 24	No class - Reading week
March 3	Economic aspects
March 10	Regulative aspects
March 17	Regulative aspects
March 24	Social aspects: Identity
March 31	Social aspects: Identity
April 7	Social aspects: Social networks & Virtual Communities
April 14	Social aspects: Social networks & Virtual Communities
TBD	Final exam - registrar scheduled