Course Description and Objectives

Each new medium of communication or information technology seems to renew the belief that it will change people’s perceptions, and therefore change social reality. In their turn, printing, photography, the telephone, radio, movies, television, cable services, and even perspective drawing in the Renaissance provoked remarkably similar predictions. Today such comments have been made about the Internet, cell phones, wireless networks, and so on. But if media really change society, how do we know? Do we live in an information society? This course examines the evolution and social implications of new information and communication technologies (ICTs). The development of various technologies are reviewed, and major social issues and cultural changes associated with their use are considered.

The main goal of the course is to familiarize students with the development of ICTs and their social and cultural implications. In addition, the course has several objectives. As a result of instruction in this class, students should be able to:

- Summarize the social and technical development of various media technologies;
- Identify the main social changes or issues associated with these systems;
- Describe and critique the major points of view regarding those social changes and issues; and
- Discuss these changes and issues within the larger context of the shift from industrial society to information society.

Course Requirements

Readings. Students will be expected to make cogent and prepared contributions to class discussions based on the assigned readings, which must be completed before class. Readings are listed below under Weekly Topics and Readings. Required course readings will be assigned from a textbook, a course reader, and online sources. The textbook is Media Now: Communications Media in the Information Society, 3rd edition, by Joseph Straubhaar and Robert LaRose (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001) and is available at the Ackerman bookstore. The reader is available from Westwood Copies, near the corner of Gayley and Weyburn in Westwood Village.

Electronic Resources. Students in the course are expected to have email addresses and to participate in class discussions at the class website. The discussion list is private and authenticated so that no one outside the class may participate or otherwise review the discussion -- that is, students must use their Bruin Online IDs and PIN numbers to access the discussion board from the main class web page.
Students are responsible for locating, retrieving and reading the online materials as assigned under **Weekly Topics and Readings**.

Students will also purchase (with the textbook) a “subscription” to the InfoTrac online catalog and document retrieval service, which can be accessed via the World Wide Web. Students will use InfoTrac to locate and obtain the latest updates on the various policy issues that will be covered in the course and as a resource (in addition to library resources) for the take-home mid-term examination (see below).

**Examination.** There is one take-home, mid-term examination. The exam will be available on the class website (or for pickup in the Department of Information Studies) on Wednesday, May 5 (5th week), and will be due no later than midnight on Friday, May 14.

**Case Study.** Each member of the class is also required to complete a case study project, which will be due on the last day of class and presented to the class during final exam week. Case topics and basic background materials will be provided by the instructor early in the quarter. Students may choose to submit their case studies either as term papers, or as web page resources, which will be posted or linked to the class web site. More information about the Case Study assignment will be given in class.

**Grading Formula.** Grading for the course will be based on the following formula: Preparation and discussion in class and online, 45%; mid-term examination, 25%; case study, 30%.

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**Weekly Topics and Readings**

The topics for each week of the course are listed below. All readings listed are required. Students are required to come to class having read the materials for that day’s meeting.

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**Week 1 / April 7**

**The World of Tomorrow: What is the Information Society?**

**Video: The World of Tomorrow**

**TEXT:** Straubhaar & LaRose, Chapter 1

**READER:**


**ONLINE:**


[Online subscription available through UCLA library.](#)
Week 2 / April 14

**Infrastructure and Social Change**

**READER:**


Week 3 / April 21

**Early Communication Forms: Oral and Writing**

**Video: The Day the Universe Changed: A Matter of Fact**

**READER:**


Orality and the problem of memory, pp. 11-31.
Early literacy and list making, pp. 32-61.


Week 4 / April 28

**From Printing to E-Publishing**

**TEXT:** Straubhaar & LaRose, Chapters 3 & 4

**READER:**


Chapter 1, Introduction, pp. 3-11.

(CONTINUED)
ONLINE:

**URL:** [http://www2.parc.com/ops/members/brown/papers/mm.html](http://www2.parc.com/ops/members/brown/papers/mm.html)


Available as PDF from class website.

TK3 Reader and Voyager (online publishing/reading tools).  
**URL:** [http://www.nightkitchen.com/](http://www.nightkitchen.com/)

**Week 5 / May 5**  
**Early Wired Technologies: Telegraph to Telephone**

[Take-home midterm exam available in class and online]

**Video:** *The Telephone*

**TEXT:** Straubhaar & LaRose, Chapter 9

**READER:**


Week 6 / May 12

**Early Wireless Technologies: Broadcasting**

[Take-home midterm exam due by MIDNIGHT FRIDAY MAY 14]

**Video: Empire of the Air**

TEXT: Straubhaar & LaRose, Chapters 5 & 7

READER:


Week 7 / May 19

**Computers as Media**

TEXT: Straubhaar & LaRose, Chapter 8

READER:


ONLINE:


http://www-personal.si.umich.edu/~rfrost/courses/SI110/readings/Basic_IT/cortada.pdf


http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longerm/books/chap1/historyofmoderncomputing.html

Week 8 / May 26

**Convergence: From Information Society to Digital Culture**
TEXT: Straubhaar & LaRose, Chapter 6

ONLINE:


Includes examples of works from the NY Digital Salon, plus:
- Malina, R.F., "The stone age of digital arts"
- Ippolito, J., "Ten myths of Internet art"


Histories of Internet Art
[URL: http://art.colorado.edu/hiaff/home.htm]

Joyce, Michael: *Afternoon: A Story; Twilight: A Symphony; TwelveBlue* [URL: http://www.eastgate.com/TwelveBlue/]

Mark Amerika [URL: http://www.markamerika.com/]

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**Week 9 / June 2**  
**Preserving the Digital Legacy**

[Case Studies due SUNDAY, JUNE 6 BY MIDNIGHT.]

**Video:** *Into the Future*

**CLASS HANDOUT:**


**ONLINE:**

[URL: http://www.nist.gov/jres]

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**Week 10 / June 9**  
**Case Study Presentations**