CMN 5650: Digital Communication
Spring 2024 | Section 600 | 3 credit hours
Online

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Office Hours: Mon/Wed 12 – 1:30 p.m.; Thurs 12:45 – 1:45 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a theoretical, practical/technical, and critical understanding of digital media culture in contemporary society. Students will learn about the history of digital media/culture; contemporary trends and practices, new media literacy, and the basic tools required to actively participate in and study the digital world. Students will actively implement concepts from various approaches utilized by scholars and practitioners in the field of Communication Studies.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate comprehension and knowledge of digital media culture
2. Critique digital media culture
3. Understand the basics of digital media aesthetics
4. Actively apply and create digital media

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Readings and other course materials will be provided on D2L Brightspace.

SUCCESS IN AN ONLINE CLASS

While online classes provide more freedom than a traditional classroom experience regarding when you will work, they presume that you possess the ability to autonomously learn from course materials and assignments with minimal intervention. This course is structured into 8 modules to help guide you through the content effectively. General guidelines for success:

1. Read all instructions and due dates carefully for each module to ensure that you complete every assignment before the module expires. **Late assignments will not be accepted.**
2. Budget ample time to study course content and complete work on assignments.
3. Anticipate that this course may be challenging as it demands both theoretical understanding and practical/technical application.
4. Do not hesitate to contact me if you need assistance or have questions!

COMMUNICATION AND RESPONSE TIME

Please contact me with any questions or concerns about the course. The best way to contact me is by email at jsgrube@eiu.edu. I typically respond to email messages within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours during the weekend. If you need to talk to me, please email me to schedule a meeting. All online meetings will be conducted through Zoom.

I will post class announcements as necessary in the news widget on the course homepage. Please check the course often (at least 3 times each week) to ensure you do not miss important information. If you have the Brightspace Pulse app on your phone or mobile device, you will receive an automatic notification when a new announcement is posted.

GRADING

Grading Scale: A = 100-90%   B = 89-80%   C = 79-70%   D = 69-60%   F = 59-0%
There is no rounding of final scores.

Grade Distributions:	
Discussion Board Posts & Responses	20%
Digital Media Analysis	10%
Semiotic Analysis	10%
Personal Brand Index	10%
Professional Logo & Business Card	10%
Promotional Photography	10%
Video Presentation	10%
Video Presentation Feedback	10%
Final Reflection	10%
TOTAL	**100%**

GRADING AND FEEDBACK

Refer to the Grade Distributions chart for more information on the weight distribution for each assignment. Except for discussion board participation, all assignments are weighed as 10% of your final grade. Grades and feedback will be posted in the course grade book in D2L Brightspace within one week after the due date for each assignment. Detailed instructions and expectations for each assignment will be provided as a PDF document in their corresponding modules. Rubrics for each assignment are available in D2L.

ASSIGNMENTS

Detailed assignment instructions are provided in D2L.
Assignments are due at noon on the final day of their module.
Specific due dates are posted on D2L and the Course Calendar (page 6 of the syllabus).

Discussion Board Posts & Responses: Using the discussion boards on D2L, you will respond to prompts and interact with peers and myself, reflecting on course concepts. For each of the first four modules, you are required to (1) create a thread post and (2) respond to at least three other threads.

Digital Media Analysis: In this 3-4 page paper, you will apply one communication theory/concept to critique an aspect of digital media communication/culture.

Semiotic Analysis: You will conduct a semiotic analysis of three organizations of your choosing to examine digital brand communication.

Personal Brand Index: You will demonstrate an understanding of semiotics and branding to develop your own personal professional brand.

Professional Logo & Business Card: Based on your personal brand index, you will design a professional logo and business card utilizing an understanding of digital media aesthetics.

Promotional Photography: With a foundation in semiotics and an understanding of visual composition, you will demonstrate effective visual communication of your brand through photography.

Video Presentation: You will demonstrate effective digital communication by delivering a video presentation based on your Digital Media Analysis Essay.

Video Presentation Feedback: You will post a response to each of your peers' video presentations, providing insights on the topic and offering constructive feedback.

Final Reflection: In this brief paper, you will reflect on how this course has developed your understanding of digital communication and culture.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Class Participation: As outlined in the assignments section, you are expected to participate in class discussions and provide peer feedback on the discussion boards in D2L. All communication must be conducted courteously and with respect to your fellow classmates and myself.

Class Communication: EIU is committed to open, frank, and insightful dialogue in all of its courses. Diversity has many manifestations, including diversity of thought, opinion, and values. We encourage all learners to be respectful of that diversity and to refrain from inappropriate commentary. Should such inappropriate comments occur, I will intervene as I monitor the dialogue in the courses. I have zero-tolerance for hate speech. Just as with a face-to-face course, EIU's Code of Conduct applies to this course. Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. Learners as well as faculty should be guided by common sense and basic etiquette.

Assignment Policy: All assignments must be submitted by the due date. ***Late assignments will not be accepted*** and will result as a 0 on the assignment. Typed assignments should have one-inch margins and use 12-point Times New Roman font and be thoroughly proofread. Any source citations must be done using APA style.

Technology Requirements: **Online students enrolled in this course are expected to possess or have access to:**
- A desktop or laptop computer.
- An updated and current web browser. Chrome or Firefox are recommended.
- A reliable, high-speed Internet connection.
- A camera or smartphone to take photos and a means to upload them.
- A webcam and microphone and program to record video (Kaltura is available at no charge through EIU).
- A photograph modifying and graphic editing/text layout program (i.e., Adobe Photoshop). More information is available in the "Overview of Design Programs" document in the relevant module.
- Microsoft Word and PowerPoint (available at no charge through Office 365/Panthermail).

