

# NEW MEDIA THEORY: COM 6270

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY • WINTER 2018

Instructor: **KAREN McDEVITT, Ph.D.**

573 Manoogian (northwest corner on the fifth floor) • 248.672.7993

Office hours: Tuesdays 12 - 2pm, by appointment, and online 24/7

[NewMediaTheory@gmail.com](mailto:NewMediaTheory@gmail.com) (always expect a response within 24 hours)



## COURSE DESCRIPTION

COM 6270 is designed to introduce the emerging aspects of new media by way of a critical / cultural studies perspective. Our goal will be to develop a sophisticated view of communication technologies as they currently *relate to* social, cultural, political, and economic practices, both nationally and globally. An emphasis will be placed on discourse analysis as well as interpersonal and group social processes, including identity-construction, behavioral norms, and social cues.

We will look closely at various forms of new media technologies – including the myriad ways they affect individuals, communities, and institutions – and we will examine some of the possible and potential future implications of these and related theoretical considerations. A graduate-level of scholarship is expected of all students.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of new media **terms and concepts** as they relate to traditional communication studies but are now interrelated in an emergent, interdisciplinary field of study. Applying the core theories of media effects and media influence scholars, students will evaluate and provide meaningful analyses of (1) the **convergence** of prior modes of communication and (2) the ways in which new media currently impact **systems of meaning-making**. Students will develop an individual new media perspective that incorporates and showcases an understanding of established theorists in connection with their own, newly comprised points-of-view.

**REQUIRED TEXTS** are comprised of online journals, essays, videos, websites, and podcasts (see “Weekly Readings” for complete details). While there is no need to purchase a textbook for this class, you will be required to regularly and very frequently access Blackboard as well as a wide variety of online sites. It is your responsibility to ensure that such access is consistently attainable.

We will meet on-campus **ONLY** twice this semester (in Room 581 Manoogian), 5:00 - 6:30pm:

**Thursday, January 18th and Wednesday, March 21st** (*this is a tentative date*)



## COURSE POLICIES

**Persons with disabilities** who need any special accommodations must let the instructor know before the end of the second week of class. In order to qualify for special accommodations, contact Educational Accessibility Services at (313) 577-1851, or [eas@teadmin.sa.wayne.edu](mailto:eas@teadmin.sa.wayne.edu)

**Religious observances:** It is WSU’s policy to respect the faith and religious obligations of students, faculty and staff. Students with exams or classes that conflict with their religious observances should notify the instructor well in advance so that a mutually agreeable alternative can be worked out.

**Adding/withdrawing:** You may add or withdraw from the course at any time allowed by the University. Students must submit their withdrawal request online through Academics. Students who stop participating in class but do not withdraw are required to receive the grade of F. The instructor must approve the withdrawal request before it becomes final, and students should continue to participate in class until they receive notification via email that the withdrawal has been approved.

**Grades and grade distribution:** It is expected that you will complete each of the following assignments to receive a passing grade. The grade of “I” (Incomplete) is very rarely granted.

Personal NMT Profile	= 15 points (2%)	<b>Grades:</b> 93 -100 = A 90-92 = A- 87-89 = B+ 83-86 = B 80-82 = B- 77-79 = C+	73-76 = C
Teamwork Endeavor	= 75 points (10%)		70-72 = C-
Midterm Evaluation	= 135 points (18%)		67-69 = D+
NM Theoretical Presentation	= 210 points (28%)		63-66 = D
Discussion Board Posts (9)	= 315 points (42%)		60-62 = D-
<b>Total Pts. = 750</b> (divide by 7.5 for your final grade)			

\* **Weekly Discussion Board posts** are **required submissions** and they must be posted no later than **Fridays at 11:59pm** to qualify for up to 35 points. You are required to post **at least twice each week** (on different days, and not only at the end of the week), submitting **approximately 750 words**, total. At the beginning of each week, I will make available my lecture-post, which will include comments about our assigned texts, while also proposing some questions for you to consider. It is expected that you will respond to my remarks, AND to one (or more) of your colleagues’ posts.



Your submissions should reflect an understanding of our “readings” in relation to my remarks and the other comments. Be very careful not to regurgitate what the authors of our readings have said, and do not simply reiterate what I, or your colleagues have already posted. (Post early in the week for best results!) Submissions are required for **any 9 weeks of Discussion**; however, you’re welcome to post during more (or all 12) weeks, receiving credit for your 9-highest scores.

