

Effective: Fall 2025

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title: Digital Culture

Course Number: CMNS 253

Credits: 3

Total Weeks: 14 (Fall, Spring)
12 (Summer)

Total Hours: 39

Course Level: ☐ First Year ☒ Second Year
☐ New ☒ Revised Course
☐ Replacement Course

Department: Humanities

Department Head: P. Best

Former Course Code(s) and Number(s) (if applicable): N/A

Pre-requisites (If there are no prerequisites, type NONE): CMNS 110 or CMNS 130

Co-requisite Statement (List if applicable or type NONE): NONE

Precluded Courses: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will cover topics examining the relationship between digital communications media and contemporary society. It will focus on aspects of digital culture and society related to the development and characteristics of online communities through mobile devices, social media, and other popular and emerging digital media technologies that facilitate so much of contemporary communications. It will examine phenomena and societal structures around digital media and society from the mundane through to the profound, from the global to the local, to the individual. It will take a critical perspective on digital cultures and explore topics including the datafication of everyday human relationships, the relationship between social media and politics, the changing face of digital labour and content production for media technologies, and many other key issues in our ubiquitously connected world.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and demonstrate their understanding of key theories and concepts regarding the relationship between digital media technologies and society.
- Be self-reflective about their own engagement with digital media technologies.
- Demonstrate the ability to apply academic concepts to the critical analysis of practical examples of digital communications media.
- Produce arguments that demonstrate the development of their own critical perspective on digital media technologies and society.
- Find and evaluate the relevance of additional academic resources and apply them to topics from the course.
- Further develop interdisciplinary academic and transferrable skills.

INSTRUCTION AND GRADING

Instructional (Contact) Hours:

Type	Duration
Lecture/Seminars	39
Laboratory	0
Field Experience	0
Other (<i>specify</i>):	0
Total	39

Grading System: Letter Grades ☒ Percentage ☐ Pass/Fail ☐ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory ☐ Other ☐

Specify passing grade: 50%

Evaluation Activities and Weighting (total must equal 100%)

Assignments: 30% Specify number of, variety, and nature of assignments: Content Creation Presentation	Lab Work: %	Participation: 5%	Project: 20% Specify nature of project: In-class projects
Quizzes/Test: %	Midterm Exam: 10%	Final Exam: 35%	Other: %

TEXT(S) AND RESOURCE MATERIALS

Readings and resources for this course will be available through MyCC – Coquitlam College’s Moodle-based virtual learning environment (VLE). The assigned readings are indicated in the course content information below.

COURSE TOPICS

Week	Topic	Required readings	Supplementary readings
Week 1	Convergence culture, media & technology, digital society, and creativity.	Harvey, Alison. “Feminist Digital Media Studies”. <i>Feminist Media Studies</i> (Polity: 2020) pp 112-141.	Jenkins, Henry. “What Constitutes Meaningful Participation?”. <i>Spreadable Media</i> (NYU: 2013) pp 153-194.
Week 2	Communities. Social and technological networks, text-based platforms, image-based platforms, and context collapse.	Baym, Nancy. “Communication in digital spaces”. <i>Personal Connections in the Digital Age</i> (Polity, Cambridge: 2010) pp 50-71.	Marwick, Alice, and boyd, danah. “I Tweet Honestly, I Tweet Passionately”. <i>New Media & Society</i> 13, no1 (2010) pp 1-20.
Week 3	Privacy. Network theory, data, surveillance, & the panopticon.	Zuboff, Shoshana. “Chapter 3: The Discovery of Behavioral Surplus”. <i>The Age of Surveillance Capitalism</i> (Public Affairs, NY: 2019) pp 65-97.	Doctorow, Cory. “Network Effects vs. Switching Costs”. <i>The Internet Con</i> (Verso: 2023) pp 26-37.
Week 4	Design I. Affordances & constraints, UI & UX designs, minimalism, maximalism, and skeuomorphism.	Murray, Janet. “Maximizing the Four Affordances”. <i>Inventing the Medium: Principles of interaction design as a cultural practice</i> (MIT Press: 2012) pp 87-103.	Greenfield, Adam. “Smartphone: The Networking of the Self”. <i>Radical Technologies: The Design of Everyday Life</i> (Verso: 2018) pp 9-29.
Week 5	Design II. Notifications, the power of defaults, and dark patterns.	Nagy, Peter, and Neff, Gina. “Imagined Affordance: Reconstructing a Keyword for Communication Theory”. <i>Social Media & Society</i> 1, no2 (2015) pp 1-9.	Airoidi, Massimo. “A Theory of Machine Habitus”. <i>Machine Habitus</i> (Polity: 2022) pp 109-143.
Week 6	Media archaeology. Lost digital cultures, linkrot, abandonware, emulators, and digital archives.	Sobchak, Vivian. “Afterward: Media Archaeology and Re-presencing the Past”. In: Huhtamo, Erkki, and Parikka,	Citton, Yves, “Archeologizing Mediarchy”. <i>Mediarchy</i> (Polity: 2019) pp 145-156.

