Instructor: Dr. Brian Ekdale, brian-ekdale@uiowa.edu, E324 AJB
Office Hours: Tues. 9-10 a.m., Wed. 1-3 p.m., or by appointment

DEO (Interim): Dr. Julie Andsager, julie-andsager@uiowa.edu, E305B Adler Journalism Bldg.

Course Description: This graduate seminar explores concepts and theories related to digital and social media. We will take a cultural approach to topics such as community, networks, participatory culture, exploitation, digital mediawork, the public sphere, global inequities, privacy and more. Weekly discussions, student presentations on current digital media scholarship, and a final paper will be used to evaluate course performance.

Objectives:
- To examine the social, cultural, economic, and political significance of digital media
- To recognize how social relations are reimagined in the digital era
- To consider the dynamic relationship between productive audiences and powerful institutions
- To discover cutting edge research, engage with its implications, and share your findings with others
- To produce original scholarship concerning the cultural significance of digital media

Required Text:

ASSIGNMENTS / GRADING

Participation (15%): The success of a graduate seminar depends on the participation of its students. Therefore, you will be graded on your attendance, preparedness, cooperation, and contribution.
- Attendance means showing up. Simply put, you should be in class. If you have a legitimate reason for arriving late, leaving early, or missing class, please contact me before the start of class.
- Preparedness means completing all assigned work prior to the start of class. Our discussions will be centered on the weekly readings. While I encourage you to bring up your experiences and areas of expertise, the conversation must be centered on the theories and concepts explored in these readings.
- Cooperation means working well with others. Seminar should be a place where students feel comfortable sharing their various perspectives, even if those views are uncommon or unpopular. At the same time, you must always be aware of how your words and actions affect those around you. Intolerance, antagonism, and demagoguery have no place in the healthy exchange of ideas.
- Contribution means sharing your ideas. Each of you brings a unique perspective to the table; therefore, it is important that you share your ideas/opinions/reactions during discussion.

Reading Responses (10%): To get you thinking critically about the assigned readings, you must turn in a total of five reading response papers. These papers should be brief (about 300- to 500-words each). You should use these responses to discuss connections between all of the assigned readings for the week. What are the main arguments? Are they persuasive? What are the areas of commonality and difference? Do you see any weaknesses in these works? Are you left with unanswered questions? These responses should demonstrate that you clearly understand the readings, you’ve grappled with their arguments and significance, and you are able to clearly communicate your thoughts. Upload your reading responses to ICON before the class period.
in which the readings are due (i.e. Tuesdays during weeks with a technology presentation, Thursdays during weeks without a technology presentation).

**Technology Research Presentation (25%)**: It is challenging to keep up with the latest scholarship on digital media. Therefore, the technology research presentations will provide an opportunity for us to learn about the newest research on digital technologies and cultural phenomena. You will work with a partner to:

- **Review recent research** on a digital media technology (the available topics are listed in the schedule below). You should collect research published in books and scholarly journals, submitted as theses or dissertations, and presented at academic conferences. Although you may review one or two “seminal” studies that are more than 5 years old, you should focus on research published/submitted/presented within the past few years.
- **Produce an annotated bibliography** of 10-15 studies reviewed above. For each entry, you should summarize the theoretical approach, the methodology, the major findings, and how the research relates to other entries in your bibliography. You also should include a brief critique that addresses any flaws, oversights, or questionable assumptions. Each annotation should be approximately 250-words long. Annotations must reflect your original work – do not copy the official abstract. You may include direct quotations, but direct quotations must be brief and cited appropriately.
- **Share the findings of your literature review during an in-class presentation**. Using a formal, 15- to 20-minute presentation, you should summarize the research included in your annotated bibliography and highlight overarching themes related to your assigned technology.
- **Assign one article or book chapter** for your classmates to read in advance of your presentation day. Following your presentation, you will lead class discussion about your technology and assigned reading. You must distribute your reading by 11:59 p.m. on the Sunday before your presentation day.

**Research Project (50%)**: Throughout the semester you will work on an original research project that explores a topic of your choosing. This scholarship should demonstrate your ability to apply digital media theories to your own research agenda. For this project, you have two options:

1. **Produce a complete research study of media content**. This paper should include an introduction, a literature review, a description of your research question(s) and methodology, a findings/analysis section, and a discussion/conclusion that identifies the significance of this research. This paper should be approximately 20-pages long (suitable for a conference or journal submission).
2. **Propose a “field ready” study** that involves human subjects. This proposal should include an introduction, a literature review and a description of your research question(s) and methodology. This proposal should be approximately 10-pages long. In lieu of a findings and discussion section, you must submit a HawkIRB application for human subjects review, including full data collection instruments (e.g. interview protocols, surveys, etc.). Approved status is not required for completion of the research project, but the application must be under official review.

In addition to turning in your research project at the end of the semester, you must also:

- **Submit a 500- to 750-word research proposal**. In this proposal, you should describe your research topic and justify its significance. To do so, you will need to identify your theoretical perspective, briefly review relevant literature (2-3 studies), pose one or more research questions, and propose methods for answering these questions. The proposal is due Friday, February 28th at 5 p.m.
- **Share your research with your peers in a formal, in-class presentation**. This 10- to 12-minute presentation will approximate a presentation at an academic conference. I will cut off any presentation longer than 12 minutes, so make sure that you practice your presentation in advance. We will have a brief Q&A session following each presentation.

**Grading Scale**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97% and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93–96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A-  90–92      C+  77–79      D  63–66  
B+  87–89      C  73–76      D-  60–62  
F  59 and below

SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Introduction
- Tuesday, January 21
  - No readings
- Thursday, January 23

Week 2 – Community
- Tuesday, January 28
- Thursday, January 30

Week 3 – Networks
- Tuesday, February 4
- Thursday, February 6

Week 4 – Participatory Culture and Fandom
- Tuesday, February 11
- Thursday, February 13


**Week 5 – Exploiting Digital Labor**
- **Tuesday, February 18**
- **Thursday, February 20**

**Week 6 – Research Methods**
- **Tuesday, February 25**
- **Thursday, February 27**
  - *Technology Research Presentation (Blogs)*

**Week 7 – Infrastructure and Ontology**
- **Tuesday, March 4**
- **Thursday, March 6**
  - *Technology Research Presentation (Wikis)*

**Week 8 – Online Identity**
- **Tuesday, March 11**


- Thursday, March 13
  - *Technology Research Presentation (Image Sharing)*

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 9 – Privacy**
- Tuesday, March 25
- Thursday, March 27
  - *Technology Research Presentation (Image Sharing)*

**Week 10 – Digital Politics**
- Tuesday, April 1
- Thursday, April 3
  - *Technology Research Presentation (Facebook)*

**Week 11 – Mediawork**
- Tuesday, April 8
- Thursday, April 10
  - *Technology Research Presentation (Twitter)*

**Week 12 – Journalism**
- Tuesday, April 15


- Thursday, April 17
  - Technology Research Presentation (Mobile Phones)

**Week 13 – Global Cultures**

- Tuesday, April 22

- Thursday, April 24
  - Work on your research projects; Brian will be available for individual meetings

**Week 14 – Final Presentations**

- Tuesday, April 29
  - Final Research Presentations

- Thursday, May 1
  - Final Research Presentations

**Week 15 – Final Presentations**

- Tuesday, May 6
  - Final Research Presentations

- Thursday, May 8
  - Final Research Presentations

**Finals Week**

- Research project due during assigned final exam period

**CLAS POLICIES**

**Administrative Home:** The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at [http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

**Electronic Communication:** University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences ([Operations Manual, III.15.2](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook), k.11).
Accommodations for Disabilities: A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Academic Honesty: All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

CLAS Final Examination Policies: The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint: Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

Understanding Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather: In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Department of Public Safety website.