Tuesday/Thursday 200-315p – CoVid Fall 2020

INSTRUCTOR: ANDRÉ BROCK

Office Hours: Wednesdays (Zoom/Slack) 1-3pm by appt.

Course Level: Undergraduate

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*This syllabus subject to change at the discretion of the instructor[ii]**

BEFORE WE BEGIN

This is an unusual and stressful time for all of us, both in our personal lives and in our work and school lives. We are all improvising as we adjust to our "new normal", knowing life won't be the same for quite some time. We'll all likely make mistakes or have difficulties, and that's okay. We'll figure it out. Our primary goal is our own safety and health.

While the educational work of this course is important, it comes second to making sure we're safe and healthy, both mentally and physically. Know that flexibility (with deadlines and other issues) is available. Accommodations with assignments are available. If you need more flexibility or an accommodation I haven't thought of, please let me know. If you find yourself overwhelmed or otherwise in a place of difficulty, please contact me to discuss flexibility and/or accommodations. You will get what you need.

COURSE OVERVIEW

In this course we will learn how to read and interpret media artifacts through a variety of theoretical lenses. Our analysis will be anchored in both the form and content of a text and will take a critical approach to understanding embedded meanings, motivations, and representations in media. Course readings will offer important concepts and vocabulary for analyzing media, but will be useful for understanding works of art and other cultural artifacts. (Prerequisites: ENGL 1102)

Although the readings and our discussions will focus mainly on the Internet, it is important to remember that information technology is much more than simply the assemblage of hardware, software, practices, and people that make up our experience of the Internet. As such, we'll examine our extraordinary circumstances - the CoVid pandemic - to illustrate the collisions between science, technology, information, and race.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students will have developed the following skills

- A broad understanding of the historical development and cultural impact of various media.

- A set of theoretical tools for analyzing media texts critically.

- A diverse vocabulary of formal and cultural elements of screen-based media texts and other cultural artifacts.

- The ability to communicate analysis clearly and concretely through both written and oral communication.

- How to find and use scholarly research through GT library resources.

- Respectful, thoughtful, and professional group discussion and collaboration.

- Increase their awareness of the multiple ways that technologies impact, extend, and hinder information uses and behaviors based on race and culture.

TEACHING STYLE AND EXPECTATIONS

This is a seminar-style course, where discussion is the primary mode of instruction and learning That requires a different kind of learning style necessitating that YOU have done the readings and approach discussions with a sense of curiosity and inquiry. It also means that you are required to complete all written assignments to the best of your capacity. Participation in class discussion allows you to explore the class readings and concepts with your peers and, in the process, discover meanings and issues that you would not discover on your own. In-class participation challenges you to continuously question, refine, and articulate your own ideas and interpretations. Please note I do not expect each of you to have fully formed and nuanced understandings of each assigned reading, but I do expect you to engage with each reading to the best of your abilities (e.g. asking questions, applying concepts to your own experiences, thinking of relevant examples, etc.).

I do not take attendance. If necessary, the course can be completed without attending any of the course meetings in Slack - but I believe that your writing won't be as strong. If you know you will have personal conflicts or scheduling issues that will interfere with any deadlines, please email me ahead of time so we can discuss alternate arrangements.

ACCESSIBILITY AND SPECIAL NEEDS

I will make every effort to accommodate any needs around health and accessibility, particularly around learning support, or mental or emotional health issues. However, in order to support you, you must register with ADAPTS. Once you have done so, please email me so we can figure out the best means to support you: http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/Course Materials

REQUIRED TEXTS

• Durham and Kellner [DK] *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works*

• Balbi and Magaudda [BM] *A History of Digital Media*

• Turner *Ordinary People and the Media: The Demotic Turn*

• Braidotti and Hlavajova [BH] *Posthuman Glossary*

All readings can be found on the course Canvas site in either PDF or ePub form (but not both). Feel free to buy physical copies to support the authors. The readings below are not exhaustive; other supplemental readings will be suggested by myself or your classmates.

Students are expected to have read the assigned readings prior to the day they are being discussed. Writing assignments (see page 3) should be completed **before** class on the day assigned so the student is prepared to participate in class discussion. If you are a student with a disability and would like to discuss special academic accommodations, please contact the instructors during their office hours or via email at the beginning of the semester.

DISCUSSION AND PARTICIPATION TOOLS

I don't like Canvas' Discussion tool - it's clunky. Therefore, we'll use **Piazza** to post reading discussions, original posts, or questions for me. The system is highly catered to getting you help fast and efficiently from classmates and myself. Rather than emailing me questions I encourage you to post your questions on Piazza. If you have any problems or feedback for the developers, email team@piazza.com.

Find our class Piazza page on the Canvas course site

ANNOTATION

Perusall

I am a firm believer in annotating readings; that is, making notes in the margins while I read through a text. In previous semesters, I've had great success showing students how to use **Perusall** to annotate each assigned reading as a class. Persuall is an annotation layer for any online content; this tool is intended to allow y'all to collaborate on your reading, synthesis, and understanding of the reading selections across the semester. I'll send out the invitation link and explain how we'll use this tool during class.

