CULT 230
INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA STUDIES:
NEW MEDIA, CULTURE, and SOCIETY

Summer 2014
Sabanci University
Ergin Bulut

Time: Wednesday/Thursday: 2-40 pm-5.30 pm
Location: GO56

1 Course Description

This course examines emerging technologies, uses, and cultural practices through the lens of “new media”. As the recent uprisings both in Turkey and at the global scale demonstrated, the significance of new media technologies in organizing and experiencing modern life is of utmost importance. However, as media historians have usefully reminded us, there was always a time that old technologies were “new”. That is, there are always ways in which new media rely on former technologies and cultural practices. In this sense, a sociological and historical perspective is crucial in order to think critically about the cultural and social functions of “new media”.

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the literature on “new media”, familiarize them with contemporary media forms, and ultimately ask what to make of these outlets from a sociological perspective. Specifically, we will try to understand what makes new media technologies and practices so unique and appealing for us. How do they differ from older technologies and cultural forms in presenting “reality” and address the audience? Indeed, in age of digital convergence, what happened to the passive audience of the TV years? While the course is grounded within media and communication studies, it is constructed with the understanding that media and communication systems cannot be understood without a broader grasp of the broader societal arrangements, as some of the readings will suggest.

Specifically, we will start with the political economic/historical context within which new media technologies emerged and became inevitable to contemporary society. We will examine the role of new media technologies in the configuration of the global order. In this respect, we will delve into what new media means in terms of identity formation in the new millennium. Some questions that will guide us throughout the term are: How do we think about class, labor, gender, race, and sexuality as far as new media technologies are concerned? How is identity produced? Are consumers also becoming active producers in the age of new media? Or are new media users becoming providers of free information and labor for Google and Facebook? How do we think about privacy and big data? Is new media making the society lazy and dumb? Are new media outlets infinite resources for self-expression and democracy? Or do we need a cautious optimism? Drawing on these questions, we will explore virtual worlds, media fandom communities, video games, social networking, issues of surveillance and privacy, digital music, citizen journalism, hacking, and activism.

Alongside the course readings, the course will be heavily supported with visual materials, online and in documentary/film form.
2 Components of Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation, Final Presentation, and 2 Quizzes</th>
<th>30% (10, 10, 10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Papers</td>
<td>30% (15 each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>40% (10 pts for proposal)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class participation grade: This will be based on active participation in class. Participation means beyond just sitting in class. Specifically, participation means discussing the readings in a meaningful way and asking new questions. This is a fun class and so is participation. As part of their participation grades, students will prepare make a 10-minute presentation to deliver at the end of the term. This will be a very brief presentation with a brief summary of the student’s final project, findings, and further issues to explore. If you miss more than 3 classes, your final grade will decrease a whole letter.

Response Papers: Each student has to write two response papers – of his or her choice – throughout the term. A well-written response paper is one where the reader can understand the basic issues, concepts, and arguments in the readings of the week chosen by the student. It is desirable if the student can further relate the reading to class discussions or a potentially interesting contemporary event or condition. The response paper must be max 1500 words (two doubled spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman, font, 1 inch margin pages). Response papers will be graded according to two main criteria: the degree to which the student displays comprehension of the material and the student’s depth of reflection. Hard copies before class are required.

Quizzes: There will be two quizzes in this course. Don’t be alarmed. They are not pop up quizzes and are only meant to prepare you for the final paper where these keywords will be crucial to deploy. Each lecture will contain certain keywords that help us to conceptualize new media practices. Quizzes will be based on these keywords and concepts that we discuss in the class. Quizzes will take place at the beginning of the class. Please do not be late to class. The dates of the quizzes are all on the syllabus.

The Final Paper invites students to think about and connect the themes particular to new media and society. There are a couple of options that you can pursue here. You are required to write a final paper that is supposed to be 8-10 pages long (two doubled spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman, font, 1 inch margin pages). You need to prepare a 1-page paper proposal about what you would like to do and inform the instructor about your choice by the third week. The instructor is more than happy to discuss the project and suggest areas of research and external readings, which will be vital to producing quality work.

A well-written final paper has to have three main focuses:
(a) Central concepts from class in relation to new media,
(b) Critical engagement with social and cultural aspects of what you choose to focus on
(c) Showing a sound grasping of the cultural studies and political economy perspectives we will develop in class.

Considering these main themes, you have a few options to write about. Here are some examples for inspiration:
a. Study online communities and explore identity. Nationalism, racism, and sexism are some of the options to explore. For example, you may want to write on the representation of gender on a Facebook advocacy group. You can write a discourse analysis with respect to nationalism on Facebook or a twitter hashtag event. You can work on the representation of LGBTQ communities within social media or gaming communities. You might analyze analyze nationalism and racism within YouTube comments of a music video etc.

b. You can study youth engagement with new media. You can interview the frequenters of an internet café or a gaming place and try to understand how their new media consumption impacts their identity. What does video game mean to these players? What are their interactions within virtual worlds? Does nationalism have a role to play in their gaming practices?

c. You can choose to interview media activists and investigate how they deploy new media technologies to organize or subvert mainstream media. Or, you can choose to write on how social media is used to satire national politics and explore the connection between humor and social protest online.

d. You can choose to write a political economy paper with respect to a new media company, their labor conditions, and regimes of intellectual property. Alternatively, you can interview freelance journalists and examine how they have worked during Gezi protests and what their working conditions were like and how they covered the events.

e. You can interview friends about their use of social media and look at issues of online presence, Facebook addiction, or privacy. Make sure to be specific and focus on a single issue that you can research well and cover well in a short final paper.

