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The New School
Spring 2018

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Room 1625
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ULEC2851
Work, Love, Learn, Play: Our Lives on the Internet



This course documents the impact of technology and new media on human society. We will explore networked lives through films, fiction, creative non-fiction and other critical readings that examine the recent history of technology, digital culture, and post-human relationships. Weekly topics address how technology creates new futures, identities, relationships, forms of work and ways of understanding the world around us, while at the same time responding to human aspirations, pleasures, ethical dilemmas and needs that long predate the Internet. Beginning in the 1960s, when computerization, space exploration and robotics first allowed popular audiences to imagine computerized creativity and machine-based alternatives to human cognition, the course addresses the following questions: why does it matter to imagine a future that is different from the present? Does technology change what it means to be human? What is the meaning of free choice when our communications, desires and thoughts are all potentially being mediated through, and monitored by, technology? Is it possible to share our intellectual and emotional lives with machines? How might we understand a "humanities practice" in a post-human world?

Sections

- *Sarah Chant, T 4:00-5:15
- Logan Brown, W 4:00-5:15 (classroom?)
- Isabella Torchia, F 12:10-1:25 (63 5th Ave. room 201)
- *Nathalie Barret-Mas, Th 12:00-1:15
- *Ahad Ali, Friday 10:00-11:15

*=synchronous online section. Look for the link in your Canvas module – and consider logging in a few minutes early!

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students should be able to:

- Use cultural analysis to understand how media story telling speaks to the present and prepares us for the future.
- Use historical thinking to understand contemporary digital culture, networking and mass communication.
- Evaluate the opportunities and costs of intelligent machines.
- Participate knowledgeably in debates about the impact of the Internet on labor, social life, politics, and leisure.
- Make decisions about surveillance and personal privacy in a digital age.
- Articulate ethical principles for virtual relationships and networked communities.

How this course works

ULEC2851 used to be structured around two meetings a week. The first was a 75-minute lecture by Claire Potter, and the second a discussion of the readings, themes, films and visual texts assigned for the week.

Then we thought: wait! Since the course is about how digital culture has changed how we learn, work, fall in love and entertain ourselves – why not make digital learning part of the course?

So instead of visiting with the sage on the stage once a week, you will spend part of your time watching a series of *short* lectures, doing exercises, communicating with each other on discussion boards, and – well, thinking, rather than just listening to a professor. Then you will go to your section meeting – either onsite or online – and talk more.

Pronouns. Students will be asked which pronouns they use in the first section meeting. Do your best to remember what pronouns other students use, and be generous when correcting others.

Use of Electronic Devices in section

Use of electronic devices (phones, tablets, laptops) to take notes, tweet and refer to readings in onsite sections *is up to the discretion of the instructor*. Should an instructor's policy prohibit devices, students may seek a waiver if their devices are necessary to learning.

Recording class is also prohibited, unless it serves a learning function. But such recordings may not be broadcast or turned over to a third-party entity.

Please visit the Learning Center early in the semester to obtain any necessary waivers.

Students are reminded, however, that they are in class to learn, and it is unwise to use devices for anything unrelated to the work of the class – shopping, social media, or email are a few examples of distractions that will inhibit learning. It is also impolite to withdraw from a social, work or learning situation and occupy yourself with activities unrelated to the group.

Students may find that, even when attending class online, that they listen better when taking notes by hand. Please consider this as a viable option, and have a notebook that is exclusively devoted to this class.

Readings and Films

All readings, films, videos, and exercises assigned to the class are required.

Although it is also on reserve, I recommend that you own this book if possible, as it increases the likelihood that you will be able to do the reading on time and refer back to it for the exam. New, as well as inexpensive used, copies are available online. Please purchase it now.

- Ian Bogost, *The Geek's Chihuahua: Living with Apple* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015)

The following movies and television shows are available on electronic reserve: streaming works best when you use the Chrome browser.

