

# Mediated Communication 17:194:512 Spring 2019

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Office Hours: Wednesday 5:00pm-6:00pm or by appointment

Course Time: Wednesday, 6:20pm-9:00pm

Course Room: CI 212 (SC&I Building, 4 Huntington Street)

Course Website: sakai.rutgers.edu

Course Mailing List: mcm512-2019@sakai.rutgers.edu

# **Course Description**

Drawing on existing theory and research, this course examines issues of usage, adoption, and performance of new and established communication technologies in the workplace and other contexts. The class considers opportunities and challenges that mediated communication presents for both users of these tools and for society more generally. The course will expose you to a range of new technologies used by people to coordinate, collaborate, and communicate with one another.

# **Learning Objectives**

Upon the successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Identify new communication technologies (and their key features or dimensions) relevant to the workplace and other contexts
- Name and summarize major theories relevant to the study of new communication technologies
- Recognize and discuss key scholars and research findings regarding the topics and technologies discussed in class
- Apply theory and research from the communication technology literature in writing assignments, class discussion, as well as in your own work experience
- Train others about issues related to new media based on existing theory and research from class.

# Required Readings

There is no required textbook for this class. All readings will be available on the course's Sakai website (sakai.rutgers.edu). Log in using your Rutgers NetID, navigate to the course site, and browse the *Course Readings* page. The reading materials for each week of class are also listed in the *Course Outline* section of this syllabus.

#### **Contact Information**

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions, ideas, problems, or concerns related to this course. The most reliable way to reach me is by emailing <a href="katya.ognyanova@rutgers.edu">katya.ognyanova@rutgers.edu</a>. Please include "SCI 512" in the e-mail subject – that ensures I can identify your message as related to this class and give it appropriate attention. I will typically respond within 3-5 days of receiving your email.

My office hours are held in SDW 302 (Simeon De Witt Building, 185 College Ave), on Tuesday, 3pm-5pm. I encourage you to stop by for a chat at least once during the semester. If you have another class during that time, you can email me, or come talk to me after class if you would like to schedule an appointment.

#### **Course Attendance**

You are expected to attend all classes. If you need to miss a class, use the Rutgers University absence reporting website (sims.rutgers.edu/ssra) to indicate the date and reason for your absence. The system will automatically send me an email. If you are unable to attend classes for longer than one week, you should contact a dean of students who can help verify your circumstances. University policy excuses absences due to religious observance or participation, and permits students to make up work missed for that reason. You should notify me at least two weeks in advance if you are unable to come to class or take an exam due to religious observance.

On occasion, the university may have to cancel classes due to inclement weather. To check if classes are canceled, visit campusstatus.rutgers.edu or call 732-932-7799.

# **Course Requirements and Evaluation**

# Participation (200 points)

In this course, we will work together to review and examine critical questions and themes related to communication and technology. Much of the class will be discussion-based, with limited lecturing from me covering key points. Everyone is expected to be active in contributing to the conversations we will have in class. You should read all the required materials carefully and thoroughly, reflect critically on their strengths and weaknesses, identify their key points, and be prepared to discuss them. Not only the frequency, but also the quality of contributions will be considered.

# Reading reflection (200 points)

Each week after you complete the required readings, you should write a brief reflection on one or more of them and share it with the class. Your writing should demonstrate original thinking rather than simply provide a summary of the readings.

The assignment should be submitted by e-mail by the end of the day on Monday before class. We will use a Sakai mailing list: send your reading reflections to mcm512-2019@sakai.rutgers.edu.

Each reading reflection should be at least 200 words long. If some of your classmates have shared their reading reflections before you submit yours, I encourage you to respond to the points they have made. Your email should conclude **with at least one thoughtful question** you have that was provoked by the readings. We will discuss many of those questions in class.

To get the full 200 points for this assignment, you need to submit **on time at least 8 reading reflections** (worth 25 points each) that show critical thinking about the theories and themes examined in this class. Emails will only contribute to the reading reflection grade if they are sent out by the end of the day on Monday of the respective week (so you cannot, for instance, send all eight in the last week of class).

