

**BCA533: New Media Theory and Practice
(Formerly Advanced Electronic Media)****Fall 2020 Course Syllabus**

Sections & Times	22392769: MW 4:00–5:30
Credits	3
Place	Moore Hall 120
Instructor	Dr. Trevor Diehl diehl1th@cmich.edu Office hours: Virtual M/W 2-3 or by appointment, Moore 313 Office phone: 989-774-3973

Course Description

Media industries, institutions, and identities appear in flux amid a continual evolution and negotiation of information technologies. This includes work practices, distribution mechanisms, audience behaviors, and user experiences. These changes in the media environment coincide with changes in the larger political, economic, social, cultural and regulatory contexts where mediated communication operate. How are we, as scholars and professionals, to make sense of digital technologies and their implications for public life? How are technology companies shaping the worlds of work, entertainment, and politics?

The purpose of this class is to introduce students to the recent history of new media as well as key theories and concepts for understanding media technologies in the digital era. Our aim is to develop an awareness of recent scholarly approaches to understanding the nature of media work.

Overall, greater emphasis is given to the sociological study of media (which examines the interplay between people, incentives, and technology). We'll also take a deeper look at the major players in digital communication: Facebook, Twitter, Google, Apple, and others. The purpose is to examine how these companies leverage larger developments in communication technology through the lens of contemporary theory and practices.

Prerequisite

BCA 332; or graduate standing

Learning Outcomes

1. Describe the recent development of new media technologies and practices.
2. Articulate key theories and concepts of digital and social media, connecting them to contemporary social, cultural, economic, political, and technical conditions and concerns.
3. Explain such theories and concepts within the framework of your own areas of interest, the field of digital media studies, and media work more broadly.
4. An improved ability to write clearly and engagingly.

HyFlex Course Structure: Virtual Classroom with In-Person Options

This course will follow a “HyFlex” instruction mode that combines face-to-face learning with the option to stream classes remotely. To ensure social-distancing guidelines for the room, you have the option to attend the course in-person or via WebEx.

Our meetings will be a mix of lecture, discussion of readings, group exercises, and lab work. In order to get the most out of class discussion, all the readings and assignments for a particular class should be finished before that meeting.

Required Reading:

Chadwick, A. (2013). *The hybrid media system: Politics and power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Peters, B. (Ed.) (2016). *Digital keywords: A vocabulary of information society and culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

There will be additional reading assignments every week. Readings will be provided as needed by the instructor. See the course schedule for details.

Resource Requirements

All students taking this course will need a CMU user ID/password and access to a computer with reliable access to Blackboard and WebEx and/or Microsoft Teams. You also need to have a working camera and microphone.

Attendance

Students must regularly attend class. Physical or virtual absence not resulting from a documentable medical or family emergency, or mental absence (i.e. sleeping in class, etc.), will be deemed an unexcused absence. Starting with the third unexcused absence, the student will be assessed a 25-point penalty against their final course grade for each further absence. All documents for excused absences must be submitted within two (2) weeks of the date of the absence. Documentation turned in after that deadline will not be accepted.

Students are responsible for all coursework, regardless of attendance. If you miss a class, excused or not, you are still responsible for labs, quizzes, and other material covered that day.

Course Assignments and Workload

1) *Three reading responses (30%)*: Three times during the semester you will write a brief analytical response to the week’s readings, submitted via Blackboard. These essays should be approximately 3 pages in length. Details will be posted to Blackboard.

Each week, paper authors will be asked to initiate class discussion by raising questions related to the week’s readings. A sign-up schedule will be posted on Blackboard the first week of class. Weekly discussion papers will be evaluated based upon their concision and clarity, demonstrated understanding of the readings, and on the quality of the points and questions you raise for class discussion.

2) *Recent research reports (RRR) for graduate students, recent news reports (RNR) for undergraduate students (10%)*: Twice during the semester you will present a brief, one-page update on recent trends in scholarship (graduate students) or current events (undergraduate students). These reports are designed to connect us to the most recent, up-to-date issues and events in the field of technology and new media studies. Details will be posted on Blackboard.