- *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1968)
- *Eye in the Sky* (Gavin Hood, 2015)
- *Her* (Spike Jonze, Warner Brothers 2013)
- *CitizenFour* (Laura Poitras, HBO Films, 2014.)
- *#chicagoGirl: The Social Network Takes on a Dictator* (Jason Banker, Amplify Releasing 2013)

- *Mr. Robot*, episode 1: "eps1.0_hellofriend.mov" (Neils Arden Oplev, 2015)
- *The Matrix* (Lana and Lilly Wachowski, 1999)
- *Black Mirror*, episode 1: "The National Anthem," (Charlie Brooker/Otto Bathurst, 2011)

All other course materials can be accessed through Canvas.

Class preparation

You should complete all of the week's work on Canvas prior to attending your discussion section. Failure to complete the exercises as they are described in the instructions will result in a recorded absence.

Please bring your readings, and reading notes, to section meetings. Conversations are more substantive if the class can refer specifically to assigned reading, films and points raised in the lectures.

Grading

Section leaders will grade their own students in consultation with Professor Potter and in relation to a common set of criteria.

Attendance, participation, and handing work in on time will factor into your final grade. There will be a 1-point deduction for every day a paper is late, and exams cannot be taken beyond the window of time in which they are offered, unless you provide an excuse from a physician or an advisor.

Attendance and participation	40%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	35%

Please note: you can do well in this class by participating, but the easiest way to end up with a poor or failing grade is to forget or ignore the online work, or to simply not attend class.

Any incompletes in the course must be requested from the section leader in advance of the final exam, and be backed up by an email from an advisor.

Course Policies

Course policies for ULECS are uniform, and have been set by the Provost's office.

Attendance and Lateness

The university understands that attendance in class is part of a student's full participation and is essential to the successful completion of course work and

enhances the quality of the educational experience for all. For significant lateness or early departure, the instructor may consider either as an absence for the day. Students, therefore, are expected to attend class regularly and promptly, and in compliance with the standards stated in course syllabi. The attendance and lateness policies are enforced as of the first day of classes for all registered students. If registered during the add/drop period, the student is responsible for any missed assignments and coursework, but those days will not be counted as absent.

Please Note: Attendance will be taken by your teaching assistant in the online component of the course, as well as in section. It is recommended that you sit near your TA in the lecture room so that they know you are present. If you are late, you may wish to make an effort to check in with your TA to avoid being counted as absent.

Significant absences will cause a grade reduction. For ULEC courses that meet twice each week, a total of four absences for a course mandates a reduction of one letter grade for the course. More than four absences mandate a failing grade for the course, unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as the following:

- An extended illness requiring hospitalization or visit to a physician (with documentation)
- A family emergency, e.g. serious illness (with written explanation)
- Observance of a religious holiday (see below)

Religious Observance

Students will not be penalized for absences due to religious observance. However, the student still may not miss a significant portion of class time as defined in "Attendance" above.

Students who must miss a class session should notify the appropriate Teaching Assistant and arrange to make up any missed work as soon as possible. Students who cannot use electronic devices for a portion of the week because of religious observance should make arrangements with their instructor to open that week's exercises for extra time.

Students failing a course due to attendance should consult with an academic advisor to discuss options.

Incomplete Grade Policy

The incomplete grade of "I" may be granted under unusual and extenuating circumstances if, for example, a student's academic life is interrupted by a medical or personal emergency. Incomplete grades are only granted at the instructor's discretion. This grade provides the student additional time to complete the work for

the course, until the end of the seventh week in the following semester, although an earlier date may be determined between the student and faculty member. The student is responsible for making appropriate arrangements with the faculty member to complete the work during this period. Incompletes granted for graduating seniors will likely result in delay in graduation.

Students must request an Incomplete from their ULEC teaching assistant who will determine whether to grant the request in consultation with the lead faculty member. If granted, the student and Teaching Assistant/lead faculty should complete the Request for a Grade of Incomplete form on the Registrar's site where all Grade related policies can be found: <http://www.newschool.edu/student-services/academic-policies/grades/> and send the form to the ULEC Program Director.