These are only examples to inspire you. Feel free to come up with your own projects and discuss them with me.

3 Course Schedule

Week 1 “New” Media: History and Central Concepts

2 July: Media and Culture in the Global Context


“Globalization.” In New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society, ed. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 146-151.

“Culture.” In New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society, ed. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 63-70.

Visual Source to Watch Before Class: Watch Paul Levinson and McKenzie Wark on Marshall McLuhan’s work and its relevance for the age of internet these, try to make comparisons with the work of Raymond Williams. Try to think about what “the medium is the message” means in the age of YouTube and Facebook.

Levinson’s talk at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3V_p8YDboE
Wark’s talk at:  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6tVeiojxDA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6tVeiojxDA)

Watch in class:  *No Logo*

3 July June: History and Technological Determinism


Watch in class:  *On the Origins of Cultural Studies*

**Week 2: Identity Online: Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality**

9 July Race, Gender and Ethnicity


“Gay and Lesbian”. In *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, ed. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 138-140.

“Gender”. In *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, ed. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 140-142.

Amy Hasinoff. (2012). Sexting as media production: Rethinking Social Media and Sexuality. In *New Media and Society*. 0(0)1-17.


**Visual Source to Watch Before Class:** Lisa Nakamura’s talk on 5 types of online racism at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DT-G0FlOo7g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DT-G0FlOo7g)

Watch in class: Further off the straight & narrow (online streaming) or The Bro Code

10 July: Class
“Commodity”. In New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society, ed. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 45-47.

Danay boyd. Viewing American class divisions through Facebook and MySpace, June 24, 2007.

Watch in class *The Facebook Obsession*

**Visual Source to Watch Before Class:**
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/digitalnation/view/

**Week 3: Digital Economy**

**PAPER PROPOSAL DUE!**
16 July: Political Economy and Labor on Facebook


**Visual Source to Watch Before Class:** Watch Mark Andrejevic's talk from the 2010 New York conference "Internet as Playground and Factory" http://vimeo.com/7697188


17 July: Digital Labor and Online Discipline


"Discipline". In New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society, ed. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 89-91.


Packer, George. (2014). Where Have All the Workers Gone? Available at http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/comment/2014/02/where-have-all-the-workers-gone.html


**Visual Source to Watch Before Class:** Watch Jonathan Zitrain's remarks on Amazon Mechanical Turk [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyfPZLb3kqc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyfPZLb3kqc)

**Visual Source to Watch Before Class:** Also watch Lilly Irani's great talk on Amazon Mechanical Turk [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAhG-CdstP4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAhG-CdstP4)

Watch in class: Freedom of Expression

**Week 4: Surveillance, Power and the Nation State**

**QUIZ 1**

23 July: Power of Big Data and Google


Watch in class
Google and the World Brain – online streaming
In class: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zr02fMBfuRA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zr02fMBfuRA)

24 July: State in the Digital Times


How the NSA's Domestic Spying Works. Read at Guardian's website [http://www.theguardian.com/world/the-nsa-files](http://www.theguardian.com/world/the-nsa-files) and [https://www.eff.org/nsa-spying/how-it-works](https://www.eff.org/nsa-spying/how-it-works)

Townsend, Anthony (2013). Your city is spying on you: From iPhones to Cameras, you are being watched right now. Available at [http://www.saloon.com/2013/10/13/your_city_is_spying_on_you_from_iphones_to_cameras_you_are_being_watched_right_now/](http://www.saloon.com/2013/10/13/your_city_is_spying_on_you_from_iphones_to_cameras_you_are_being_watched_right_now/)

Watch in class: "Living in a Surveillance State" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHj7jgQpnBM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHj7jgQpnBM)

**Week 5: Digital Games: Work, Play, or Playbour?**

30 July: Introducing Games and Play


Visual Source to Watch Before Class:
Watch Julian Kucklich's talk on Playbor at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5D2Gp82d08

Watch in class: Game Over (online streaming)

31 July: Playing Race/ism in the Global Context


Explore this website prior to class: http://valuesatplay.org/

Watch in class: Returning Fire

Week 6: New Media and the New Political

6 August: Digital Politics


Evgeny Morozov (2010). "How to become an Internet freedom warrior," Foreign Policy May 13, 2010. (Be aware of the irony the author uses in this piece). Available at: http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/05/12/how_to_become_an_internet_freedo m_warrior

In class: #Regeneration

7 August: Unpacking the Arab Spring

http://connectedincairo.com/2012/10/16/documentary-films-on-the-egyptian-revolution/

In class: The Square

**Week 7**

13 August: Gezi Protests

Understanding Generation Y in the Context of Gezi.


14 August: No class. Students work on their papers

**Week 8**

20 August
**Final Paper Presentations and Submissions of Final Papers**: Each student has to make 10 minutes presentation on their final project.

21 August
**Final Paper Presentations and Submissions of Final Papers**: Each student has to make 10 minutes presentation on their final project.