# Research design (150 points)

This assignment will ask you to think about the data collection for a research project. The project should focus on an issue related to the class material. To examine that issue, you will design a questionnaire and create an online survey using Qualtrics. Finally, you will submit a brief report describing your research design.

The research design report should be submitted through the *Assignments* section on Sakai by **March 13**. It should include the following elements:

- (1) The **big-picture question** you are trying to answer. Your big-picture question should deal with the relationship between technology and human behavior For example, your big-picture question could ask if social media use is related to political participation.
- (2) The **narrower research questions** that you need to look into. Those should take the bigpicture question and add some specifics, making it concrete enough to test through a survey. Your narrower questions may include: (1) do people who spend more time on Facebook participate more in politics; (2) do people who get more news and information on Facebook participate more in politics (3) do people who discuss current affairs on Facebook participate more in politics; etc.
- (3) The **key measures** you will include in your survey. Those should be based directly on your narrower research questions. They should allow you to find useful and specific answers. Here you would list the specific survey items used to measure every aspect of your narrowed-down research questions. What survey items would you use to find out how often people are on Facebook and how much time they spend there? What survey items would tell you whether and how much people read news on Facebook? What questions would you use to measure political participation? It will be useful to check how researchers have measured this construct before (e.g. political participation may involve voting, donating to campaigns, volunteering, signing petitions, going to rallies, etc.).
- (4) A description of **the intended research subjects** their age, gender, race and ethnicity, nationality, and any other relevant characteristics.

  For example, you might be studying political participation among older Latinos: your subject pool would include Latino U.S. residents over the age of 65.
- (5) Your **Qualtrics survey**. You should include a survey link, and the exported survey that shows your question logic. (*Hint: go to Tools*  $\rightarrow$  *Export*  $\rightarrow$  *Export Survey to Word...*)

Your survey should be clear and well-organized. The questions should be carefully formulated and unambiguous. You should use an appropriate question format and have well-crafted answer options. Correct display/skip logic should be used where needed.

You should include filter questions that screen out participants who are not eligible to take the survey (people who do not fit your requirements -- e.g. those under 18, etc.). You should also include demographic questions that will help you learn more about your participants.

#### Research talk (150 points)

This assignment will require that you work in groups to research a theme related to the material we have covered during the semester. Your team will examine one of the eight topical areas listed below. During the last two weeks of class, you will lead a **20-minute lecture** and a **10-minute discussion** on your topic. You may also opt for a more conversational format, combining lecture and discussion as you go.

Groups will have to prepare a **one-page outline** of their research talk and submit it through the *Assignments* section on Sakai by **April 10**. If you have questions about your topical area, do come see me during my office hours to discuss them.

For this assignment, you will sign up on Sakai to work on one of the following eight topics:

- (1) Stress and social media
- (2) Online health communication
- (3) Children and cyberbullying
- (4) Hate speech on the Internet
- (5) Identity and self-presentation online
- (6) Technology and romantic relationships
- (7) Online activism and collective action
- (8) Companies and digital brand management

In your research talk, you should:

- Summarize relevant academic research dealing with your topic
- Explain how the topic connects with concepts and theories covered in class
- Provide examples or case studies illustrating key points you are making
- Find ways to engage your audience and keep them interested

In the limited time you will have, you will **not** be expected to provide a comprehensive overview of your topic. Instead, you will need to select and present a few key ideas. Skip the details and focus on the big picture.

During your research talk, you can use slides, Prezi, video, or any other format or material you prefer. Be ready to answer questions from the instructor and your peers.

## Final exam (300 points)

The take-home final exam includes four questions that will be posted on Sakai by May 1. Students will select **three of the four questions** and submit answers for them by May 12.

Your answers should demonstrate critical evaluation skills, familiarity with the concepts and ideas covered in this class, and ability to produce original insights about the subject matter. You should develop clear, coherent, and compelling arguments supporting your position. The goal is not to give a "correct" response but to provide a thoughtful, evidence-based defense of your answer, whatever that answer might be.