Week 1 | Introduction to Internet Studies | January 22 - January 28

- Video: William Gibson, "On the Dawn of the Internet"
- Reading: John Markoff, "Augmentation"

Week 2 | Imagining Cyberfutures | January 29 - February 4

- Reading: Margaret Rhodes, "The Amazingly Accurate Futurism of 2001: A Space Odyssey"
- Video: "The Jetsons"
- Film: *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Dir. Stanley Kubrick, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1968)

Week 3 | Getting Connected | February 4 - February 11

- Howard Rheingold, "What the WELL's Rise and Fall Tells Us About Online Community"
- Video: "Kids Guide to the Internet"
- Video: "China's Internet Junkies"

Week 4 | Intelligent Machines | February 12 - February 18

- Reading: Nello Christianini, "The Road to Artificial Intelligence: Data Over Theory"
- Video: Patrick Lin, "The Ethical Dilemma of Self-Driving Cars"
- Peter Asaro, "Drone Technology in Eye in the Sky"
- Film: Gavin Hood, "Eye in the Sky"

Week 5 | Networked Lives | February 19 - February 25

- Ian Bogost, *The Geek's Chihuahua: Living with Apple*
- Video: AT&T "Reach Out and Touch Someone"
- Video: "First Day"

Week 6 | Harvesting Data About You | February 26 - March 4

- Video: Meghan Gupta, "How to Engage in Cyber Policy"
- Reading: Dave Eggers, "We Like You So Much and Want to Know You Better"
- Video: "The Googlization of Everything: An Interview with Siva Vaidhyanathan"

Week 7 | Internet Violence | March 5 - March 11

- Reading: Katherine Cross, "Fictive Ethnicity and Nerds"
- Reading: Jon Ronson, "How the Online Hate Mob Set Its Sights on Me"

Week 8 | Midterm Exam | March 12 - March 18

There are no readings or films this week.

Sections Will Meet for Exam Review: please bring notes and questions

The midterm exam will be posted to Canvas, and will open on March 14 and it will close on March 18. When you are ready to take it, open the exam: you will have two hours to complete the work. Students who are entitled to extra time because of a learning accommodation should remind their instructors, so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

*******SPRING BREAK*******

Week 9 | Hacker Culture | March 26 - April 1

- Reading: Ken Wark, *The Hacker Manifesto*
- Reading: Mark Karlin, "Aaron Swartz's Quest to Keep Corporations from Privatizing the Internet"
- Video: Mr. Robot, episode 1: "eps1.0_hellofriend.mov"

Week 10 | Cyberpunks | April 2 - April 8

- Reading: David Weinberger, "Matter"
- Film: *The Matrix*
- Reading: E.A. Lockhart, "Yes, 'The Matrix' Is a Transgender Film, and Some of Us Noticed That a Long Time Ago"

Week 11 | Intimacy | April 9 - April 15

- Reading: Jean Twenge, "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?"
- Film: *Her*
- Reading: Lisa Ferris, "Kindred Keyboard Connections"

Week 12 | Resistance | April 16 - April 22

- Reading: Zeynep Tufekci, "Introduction," *Twitter and Tear Gas*
- Video: Clay Shirky, "How Twitter, Facebook, and Facebook Can Make History"
- Film: *#chicagoGirl: The Social Network Takes on a Dictator*
- Video: "Black Lives Matter: How 3 Words Became a Movement"

Week 13 | Security | April 23 - April 29

- Reading: Adam Segal, "Let Slip the Twitter Followers of War: Information, Ideas and Legitimacy"
- Video: "Hackers"
- Film: *CitizenFour*

Week 14 | Reputation | April 30 - May 6

- Reading: James Lasdun, "Nasreen"
- Video: Black Mirror, "The National Anthem"
- Video: Michael Douglas, University of Sydney School of Law, "Do We Have the Right to Be Forgotten?"

Week 15 | Final Exam | May 7 - May 14

The final exam will be posted to Canvas: it will open on May 7 and it will close on May 18.