

AMST 475 Digital Diversity

Summer 2015, 3 Credit Hours
M,T,W,T,F 12:00 – 2:40PM, CUE 319

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Course Description

This course explores the field of critical cyberculture studies. This academic subject investigates the complex ways in which broadband internet access is increasingly used by state and government agencies; businesses; consumers; and non-profit organizations through a wide variety of technological devices like smartphones, remote digital cameras, tablets and RFID/GPS protocols, for a wide variety of reasons. Commerce, social networking, crowdsourcing, and archiving are just a few ways that broadband and web 2.0 technologies enable end users to fully participate in our increasingly digitized world. In order to assess how different sociocultural demographics utilize broadband access we must also examine who benefits and who is disadvantaged by its use. We must critically assess the historical, political, socioeconomic and identity politics are implicated in these processes of digital enfranchisement by being attentive to the ways in which US society has been both directly and indirectly influenced by the legal and cultural decisions, values and practices of the producers and consumers of that society. *Please Note: Your continued enrollment beyond the first week of class affirms your willingness to abide by the conditions set forth in this document.*

Student Learning Outcomes

- Recognize, comprehend and successfully interpret complex concepts about digital diversities between race, class, gender and sexual identities between consumer/producers
- Understand the dialectical relationship between concepts of race and ethnicity in the global exchanges of cultural production and capitalism in corporate American media
- Examine the diverse sets of users and creators who produce, engage and define the products, practices and processes of the digital landscape with particular attention to the margins of those normative groups
- Develop critical thinking skills of introspection and analysis while formulating effective, and persuasive writing prose especially using IT devices and social media platforms

Required Texts

Athique, Adrian. *Digital Media and Society, An Introduction*. Polity (2013)

Citron, Danielle Keats. *Hate Crimes in Cyberspace*. Harvard University Press (2014)

Staples, William G. *Everyday Surveillance: Vigilance and Visibility in Postmodern Life*, 2nd Edition. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers (2014)

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|-------------------|------------|
| Participation | 100 Points |
| Chapter Summaries | 100 Points |
| Research Paper | 100 Points |

Course Policies

Academic Etiquette: Class will begin promptly at 12:00. Arriving late or leaving early, without permission from me well in advance, is not acceptable. Your participation in this course is predicated on principles of reciprocal respect, tact, courtesy, and professionalism...disruptive behavior¹ will not be tolerated. In order for us to learn from each other, we have to allow each other to make mistakes and to offer unpopular positions for debate. However, name-calling and other forms of verbal harassment will not be tolerated and will result in students being asked to leave the class².

Email: I encourage students to be in close contact with me and those who elect to contact me by email, please remember to include the following: (1) a salutation, (2) your class abbreviation in the subject line, e.g. AMST 475 and, (3) a precise description of your concern, issue, etc. Every attempt is made to respond to student emails within 24hrs of receipt, but emails received on vacation days or Fridays may not be replied to until the following Monday. Please DO NOT EMAIL ME if you will be absent³.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices: Please turn off your cell phones *before* entering the classroom! Do *not* wear headphones, earbuds, etc. in the classroom. If your device goes off more than once during the semester, or I discover you texting in class, I will immediately seize your device. Students who violate this policy will have to turn your phone into me at the beginning of every class, to be returned to you at the end of class, for the duration of the semester. Students are both allowed and encouraged to use laptops and or tablets judiciously – meaning if you're caught doing anything other than assigned work, taking notes, etc. your participation grade suffer (and with each successive incident these penalties *may increase*, with or without announcement, subject exclusively to my discretion).

Academic Integrity: In all instances, you must do your own work. In simple terms, plagiarism is the act of using another person's words or work without giving them credit for it. You are encouraged to read *WSU's Academic Integrity Policy*. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty, whether intentional or unintentional, may result in a grade of "F" for the assignment, or a grade of "F" for the entire course, *at my sole discretion*.

Disability Accommodation: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Access Center (Washington Building 217) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations **MUST** be approved through the Access Center.

¹ Arriving late, leaving early, talking during lecture, reading the newspaper, etc.

