

## CA 346: Critical Internet Studies

Spring 2015, M/W 11am – 11:50am, Grainger 2080

### Course Instructor

Jeremy Morris  
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6132 Vilas Hall  
Office Hours by email or:  
Tuesday 2:00pm–4:00pm

### Teaching Assistant

Andrew Zolides  
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Office Hours by email or:  
Wednesday 12:00pm-2:00pm

### Discussion Sections:

**301-** Mon. 12:05pm – 12:55pm Grainger 2195 (Jeremy Morris)

**302-** Mon. 1:20pm – 2:10pm  
Grainger 2167 (Andrew Zolides)

**303-** Mon. 3:30pm – 4:20pm  
Grainger 2165 (Andrew Zolides)

**304-** Tues. 11:00am – 11:50am  
Grainger 2195 (Andrew Zolides)

**305-** Tues. 12:05pm – 12:55pm  
Grainger 2165 (Andrew Zolides)

**Course Website:** Learn@UW

**Course Twitter Feed:** @interwhut or #CA346

**TA Twitter Feed:** @DZolides

### Course Overview

The Internet has emerged as a cultural technology of extraordinary complexity. This class aims to explore the historical development of the Internet and its infrastructure as well as some of the many social, political, economic, and industrial implications the Internet as a technology for communication opens up. Weekly readings and examples will introduce students to the origins of the Internet's technical development, to key theories for analyzing cultural life online and to contemporary issues facing the Internet and its users.

### Course Objectives

1. Provide students with an in-depth understanding of the development of the Internet within its historical, technical and cultural contexts.
2. Introduce students to theories from leading thinkers in cultural studies, media studies and communication studies and to key methodologies for studying the Internet, including digital historiography, political economy, critical analysis, etc.
3. Connect current issues in Internet culture to previous media and technology debates.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Define key terms and concepts related to the Internet and digital culture and deploy them in discussions, written work and everyday life.
2. Read and respond critically to ideas, debates and written work about Internet culture.
3. Use methods from the course to enhance their Internet-based research skills.

### Course Evaluation

Participation (quizzes and discussion):	15%
Role Reading:	20%
Mid-Term:	20%
Critical Internet Project:	20%
Final Exam:	25%

## **Assignments**

*We will provide assignment sheets and grading rubrics containing further details on the individual assignments and outlining our expectations and the desired learning outcomes.*

### *Participation (15% - 10% Quizzes, 5% Discussion)*

Students are expected to attend and contribute to lectures/discussions and to complete readings and assignments. More than two absences from the discussion sections without due cause will negatively affect your participation grade. Additionally, 10% of the participation mark will come from pop quizzes, given at random throughout the semester during lectures. Quizzes will consist of a basic question derived from the weekly reading, to which you are expected to provide a short one or two sentence response. There will be 6 quizzes throughout the year, 5 of which will count toward your final grade.

### *Role Reading (2 x 10% = 20%)*

This assignment is designed to help develop students' critical reading and writing skills. Students will respond to weekly readings by posting to learn@UW and their responses will be used as fuel for the weekly discussion sections. For each reading, there will be a SUMMARIZER (i.e. someone who summarizes the main points and flaws of the author's argument and formulates 3 questions to kick off discussion) and an OBJECT FINDER (i.e. someone who brings in a link to a website, video or audio clip, or web object and explains how it relates to the reading). Students will play each role once during the term.

### *Mid-Term Exam (20%)*

The mid term exam will be a mix of short essay questions concerning the first half of the course. The exam will take place in class on **Mon. Mar. 9.**

### *Critical Internet Project (20%)*

For the Critical Internet Project, students will get to choose from one of several project options, all designed to help them further explore course concepts through different media/web technologies. Projects will include a standard essay or other projects such a critical remix, an explainer video, digital annotations, etc. Prompts will be handed out in week 4, along with further guidelines about each option (i.e. the requirements for the projects vary based on the prompt). All projects will be due **Wed. Apr. 8.**

### *Final Exam (25%)*

The final exam will be a mix of short essay questions. It will include material from the entire course. Exam Date: **Thursday, May 14, 2015, 7:25pm - 9:25pm.**