In addition to highlighting snippets of text that you find interesting (or confusing), Perusall also allows the use of images and other multimedia content within your annotations. I am inclined to offer extra credit for those whose annotations include compelling, relevant multimedia content illustrating difficult or interesting concepts in the reading.

Your annotations will count as 25% of your participation grade. To get full participation credit, you must annotate every reading with at least ONE note.

MY EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

ASK QUESTIONS.

Be thoughtful and civil to classmates and the instructor.

Attend class: attendance is not optional.

Keep up on all readings.

Turn in all assignments.

Participate in discussions.

Check Canvas/Slack/Piazza regularly.

Check email and Canvas regularly for assignments and updates.

Drink coffee or eat if you're hungry.

Please note that **I am a mandated reporter** and am legally obligated to report any sexual violence reported to me. Georgia Tech offers confidential support for sexual or relationship violence through

VOICE, which also contains links to local and non-GT resources: https://healthinitiatives.gatech.edu/resources

HONOR CODE AND PLAGIARISM POLICY

The Georgia Tech Honor Code is very explicit about plagiarism as "the deliberate use of any outside source without proper acknowledgment," "appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts of passages of his or her writings, or language or ideas of the same, and passing them off as the product of one's own mind." If caught plagiarizing, you will be dealt with according to the GT Academic Honor Code. The full GT Honor Code is available online: http://osi.gatech.edu/content/honor-code.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND ATTRIBUTION

Thanks to Myriam Asad, Jay Bolter, and Miriam Sweeney for their advice and support in building this syllabus

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course grade will be based on the following elements:

	Percentage
Reading Discussion Leader	20%
Portfolio - Reading Reflections and responses	40%
Annotations/Class Participation	40%

READING SCHEDULE

WK	DATE	READING
1	T 8/18	(BlueJeans) Introduction: Interpersonal
1	Th 8/20	(BlueJeans) Introduction: Technology Canvas, Perusall, Piazza, Slack, BlueJeans
2	T 8/25	Logistics: Assignments and Such Logistics: Writing and Reading
	Th 8/27	Reading Discussion selection day
3	T 9/1	NO Class
	Th 9/3	Pacey (1984) Chapter 1, Culture of Technology

4	T 9/8	
	Th 9/10	McLuhan: Medium is the Message [DK]
5	T 9/15	
	Th 9/17	BM "Why Study the History of Digital Media and How?"
6	T 9/22	
	Th 9/24	Braidotti "Ethics of Joy" (BH p. 221)
7	T 9/29	
	Th 10/1	Turner Ch. 1 "Ordinary People"
8	T 10/6	Bianco "Algorithm" (BH p. 23)
	Th 10/8	Benjamin "works of Art and…" [DK] BM "Digitization of Analog Media"
9	T 10/13	Bianco "Algorithm" (BH p. 23)
	Th 10/15	Hall "Encoding/Decoding" [DK]
10	T 10/20	

	Th 10/22	Amaro "Afrofuturism" (BH p. 17) hooks, "Eating the Other" [DK]
11	T 10/27	
	Th 10/29	Bakhtin "Carnival and Carnivalesque" [DK] Turner "Reality TV and the Construction of Cultural Identities"
12	T 11/3	
	Th 11/5	BM "The Internet" Parisi "Artificial Intelligence" (BH p. 21)
13	T 11/10	
	Th 11/12	Horkheimer and Adorno "Culture Industry" [DK]
14	T 11/17	
	Th 11/19	Leurs, Shepherd, and Harvey "Youth" (BH p. 463)

ASSIGNMENTS

DISCUSSION LEADER

To demonstrate mastery and comprehension of course material, you and your group members must lead a discussion of a randomly assigned reading.

NUMBER OF ASSIGNMENTS PER GROUP: ONE (I THINK)

There are multiple aspects of this assignment:

1. Your group must post your reading response and discussion questions to **Piazza** by the class date *before* the assigned date of the reading (see more details below).

2. Your group must provide an **analysis** of the arguments made in your assigned reading.

3. You must also provide at least **ONE discussion question** (see below) with your analysis

    a. Post your analysis and discussion questions to Piazza. Your post should be titled using the format "Author - Class Date Assigned" (e.g., "Brock - May 19")

    b. You must also ANSWER your question using your experiences, knowledge of, or reactions to the subject matter of the reading.

4. In Slack/Teams **on the day the reading is assigned**, **your group will lead the discussion** by offering a (brief) media example (TikTok, GIF, meme, social media post) that highlights an element or argument found in the reading.

Your discussion question can/should be based on current (or recently completed) readings.

Suggestions for Discussion questions:

- What social or cultural theories about science and technology were presented in these readings?

- What ideas did you find the most challenging or provocative? Why?

- Can you map any of the ideas from the readings into your own life, work, or research experiences?

- How comfortable or difficult did you find reading and discussing these topics? Why do you think this is?

> **Thursday reading responses must be posted by Tuesday at 11pm. Comments to these posts should ideally be made by Wednesday at 12 midnight.**

Your discussion leader post will comprise 30% of your grade. The above criteria are the rubric on which you'll be evaluated.