Exams should comply with the following requirements:

#### (1) Formatting and length

Each answer should be 4 pages long (making for a total exam length of 12 pages). The text should be double-spaced, using a 12-point font with a 1-inch margin on all sides.

#### (2) Writing quality and organization

The answers should be clearly and logically organized. The text should flow smoothly and demonstrate an excellent writing style. Be sure to carefully proofread the final draft of your exam and confirm that it is clearly written, grammatically correct, and free of spelling errors.

## (3) References and bibliography

Each answer should include at least **five** citations to **academic** works. The full reference list for the exam should contain at least 15 citations. The citations and bibliography should be formatted in APA style (one place where you can learn more about it is the Purdue Online Writing Lab). You can use a free citation manager to store and format citations (e.g. www.zotero.com), or a simpler online tool to format selected citations (e.g. www.refme.com/citation-generator/apa or www.bibme.org/apa).

#### (4) Use of sources and quotes

Do not include long quotes in your answers. When you want to discuss someone else's ideas, summarize them in your own words. Be sure to always give the author credit by adding a reference to their work.

You should **never copy and paste text from a paper, an online source, or a classmate's work**. Read carefully, summarize, and name the source. Doing anything else can be considered a breach of academic integrity and have serious consequences. Note that all answers go through a plagiarism detection software. It highlights and records all such problems, which are then reported to the school.

#### (5) Deadline and submission

Exams should be submitted through the *Assignments* section of Sakai by **May 12.** Your submission should be included as a single-file attachment in PDF or Word Document format. Late exams will be accepted by May 15, but every day of delay will reduce your grade by **30 points**. Exams that are submitted later than May 15 or sent by e-mail will not be accepted.

#### Grade Breakdown & Scale

A and B grades in this course are reserved for outstanding work. To get a high grade, students need to participate actively in class, be thorough and careful in assignments, and demonstrate excellent understanding of the subject, critical thinking, and originality in their work.

The grade breakdown is as follows:

Class participation
Reading reflections
Research design
Research talk
Final exam
Total:

200 points
200 points
150 points
150 points
150 points
150 points

The final grade will be awarded according to the following scale:

A 900-1000 points
 B+ 850-899 points
 B 800-849 points
 C+ 750-799 points
 C 700-749 points
 D 600-699 points
 F Below 600 points

# Grade appeals

You can appeal individual assignment grades in writing up to 5 days after the grades are announced. In order to be reviewed, your appeal has to be submitted over e-mail. If you have concerns about your course grade, schedule an appointment with me as early as possible during the semester to discuss it. Once the course grades are announced, they are final and will only be changed in case of an error in the computation of the student's score.

#### Individual extra credit

In addition to any other extra credit opportunities that may be available during the semester, students who receive a failing grade on an assignment may request to do an individual extra credit project. Those requests will only be granted for students who can show a legitimate and verifiable reason for their poor performance (e.g. a health problem).

You can request individual extra credit up to 3 days after you receive a failing grade.

If your request is approved, you will have one week to turn in the assignment: a short paper (5 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced, including at least 5 academic citations) on the role of technology in the civic engagement and participation of Americans. The assignment would be worth a maximum of 30 extra credit points.

# **Academic Integrity**

You are required to complete your own assignments and always acknowledge the sources of contributions, materials, quotes, and ideas that you did not develop yourself. The consequences of scholastic dishonesty in this class and at Rutgers University in general are very serious. For more details, consult the University's academic integrity policy. Any violation will at a minimum result in no credit earned for the assignment in question. Serious violations of academic integrity may prevent students from completing the course or their academic program. If you have questions about issues related to plagiarism or academic integrity, do not hesitate to contact me.

#### Accommodation

This course will accommodate any student in need of assistance. Students with documented disabilities who need accommodations should contact the Rutgers Disabilities Services Office (see disabilityservices.rutgers.edu for details). You can also speak with a SC&I adviser by visiting the Office of Student Services in the SC&I Building, Room 214 or calling them at 848-932-7500 (dial 2 as your menu choice). Please contact me with information about the requested assistance and present your Letter of Accommodation as early in the semester as possible.