*NB: All readings are stored as PDF files on the course site at Learn@UW. There will also, based on demand, be a course pack ready at Bob's Copy Shop (616 University Ave) for students who prefer to have all the readings printed and collated. The course pack will cost approximately \$50. Since they will likely be printing it on demand, please allow 2-3 days turnaround.*

## SECTION 1: BUILDING BLOCKS

### Week 1: Introductions

#### W – Jan. 21 – Hello, Internet

No reading; No discussion sections

### Week 2: This is Your Brain on the Internet

#### M – Jan. 26 – Dumbing us Down

Carr NG. (2011) The Juggler's Brain. *The shallows: what the Internet is doing to our brains*. New York: W.W. Norton, 115-148.

#### W – Jan. 28 – Envisioning the Internet

Borges JL. (1941) The Garden of Forking Paths. *Collected fictions* (1999). NY: Penguin.  
Bush V. (1945) As We May Think. *The Atlantic Monthly*. 101-108.

**Outcome:** Understand syllabus and assignment expectations

### Week 3: Internet History

#### M – Feb. 2 – The Essence of the Internet

Blum A. (2012) The Map. *Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet*. New York: Harper Collins, 11-34.

#### W – Feb. 4 – Welcome to the Web

Carey J and Elton MCJ. (2009) The other path to the web: the forgotten role of videotex and other early online services. *New Media & Society* 11: 241-260.

**Outcome:** Develop familiarity with the early history of the Internet and the web

### Week 4: Studying The Internet

#### M – Feb. 9 – Hypertext Theory

Berners-Lee T. (2000) "Enquire Within Upon Everything" and "Tangles, Links, and Webs".  
In: *Weaving the Web: The Original Design and Ultimate Destiny of the World Wide Web by Its Inventor* Harper Business: 1-23

#### W – Feb. 11 – Archiving the Internet

Gitelman L. (2006) New Media </Body>. *Always Already New: Media, History And The Data Of Culture*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 123-150.

**Outcome:** Use the Internet Archive and other web sources for doing web history

## SECTION 2: GROWING PAINS

### Week 5: Economics 2.0

#### M – Feb. 16 - Dot.Commercial

Turner F. (2005) Where the Counterculture Met the New Economy: The Well and the Origins of Virtual Community. *Technology and Culture* 46: 485-512.

#### W – Feb. 18 - Dot.Conflict

Barbrook R. (1996) The Californian Ideology. *Science as Culture* 26(6): 44-72.

Cassidy J. (2002). "Prologue" In *Dot.con: The Greatest Story Ever Sold*. New York: Harper Collins. 1-8

**Outcome:** Understand the ideologies and cultures of the early web

## **Week 6: Digitizing Difference**

### **M – Feb. 23 - Blindspots**

Nakamura L. (2013) Glitch Racism. *Culture Digitally*. 10 December. Available at:  
<http://culturedigitally.org/2013/12/glitch-racism-networks-as-actors-within-vernacular-internet-theory/>

Dibbell, J. (1993). A Rape in Cyberspace. *The Village Voice*. Dec. 23

### **W – Feb. 25 - Accessibility**

Ellcessor E. (2010) Bridging Disability Divides. *Information, Communication and Society* 13(3): 289-308.

**Outcome:** Think critically about how race, gender and (dis)ability affect Internet usage

## **Week 7: The Politics of Search**

### **M – Mar. 2 – How Search Works**

Halavais A. (2009) “Knowledge and Democracy”. *Search Engine Society*. Cambridge: Polity: 85-117

Levy S. (2010) How Google's Algorithms Rule the Web. *Wired*.

### **W – Mar. 4 – Personalized Search**

Morozov E. (2014) Facebook Invades your Personality, Not Your Privacy. *The Financial Times*. 10 August

Doctorow C. (2013). “The NSA’s Prism: Why We Should Care.” *The Guardian*. 14 June

**Outcome:** Explain how search works and how it mediates our experiences of the web

\*\*\*\*\*MID-TERM EXAM MON. Mar. 9\*\*\*\*\*

## **SECTION 3: NET-WORKING**

### **Week 8: User-Generated Content**

#### **W – Mar. 11 – Here Comes Everyone?**

Rosen, J. (2006) “The People Formerly Known as the Audience”. In Mandiberg, M. (ed) *The Social Media Reader*. New York: New York University Press 13-16.

