Syllabus TWC454: Information Technology and Culture

TWC 454: Information Technology and Culture

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Required Materials

An ASU email address and Internet access

Storage space to back up all class work

No textbook required.

Course description

This course is, as the name suggests, about communication, technology, culture and their various intersections. Marshall McLuhan once said, "We shape our tools and then they shape us." We invented writing, printing press, radio, telephone, computers and many modern means of communication; all of them in turn brought monumental transformation in our culture.

Most now believe that the Internet and related technologies not only communicate or distribute data, but that they have changed the way we think and interact. Current educational, familial, social, cultural, political, economic and legal systems no longer work as we have been accustomed to them working. Like with the advent of the printing press, changes are occurring everyday with no end in sight.

This is an exciting time in how information is managed, but it is also a time of uncertainty, concern and adjustment. We are in a transition period where segments of the population worldwide are immensely comfortable in the digital age and others have little or no idea of how to maneuver within the technology. The danger of creating a widening gap between the information haves and the have nots has not diminished since the advent of the personal computer. How will we, as a society, deal with the changes so as to ensure that our decisions today have the most beneficial impact on the generations to follow?

In addition to pondering on such issues, our emphasis will also be on the interaction between technologies and surrounding political, economic, legal, and social issues. It is an accelerated course. That means that the work that would be included in the traditional semester is expected to be done in about 7 weeks.

On completion of the course, students will:

- be familiar with scholarship about communication in the digital age.

- be familiar with scholarly work about various aspects of culture impacted by technology.
- analyze the impact of information age on society, including legal, social, and ethical issues
- analyze the role of social environment on the development, manipulation and application of technology
- identify and apply effective research strategies
- develop flexible strategies for writing, editing, and revising
- understand and apply principles of effective document design

Also see the MWTC Program Outcomes for additional course and program objectives. http://www.public.asu.edu/~bmmaid/outcomes.html

Class Communication

All official correspondence for this class will arrive via your ASU email account. Information on email at ASU is available here: http://help.asu.edu/node/1541 .

Online Etiquette

All communication for this course should be written in a professional style and tone. Hate speech will not be tolerated. As this course focuses on communication, refusal to communicate in a professional style and tone can affect your grade.

Turning in work

When turning in work, Microsoft Word files are preferred. rtf files are also acceptable. You can also paste the contents of your work in discussion area designated for the assignment. If you are not able to access the course website on a given day, you can email your assignments to the email account provided in the syllabus.

Late work

I do not generally accept late work. Failure to turn in an assignment on time will result in a zero for that assignment. To this end, I recommend that you back up your work in more than one location. Backing up files is an important professional practice in the age of digital information, and I am not likely to grant extensions because you failed to back up your files. I do, however, understand that life does not begin or end with class and I am willing to grant reasonable extensions and exceptions to students who are responsible about communicating with me regarding problems with due dates. If I accept an assignment late, the maximum grade I will award for it is a B.

ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. This legislation guarantees that all qualified students with documented disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Resource Center at ASU Polytechnic. Information for contacting the DRC is available here: http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc . If you believe you qualify for a reasonable accommodation, please obtain the pertinent documentation from the DRC as soon as possible. I am unable to provide accommodations for disabilities that have not been documented by the DRC, and students should not expect retroactive accommodations.

Grades, Grading, and Academic Integrity

ASU's official grading scale, which provides more detail than the scale shown at right, can be found at http://students.asu.edu/grades-grading-policies .

Percentage	Letter Grade
100	A+
94-99	A
90-93	A-
88-89	B+
84-87	B
80-83	B-
78-79	C+
71-77	C
70	D
69 and below	E

Students are expected to earn their own grades and complete their own work. The use of all sources should be properly and completely documented for all work in this course. Instances of plagiarism may result in a reduced or failing grade for an assignment. Repeated instances of plagiarism may result in a reduced or failing grade for the course. You are responsible for reading and understanding your rights and responsibilities under ASU's Student Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found at http://students.asu.edu/studentlife. If you have questions about how or when to cite sources, contact me or consult with a tutor in the ASU Student Success Center. Ignorance is not an excuse for plagiarism or improperly cited work.

Assignments

Students will complete the following assignments to determine their grades in this course:

Discussion Board – 50%

All students will participate on the class Discussion Board. Students will participate in four *substantial* posts based on prompts provided under respective weeks. (A substantial post is one that responds thoughtfully to the material and goes beyond saying, "I agree" or "I disagree." A substantial post, for this course, means a *minimum* of 750 words. While you are welcome to post short responses for the purpose of communicating with me or your classmates, do not post a short or shallow response and expect to receive credit for it.)

Proposal for the Final Project – 25%

The proposal should explain your topic for the final project. Your topic has to be related to communication technology and some aspect of culture. You should try to answer such questions surrounding the topic as: What question are you trying to answer in your final project? What's the significance of the issue to the society? Why are you personally interested in the topic? What are you trying to persuade/convince your readers for? What has been your strategies to know more about the topic? What steps did you take to find the articles relevant to your topic? What have the scholars said thus far about this issue? What's new that you are going to add to the existing scholarship? Are their divergent views expressed by different scholars? What side of the debate do you find yourself? What are the problems that you find in the writings/arguments of the scholars you don't agree with? In addition to this paper, This assignment should also include an annotated bibliography of the relevant sources. This annotated bibliography should list and describe, in about five sentences each, minimum of 10 recent articles relevant to your topic. Follow MLA or APA writing style for this project.

Final Project – 25%

Students will write a research paper or an argumentative essay exploring a specific relationship between communication technology and some aspect of culture, i.e. educational, professional, political, interpersonal, legal, recreational, ethical. Your paper should be responding to debatable statement such as, "Literacy will not survive beyond 2050." It should include the following:

1. An introduction to this topic.

2. A brief history of your topic's development.

3. A section in which you examine why this topic is relevant in this age.

4. An original argument about the future of this topic.

 The word length should be between 1500-2000 words and should include at least 5 references to sources for a passing grade.