

Theorizing New Media

Rhetoric R1B.04, Fall 2015

Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30–5:00pm | Dwinelle 223

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M 2:30 – 4:00pm / F 1:00 – 2:30pm;
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The term ‘new media’ occupies a prominent but vexed space in contemporary social thought. Situated at the intersection of myriad cultural practices and effects, “new” media undeniably represent an increasingly expansive and ubiquitous way of life in the developed world—we live, work and play on our digital, networked devices. But what makes ‘new media’ new, and how do we make sense of the contemporary social landscape when technologies like the Internet, smartphones, and their attendant data proliferate into seemingly every aspect of life? With these questions in mind, this course will investigate the multiple histories, practices and profound cultural, economic and political effects of new media on society. We will examine media as material objects, virtual interfaces, and mass communication and networked technologies with a particular focus on the cultural effects that they produce. Readings from this course will consider a range of topics: race and labor, changing notions of human subjectivity, and broader questions surrounding hardware and software, the question of the medium, and the impact of networks.

The core objective of this course is to prepare students for college-level reading, writing, and research. We will use course materials as tools for close reading, critical analysis, construction of arguments, and persuasive analytical writing. This course satisfies the second half of the Reading and Composition (R&C) requirement.

COURSE MATERIALS

A course reader will be available at Copy Central, located at 48 Shattuck Square (corner of Shattuck and University). Readings will also be available on bCourses as individual PDF files. Other materials will be distributed via handout or made available online.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

20% Attendance/Participation

25% Short Papers

15% Paper #1

15% Paper #2

25% Final Paper

SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: Throughout the semester, students will write short papers (roughly 500–750 words) based on prompts designed to practice important aspects of analytical thinking. Students will be divided into two groups, with each group writing bi-weekly. Students will write four short papers during the semester (i.e., the student may choose any three weeks in which to 'opt out' of posting). Posts are due via bCourses by 10pm on the Monday or Wednesday of your group's week.

MID-TERM PAPERS: Students will write papers of roughly 1000 to 1250 words that demonstrate an engagement with the writing process: researching a topic, carefully and closely analyzing source materials, formulating a thesis, and articulating a clear, original argument. Prompts will be provided closer to assignment due dates.

FINAL PAPER: Using primary and secondary sources acquired through the University libraries, databases and online research, students will be asked to write a final paper (roughly 2000–2500 words) on some object or event related to the rhetorical, cultural, or philosophical uses and effects of "new" media on society. This assignment will consist of multiple stages, from initial research and a

bibliography to a paper abstract in advance of the final draft. A detailed prompt will be distributed later in the semester.

POLICIES

ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION: Due to the intensive nature of the course, attendance and active participation are mandatory. Active participation means reading assigned course materials and coming to class prepared to discuss them in detail, giving full attention to instructors and fellow classmates during lecture and discussion, and remaining an engaged participant in all class activities.

We understand that participation can happen in a number and combination of forms: in addition to providing thoughtful questions and comments during class discussion, you may take an active role in small group discussion, be an engaged and carefully critical thinker in shorter assignments, and give and receive constructively critical feedback in peer reviews.

We will keep close track of attendance and participation throughout the semester. Students will be granted two unexcused absences, after which their grade will be lowered for each additional absence. Three late arrivals will count as one absence. If you have a medical reason for missing class, please contact us as early as possible.

ELECTRONICS: In this class we will be concerned with the ways that technology is constructed (both literally and figuratively). It will be important to think about the ways in which we engage with digital objects, and ways that they are designed to engage with us. With this in mind, we encourage you to bring your laptops and tablets to class. **However, digital devices are allowed only for the purpose of reading assigned texts, taking notes, visiting assigned websites and using assigned applications during lecture.** If the presence of laptops and tablets interferes with discussion or otherwise serves as a distraction from the goals of the course, we will prohibit their use.