O’Neil, L. (2013) “The Year We Broke the Internet”. *Esquire*. 23 December Available at <http://www.esquire.com/blogs/news/we-broke-the-internet>

**Outcome:** Compare and contrast the myth versus the reality of Web 2.0

### **Week 9: Social Networks**

#### **M – Mar. 16 – Defining Community**

Baym NK. (2010) Communities and Networks. *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*. Cambridge: Polity, 72-97.

#### **W – Mar. 18 – Networked Communities**

boyd d. (2012) White Flight in Networked Publics? How Race and Class Shaped American Teen Engagement with MySpace and Facebook. In: Nakamura L and Chow-White PA (eds) *Race After the Internet*. Abingdon: Routledge, 203-222.

**Outcome:** Differentiate between network and community

## **Week 10: Social Movements and Netizenship**

### **M – Mar. 23 – Twitter Revolutions**

Farivar C. (2013) "Introduction". *The Internet of Elsewhere*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press: 1-15

### **W – Mar. 25 – Digital Citizenship**

Barney D. (2008) Politics and Emerging Media: The Revenge of Publicity. *Global Media Journal* 1(1): 89-106.

**Outcome:** Understand the link between technology and citizenship

\*\*\*\*\*SPRING RECESS MAR. 30 – APR. 5\*\*\*\*\*

## **Week 11: Digital Hacktivism**

### **M – Apr. 6 – Anonymity and The Politics of the Offensive**

Coleman G. (2012) Our Weirdness is Free, The logic of Anonymous — online army, agent of chaos, and seeker of justice. *Triple Canopy* 15. Available at [http://canopycanopycanopy.com/15/our\\_weirdness\\_is\\_free](http://canopycanopycanopy.com/15/our_weirdness_is_free)

### **W – Apr. 8 – The Virtual Public Sphere**

Shifman L. (2014). "May the Excessive Force Be With You: Memes as Political Participation". *Memes in Digital Culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 119-150.

**Outcome:** Recognize the benefits and drawbacks of anonymity

\*\*\*\*\*PROJECTS DUE WED Apr. 8\*\*\*\*\*

## **SECTION 4: FUTURES AND PASTS**

### **Week 12: Regulation is Boring**

#### **M – Apr. 13 – Regulating the Internet**

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

Lentz B. (2009) Regulation is Boring. *Flow*, 11(1). Available at

<http://flowtv.org/2009/10/regulation-is-boringbecky-lentz-mcgill-university/#>

#### **W – Apr. 15 – Net Neutrality**

Kimball D. (2012) "What We Talk About When We Talk About Net Neutrality: A Historical Genealogy of the Discourse of 'Net Neutrality.'" *Regulating the Web: Network Neutrality and the Fate of the Open Internet*. Lanham: Lexington Books: 33-48.

Patel, N. (2014) The Internet is Fucked (but we can fix it). *The Verge*. 25 February.

**Outcome:** Understand how regulation shapes our experiences of the web

### **Week 13: Intellectual Property**

#### **M – Apr. 20 – Copyright and Creativity**

Lessig, Lawrence. (2004) "Piracy" and "Creators". In *Free Culture*. New York: Penguin Press: 17-30.

#### **W – Apr. 22 – Patents and Property**

Surowiecki J. (2003) Patent Bending. *The New Yorker*. 14 July. Available at:

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2003/07/14/patent-bending>

Bessen J. (2013) The Power of No. *Slate*. 4 December. Available at

[http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future\\_tense/2013/12/](http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2013/12/)

**Outcome:** Link regulation with culture and creativity and innovation

#### **Week 14: Cultural Memory**

##### **M – Apr. 27 – Life-Logging (Guest Lecture by Andrew Zolides)**

Marwick A. (2013) Lifestreaming: We Live in Public. *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity and Branding in the Social Media Age*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 205 – 244.

##### **W – Apr. 29 – Big Data (Guest Lecture by Tony Tran)**

Goldstein, J (2014) Meet The Woman Who Did Everything In Her Power To Hide Her Pregnancy From Big Data. *Think Progress*. 29 ril.