Credit for weekly posts will be based on your **preparation** (*evidence of your completion of the required texts*), and the **quality of your observations** (reflecting your ability to **synthesize** the texts and each other’s posts). **Please note:** although debate and discussion are highly encouraged in this class, the Discussion Board is primarily an opportunity to share with me your comprehension of the assigned texts and topics. While I may look forward to learning how your personal experiences with new media, I am only able to grant points for your expressed understanding of the assigned MATERIALS. In other words, anecdotal references should be kept to a minimum while your primary focus should be on *scholarship*.

*Points earned for weekly commentaries will be based on the following criteria:*

- A /35 = Superior** - Well-presented in a timely manner; well-argued with a clear thesis, sustained focus, and **several, specific references to assigned readings**. Contains original ideas and/or insights.
- B / 29 = Good** - A strong presentation but might not be submitted in a timely manner or may not adequately develop one or more of the above areas.
- C / 25 = Average** - Shows an understanding of the issues and readings, but is an undistinguished presentation, may be weak in key areas, or might not touch upon significant points.
- D /20 = Poor and just passing** - A cursory presentation lacking in examples and support from assigned texts, reflecting inadequate reading and/or reflection.



**Note:** If you need Blackboard assistance, Computing & Information Technology (C&IT) offers some great online tutorials at <http://www.computing.wayne.edu/blackboard/students.php>. In addition, **technical support** is available 7:30am to 7pm weekdays, and on Saturday and Sunday 9am to 4pm at [helpdesk@wayne.edu](mailto:helpdesk@wayne.edu) or (313) 577-4778.

Dynamic interactions are essential and indispensable for this online course; however, this is a **collective process** that requires tolerance and respect. Courtesy and civility online are anticipated and expected. Detailed explanations of all other assignments will be posted to Blackboard. Late assignments will not be accepted. *Always keep a copy of your submitted work.*

**PLEASE, PLEASE NOTE:** I have a **zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism**. Cheating will result in a failing grade for **this course**. For further details regarding academic dishonesty, see: <http://doso.wayne.edu/assets/student-code-of-conduct-brochure.pdf>. **One more reminder:** our “weeks” begin at 9am on Mondays and end at 11:59pm on Fridays; other assignments are due no later than 11:59pm on the days for which they are assigned.

# COM 6270 🖱️ WINTER 2018

WEEK 1      Monday, January 8 – Friday, January 12, 2018 / **Welcome**  
*Say “hello” on our Trial Discussion Board, and submit your Personal NMT Profile*

## PART ONE: ONTOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

WEEK 2      Monday, January 8 – Friday, January 19 / **U + I**  
**On-Campus Orientation / Thursday, January 18, 5:00-6:30pm**

WEEK 3      Monday, January 22 – Friday, January 26 / **We + They**

WEEK 4      Monday, January 29 – Friday, February 2 / **Real + Virtual**

WEEK 5      Monday, February 5 – Friday, February 9 / **Here + Not**

## PART TWO: EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONCERNS

WEEK 6      Monday, February 12 – Friday, February 16 / **SOCIALIZATION**  
**Teamwork Endeavor due before 11:59pm Monday, February 12**

WEEK 7      Monday, February 19 – Friday, February 23 / **GAMIFICATION**

WEEK 8      Monday, February 26 – Friday, March 2 / **EDUCATION**

WEEK 9      Monday, March 5 – Friday, March 9 / **AUTHORIZATION**  
**Midterm Evaluation due before 11:59pm Monday, March 5**

WEEK 10     Monday, March 12 – Friday, March 16  
*No Classes – Spring Break*

## PART THREE: IDEOLOGICAL STANDPOINTS

WEEK 11     Monday, March 19 – Friday, March 23 / **Digital Discourses**  
**On-Campus Meeting, tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, March 21**

WEEK 12     Monday, March 26 – Friday, March 30 / **Digital Aesthetics**

WEEK 13     Monday, April 2 – Friday, April 6 / **Digital Economies**

WEEK 14     Monday, April 9 – Friday, April 13 / **Global Digitization**

WEEK 15     Monday, April 16 – Monday, April 23  
**NM Theoretical Presentation due before 11:59pm Monday, April 23**