If technical support is required during the course, students are expected to achieve solutions BEFORE assignments are due. Students should have a Plan B (such as an alternate computer, internet service, or access to a computer lab) should technical issues arise that cannot be resolved before the assignment is due.

Technical Skills: Students enrolled in this online course are expected to possess adequate computer literacy skills and be proficient at using computers, peripherals, software, internet, etc. In addition to being comfortable using a computer, online students for this course are expected to possess:
- A working knowledge of email, web browsers, D2L Brightspace, word processors (Microsoft Word), and basic image editing (Photoshop).
- The ability to install applications or plugins when necessary.
- The ability to take and upload photographs and record and upload video.

Information Literacy Skills: Students enrolled in this online course are expected to possess the following digital information literacy skills:
1. Using online libraries and databases to locate and gather appropriate information
2. Using computer networks to locate and store files or data
3. Using online search tools for specific academic purposes, including the ability to use search criteria, keywords, and filters
4. Properly citing information sources
5. Preparing a presentation of research findings

E-PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT

Students in the online MA in Communication Studies and Graduate Certificate in Communication Processes programs are expected to achieve comprehensive knowledge in the area in which the degree is being offered. Comprehensive Knowledge will be assessed through a final e-portfolio demonstrating mastery of the knowledge and skills that a student is expected to learn in the program. Each online class will require an end-of-semester comprehensive exam style question, paper or creative project, which

students may submit for their e-portfolio. See the Communication Studies Graduate Student Online Orientation D2L site for more details regarding e-portfolio requirements.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

This course has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism. EIU's Code of Conduct defines plagiarism as "the use, without adequate attribution, of another person's words or thoughts as if they were ones' own, failing to cite outside sources used in completion of the work, improperly citing sources, and submitting work that was previously completed for another class without prior approval from the instructor." At minimum a student who engages in academic dishonesty/plagiarism will receive a 0 on the assignment and be reported to the Office of Student Standards. If there are multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Office of Student Standards may sanction the student further, i.e., suspension or expulsion from the university.

Students are not allowed to use advanced automated tools (artificial intelligence or machine learning tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, or Dall-E 2) on assignments in this course. Each student is expected to complete each assignment without substantive assistance from others, including automated tools.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Accessibility & Accommodations (OAA). All accommodations must be approved through OAA. Please stop by McAfee Gym, Room 1272, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Academic Support Center (www.eiu.edu/success) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Academic Support Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to McAfee Gym, Room 2230.

COURSE CALENDAR

Readings and videos for each module should be completed before beginning work on the assignment(s).
All assignments in the fourth column are due at noon on the final day of their module.

MODULE	TOPIC	READINGS & VIDEOS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Module 1: **Week 1** **1/8 – 1/14**	*Digital Media Theory*	• Lindgren – "Digital Society" • McMullan – "A New Understanding of 'New Media'" • Webster – "Three Myths of Digital Media" • VIDEO: Frith - "The Physicality of Digital Media" (Tedx Talks)	• Discussion #1 Thread Post
Module 2: **Week 2** **1/15 – 1/21**	*Algorithms and Attention*	• Andersen – "Archiving, Ordering, and Searching" • Menczer & Hills – "Information Overload Helps Fake News Spread" • Anikina – "Automating Platform Spectators" • VIDEO: Wisecrack - "Social Media and the Business of Anger	• Discussion #2 Thread Post • Discussion #1 Responses
Module 3: **Week 3** **1/22-1/28**	*Digital Media Culture and Community*	• Lankshear & Knobel - "Memes, Macros, Meaning, and Menace" • Lee et al. - "Fandom, Social Media, and Identity Work" • Berkowitz - "A Game Designer's Analysis of QAnon" • VIDEO: VICE News - "How Memes Are Influencing Anti-China Protests"	• Discussion #3 Thread Post • Discussion #2 Responses • Digital Media Analysis
Module 4: **Week 4** **1/29-2/4**	*Message and Meaning: Semiotics*	• "Introduction to Media Semiotics and Visual Communication" • Fiske – "Signification & Semiotic Methods and Application" • Thurlow et al. - "Visualizing teens and technology"	• Semiotic Analysis • Discussion #4 Thread Post • Discussion #3 Responses
Module 5: **Week 5** **2/5-2/11**	*Developing a Brand*	• "Introduction to Branding" • "Overview of Design Programs" • Schrubbe-Potts – "Branding" • Hefland – "Electronic Typography"	• Discussion #4 Responses • Personal Brand Index • Professional Logo & Business Card
Module 6: **Week 6** **2/12-2/18**	*Promotional Photography*	• "Overview of Photography Signifying Practices and Basic Composition" • Ramos-Serrano & Martínez-García – "Personal Style Bloggers"	• Promotional Photography
Module 7: **Week 7** **2/19-2/25**	*Video Presentations*	• "Overview of Video Presentations" • Ivey – "Perfect Presentations"	• Video Presentation (posted to discussion board with manuscript)
Module 8: **Week 8** **2/26-2/29**	*Viewing and Responding to Presentations & Final Reflection*	*In lieu of readings, you will watch five of your peers' video presentations*	• Feedback on FIVE peer video presentations • Final Reflection