GRADING and ACADEMIC HONESTY: We have zero tolerance for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. We will adhere to the University policy,

which indicates that any form of plagiarism or other appropriation of the ideas of another will result in failure of the course and/or other disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the University. Find further information on the University's policies on plagiarism at sa.berkeley.edu/student-code-of-conduct.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: Late assignments will be marked down for each day they are late (e.g. an A becomes an A-, then a B+, etc.). Assignments later than five days will not be accepted without prior written permission. Extensions will only be granted due to extenuating circumstances, such as serious illness or family emergency and will be granted at the discretion of the instructors.

SCHEDULING CONFLICTS: Please provide written notification to Nicholas no later than the second week of the semester regarding any known or potential scheduling conflicts (e.g. athletics, religious observance, or other extra-curriculars). We will try to accommodate any requests, but please be aware that they cannot be accommodated in all cases.

OFFICE HOURS: We will hold regular office hours at the times listed above. If you are unable to attend regular office hours due to a scheduling conflict (e.g. you have a class or work scheduled during that time), please email us to set up an appointment. We strongly encourage you to attend office hours at least once during the semester.

HEALTH and ACCOMMODATIONS: The Disabled Students Program arranges accommodations for students with disabilities. Find information about the DSP online at dsp.berkeley.edu; should you require accommodations, please bring proper documentation from the DSP office to Nicholas as early as possible.

CAMPUS RESOURCES: Please be aware of the following resources offered to Berkeley students:

- Student Writing Center slc.berkeley.edu/writing
- Tang Health Center: uhs.berkeley.edu
- Disabled Students Program: dsp.berkeley.edu

SCHEDULE

1. Introduction		
Thursday, August 27	<input type="checkbox"/> Syllabus <input type="checkbox"/> Course Overview	
2. The Culture Industry		A
Tuesday, September 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry"	
Thursday, September 3	<input type="checkbox"/> "The Culture Industry," cont. <input type="checkbox"/> Siegfried Kracauer, "The Mass Ornament" <input type="checkbox"/> YouTube: Adorno on popular music (http://bit.ly/1N1x2cf), Busby Berkeley, "Dance 'Till Dawn" (http://bit.ly/1EINLQa) <input type="checkbox"/> Natalie Bookchin, <i>Mass Ornament</i> (http://bit.ly/1IRAU9q)	
3. Technology, the Medium and the Message		B
Tuesday, September 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Marshall McLuhan, <i>Understanding Media: "The Medium is the Message" and "Clocks"</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Wolfgang Schivelbusch, <i>The Railway Journey: "Railroad Space and Railroad Time"</i>	
Thursday, September 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Marshall McLuhan, "The Medium is the Message" and "Clocks" cont.	
4. Mechanical Reproduction		A
Tuesday, September 15	<input type="checkbox"/> Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility" <input type="checkbox"/> YouTube: John Berger, "Ways of Seeing" (http://bit.ly/1iuuFS5)	
Thursday, September 17	<input type="checkbox"/> Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility" cont.	

5. "New" New Media I		B
Tuesday, September 22	<input type="checkbox"/> Janet H. Murray, "Inventing the Medium" <input type="checkbox"/> Lev Manovich, "New Media from Borges to HTML" <input type="checkbox"/> Tiziana Terranova, "Three Propositions on Informational Cultures"	
Thursday, September 24	<input type="checkbox"/> Friedrich Kittler, "Introduction" in <i>Gramophone, Film, Typewriter</i>	
6. "New" New Media II		A
Tuesday, September 29	<input type="checkbox"/> Galloway, "The Computer as a Mode of Mediation"	
Thursday, October 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Galloway, "The Computer as a Mode of Mediation" cont. DUE: Mid-Term Paper #1	
7. The Culture Industry Revisited		B
Tuesday, October 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret" <input type="checkbox"/> Guy Debord, "The Commodity as Spectacle"	
Thursday, October 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Marx, "The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret" cont. <input type="checkbox"/> Debord, "The Commodity as Spectacle" cont. <input type="checkbox"/> OPTIONAL: Abigail de Kosnik, "Fandom as Free Labor" (via bCourses); Tiziana Terranova, "Free Labor"; Amazon's 'Mechanical Turk' http://bit.ly/1b0syji	
8. New Media Art and Technologies		A
Tuesday, October 13	<input type="checkbox"/> Nam June Paik / Fluxus <input type="checkbox"/> Tim Hawkinson <input type="checkbox"/> Theo Jansen	
Thursday, October 15	<input type="checkbox"/> Cellular Automata <input type="checkbox"/> Siggraph 2015 Emerging Technologies Mid-Term Paper #1 Peer Review	

