

DIGITAL CULTURE

Digital? Culture?

Digital cultures (DC) consist of the cultures that are situated in, and supported by, the new digital media platforms and devices.



The major differences between DC and pre-digital culture stem from the affordances and characteristics of the new tools media techniques, such as interactivity, simultaneousness, multitasking, convergence and immediacy. These devices and techniques and

our adoption of them have altered the way people express cultural identity.

Culture is a complex and difficult concept and digital likewise. The culmination of the two gives for a problematic theoretical concept that is hard to describe, let alone definitively define. The study of DC explores the consequences and meaning of technical innovations in social media, economics, politics, social life and more through the observation of the artifacts and rituals connected with digital technologies and new media.

As the digital media landscape is constantly evolving, this course will take a specific interest in understanding the evolution of media

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technologies and investigate the emergence of older forms of “new” media, from the original internet to big data, from graphical user interfaces to social media platforms. As we do so, we will focus on how we use digital media, and how that use impacts individual identities, connections between people, our knowledge levels, relationships of power, and so on.

Course Objectives

Students will gain an understanding of core concepts of digital content, such as mobility, interactivity, networking, as well its technical components and how it impacts communication and information.

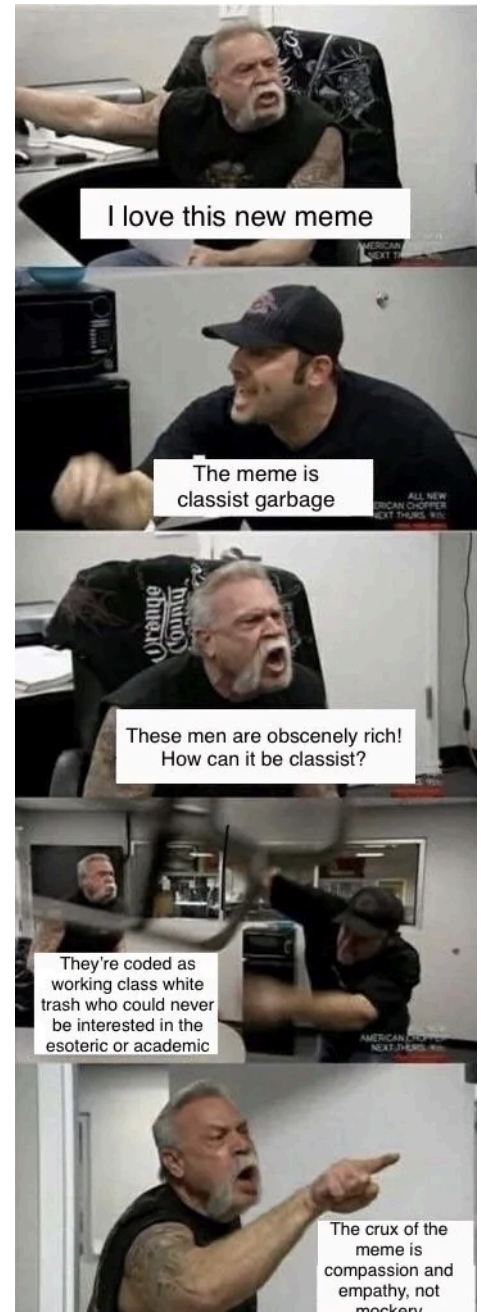
- Students will historicize media technologies we consider(ed) “new” media.
- Students will understand and contribute to contemporary debates over changes in identity, sociality, the economy, education, and play associated with the emergence of new media.
- Students will recognize how digital media constantly impact and/or structure their everyday social interactions, identities, and seemingly-mundane or rote behaviors.