² Such request will also necessarily count as an absence

³ Except when their absence will be (1) a university sponsored event coinciding with class or a prolonged illness

Campus Safety Plan/Emergency Information: In the interest of campus safety and emergency procedures, please become familiar with the information available on the following websites: (1) <http://safetyplan.wsu.edu> (Campus Safety Plan); <http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies> (Emergency Management Plan); and (3) <http://alert.wsu.edu> (WSU Alert Site).

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: Attendance is compulsory and because you have enrolled in this course I assume that you are interested in the material and want to be here. Therefore I expect you to assume responsibility for your education. I will take attendance *every* class and those students who arrive *after* attendance has been recorded will be marked absent. ***Thus, lateness equals an absence.*** Moreover, “attendance” and “participation” shall be construed as being in class both mentally as well as physically. You are allowed **3 absences, period.** Missing a 4th class will result in the reduction of your final grade by one letter (e.g. A- reduced to a B-). On the **5th absence** you will receive an “F” grade in the course. Only approved and documented “sponsored university events” will be exempted from this rule⁴. Arrangements for makeup work must, therefore, be made **at least one week** in advance pursuant to *University Regulation no. 73*. You are expected to come to class having completed all of the readings assigned for that day. This course asks you to read texts closely and responsively. This means that if you want to do well you will actively engage with your books by writing questions in the margins, circling key terms, looking up words you do not know, and underlining themes or issues you find intriguing. Responsive readers think of themselves as having a dialogue with the author and use the assigned readings as the basis for formulating their own interesting ideas, questions, and arguments.

Students, who by virtue of their absence have missed an assignment eligible to be made up, must turn in their work **no later than the next** normally scheduled class meeting, provided that work is accompanied with the appropriate documentation described above. While this is *not* a writing class per se, your ability to effectively and persuasively communicate your thoughts on paper *is directly related* to your ability to succeed in this course⁵. This course will utilize the Chicago Author-Date citation style, e.g. NO FOOTNOTES OR ENDNOTES PERMITTED; familiarize yourself with it **before beginning** any written assignments. Deviations from **any** of these standards will result in point reductions.

Coursework Performance: Written work is to be turned in during class, on time and in the format required for each assignment. Late work will not be accepted without penalty unless accompanied by some form of official documentation. In all cases those forms of documentation provided will be subject to my exclusive judgment regarding validity. As you can gather from the detailed syllabus I have provided for you, the only thing you can do to get a passing grade in the class is complete the work assigned in the syllabus on time and without excuses. What does this mean?

⁴ <http://www.registrar.wsu.edu/Registrar/Apps/AcadRegs.ASPX> #73

⁵ All written assignments must conform to the standard conventions of academic writing: e.g., typed in 12 point, *Times New Roman* font, with all 1” margins and double spaced with page numbers centered at bottom on each pg.

Essentially, I am warning you that the level of effort you put into the class, *may not correspond to the results* you produce (which is what ultimately matters in obtaining a grade). That is, sometimes a person's best effort may only earn them a "C". Therefore, please know that I will tolerate no drama at the end of the semester about how you "wanted an A in this class" and are actually getting a C- and can I do something to help you "improve your grade."

Last, But Not Least is the "How Is That My Problem" Clause: I am a very busy person, and as an instructor, my role in this class is to teach you about effects of intersecting social markers and to generally prepare you for the professional world. I feel the need to warn you, then, that often times I will have a standard response to many of your "problems" or "conflicts." The response will usually be a variation of "How is that my problem?" *Before* you raise any issue with me, understand that your personal matters should bear *no effect* on me or on how this class is conducted. *It is your responsibility to be aware of the policies on this syllabus and follow them appropriately. If you miss class it is your responsibility to check with your classmates to find out what you have missed.* And though you are always welcome to follow up with me if you are absent, *do not* ask me if you "missed anything important."

Course Assignments

Participation (100pts): Your contributions to class discussion are assessed based *not on quantity but quality*; e.g. moving the discussion forward in new directions while linking theoretical concepts to tangible examples. Student participation grade is generally comprised of *exclusively* my critical assessment of your contributions to the course's progress. This determination is based on two objective criteria; *first* the frequency (e.g. regularity) of your comments and *second*, (and more importantly) the quality of those comments. My subjective and objective assessments of your in class participation is exclusively made by me in accordance with these criteria and a holistic accounting of your performance *over the entirety* of the semester.