#### **Additional Resources**

The university offers a number of resources that you can access if needed:

- For additional tutoring, training, or **writing help**, visit the Rutgers Learning Center (online at rlc.rutgers.edu') and the Writing Center (plangere.rutgers.edu).
- If you need a consultation on **research materials** and ways to find them, you can contact the Rutgers University subject specialist librarian for communication.
- If you need help with **class schedule or registration**, visit the Student Services Office located in CI 214, and online at comminfo.rutgers.edu/student-services/contact-us.html.
- The SC&I IT Services can help you with various **technological problems**. You can find them in CI 120, by phone at 848-932-5555, or by email at help@comminfo.rutgers.edu.
- If you encounter **problems with Sakai**, you can contact the help desk at sakai@rutgers.edu or call them at 848 445 8721 between 8am-6pm on Monday through Friday.
- Student wellness services are available to you at Rutgers. You can contact CAPS for mental health support at rhscaps.rutgers.edu or by phone at 848 932 7884. Free and confidential peer counselling is available from Scarlet Listeners at 732 247 5555.
- The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling, and advocacy for victims of **sexual and relationship violence**. You can reach VPVA at vpva.rutgers.edu and 848 932 1181.
- The Office of Disability Services can be reached for help with accommodation and facilities for **students with disabilities** at ods.rutgers.edu, or by phone at 848 445 6800.
- On occasion, the university may have to **cancel classes** due to inclement weather. To check if classes are canceled, visit campusstatus.rutgers.edu or call 732-932-7799.

#### **Course Outline**

The course schedule is subject to change: materials may be added or replaced during the semester. If that happens, the changes will be reflected on Sakai and announced in class/over email.

Week 1 - January 23

## Introductions, course and syllabus review

Week 2 - January 30

### Technological affordances

- **Required:** Baym, N. (2015). Personal connections in the digital age (2nd Ed.). Malden, MA: Polity Press. Ch.2 Making new media make sense.
- Norman, D. (2013). The design of everyday things, 2 Ed. Ch. 1 The psychopathology of everyday things.
- Ellison, N. & Vitak, J. (2015). Social Network Site Affordances and their Relationship to Social Capital Processes. In Sundar, S. (Ed.) The Handbook of Psychology of Communication Technology (pp. 205-227). Boston, MA: Wiley Blackwell.
- boyd, d. (2011). Social network sites as networked publics: Affordances, dynamics, and implications. In Z. Papacharissi (Ed.), A networked self: Identity, community, and culture on social network sites (pp. 39–58). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Treem, J., & Leonardi, P. (2012). Social media use in organizations: Exploring the affordances of visibility, editability, persistence, and association. Communication Yearbook, 36, 143-189.

## Week 3 - February 6

#### Theories of mediated communication

- Required: Baym, N. (2015). Personal connections in the digital age (2nd Ed.). Malden, MA: Polity Press. Ch.3 Communication in digital spaces
- Walther, J. B. (2011). Theories of computer-mediated communication and interpersonal relations. In M. L. Knapp & J. A. Daly (Eds.), The handbook of interpersonal communication, pp. 443-479. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Walther, J. B. (2015). Social Information Processing Theory (CMC). The International Encyclopedia of Interpersonal Communication. 1–13.
- DeAndrea, D. C. (2014). Advancing Warranting Theory. Communication Theory, 24(2), 186-204
- Optional: Riordan, M. A., & Trichtinger, L. A. (2016). Overconfidence at the Keyboard: Confidence and Accuracy in Interpreting Affect in E-Mail Exchanges. Human Communication Research.