Resource Page

If you really want to know what the course is about, the directions it will take, and the thinking behind it (and too many digressions, bad jokes, and other useless information) then I highly recommend you keep one eye on the Digital Culture Fall 2021 resource page <http://klangable.com/blog/teaching/courses-syllabi/digital-culture-fall21/>

We Slack

I really like using Slack as a communications platform in my courses. It is faster, more informal, fun (?), and it enables you all to get to know each other and help each other answer questions that you may have. So in Digital Cultures we will use Slack to post questions, share information, and goof off. Indeed we could argue that Slack IS a form of digital culture... (how Meta?!). In fact if you have any questions they will be answered quicker on Slack than via email. Make sure you are on the course slack channel. Have you read the syllabus? Post a image of a fruit on random (no text, just picture)



Module 0 Fri 9/3	Introduction	
Module 1 Tue 9/7 Fri 9/10	What is Culture? Understanding Culture & Schein's The Three Levels of Culture.	
Module 2 & 3 Tue 9/14, Fri 9/17 Tue 9/21, Fri 9/24	An Origin Story? What is technology & Early Cybercultures Herlander (2009) Cyberpunk between punks and cyborgs Perry Barlow (1996) A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace Haraway (1985) Cyborg Manifesto.	
Module 4 Tue 9/28 Fri 10/1	Performing Identities Miltner & Highfield (2017) Never Gonna GIF You Up Nissenbaum & Shifman (2017) Internet memes as contested cultural capital	
Module 5 Tue 10/5 Fri 10/8	Influencer Culture O'Meara (2019) Weapons of the Chic Wellman (2020) What it means to be a bodybuilder	
Module 6 Tue 10/12 Fri 10/15	Digital Fitness Culture Toner (2018) Exploring the dark-side of fitness trackers Esmonde (2019) 'There's only so much data you can handle in your life'	EXERCISE
Module 7 Tue 10/19 Fri 10/22	Copyright/Copyleft Culture Berry & Moss. (2006) The politics of the libre commons. Lessig (2004) Afterward in Free Culture	MIDTERM





Module 8
Tue 10/26
Fri 10/29

Hacker, Maker & Consumer Culture

Murillo (2016) New Expert Eyes Over Fukushima
Montello (2020). The right to repair and the corporate stranglehold over the consumer: profits over people.

Module 9
Tue 11/2
Fri 11/5

Participatory Culture and Subversive Sharing

Kelty (2012). From participation to power.
Breakey (2018). Deliberate, principled, self-interested law breaking

Module 10
Tue 11/9
Fri 11/12

Digital Public Sphere

Runciman (2017) Political Theory and Real Politics in the Age of the Internet
Theocharis & de Moor (2021) Creative Participation and the expansion of political engagement.

Module 11
Tue 11/16
Fri 11/19

Activist Culture

Alfonzo (2021) A Topology of Twitter Tactics
Vega (2017). Selfless Selfie Citizenship

Module 12
Tue 11/23
Fri 11/26

Luddism & Work Culture

Vallas & Schor (2020) What Do Platforms Do?

THANKSGIVING

Module 13
Tue 11/30
Fri 12/3

Memory & Forgetting in Obsolescence Culture

Owens (2017) Theory and Craft of Digital Preservation Chapter 3.
Pitsillides et al (2012) Museum of the self and digital death

Module 14
Tue 12/7
Fri 12/10

Play Culture & End

Woodcock & Johnson (2018). Gamification: What it is, and how to fight it.

END

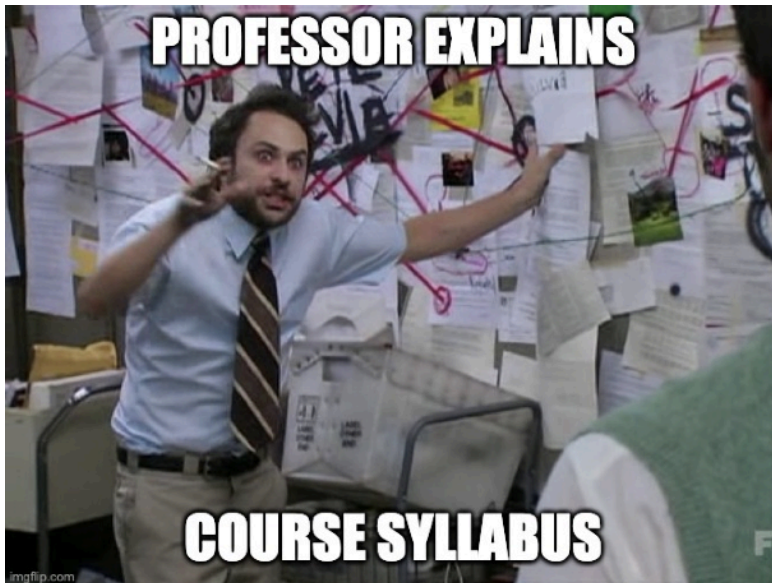
Graded Exercises	Grade Scale Percentage
Intro Video 10	The final letter grade for the course is a percentage of your total points
Exercise 80	
Midterm 130	
Weekly Media 50	
Final Paper 130	
TOTAL POINTS 400	
	A 94 or above A- 90-93
	B+ 87-89, B 83-86, B- 80-82
	C+ 77-79, C 73-76, C- 70-72