2) *Final paper (40%)*: Students may choose one of two formats for their final paper. Students on an **academic track** are encouraged to write an *original research paper* or an *in-depth literature review* examining a topic related to social media platforms, emerging media practices, or theories that address news media. Students on a **professional track** are encouraged to write an *original analysis that critiques media practices and offers proposals for improvement*.

In either case, this paper should explore the concepts in our readings and extend them to new situations and cases, media platforms, or issues. Students must submit a 500-word prospectus describing their intended final paper project (5% of the final paper grade).

3) *Final paper presentation (10%)*: We will devote the last class meeting(s) to brief presentations on your final paper projects.

4) *Participation in class discussions (10%)*: If we are to have robust and well-informed participation class discussions, all the reading for a particular class should be finished before that meeting. Students should make an honest effort to actively contribute to those discussions.

Grading

Grading scale for final grades:

A 100 - 93.50%	A- 93.49 - 89.50%	B+ 89.49 - 86.50%
B 86.49 - 83.50%	B- 83.49 - 79.50%	C+ 79.49 - 76.50%
C 76.49 - 73.50%	C- 73.49 - 69.50%	E 59.49 - 0%

Late Work/Missed Assignments

Most work cannot be late because the class meeting for that day depends on your contribution. In general, you will lose one letter grade per day if you fail to hand-in an assignment when due (e.g. an 'A' paper will automatically become a 'B' paper). **I will not grade assignments more than 7 days late.** Please note that for the final paper, late papers will not be accepted except in cases of exceptional circumstances.

Incomplete Policy

Incomplete grades will only be given in cases where a student is unable to complete or attend the class. In such cases, the decision of the instructor is based solely on written, verifiable documentation submitted well in advance of the final exam/project due date. Acceptability of documentation/verification is left to the instructor's discretion. It is also the student's responsibility to file for incomplete status.

BCA & CMU Policies

COVID-19 University Requirements

Face coverings, such as masks, and social distancing (6 feet apart) are required in all buildings and classrooms ([CMU's policy on face coverings](#)). Students who have forgotten their face coverings may obtain a disposable mask from one of the 40 vending areas on campus. Vending machine locations are available on the [Fired Up for Fall website](#). The evidence is clear that [face coverings are a crucial part of keeping coronavirus at bay](#) and [support the university's commitment to providing all members of its community with a safe, healthy, caring, and supportive environment](#). Masks should cover the entire nose and mouth, per guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face->

[coverings.html](#)). Students whose unique and individual circumstances require an alternative face covering, as indicated by a medical condition may request one. To request an alternative, students should [contact Student Disability Services \(SDS\)](#).

Refusing to wear a mask in any building or classroom without an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services is a violation of university regulations ([section 3.2.31 of the Student Code of Conduct](#)) and exposes the student to possible sanction for not adhering to university regulations. Refusing to maintain social distancing guidelines also violates the same university regulations. Students not adhering to the policy on face coverings or social distancing will be asked to leave the classroom and the building. In addition, faculty and/or staff may file a report with the Office of Student Conduct.

Students with Disabilities

Central Michigan University provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodations to participate in educational programs, activities, or services. Students with disabilities who require accommodation to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made. Students with disabilities requiring accommodation to participate in class activities or meet course requirements must first register with the Office of Student Disability Services (120 Park Library, telephone 774-3018; TDD 774-2586). Reasonable accommodations will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Policy on Academic Integrity

On May 5, 2009, the Central Michigan University Academic Senate approved the Policy on Academic Integrity, which applies to all university students. Copies are available on the CMU website at: <https://www.cmich.edu/AcademicSenate>; or in the Academic Senate Office in Ronan 280. All academic work is expected to follow these policies. This includes practices related to plagiarism and proper citation. **Course work that directly copies or presents the work of others without clear attribution will receive an automatic zero on the first offense, and a final grade of 'E' on the second offense. Cite your sources, period.**

School of BCA Policy on Classroom Civility

All CMU students are expected to comply fully with the Responsibilities of Students, as stated in the CMU Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Disciplinary Procedures, available online at: <https://www.cmich.edu/ess/studentaffairs/Pages/Student-Rights.aspx>

School of BCA Policy on Class Absences

Absences for which the student is requesting special accommodation must be requested in advance and in writing. These absences may adversely impact the student's grade.