Chapter Summaries (100pts): Students will select a particular assigned reading and/or chapter from the text, film or other source to lead class discussion. Their performance will be graded upon the following criteria: (1) Sophistication of analysis or critique, (2) Ability to lead discussion and solicitation of questions, (3) Use of audio/visual and supplementary aids, handouts, etc. that augments your analysis. Additional instructions for this assignment will be distributed to you later.

Research Paper (100pts): You will author a research paper of no less than 10 pages, on a subject of your choice related to the content of the course. This research paper will attempt to assess the current status of your subject of study, it's relevance to US constructions of race, social class, gender and human sexuality within larger discourses of power and oppression. The paper will conform in all respects to the standard conventions of writing, e.g. 1" margins, Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double spaced, an attached Bibliography of scholar sources, etc. Additional instructions for this assignment will be distributed to you later.

Grading Scale

100 – 94 = A
93 – 90 = A –

Suggests that a student's work is outstanding to excellent; the student's work reflects an engaged comprehension of the course content and shows thoughtful insight into the complexities of the course. Student shows an attentive engagement with the course.

89 – 87 = B+
86 – 83 = B
82 – 80 = B-

Suggests that a student's work is very good to good; the student's work reflects a very strong, engaged, and solid understanding of course material. Occasionally, the student's work doesn't go the extra step in critical analysis.

79 – 77 = C+
76 – 73 = C
72 – 70 = C-

Suggests that a student's work is adequate; the student's work reflects a fair, but essentially disengaged, grasp of the course material and doesn't go very far in comprehension, or reflects a lack of understanding of the issues represented in the material. Student's work is un- or underconsidered and unclearly written.

69-67=D+
66-63=D
62-60=D-
59-0=F

Suggests that a student's work shows some, but very little effort; the student's work does not reflect a comprehension of the course material, is disengaged, or reveals a lack of reading, attention, and/or attendance.

| | | Assignments |
|------|--|----------------------------|
| 5/11 | Class Introduction | Syllabus Review |
| 5/12 | Conceptual Review and Discussion | Terminology/Vocabulary |
| 5/13 | Ch. 1 – 3 <i>Digital Media and Society</i> | Chapter Summaries 1, 2, 3 |
| 5/14 | Ch. 4 – 6 <i>Digital Media and Society</i> | Chapter Summaries 4,5,6 |
| 5/15 | Ch. 8 – 10 <i>Digital Media and Society</i> | Chapter Summaries 8,9,10 |
| 5/18 | Ch. 13 – 15 <i>Digital Media and Society</i> | Chapter Summaries 13,14,15 |
| 5/19 | Ch. 1 – 3 <i>Hate Crimes in Cyberspace</i> | Chapter Summaries 1,2,3 |
| 5/20 | Ch. 4 – 6 <i>Hate Crimes in Cyberspace</i> | Chapter Summaries 4,5,6 |
| 5/21 | Ch. 7 – 9 <i>Hate Crimes in Cyberspace</i> | Chapter Summaries 7,8,9 |
| 5/22 | Independent Research Day – No Class! | Final Paper Outline/Draft |
| 5/25 | <i>Memorial Day – No Class!</i> | |
| 5/26 | Ch. 1 – 3 <i>Everyday Surveillance</i> | Chapter Summaries 1,2,3 |
| 5/27 | Ch. 4 – 6 <i>Everyday Surveillance</i> | Chapter Summaries 4,5,6 |
| 5/28 | Final Class Meeting | Student Evaluations |
| 5/29 | Final Paper Due! | |

Grading Procedures: I will try to remain as faithful as possible to this syllabus. However, I reserve the right to amend any and all readings, assignments, presentations, exams, etc. which are subject to change without notice. However I will endeavor to announce these changes as far in advance as possible and to grade assignments as efficiently as practicable. Incompletes will only be awarded upon convincing proof of a serious emergency, subject to my discretion.