Introduction Video

I don't know about you but my social skills have shriveled up during the pandemic. So to help get to know each other you will create a short (2-3 minute) video introduction of themselves and upload it to the course Google Drive space (which I will create and invite you to). Remember these videos will be available to the whole class, but only to the class. **The uploaded video file name should be your surname.** The video should address the following things (in any order): (1) Something about you. (2) What Internet thing do you like & dislike. (3) Either demonstrate a talent you have, or tell us about your favorite thing.

Perusal

I have a love/hate relationship with a lot of technology and perusal is no different. It is awesome to see what other people are thinking/marketing when they read (it also really helps me as an instructor)



but it also makes the whole thing about the number of comments. Knowing this I want you to make at least 4 comments on each reading. Asking/answering questions is a bonus! This will be even more important if you (or we) have to stay home for any reason (looking at you Covid) so that I can see that you are active in class. While there is no 'active participation' grade in the course think of Perusal as active participation. Readings should be done before end of day Wednesday so I have some time to look at the comments before class on Friday.

Subculture Exercise

The idea is to conduct a short analysis of an internet subculture. For this exercise you need to choose any internet (or technologically mediated) subculture and use Schein's The Three Levels of Culture to attempt to analyze and explain it. Therefore in 500 words you will give examples of your chosen culture's 1. Artifacts, 2. Espoused Beliefs and Values, and 3. Basic Underlying Assumptions. You will also need to explain why you argue that this is a subculture as opposed to a culture, counterculture, or individuals behaving similarly.

Midterm

What can I say. It's a midterm. Some short questions, some long questions. It's me testing to see if you have read, understood and analyzed the materials thus far. I don't like timed exams and I don't like the pressure these cause. So the midterm is on Tuesday 10/19 but it is NOT in class.

Weekly Media

We will be covering a new and highly exciting topic every week. Which means we get to look at a lot of exciting stuff. When you have checked out the materials I want you to find something interesting and relevant to the discussion at hand. Each week you will find an engaging news item relevant to the module and post your findings to a shared google doc. Your post should contain (1) Title and author information (2) link to source (3) a short summary of the information, and (4) an argument why you think it is interesting and relevant. This will be due by end of day Thursday and I may even ask you to present your findings in class on Friday.

Final Paper

The final paper is an original piece of research. The topic must be within the parameters of the course and is chosen by the participant, and approved of by the instructor. The paper is to be double spaced, 2000 words in length, not including footnotes or bibliography.

FOCUSED: Provide all the arguments needed to support your thesis/answer your question. Do not add random facts or quirky points of interest. Unrelated or unsupported facts/arguments lower the legibility and grade.

STRUCTURED: You may know what you mean but you are not there when the paper is being graded. Expect to be misunderstood. Creating an outline, putting arguments in order, & rereading your paper are excellent ways of improving structure.

DOCUMENTED: The point of the paper is to provide strong arguments. The weakest argument is the unsupported argument. I may agree with you but its still weak. Provide support for the positions you take. For example if I was to argue that smoking is healthy you wouldn't believe me if all I said to support the argument was "because I said so". Show me the expert. Show me that you have read and understood the expert.



WELL PRESENTED: You are students of communication. This course is not about grading your grammar or spelling. However, turning in a badly written paper will not improve your grade.