#### Week 4 – February 13

# Social relationships and social capital

- **Required:** Ellison, N. B., Vitak, J., Gray, R., & Lampe, C. (2014). Cultivating Social Resources on Social Network Sites: Facebook Relationship Maintenance Behaviors and Their Role in Social Capital Processes. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19(4), 855-870.
- Green, M. C. & Clark, J. L. (2015). Real or Ersatz? Determinants of Benefits and Costs of Online Social Interactions. In Sundar, S. (Ed.) I *Handbook of Psychology of Communication Technology* (pp. 247-269). Boston, MA: Wiley Blackwell.
- McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Brashears, M. E. (2006). Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks over Two Decades. *American Sociological Review*, 71(6), 353-375.
- Hampton, K., Sessions, L. F., & Her, E. J. (2011). Core networks, social isolation, and new media: How Internet and mobile phone use is related to network size and diversity. *Information, Communication & Society*, 14(1)
- **Optional:** Dunbar, R. I. M. (2016). Do online social media cut through the constraints that limit the size of offline social networks? *Royal Society Open Science*, 3(1).

#### Week 5 - February 20

#### Social networks and network concepts

- **Required:** Ellison, N. B., & boyd, d. (2013). Sociality through social network sites. In W. H. Dutton (Ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies* (pp. 151-172). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Christakis, N & Fowler, J. (2011) *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives*, Ch.8 Hyperconnected
- Easley, D., & Kleinberg, J. (2010). *Networks, Crowds, and Markets: Reasoning About a Highly Connected World*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Ch.1 Overview.
- Nahon, K. & Hemsley, J. (2013) Going Viral. Ch. 2 What virality is: I know it when I see it.
- **Optional:** Marin, A., & Wellman, B. (2011). Social Network Analysis: An Introduction. In P. Carrington & J. Scott (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Network Analysis* (pp. 11-26). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Digital tool overview:	NodeXL	(nodexl.cod	.eplex.com)	

#### Week 6 – February 27

# Digital Methods: data collection

- **Required:** Pew Research Center (2015) From Telephone to the Web: The Challenge of Mode of Interview Effects in Public Opinion Polls. Washington, DC: Pew Research.
- Couper, M. P. (2017). New Developments in Survey Data Collection. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 43(1), 121–145.
- Vitak, J. (2016). Facebook as a Research Tool in the Social and Computer Sciences. In L. Sloan & A. Quan-Haase (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Schober, M. F., Pasek, J., Guggenheim, L., Lampe, C., & Conrad, F. G. (2016). Social Media Analyses for Social Measurement. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 80(1), 180-211
- **Optional:** Lazer, D., Pentland, A., Adamic, L., Aral, S., Barabasi, A. L. et al. (2009). Life in the network: the coming age of computational social science. *Science*, 323(5915), 721.
- Digital tool overview: Qualtrics (rutgers.qualtrics.com)

#### Week 7 - March 6

#### Algorithms and big data

- **Required:** Donovan, J., Caplan, R., Matthes, J., & Hanson, L. (2018). *Algorithmic Accountability: A Primer.* Data & Society Research Institute.
- Willson, M. (2017). Algorithms (and the) everyday. *Information, Communication & Society*, 20(1), 137–150.
- Bogost, I. (2015). The cathedral of computation. *The Atlantic*.
- Lazer, D., & Radford, J. (2017). Data ex Machina: Introduction to Big Data. *Annual Review of Sociology*.
- **Optional:** Bakshy, E., Messing, S., & Adamic, L. (2015). Exposure to ideologically diverse news and opinion on Facebook. *Science*, 348(6239), 1130-1132.
- + The Wall Street Journal (2016) Blue Feed, Red Feed: graphics.wsj.com/blue-feed-red-feed

#### Week 8 - March 13

#### Assignment due: Research design report (submit through Assignments on Sakai)

### Political participation & civic engagement

- **Required:** Wells, C., Vraga, E., Thorson, K., Edgerly, S., & Bode, L. (2015). Youth civic engagement. In Coleman, S., & Freelon, D. (Eds.). *Handbook of digital politics*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Jenkins, H., & Zimmerman, A. (2016). *By any media necessary: The new youth activism*. NYU Press. Ch.1 Youth Voice, Media, and Political Engagement
- Kahne, J., & Bowyer, B. (2018). The Political Significance of Social Media Activity and Social Networks. *Political Communication*.
- Bond, R. M., Fariss, C. J., Jones, J. J., Kramer, A. D., Marlow, C., Settle, J. E., & Fowler, J. H. (2012). A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization. *Nature*, 489(7415), 295-298.
- **Optional:** Kreiss, D., Lawrence, R. G., & McGregor, S. C. (2018). In Their Own Words: Political Practitioner Accounts of Candidates, Audiences, Affordances, Genres, and Timing in Strategic Social Media Use. *Political Communication*, 35(1), 8–31.