Crawford, K. (2013, 1 April). The Hidden Biases in Big Data. *Harvard Business Review*.

**Outcome:** Recognize the role the Internet plays as a technology for archiving memories and the implications of Big Data.

#### **Week 15: The Future of the Internet**

##### **M – May 4 – The Internet of Things**

Wasik, B. (2013) In the Programmable World, All Our Objects Will Act as One. *Wired*. 21(6). Available at: <http://www.wired.com/2013/05/internet-of-things-2/all/>

##### **W – May 6 – Final Review**

Review Session

**Outcome:** Consider future directions for the technological development of the Internet

### **FINAL EXAM:**

**Thursday, May 14, 2015**

**7:25pm - 9:25pm**

**LOCATION: TBD**

#### **Course Policies**

##### *Grading Scale*

We will be using the following grading scale for this course and all its assignments.

A: 93-100%

C: 70-77.9

AB: 88-92.9%

D: 60-69.9

B: 83-87.9%

F: 0-59.9

BC: 78-82.9%

##### *Extensions and Late Work*

If you are unable to meet the due date for the mid-term paper or other assignments, extensions will be granted only in rare and unavoidable circumstances (at the instructor's discretion). Late papers will be penalized 2% for each day the assignment is late. All assignments are to be handed in at the beginning of class or deposited in my mailbox outside the department's main office.

##### *Illness and Missed Classes*

Not attending classes and discussions will negatively impact your participation mark and your overall performance in the class. However, it is flu season and neither your instructors nor your fellow classmates want to get sick. If you have to miss a class or discussion due to illness please notify the instructor or the TA as far in advance as possible. If your absence results in a missed assignment we will do our best to make alternate arrangements for making up missed work, provided we know in advance that you will be absent. Students with influenza-like illness (ILI: fever of 100 degrees F or higher, with a cough and/or sore throat) should not participate in face-to-face instructional activities until fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medications.

### *Extra Credit*

There will be opportunity to earn 0.5 percentage points of extra credit by participating in research in affiliation with the Center for Communication Research. To receive the extra credit, students will have to participate in a half an hour research study. This research opportunity is administered through the SONA website <http://wisc-commarts.sona-systems.com>, which will be available for log-in after February 2nd. The student guide to using the SONA website is on [learn@uw](mailto:learn@uw). Address all questions to Esther Paik, the SONA Administrator, at [jpaik3@wisc.edu](mailto:jpaik3@wisc.edu).

There will also be an opportunity to earn 0.5 percentage points of extra credit for participating on the class Twitter feed. Once a week, students are expected to either 1) send out a link to a \*relevant\* story/site/issue that coincides with the week's theme or 2) respond to a classmate's tweet about a story/site/issue related to the week's theme. To receive extra credit, please provide screenshots of your tweets, or compile them in some readable fashion and submit them in the last week of the semester. Also, be sure to add the class hashtag (#ca346) so that it appears in the course feed.

### *Plagiarism and Academic Integrity*

Plagiarism – passing off the work of someone else as your own without proper citation or reference – is unacceptable. Please adhere to UW's policy on the matter: <http://students.wisc.edu/doso/acadintegrity.html>. Abuses of this policy will be reported to the Dean of Students and given a failing grade.

### *Accommodations*

Your instructors hope to foster a safe and comfortable learning environment for all students. We will not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, ethnic or national origin, civil status, religion, creed, political convictions, language, sex, sexual orientation, social condition, age, personal handicap or the use of any means to palliate such a handicap. Please let us know how we can improve the class environment. If you have a disability and require special testing or classroom modifications for religious or other reasons, please contact me within the first two weeks of class. UW also offers resources at the McBurney Disability Resource Center: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>

### *Communication Policy*

Your instructors are here to help you meet our high expectations of you. We encourage you to make use of our office hours or to set up additional times with us to discuss your progress in the course, or any aspect of the class that concerns you. We will endeavor to respond to you as quickly as we can and to have your work graded in a timely fashion, though please allow for extra time during periods of the semester when we may have many students meeting with us (i.e. around assignment due dates, before exams, etc.).