INSTRUCTOR: ANDRÉ BROCK

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-3pm by appt.

Course Level: Undergraduate/Graduate:

Room: 314 Skiles

Office: 326 Skiles

Email:andre.brock@lmc.gatech.edu

This syllabus subject to change at the discretion of the instructor[2]*

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

- Develop an understanding of key theoretical texts for critical race theory, digital theory, and STS

- Explore issues surrounding race and technoculture in online venues, social media, and digital practice.

- Increase their awareness of the multiple ways that the digital impacts, extends, and hinders information use and design.

- Engage with research from a range of disciplines, and will see how different fields address these themes in order to develop an interdisciplinary approach. 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

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 resonses	50%
Annotations/Class Participation	30%

GRADE POLICIES

A good grade requires thoughtful, informed participation in class and in online discussions, 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.

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	Murthy Ch.1 "What is Twitter" Brock Ch.3 "Black Twitter as Black Technoculture"
4	T 9/8	

	Th 9/10	Instagram Ch.1 - Platform
5	T 9/15	
	Th 9/17	Instagram Ch.2 - Aesthetics
6	T 9/22	
	Th 9/24	Instagram Ch.3 - Ecologies
7	T 9/29	
	Th 10/1	Instagram Ch.4 - Economies
8	T 10/6	
	Th 10/8	Instagram Ch.5 - Cultures
9	T 10/13	
	Th 10/15	Instagram Ch.6 - Lifespans Instagram Ch.7 - From the Instagram of Everything
10	T 10/20	
	Th 10/22	YouTube Ch.1 - How YouTube Matters
11	T 10/27	

	Th 10/29	YouTube Ch.2 - …and the Media
12	T 11/3	
		.
	Th 11/5	YouTube Ch. 3 - …Popular Culture
13	T 11/10	
	Th 11/12	YouTube Ch.4 - …Community
14	T 11/17	
	Th 11/19	YouTube Ch.5 - …Cultural Politics YouTube Ch.6 - …Competing Futures

ASSIGNMENTS

PIAZZA/READING DISCUSSIONS

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Annotations

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DISCUSSION LEADER

You are required to lead a discussion on a reading of your choice. There are multiple aspects to this assignment:

1. **You must provide an analysis of the arguments made in your assigned reading.**

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

    a. Post your analysis and discussion questions to the Canvas/Piazza "Reading Summaries and Discussion" for the appropriate reading.

3. **In class, lead the discussion by—if possible--offering a (brief) media example that highlights an element or argument found in the reading**

Your discussion question can/should be based on current (or recently completed) readings. You must also ANSWER your question using your experiences, knowledge of, or reactions to the subject matter of the reading.

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.**

DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION

If you're not the discussion leader, you must follow, post, and contribute to the Canvas/ Piazza "Reading Summaries and Discussion" for 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. Your discussion posts and comments will count as 75% of your participation grade.

DISCUSSION PORTFOLIO

DUE: NOVEMBER 26

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 osts, 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 and Perusall tracks your participation across the semester. Your participation counts will affect your grade. DO NOT wait until the end of the semester to write comment.

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

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