#### Week 9 - March 27

#### Privacy, free speech, copyright

- **Required:** Acquisti, A., Brandimarte, L., & Loewenstein, G. (2015). Privacy and human behavior in the age of information. *Science*, 347(6221), 509-514.
- Papacharissi, Z. & Gibson, P. L. (2011). Fifteen Minutes of Privacy: Privacy, Sociality, and Publicity on Social Network Sites. In Trepte, S. & Reinecke, L. (Eds.) *Privacy Online: Perspectives on Privacy and Self-Disclosure in the Social Web*. Berlin, Germany: Springer.
- Solove, D. J. (2007). *The future of reputation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Ch. 6 Free Speech, Anonymity, and Accountability.
- Aufderheide, P. (2015). Copyright and Fair Use in Remix. In E. Navas, O. Gallagher, & x. burrough (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Remix Studies* New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

<b>Optional:</b> Freedom House (201	8) Freedom of the Net.

#### Week 10 - April 3

# Media, news, and information

- **Required:** Iyengar, S. (2017). A Typology of Media Effects. In K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication.
- Metzger, J. M. (2014). Broadcasting versus Narrowcasting: Do Mass Media Exist in the Twenty-First Century? In K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Mitchelstein, E., & Boczkowski, P. J. (2013). Tradition and Transformation in Online News Production and Consumption. In W. H. Dutton (Ed.), Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies (pp. 151-172). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Thorson, K., & Wells, C. (2015). Curated Flows: A Framework for Mapping Media Exposure in the Digital Age. *Communication Theory*, 1-20.
- **Optional:** Bright, J. (2016). The Social News Gap: How News Reading and News Sharing Diverge. *Journal of Communication*, 66(3), 343-365

# Week 11 - April 10

#### Assignment due: One-page research talk outline (submit through Assignments on Sakai)

# Misinformation and credibility

- Metzger, M. J., & Flanagin, A. J. (2015). Psychological approaches to credibility assessment online. *The handbook of the psychology of communication technology*, 32, 445.
- Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146–1151.
- Thorson, E. (2016). Belief echoes: The persistent effects of corrected misinformation. *Political Communication*, 33(3), 460-480.
- Waisbord, S. (2018). Truth is What Happens to News: On journalism, fake news, and post-truth. *Journalism Studies*, 1-13.
- **Optional**: Marwick, A. E. (2018). Why Do People Share Fake News? A Sociotechnical Model of Media Effects. *Georgetown Law Technology Review*, 474.

#### Week 12 - April 17

## Crowdsourcing, collaboration, and teams

- **Required:** Shirky, C. (2008) *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations.* Ch. 5 Personal motivation meets collaborative production.
- Benkler, Y., Shaw, A., and Hill, M. (2015), Peer Production: A Form of Collective Intelligence. In Malone, T. W., & Bernstein, M. S. *Handbook of collective intelligence*. MIT Press.
- Brabham, D. (2013) Crowdsourcing. Ch.1 Concepts, Theories, and Cases of Crowdsourcing.
- Shaw, A., & Hargittai, E. (2018). The Pipeline of Online Participation Inequalities: The Case of Wikipedia Editing. *Journal of Communication*, 68(1), 143–168.
- **Optional:** Gura, T. (2015) Amateur experts: Involving members of the public can help science projects, but researchers should consider what they want to achieve. *Nature* 496.

Week 13 - April 24
Research talks

Week 14 - May 1
Research talks

May 12
Final exam due