Intellectual Property Protection Statement

In order to protect the intellectual property interests of the instructor, the privacy interests of student members of the class, and to encourage an open and fair exposition of all student views in the classroom without fear that student views expressed will be recorded and possibly posted in another forum, recording of classroom lectures and conversations is not permissible without the express, prior written consent of the instructor. Unauthorized recording of classroom activity shall be considered a violation of the CMU Student Code of Rights, Responsibilities and Disciplinary Procedures.

BCA 533 New Media Theory and Practice

Reading and Topic Schedule

Subject to Change

Week of	Topics & Readings
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M = Monday

W = Wednesday

Aug. 18	Course Introduction & Key Concepts
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Excerpt: Tracy, S. J. (2019). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. John Wiley & Sons.

Chapters 2 & 3

Aug. 25	Media Landscape Today
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M/W) Hindman, M. (2018) *The Internet Trap*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
Introduction, Chapters 1-3, + 8.

Note: Available through CMU Libraries website as digital copy

Sept. 1	What's new about new media?
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M) *Digital Keywords*: "Introduction"; "Analog"; "Digital"; "Information"; "Internet"

M) Peters, B. (2009). And lead us not into thinking the new is new: A bibliographic case for new media history. *New Media & Society*, 11(1-2), 13-30.

M) Turner, F. (2005). Where the counterculture met the new economy: The WELL and the origins of virtual community. *Technology and Culture*, 46(3), 485-512.

W) Winner, L. (1980). "Do Artifacts have Politics?" *Daedalus*, Vol. 109, No. 1, Modern Technology: Problem or Opportunity? (Winter, 1980), pp. 121-136.

W) Pinch, Trevor J. and Wiebe E. Bijker (1987). "The Social Construction of Facts and Artifacts," in Bijker, Hughes and Pinch eds. *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1987) pp. 17-50.

W) Gillespie, T. (2010). *The politics of 'platforms'*. *New Media & Society*, 12(3), 347-364.

Sept. 7	Hybrid Media and the power of networks
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W) Chadwick: **Introduction, Chapters 1-3**

W) Benkler, Y. (2006). *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom* (New Haven: Yale University Press) pp. 212-272.

W). Castells, M. (2004). "Informationalism, Networks and the Networked Society: A theoretical blueprint" in Manuel Castells ed. *The Network Society: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar), pp. 3-45.

W) *Digital Keywords*: "Cloud", "Community", "Culture"

Sept. 15 **Hybrid Media and Politics**

M) Chadwick: **Chapters 4,7,9, 10**

W) Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2012). The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(5), 739-768.

W) Tufekci, Z., & Wilson, C. (2012). Social media and the decision to participate in political protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 363-379.

W) Bonilla, Y., & Rosa, J. (2015). #Ferguson: Digital protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the united states. *American Ethnologist*, 42(1), 4-17.

W) *Digital Keywords*: "Activism", "Hacker", "Democracy", "Participation"

Sept. 22 **Journalism: Practice and Meaning**

M) Chadwick: **Chapters 5, 8**

M) Lewis, S. C. (2012). The tension between professional control and open participation: Journalism and its boundaries. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(6), 836-866.

M). Carlson, M. (2015). Introduction: The many boundaries of journalism.

W) Deuze, M., & Witschge, T. (2017). Beyond journalism: Theorizing the transformation of journalism. *Journalism*.

W) Witschge, T. & Deuze, M. (2020). From suspicion to Wonder in Journalism and Communication Research. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 97(2), 360-375.