This assignment is designed to elicit your reading comprehension, argumentation, knowledge acquisition, and application of course material to sociohistorical context.

DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION

DUE: MULTIPLE DATES

If you're not the discussion leader, you should follow, post, and contribute to the Canvas/Piazza discussion for the reading for every class. To pass the course, you should post a MINIMUM of five (5) comments on your classmates' posts during the semester.

Participation online can include:

- Posting questions or responding to other students' forum postings
- Providing examples and counter-examples
- Performing scholarly, constructive criticism of the assigned reading
- Proposing additional literature, websites or resources
- Sharing current news items and media reports that are relevant to class topics

The best comments will respond actively to the topic of discussion, or extend discussions from section or even lecture. Thread-jacking or trolling will not be tolerated and will result in a grade reduction.

These comments will comprise 60% of your grade for the entire course; they demonstrate informal thinking, informal writing, participation, engagement, and mastery.

DISCUSSION PORTFOLIO

DUE: DECEMBER 3

>   Goal: This assignment gives the student an opportunity to reflect on challenging class readings and topics.

Your Discussion Leader post(s), any Original Posts, plus your THREE best responses to another classmate's discussion post or threaded comment, will comprise a major portion of your final grade.

Submitted posts, comments, and reading responses will be assessed based on clarity of argument, skill in framing the issue, and the weight of supporting evidence drawn from course materials and lectures. Attempting to complete this assignment in its entirety in the first few (or the last few) weeks of the semester will be considered SPAM and will result in a reduction of your grade.

NB: Canvas tracks your participation across the semester. Your participation counts will affect your grade. This means that you should not wait until the end of the semester to write comments.

GENERAL POLICIES

GRADE POLICIES

A good grade requires thoughtful, informed participation in class and online, well executed arguments in writing, and an outstanding portfolio. Readings will be DISCUSSED on the day marked on the syllabus. Assignments are due as scheduled.

EMAIL POLICY

E-mail is not a substitute for meeting with me during office hours. E-mail should be used to schedule an appointment outside of office hours or for short questions clarifying class assignments or specific items from the lecture. In-depth questions about course readings or an entire day's lecture, etc. are not appropriate for e-mail.

ABSENCE POLICIES

I expect you to attend class regularly. If you MUST miss class, please let me know in advance; if you had to miss class unexpectedly, please let me know by email.

It is the policy of the Institute to make every reasonable effort to allow members of the Institute community to observe their religious holidays without academic penalty. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss classes as a consequence of their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to make-up missed academic work. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates on which they will be absent. When the absence coincides with an exam or other assignment due date, the options to make up that missed work may be limited and will be determined by the instructor within the boundaries of the respective class.

For GT athletes and others traveling to represent the Institute, your team staff will give you paperwork to provide to your instructors. Notify me within the first two weeks of class.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

For any student needing an accommodation for any sort of disability: please visit the Office of Disability Services to obtain an accommodation letter. Once you have that, make an appointment to see me during my office hours; you must bring your accommodation letter. The Office of Disability Services for Students offers a variety of resources for students with disabilities. Learn more about the ADAPTS program here: http://adapts.gatech.edu.

HONOR CODE

The penalties for plagiarism (submitting other people's words or ideas as your own) are severe. I will report all cases of academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Integrity. Please adhere to the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code. You may review that code at www.honor.gatech.edu.

STUDENT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, which includes sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students' academic success and we encourage anyone dealing with sexual misconduct to talk to someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need. Confidential support and academic advocacy can be reported to the Institute's VOICE advocates, located in the Office of Health Initiatives (http://healthinitiatives.gatech.edu/contact-voice) General information is collected for campus safety statistics without revealing information that would identify the victim.

If information is provided that would identify the Respondent, the Institute will endeavor to use that information to conduct appropriate follow-up.

Alleged violations can be **non-confidentially** reported to the Title IX Coordinator/Deputy Coordinator (http://titleix.gatech.edu/) or to ANY other Responsible Employee of the Institute, as defined in this Policy. Upon the report of an alleged violation, the Responsible Employee will inform the victim of:

- the Responsible Employee's obligation to report the alleged violation to the Title IX Coordinator; and

- the victim's option to discuss available resources, including counseling, support and investigation, with the Title IX Coordinator or a confidential VOICE Advocate; and

- the victim's right to file a complaint with the Institute and to report a crime to Georgia Tech and/or local police.

A victim may file a report with Georgia Tech Police Department or local police for a criminal investigation, which may be sought in addition to a Georgia Tech investigation. The Office of the Dean of

Students (including the Women's Resource Center) can provide to a student victim a VOICE Advocate in the Office of Health Initiatives who can assist students with reporting to Georgia Tech Police Department or local police. Advocates are confidential and available 24 hours per day.

[i] This syllabus would not be possible without the brilliance of Dr. Miriam Sweeney (Univ. of Alabama) or Dr. Eve Ewing (University of Chicago)

ii With as much advance notice as possible. There may be typos. I reserve the right to make any changes to accommodate class progress.