		Jussi. <i>Media Archaeology</i> (University of California: 2011) pp 323-334.	
Week 7	Animation & the uncanny. Computer animation, games and interactivity, VR, AR, motion capture, and the uncanny valley.	Bode, Lisa. "The Uncanny Valley". In: Dobson, Nichola et al (eds) <i>The Animation Studies Reader</i> (Bloomsbury: 2022) pp 59-68.	Mori Masahiro. "The Uncanny Valley". <i>IEEE Robotics & Automation</i> , June (2012) pp 98-100.
Week 8	Platforms & the digital commons. Consolidation, walled gardens, digital ecosystems, copyright, intellectual property, the GPL, creative commons, and open-source software.	Van Dijck, Jose. "The Ecosystem of Connective Media". <i>The Culture of Connectivity</i> (Oxford: 2013) pp 154-176.	O'Shea, Lizzie. "Protect the Digital Commons!". <i>Future Histories</i> (Verso, London: 2019) pp 239-260.
Week 9	Industry & Governance. Private platform governance and new turns in regulation of tech & digital industries, vertical integration, and industry consolidation.	Poell, Thomas, Nieborg, David, and Duffy, Brooke. "Governance". <i>Platforms and Cultural Production</i> (Polity: 2022) pp 79-105.	Barbrook, Richard, and Cameron, Andy. "The Californian Ideology." <i>Science as Culture</i> 6, no. 1 (1996) pp 44-72.
Week 10	Digital Journalism. Information overload, the digital public sphere, alternative & citizen journalism.	Andrejevic, Mark. "Cutting through the Glut: Knowledge Small Enough to Know". <i>Infoglut</i> (Routledge, NY: 2013) pp 136-165.	Boeder, Peter. "Habermas' heritage: The future of the public sphere in the network society". <i>First Monday</i> , 10, no9 (2005).
Week 11	Digital Labour. Content creation, the gig economy, precarity, and when your boss is an algorithm.	Appadurai, Arjun, and Alexander, Neta. "Creative Destruction and the New Socialities". <i>Failure</i> (Polity: 2020) pp 46-69.	Johnson, Mark, Carrigan, Mark, and Brock, Tom. "The Imperative to be Seen". <i>First Monday</i> , 24, no8 (2019).
Week 12	Presentations.	No reading assigned.	No reading assigned.
Week 13	Revision and final exam preparation.	No reading assigned.	No reading assigned.
Week 14	Exam	No reading assigned.	No reading assigned.

NOTES

1. Students are required to follow all College policies. Policies are available on the website at: [Coquitlam College Policies](#)
2. To find out how this course transfers, visit the BC Transfer Guide at: [bctransferguide.ca](#)

Last Reviewed: March 2025

Last Revised: March 2025