W) Anderson, C.W. (2020). Practice, Interpretation and Meaning in Today's Digital Media Eco System. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 97(2), 342-359.

Sept. 29 **Social Media and Propaganda**

M) DiResta, Albright, and Johnson (2019). Tactics and tropes of the internet research agency. Kew Knowledge Report to Congress.

M) Farkas, J., Schou, J., & Neumayer, C. (2018). Cloaked Facebook pages: Exploring fake Islamist propaganda in social media. *New Media & Society*, 20(5), 1850-1867.

W) Mittelstadt, B. (2016). Automation, algorithms, and politics| auditing for transparency in content personalization systems. *International Journal of Communication*, 10, 12.

W) Maréchal, N. (2016). Automation, algorithms, and politics| when bots tweet: Toward a normative framework for bots on social networking sites (feature). *International Journal of Communication*, 10, 10.

W) *Digital Keywords*: “Meme”, “Sharing”, “Gaming”

Oct. 6 **Critical Perspectives from Classics to Modern Views**

Excerpt: Meenakshi & Keelner (2012). *Media and Cultural Studies Keywork.*, 2nd edition:

M) The ruling class and ruling ideas (Marx and Engels)

M) History of the Subaltern Class (Gramsci)

M) Fuchs, C. (2015). “The digital labour theory of value and Karl Marx in the age of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Weibo.” In *Reconsidering value and labour in the digital age* (pp. 26-41). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

W) Aouragh, M., & Chakravartty, P. (2016). Infrastructures of empire: Towards critical geopolitics of media and information studies. *Media, Culture & Society*, 38(4), 559-575.

W) de Albuquerque, A. (2019). Protecting democracy or conspiring against it? Media and politics in Latin America: A glimpse from Brazil. *Journalism*, 20(7), 906-923.

Oct. 13 **Media Politics and Representation**

M) Van der Pas, D. J., & Aaldering, L. (2020). Gender Differences in Political Media Coverage: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Communication*, 70(1), 114-143.

M) Harmer, E., Savigny, H., & Siow, O. (2020). Trump, Clinton, and the Gendering of Newspaper Discourse About the 2016 US Presidential Election Debates. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 1-21.

M) Mendes, K., Ringrose, J., & Keller, J. (2018). # MeToo and the promise and pitfalls of challenging rape culture through digital feminist activism. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 25(2), 236-246.

W) Sandvig, C., Hamilton, K., Karahalios, K., & Langbort, C. (2016). Automation, algorithms, and politics| when the algorithm itself is a racist: Diagnosing ethical harm in the basic components of software. *International Journal of Communication*, 10, 19.

W) Freelon, D., McIlwain, C. D., & Clark, M. (2016). Beyond the hashtags: # Ferguson, # Blacklivesmatter, and the online struggle for offline justice. Center for Media & Social Impact, American University, Forthcoming.

W) *Digital Keywords*: “Algorithm”

Oct. 20 **Platform Studies: Facebook & Twitter**

Bucher, T. (2012). Want to be on the top? Algorithmic power and the threat of invisibility on facebook. *New Media & Society*, 14(7), 1164-1180.

Van Dijck, J. (2013). 'You have one identity': performing the self on Facebook and LinkedIn. *Media, Culture & Society*, 35(2), 199-215.

Halpern, D., & Gibbs, J. (2013). Social media as a catalyst for online deliberation? Exploring the affordances of Facebook and YouTube for political expression. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(3), 1159-1168.

Other Readings TBD

Oct. 27 **Platform Studies: YouTube and TikTok**

Lee, C. S. (2012). Exploring emotional expressions on YouTube through the lens of media system dependency theory. *New media & society*, 14(3), 457-475.

Wu, Tim (August, 2020). A TikTok Ban is Overdue. *New York Times*

Other Readings TBD

Proposal Due

Nov. 3 **TBD**

Nov. 10 Individual meeting for final papers

Nov. 17 Presentations

Nov. 20 **Final Period**