I am looking for your ability to present analytical substance in a structured argument. I want to see you use supporting material in a clear and persuasive manner. I want you to show me that you have thought about the issue you are discussing and are able to argue in a way that does not confuse assumptions and value judgments with analysis and argument. And I want you to do all this with a high quality of writing.

More information <http://klangable.com/uploads/teaching/FinalPaper.pdf> and thoughts on grading <http://klangable.com/blog/teaching/grading/>

Effort

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Inclusivity

Inclusivity: Every student in this classroom, regardless of personal history or identity categories, is a valued member of this group. Your experiences are valuable and important, and you should feel free to share them as they become relevant to our class. No student in this class is ever expected or believed to speak for all members of a group.

In this classroom you have the right to determine your own identity. You have the right to be called by whatever name you wish, and that name to be pronounced correctly. You have the right to be referred to by whatever pronouns you wish. You have the right to adjust those things at any point in your education. If you find that there are aspects of course instruction, subject matter, or classroom environment that result in barriers to your inclusion, please contact me privately without fear of reprisal. For more see <http://klangable.com/blog/teaching/inclusivity-policy/>

me in class taking a picture of the notes that i'll never look at again



Attendance

This is a tough one. Given the realities of this new normal it is important for us all that we stay safe. So here it is: If you feel unwell do not come to class. If you are away from class you **MUST** contact me

as soon as possible. If you reach out and we communicate then this will not be an absence. However, disappearing with not contact IS an absence. If this is confusing in any way please reach out to me.

Scheduling

Changes to the syllabus may be made at the instructor's discretion and if circumstances require. Participants will be notified of changes via Blackboard/university email. Participants are responsible for keeping up to date with these changes.

Writing Aid & Writing Center

Writing is a painful, but rewarding, process. For help and tips see <http://klangable.com/blog/teaching/writing-resources/>. If you struggle with the writing required in this course, please make use of the Writing Center. For more information about their services see www.fordham.edu/academics/programs_at_fordham/english/writing_center

University Statement on Academic Integrity

A University, by its nature, strives to foster and recognize originality of thought. Originality can only be recognized, however, when people acknowledge the sources of ideas or works that are not their own. Therefore, students must maintain the highest standards with regards to honesty, effort and performance. As a Jesuit, Catholic University, Fordham is committed to ensuring that all members of the academic community strive not only for excellence in scholarship but also for integrity of character. In the pursuit of knowledge and personal development, it is imperative that students present their own ideas and insights for evaluation, critique and eventual reformulation. As part of this process, each student must acknowledge the intellectual contribution of others. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to plagiarism, cheating on exams, falsification, unapproved collaboration, and destruction of library materials. For further details, consult the Standards of Academic Integrity on the University website.

Academic Coaching

Any student who struggles with time-management and/or organization is invited to one-on-one academic coaching sessions (typically once a week for 45 minutes). Please contact disabilityservices@fordham.edu for more information.



Accommodations

The Office of Disability Services at Fordham University helps to ensure equal educational access and opportunity for all members of our community. In the Jesuit tradition of *cura personalis*, members of the ODS staff work individually with each student to understand his or her strengths and limitations in order to develop their most effective and comprehensive accommodation plan. Fordham will offer reasonable and appropriate auxiliary aids and services to assist otherwise qualified persons in achieving access to its programs, services, and facilities once students meet with ODS for an initial intake meeting to develop an accommodation plan directly with the student in accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students seeking accommodation(s) should the Rose Hill Office of Disability Services, (718) 817-0655 or email disabilityservices@fordham.edu.

If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, please visit the Office of Disability Services, email, or call them.

Counseling and Psychological Services

University life is full of challenges. Fordham offers support for anyone who feels like they need help dealing with the pressures of life as a student. CPS offers free individual and group counseling and psychotherapy in a safe and confidential setting. For more information about their services see www.fordham.edu/campus_resources/student_services/counseling_and_psych/

Student well-being

Any student who faces difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat everyday, or who lacks a stable place to live is urged to contact your class dean for support. I also urge you to contact me, or our department chair, about these or other hardships you may be going through. Your well-being is of primary importance to us. if you are facing challenges related to your physical or mental health, or obstacles like food or housing insecurity, please do not hesitate to reach out. **We can help.**

