

## SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION COMM 361 Fall 2015

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T/R 2:30PM – 3:45pm  
Corboy Law Center 522  
Office Hrs: T/R: 1-2 PM  
and by appointment.

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### New Media Criticism

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**Prerequisites:** Prerequisites: COMM 100 & 200.

**Course Description:**

This course will equip students with the critical analytical tools to describe the social and technological dynamics of new communication technologies. They should leave the course ready to see technologies, institutions, practices and values within broad patterns of innovation and power—articulating not only the features and dynamics of a particular communication technology but also why it matters in terms of social justice and political power.

This course satisfies the Writing Intensive requirement.

**Course Objectives:**

Throughout the semester, students will:

- 1) Participate in critical conversations about new media choices through research and reflection
- 2) Learn and engage with best practices for how to ethically engage with social media and communication technologies
- 3) Gain a vocabulary for discussing the most pressing digital communication issues of our time as they intersect with society
- 4) Journey past consuming media to make specific informed choices about media use and production processes that affect everyday people.

**Course Readings:**

Orwell, G. (1950). *1984, a novel*. New York: Signet Classics.

Phillips, W. (2015). *This is why we can't have nice things: Mapping the relationship between online trolling and mainstream culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Pickard, V. W. (2015). *America's battle for media democracy: The triumph of corporate libertarianism and the future of media reform*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

**Course Organization:**

This course consists of a 1-hour and 15-minute class twice per week.

**Assignments and Grading:**

1. Tech Origin Story (10%)

2. Skills Exercises/Commentary (15%)
3. Paper Proposal (10%)
4. Final Paper (20%)
5. Final Presentation (5%)
6. Midterm Exam (15%)
7. Take-home Exam (15%)
8. Participation and Professionalism (10%)

\*All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

\*All assignments must be submitted on time or marks will be deducted.

**Course Website:** <https://sakai.luc.edu/>

Our Sakai space is where we will post information on COMM 361 online. It will also act as a community space where you can share your own interests and draw the class's attention to items of interest. So, check it often for course updates and other information.

You are expected to ask questions and seek out information needed to fulfill the course requirements as an active learner. Additionally, seeking out technical skills to solve new media problems is a key element in this class (and a transferable skillset beyond our classroom). Depending on how you build your own responses to assignments, you may need to seek out more sophisticated technical skills. Your investment in your own learning outcomes will show.

### **Attendance/Participation/Professionalism**

This course covers a wide range of material and we have a lot of work to do together. First off (and so important), attendance is foundational. Making it to class on time and being present for the lectures, assignments, and discussions is essential to your success in COMM 361 and a sign of mutual respect. Second, teamwork is a central aspect of our daily class life, so please come prepared to talk about the readings and issues of the day. Both the professor and your peers will be supporting and evaluating your participation throughout the semester. You are responsible to one another in fulfilling our shared course objectives that include in-depth participation and discussion grounded in the assigned material you will read before our class meetings.

Attendance counts as part of professionalism. It is your responsibility to ask classmates for announcements you may have missed by arriving late. Documentation for university-authorized absences must be cleared with the professor in advance. In the case of severe illness, death in the family, or religious holiday, the professor will help you find ways to make up the work. In any case, please provide documentation whenever possible. It allows your instructor to find better ways to help you as the course progresses.

In the unfortunate event that you fall ill, especially with a contagious ailment, please aid in preventing the spread of infection by not coming to class. Rather, submit the official documentation you are able to provide the professor when you are healthy and able to come to class.

### **Participation**

As mentioned above, it is crucial to make your voice heard in this course. There will be plenty of different settings (lecture, the discussions, your presentations, online) to contribute to our evolving discussion over the semester.

### **Deadlines/Professionalism**

Assignments are due on the dates indicated in the syllabus schedule below by paper and email at the beginning of class unless otherwise specified. It is the responsibility of the student to manage any scheduling conflicts with the course or missed time. I will not grant extensions except in the direst of circumstances and under no circumstances will I grant an extension within 24 hours of a due date. So please plan your semester ahead of time. As the old adage goes: *Plan your work. Then work your plan!* Missed deadlines will be assessed a deduction of one third of a letter grade per day (e.g. from A- to B+ for 1 day late). The penalty for lateness begins immediately after class on the due date.

**All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.**

**No assignment will be accepted more than 72 hours past the due date, unless authorized by the instructor before the original due date.**

### **Student Meetings**

I have regular drop-in office hours as indicated on the syllabus. You can also reach me via email to make an appointment to meet in person at my office. Missing a mutually agreed-upon meeting with me will negatively impact the professionalism component of your grade. Always follow through on your appointments, as they are for your benefit.

### **Academic Integrity**

The School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. The School expects that the grades in this course will bear some reasonable relation to established university-wide practices with respect to both levels and distributions of grades.

Please consult the Loyola School of Communication statement on “Academic Integrity” for information and guidelines.

<http://www.luc.edu/soc/Policy.shtml>

These policies, procedures and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They protect your rights, as well as those of the faculty. It is particularly important that you be aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself. Violations of these principles will result in a failing grade in the course, and be reported to the proper university office. If you have uncertainties about any of these practices, conferring with the professor is good practice.

### **Special Accommodations**

While the instructor will accommodate student needs in the best way possible given the constraints of the course content and processes, it is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates. This includes providing any documents needed for accommodations for matters such as University Athletics or Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to the instructor.

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