9. Representations of/and Difference		B
Tuesday, October 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lisa Nakamura, "Don't Hate the Player, Hate the Game: Racialization of Labor in World of Warcraft" <input type="checkbox"/> Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Race and/as Technology or How to Do Things to Race" <input type="checkbox"/> OPTIONAL: Alexander Galloway, "Does the Whatever Speak?" 	
Thursday, October 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Film: <i>Ghost in the Shell</i> (Mamoru Oshii) <input type="checkbox"/> Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Orienting the Future" <p>DUE: Final Paper Object Rationale</p>	
10. Hardware / Software I		A
Tuesday, October 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Friedrich Kittler, "There is No Software" <input type="checkbox"/> Manovich, "There is Only Software" in <i>Software Takes Command</i> 	
Thursday, October 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Alexander Galloway, "Software and Ideology" <p>DUE: Mid-Term Paper #2</p>	
11. Hardware / Software II		B
Tuesday, November 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Software: A Supersensible Sensible Thing" (via bCourses) <input type="checkbox"/> Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "On Sourcery and Source Codes" (via bCourses) 	
Thursday, November 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "On Sourcery and Source Codes" cont. (via bCourses) <p>DUE: Final Paper Topics</p>	
12. Metaphor and Matter		A
Tuesday, November 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> George Lakoff, <i>Metaphors We Live By</i> (Selections) <input type="checkbox"/> Gallagher and Zahavi, "Embodied Mind" <input type="checkbox"/> OPTIONAL: Yuasa Yasuo, "Eastern Mind-Body Theory" 	
Thursday, November 12		

	<input type="checkbox"/> OPTIONAL: Lakoff and Gallese “The Brain’s Concepts: The Role of the Sensory–Motor System in Conceptual Knowledge” Mid–Term Paper #2 Peer Review DUE: Bibliography for Final Paper	
13. Networks / Politics		B
Tuesday, November 17	<input type="checkbox"/> Clark and Chalmers, “The Extended Mind” <input type="checkbox"/> OPTIONAL: Yochai Benkler, “Individual Freedom: Autonomy, Information and Law” in <i>The Wealth of Networks</i> (via bCourses) Writing Workshop	
Thursday, November 19	<input type="checkbox"/> Alexander Galloway, “Form” from <i>Protocol</i> <input type="checkbox"/> OPTIONAL: Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, “Crisis, Crisis, Crisis; or, the Temporality of Networks” Research Workshop	
14. The Popular Imaginary: A Californian Ideology?		A
Tuesday, November 24	<input type="checkbox"/> Barbrook and Cameron, “The Californian Ideology” <input type="checkbox"/> Robin James, “Cloudy Logic” (http://bit.ly/1z6TqKt) <input type="checkbox"/> Ian Bogost, “The Cathedral of Computation” (http://theatlntc/1AjaBoT) DUE: Abstracts for Final Paper Writing Workshop	
Thursday, November 26	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING	
15. Gaming		B
Tuesday, December 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Alexander Galloway, “Allegories of Control” <input type="checkbox"/> Anita Sarkeesian, “Ms. Male Character” (http://bit.ly/1oHLpbm)	
Thursday, December 3	<input type="checkbox"/> James Gee, “Cultural Models: Do You Want to be the Blue Sonic or the Dark Sonic?”	

**FINAL PAPER DUE:
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11**