

Communication 5640/6640: Communication Technology and Culture

Version 2.0

Fall 2010 – M and W 11.50 am to 1.10 pm – LNCO 1100

Robert W. Gehl

Office: LNCO 2515

Phone: 801-581-7313

Email: robert.gehl@utah.edu

Office hours: by appointment (typically M and W 10 am to 11:30 am)

Grades: available on WebCT

Readings: (Mostly) available on Web CT

PART ONE: Rules of the Course

Catalog Description

This course examines the ideological context of evolving communication technologies as they function to structure, maintain, and alter power relations in contemporary society. Special attention is given to a) social construction of gender, race, national identity, and class by and through communication technology; and b) the ideological valences of recent and emerging communication technologies.

Required Readings and Materials

There is no required book to purchase for this course. All the material will be provided to you via WebCT or links to various Web pages. This means the course reading material will cost little (outside of any printing you may do).

Etiquette

If I am more than 15 minutes late, you may go home. ~~If you are more than 15 minutes late, stay home.~~ If you are late, sit in the back row, and don't disturb the class. If you are on time, be sure not to sit in the back row!

In-class technology is a double-edged sword. Studies have shown that using computers in class reduces learning. However, computers provide incredible resources. If you use a computer in class, stay on task. Cell phones should be set to vibrate. Texting is strictly forbidden – for every person I see texting, I will add an additional question to the the mid-term exam. LOL OMG :(

This class has content drawn from popular culture and the Web. Moreover, your

classmates will likely share opinions and/or material they have created in class or online. Disagreement is certainly allowed, but debate must be respectful and grounded in evidence and logic. I do not condone ad hominem attacks.

We will follow whatever food/drink policy is set for the room.

Time Management

Per the University College Advising office, "As a rule of thumb, you should plan to study two hours for every hour you are in the classroom. That means that if you are registered for 12 credit hours, you'll need 24 hours a week of study time. With that in mind if you're working or have other commitments, you may need to make an adjustment in your course load or outside commitments."

This course is reading, writing, and Web intensive. Outside of documented, major family events (sickness, death, etc) I will not give consideration for late assignments.

If you know that you must miss a class, let me know at least two weeks in advance to make accommodations. Most likely, I will suggest you ask a classmate to take notes for you.

Content Accommodations

In the spirit of higher education, this course should present challenges, some of which may be ideological in nature, and you are encouraged to empower yourself to engage these challenges. This course has been designed to meet or exceed the quality of similar courses taught at top-caliber universities around the world. Readings and materials assigned for this class have been carefully scrutinized and selected. As we study communication in its various forms and contexts, we will apply the concepts we engage to a variety of examples, including those that occur in the venue of popular culture. Popular culture, as you are certainly aware, can contain potentially objectionable material. I make every effort to give notices before showing potentially objectionable material in class, often with disclaimers about language, violence, or sexual content. Please understand that all material that I will present in this class or require you to know has been selected for its overall value and its applicability to the course, and my colleagues in the department have reviewed and approved of all of the content to be presented in the course. That said, I will not make content accommodations for any material scheduled for this course. It is your responsibility to review the syllabus, readings, assignments, and materials to be sure that this is a course you wish to take. Should you have questions or concerns, please see me immediately. Details on the university's accommodation policy are available here:

<http://www.admin.utah.edu/facdev/pdf/accommodations-policy-background.pdf>

ADA Accommodations

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services,

and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services (CDS), 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to CDS.

Honesty, Plagiarism, and Intellectual Property

This course will require you to work alone and in groups. All work you contribute should be your own. Plagiarism – the unattributed use of someone else's intellectual work – is a severe offense. I will review each case of plagiarism and either penalize it by failing the assignment or failing the student for the course. Every semester, I find cases, and I will take them to the Dean if necessary. So don't do it.

Whenever writing a research paper or similar document, you must give full attribution to the original authors of the material you use. Attribution can take the form of hyperlinking or citation in a consistent citation style. **WHEN IN DOUBT, PROVIDE ATTRIBUTION.**

Communication

I prefer to communicate either in person or via email. I may send you emails via the Campus Information System or WebCT. It is your responsibility to have a functioning email address associated with these campus sites.

All assignments will be turned in via either WebCT or via email. **Pay attention to the assignment requirements.** Any assignment which is turned in by the wrong method will be marked down 40%.

My Responsibilities

Since this syllabus is now taking on the appearance of a legalese-drenched Terms of Service agreement on a Web 2.0 site, I think it's best for me to explain what I will do for you in this course:

1. My grading is aimed towards rewarding excellence and encouraging improvement. I do not give out grades; you earn them.
2. I will point you towards a wide range of helpful resources on campus and online.
3. I will be available to help you (during office hours or by appointment).
4. On this **first day of class**, I am willing to discuss the syllabus requirements if you feel that my policies need revision.

PART TWO: UNDERGRADUATE Assignments and Grading

Assignment/Component	Points
Attendance	100
Forum participation	200
In-class participation	200
Mid-Term exam	200
Final Project	300
TOTAL	1000 points

Grading Scale

Point Range	Grade
970 - 1000	A+
940 - 969	A
900 - 939	A-
870 - 899	B+
840 - 869	B
800 - 839	B-
770 - 799	C+
740 - 769	C
700 - 739	C-
670 - 699	D+
640 - 669	D
600 - 639	D-
599 or less	E

Description of Undergraduate Assignments and Participation**Attendance: 100 pts**

Taken every class. You are automatically allowed 2 unexcused absences. There is no need to contact me regarding those absences. Any absence after that will reduce your grade, unless it is for a documented emergency.

In-class Participation: 200 pts

This is the most subjective category. It is based on your participation in class discussions. For best results, given the size of the class, you will want to say your name before your comments. This is all about letting me know you're out there. In-class discussion will likely be limited due to the brief amount of time we have in class.

Forum: 200 pts

Every week, I will post an "open discussion" forum on WebCT. This is meant to be a space for you to have a conversation about the week's readings and my lectures. You are responsible for three comments each week. The comments should be substantial enough to demonstrate you read the works and heard the lectures. These can be comments on the readings, lectures, and on each other's comments. I will participate in the forums on occasion, responding to comments and asking questions of you.

Mid-term: 200 pts

This quiz will be based on the readings, concepts, and techniques we will discuss in the first half of the course. It will consist of short essay questions. We will have a collective review day the class prior to the quiz.

Final project: 300 pts

This is the final, group assignment. See handout on WebCT for details.

PART THREE: GRADUATE assignments and grading

Graduates will be graded on their final papers, participation in the class discussion (online and in person), and their presentations. Each of these will receive equal weight when I assign a final grad. GRADUATES ARE EXEMPT FROM THE MID-TERM, but are asked to participate in the review session.

PART FOUR: Course Schedule

The schedule is, of course, subject to change. Notice of any changes will be made in-class, via WebCT, or via email. See schedule PDF spreadsheet for details (on WebCT).