

Introduction to Digital Cultures
INF 315E
Unique #28025

Fall 2016

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 9am-10am and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

INF 315E: Information and Culture: Introduction to Digital Cultures

As an introduction to digital cultures, this course explores ways in which new technologies impact and reflect our culture(s), while also considering the ways in which we shape digital environments and interactions. Subjects include Internet history, virtuality, identity, and politics.

Course Aims and Outcomes:

This course serves as an introduction to key concepts related to digital cultures. Over the course of the semester, we will explore questions related to identity in various digital environments, including gaming and social media. How is gender constructed in virtual worlds? Is it different or does it reflect real life?

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of key concepts related to digital cultures
- think critically about ways we interact with and shape digital environments
- discuss aspects of Internet culture
- relate questions concerning the digital to a variety of (virtual and real life) contexts
- formulate responses to a research topic of individual choosing

Course Format:

INF 315E: Introduction to Digital Cultures has no face-to-face class meetings. The course is entirely web-based.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Materials

Introduction to Digital Culture: Living and Thinking in an Information Age

ISBN: 978-1-60927-150-3

Edited by: Dr. Tessa Joseph-Nicholas

In addition to the text, there will be additional outside materials provided via Canvas.

Use of Canvas in Class

- In this class, we will use Canvas—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give you online quizzes and surveys. You can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk at 512-475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.

Internet Access

To succeed in this course, students must have regular, reliable Internet access. If you do not have access to a personal computer, you may use the School of Information IT Lab (UTA 1.210) while a student in this course. The lab has both Macs and PCs available.

Class Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance is expected. Students should arrive in class prepared and ready to participate fully in class discussions. Active participation is critical to student success in this course.

Expected Classroom and Online Behavior

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time. Students are expected to interact in-person and online in a respectful manner. Disrespectful, rude or inappropriate language or behavior will not be tolerated.

ASSESSMENTS

Reflection Journal: 100 pts

Students will maintain a reflection journal/blog through Canvas. Posts of at least 300 words are required every two weeks. The journal allows students to reflect on the topics and concepts of the course and to make connections with their personal, academic, and professional experiences. Course readings and discussions should be used as a point of departure for reflection posts. These posts are due at the end of every module, every other Monday by 5pm.

Reading Points: 75 pts

Students must post TWO reading points no later than 5pm the first Wednesday of each module. The reading points demonstrate students' preparation for reading discussion. Reading points can be thoughtful questions or observations/comments that are meant to stimulate class discussion.

Online Discussion Forum: 100 pts

Students must make two posts per module. The reading points demonstrate students' preparation for reading discussion. Reading points can be thoughtful questions or observations/comments that are meant to stimulate class discussion. The first will be a response to the reading point, and the second will be a response or comment classmate's initial post. These discussion posts must be at least 150 words.

Final Paper: 100 pts

Students will write a 3-5 page paper on a topic of individual choosing. The paper may explore any aspect of digital culture. The paper topic must be selected by Monday 3 October by 5pm. The paper draft is due by Monday 7 November. Peer review is due by Monday 21 November. The final paper is due the last class day of the fall semester, MONDAY 5 DECEMBER by 5pm.

Peer Review – Final Paper Draft: 25 pts

Canvas will assign a peer review partner for your final paper draft. As a peer reviewer, you will read and provide feedback to your classmate's paper draft. The peer review will be due Monday 21 November. Details on the evaluation/feedback expected will be provided in Canvas.

Grading for this Course

This course emphasizes discussion and active student participation instead of lectures. Students should demonstrate their engagement with the course topics and materials. Student work will be graded on college-level writing standards, completion of assignment expectations, and insight. Grading is out of a maximum 400 points for the semester.

Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	Number	Total Points
A	93-100	372-400
A-	90-92	360-371
B+	87-89	348-359
B	83-86	332-347
B-	80-82	320-331
C+	77-79	308-319
C	73-76	292--307
C-	70-72	280-291
D+	67-69	268-279
D	63-66	252-267
D-	60-62	240-251
F	59 or below	239 or below

Course Schedule

***This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.*

Week	Date	Main Topic(s)	Assignments
1	8/24	Introductions	Introductions in Canvas
2	8/29	Module 1: Attention and Distraction	Selected Readings and Homework Reading Points due Wed
3	9/5	Module 1: Attention and Distraction	Selected Readings and Homework Initial Discussion Forum Post
4	9/12	Module 2: History and Development of Internet	Selected Readings and Homework Reading Points due Wed Follow-Up Discussion Forum Post Reflection Journal Module 1
5	9/19	Module 2: History and	Selected Readings and Homework

		Development of Internet	Initial Discussion Forum Post
6	9/26	Module 3: Ethics in Digital Environments	Selected Readings and Homework Reading Points due Wed Follow-Up Discussion Forum Post Reflection Journal Module 2
7	10/3	Module 3: Ethics in Digital Environments	Selected Readings and Homework Final Paper Topic Due! Initial Discussion Forum Post
8	10/10	Module 4: Identity and Community	Selected Readings and Homework Reading Points due Wed Follow-Up Discussion Forum Post Reflection Journal Module 3
9	10/17	Module 4: Identity and Community	Selected Readings and Homework Initial Discussion Forum Post
10	10/24	Module 5: Avatars	Selected Readings and Homework Reading Points due Wed Follow-Up Discussion Forum Post Reflection Journal Module 4
11	10/31	Module 5: Avatars	Selected Readings and Homework Initial Discussion Forum Post
12	11/7	Module 6: Property	Selected Readings and Homework Final Paper Draft Due Reading Points due Wed Follow-Up Discussion Forum Post Reflection Journal Module 5
13	11/14	Module 6: Property	Selected Readings and Homework Initial Discussion Forum Post
14	11/21	Module 7: Beyond the Body	Selected Readings and Homework Peer Review of Final Paper Due! Reading Points due Wed Follow-Up Discussion Forum Post Reflection Journal Module 6
15	11/28	Module 7: Beyond the Body	Selected Readings and Homework Initial Discussion Forum Post
16	12/5	Last Class Day	Follow-Up Discussion Forum Post Final Paper Due Reflection Journal Module 7

POLICIES & RESOURCES

COURSE POLICIES

Late Work

Late work is not accepted except in unusual circumstances. Students should prepare and submit all assignments by the posted deadlines.

Participation:

Active, thoughtful contributions to discussions are vital in this course. Students will be evaluated on their participation online. To participate fully in discussions and other activities as assigned, advanced preparation is necessary.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Religious or Holy Day Observance

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Q Drop Policy

If you want to drop a class after the 12th class day, you'll need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline, which typically occurs near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information, see: <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop>

Student Accommodations

Students with a documented disability may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/about/>

- Please request a meeting as soon as possible to discuss any accommodations
- Please notify me as soon as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible
- Please notify me if any of the physical space is difficult for you

Academic Integrity

Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code:

“As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.”

This means that work you produce on assignments, tests and exams is all your own work, unless it is assigned as group work. I will make it clear for each test, exam or assignment whether collaboration is encouraged or not.

Always cite your sources. If you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must make that clear otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course.

You are responsible for understanding UT's Academic Honesty Policy which can be found at the following web address: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

University Resources for Students

The university has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning, use these to help you succeed in your classes

The Sanger Learning Center

Did you know that more than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center's classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, please visit <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc> or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332).

The University Writing Center

The University Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT student, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. The assistance we provide is intended to foster students' resourcefulness and self-reliance. <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Counseling and Mental Health Center

The Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) provides counseling, psychiatric, consultation, and prevention services that facilitate students' academic and life goals and enhance their personal growth and well-being. <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>

Student Emergency Services

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

ITS

Need help with technology? <http://www.utexas.edu/its/>

Libraries

Need help searching for information? <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

Canvas

Canvas help is available 24/7 at <https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/633028/pages/student-tutorials>

Important Safety Information

BCAL

If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or Professors, call BCAL (the Behavior Concerns Advice Line): 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn't feel right – it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

Evacuation Information

The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when an alarm or alert is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside, unless told otherwise by an official representative.

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.

- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency