COMMUNICATION 202: COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY
Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism
University of Southern California
[Spring 2016]

LECTURES
Mondays & Wednesdays, 12-1:20pm  |  ASC G26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUCTOR</th>
<th>COURSE ASSISTANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mike Ananny, PhD  
Assistant Professor  
Annenberg School for  
Communication & Journalism  
ananny@usc.edu | Kate Miltner  
miltner@usc.edu  
Office Hour & Location:  
Mondays, 2-3pm  
ANN-310 (lounge area)  
Sarah Myers West  
sarahmye@usc.edu  
Office Hour & Location:  
Mondays, 10-11am  
ANN Café (1st floor) |
| Melina Sherman  
melinash@usc.edu  
Office Hour & Location:  
Wednesdays 10-11am  
ASC, West Lobby  
Emily Sidnam  
sidnam@usc.edu  
Office Hour & Location:  
Wednesdays 1:30-2:30pm  
ASC, PhD offices (basement) |

Discussion Sections:
Monday, 8am-8:50am (ANN 211): Sarah Myers West
Monday, 8am-8:50am (ANN 309): Melina Sherman
Monday, 9am-9:50am (ANN 211): Sarah Myers West
Monday, 9am-9:50am (ANN 309): Kate Miltner
Monday, 10am-10:50am (ANN 309): Kate Miltner
Monday, 11am-11:50am (ANN 309): Emily Sidnam

There are no required books to purchase. All readings are provided through Blackboard.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
What are communication technologies and why do they matter? This is a survey course designed to give undergraduates an overview of core concepts, historical trajectories, and contemporary controversies in the design, use, and critical study of communication technologies. While the course takes a broad view of technology and considers different historical moments, it focuses on contemporary, internet-based system and cultures. Students will learn about different definitions of “communication” and “technology”; examine the values and assumptions of those who make and use communication technologies; and gain insight into how communication technologies are interpreted, resisted, and remade through an ever changing set of social and cultural dynamics. Through critiques of scholarly literature and contemporary cases students will examine communication technologies in relation to notions of: community, participation, crisis, race, gender, sexual orientation, politics, journalism, copyright, free speech, reputation, “anti-social” behavior, big data, algorithms, privacy, surveillance, labor, gaming, and cosmopolitanism. By the end of the course, students should be able to create and refine complex definitions of “communication” and “technology” that they can draw upon as critical makers and users of communication technologies for years to come.
Mike Ananny is an Assistant Professor at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism, Affiliated Faculty with USC’s Science, Technology and Society research cluster, and a Faculty Associate at Harvard’s Berkman Center for Internet & Society. He studies the public significance and sociotechnical dynamics of networked news systems. He has held fellowships and scholarships with Stanford’s Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, the LEGO Corporation, and Interval Research. He was a founding member of Media Lab Europe’s research staff, a postdoc with Microsoft Research’s Social Media Collective, and has worked or consulted for LEGO, Mattel, and Nortel Networks. His PhD is from Stanford University (Communication), SM from the MIT Media Lab (Media Arts & Sciences), and BSc from the University of Toronto (Human Biology & Computer Science). He has published in a variety of venues including Critical Studies in Media Communication, International Journal of Communication, the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, American Behavioral Scientist, Television & New Media, and the proceedings of the ACM’s conferences on Computer-Human Interaction and Computer Supported Collaborative Learning. He is writing a book on a public right to hear in an age of networked journalism (under contract with MIT Press).

Kate Miltner’s current research looks at the impact of structural inequality on participation in online popular culture. She has a BA in English (cum laude) from Barnard College, Columbia University, and received her MSc in Media and Communications (with Merit) from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Kate has had research appointments in the Research department at Twitter and the Social Media Collective at Microsoft Research New England; before her academic career, she worked in social media strategy and advertising for close to a decade. Kate has published scholarly work on a variety of topics relating to internet culture, including internet memes, online antagonism, selfies, and Big Data; her work has appeared in the peer-reviewed journals Mobile Media and Communication, the International Journal of Communication, First Monday, and Social Media & Society. Kate has also published articles in The Atlantic and The Guardian.

Sarah Myers West is a doctoral student and the Wallis Annenberg Graduate Research Fellow at the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, focusing her work on information controls and Internet governance. She received her B.A. with Distinction in Media Studies and Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia and Masters in Public Diplomacy from the University of Southern California where she was a Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellow. Her ongoing research centers on the role of technology companies in governing speech and new formations of networked “public” spaces. In addition, she studies international policymaking and activism around privacy, security, and freedom of expression. She is an affiliate researcher at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society, a Cybersecurity Fellow at the New America Foundation, the managing editor for Global Voices Advocacy’s Netizen Report, and worked as a Google Policy Fellow for the Electronic Frontier Foundation in the summer of 2015.

Melina Sherman is a Ph.D. student in Communication at USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. She received her BA in Communication Studies from Northwestern University, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude and with departmental excellence. As a senior, she wrote an honors thesis—a year-long ethnographic project about the gendered dimensions of electronic dance music culture. Melina’s research explores how scientific and medical innovations engender new forms of governance, identities, and attachments that change the ways in which we understand ourselves as biological creatures. At the moment, she is working on a project about “chemical attachments,” which maps out a genealogy of addiction and examines the role of pharmaceutical drugs in everyday life.

Emily Sidnam received her B.A. in Communication Studies summa cum laude from Biola University, where she was named Outstanding Communication Student of the year. Prior to her graduate studies, Emily worked as a Social Media Manager for a marketing and innovation company, growing clients’ social media followings through strategic, brand-centered marketing campaigns. Emily then went on to earn her M.A. in Media,
Technology and Society from Purdue University, with a double minor in Social Networks & Social Capital and Research Methods. At Purdue, Emily worked on a research project on Twitter and safety behavior for the Department of Homeland Security’s VACCINE group. She also designed an interactive learning module for Purdue’s Polytechnic Initiative, in addition to teaching multiple standalone sections of Fundamentals of Speech Communication. Her master’s thesis explored how usage motivations and social capital may inform knowledge gaps in a social network site setting. Broadly, Emily’s research interests include new media, social networks and media effects. Her research focuses on topics such as usage motivations, information behavior, social capital and the digital divide in new media settings.

### THE BEST WAY TO GET AN ‘A’ IN THIS CLASS

- do all the assigned readings before the class (doing so will help the lecture make sense and I’ll draw on both the required and recommended readings in my lectures);
- turn your phone off during class and don’t wander off to social media while using your laptop (you’ll take the best notes and increase your grade if you stay focused on class in class);
- make friends with fellow students, trade notes, form study groups, and write 3 practice exam questions after each class;
- leave yourself time to edit and revise your responses to the ‘reflection’ assignments (i.e., don’t leave it until the night before to write them);
- study for the exams as if they aren’t “open book”; you won’t have time to learn material or read articles for the first time during the exam – exams will ask you to synthesize and work with concepts, not repeat details;
- stay in touch with your TA, participate often and thoughtfully in discussion sections, and come to my office hours (this will help you stay connected to the course);
- practice applying the concepts we discuss in class immediately as you use and encounter new communication technologies.

This course is designed not only to expose you to a variety of ideas and controversies associated with communication technologies, but also the varied ways that people communicate about and debate communication technologies.

I’m asking you to consider a variety of materials in this class – everything from videos, podcasts, and long-form popular press articles to easily accessible book chapters and more challenging scholarly pieces published in academic journals. Each class has a list of materials you are required to read and make notes on – but you are not responsible for readings labeled ‘Recommended/Background’.

Some readings are more challenging or longer than others. **Give yourself sufficient time to read and flag difficult bits for us to talk about in lecture, discussion sections, or office hours.** A large class like this works best if everyone has done the reading ahead of time and you come to class with questions. I love it when students ask questions and try to make even large classes as conversational and interactive as possible – please always feel free to speak up.
## ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media Change Memo</td>
<td>January 25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Section</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections (3 x 50 points each)</td>
<td>February 24, March 28, April 25</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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- **500-750 word Media Change Memo (50 points):** due January 25

- **Examinations (200 points total):** Mix of true/false, multiple choice, and a choice of short answer questions. The final exam is not cumulative – i.e., it only covers material after the midterm exam. You may use your notes and printed copies of readings during the exams, but not laptops or phones. All questions will come from the assigned readings and in-class discussions. Exams will focus on applying concepts and not repeating details.
  - **Midterm Exam** (100 points): Wednesday, March 2 (In Class)
  - **Final Exam** (100 points): Friday, May 6, 11am-1pm (as determined by university, [http://classes.usc.edu/term-20161finals/](http://classes.usc.edu/term-20161finals/))

- **Discussion Section (100 points):**
  - **Attendance** (30 points)
  - **Participation** (30 points)
  - **Posting one thoughtful question on that week’s readings by 7pm Sunday** (40 points)

- **Reflections (150 points total):** Three (3) times during the semester, you’ll submit short (approximately 800-1000 words) reflections via Blackboard on topics I give you. These are short writing assignments in which you reflect on an aspect of the course’s topic, analyzing at least two required course readings. The due dates of each reflection are indicated below and the topics will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard. A note on reflection grades: Each reflection will be graded out of 50 points. If you submit all the reflections on time (no lateness), at the end of the course I’ll add 5 points to your earned grade total in this section meaning (a) don’t worry if you don’t get a great score on one of the reflections and (b) if you get perfect scores on all reflections there’s actually a chance for you to get 155/150 on this section and increase your overall course grade out of 500. (If you don’t submit any one of the reflections on time, you won’t get the extra 10 points.)
  - **Reflection 1** (50 points): due February 24
  - **Reflection 2** (50 points): due March 28
  - **Reflection 3** (50 points): due April 25
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 500 points

Final grades will be assigned to the following total point ranges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>500-467</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>466-450</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>449-433</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>432-416</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>399-384</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>383-367</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>349-333</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>332-316</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>299-284</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
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**Late Policies:**
Unless there is a valid, documented medical/family reason and the student has communicated with the instructor or TA before an assignment’s due date, late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. If an assignment is submitted late, we will subtract one partial letter grade for every 24 hours the assignment is late. E.g., an assignment handed in 24 hours late can only earn a maximum possible grade of A-minus; 48 hours late, B-plus, etc. No assignment will be accepted more than 72 hours past the due date, unless discussed with the TA or instructor before the original due date.

Arrangements to make up exams will only be made with a valid, documented medical/family reason that is communicated to the instructor or TA before the start time of the exam. No arrangements will be made for make-up exams after the exam has started. The final exam cannot be rescheduled or taken at a different time, per university policy.

**On Class Communication:**

1. With a class of this size, your TA is your best first point of contact for any logistical or administrative issues. Please email him/her first, and then me if you still have questions. I’ll generally answer your email within about 24 hours, but I usually don’t answer email on weekends or after 7pm on weekdays. If it’s an urgent matter (e.g., an emergency that will prevent you from completing an assignment or taking an exam), please mark the subject line ‘urgent’ and email me and your TA simultaneously. If you have a longer question that would be best addressed in a conversation, please visit one of our office hours or make an appointment to talk. I’m always happy to meet with students and more involved questions are often best addressed face to face.

2. Please make friends with your fellow students – they’re often your best first point of contact if you missed a class. I can’t summarize classes either in person or via email so please be sure to have a few friends you can borrow notes from if you happen to miss a class. It’s also a good idea to form small study groups to review notes and prepare for exams together.

**ACADEMIC ACCOMODATION: DISABILITY SERVICES & PROGRAMS**

Any students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me when classes begin. DSP is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.—5 p.m. The office is in the Student Union room 301 and their phone number is (213) 740-0776.
ACADEMIC CONDUCT & SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Academic Conduct
Plagiarism—presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words—is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems
Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity http://equity.usc.edu or to the Department of Public Safety, http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage http://sarc.usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.
# COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule and readings described below may change as the semester progresses. If it does I’ll be sure to give you plenty of notice, mention changes in class, and send an email summarizing the changes.

## Week #1: Monday, January 11th

**INTRODUCTION**

## Week #1: Wednesday, January 13th

**WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COMMUNICATION & MEDIATION?**

**TRANSMISSION, RITUALS, & PICTURES IN OUR HEADS**


**Recommended/Background:**


## Week #2: Monday, January 18th – MLK Jr DAY: NO CLASS

## Week #2: Wednesday, January 20th

**WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ‘TECHNOLOGY’?**

**AFFORDANCES & CONSTRAINTS, SOCIAL VS. TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM**


**Recommended/Background:**


**Week #3: Monday, January 25th**

(HOW) DO MEDIA HAVE POLITICS?

VALUES & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES


**Recommended/Background:**


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**Week #3: Wednesday, January 27th**

BRIEF HISTORY & TECHNICAL OVERVIEW OF INTERNET & WEB INFRASTRUCTURES


**Recommended/Background:**


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**Week #4: Monday, February 1**

**INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS & NETWORKED DIGITAL MEDIA**


**Recommended/Background:**


Try using *Eliza, the Rogerian Therapist*: http://psych.fullerton.edu/mbirnbaum/psych101/Eliza.htm
FORMS OF ONLINE COLLECTIVITY:
FROM “VIRTUAL” COMMUNITY TO SOCIAL MEDIA, FAN ACTIVISM, & PARTICIPATORY CULTURE


Recommended/Background:
Browse first issue of Social Media+Society: http://sms.sagepub.com/content/1/1?etoc


Recommended/Background:


Week #5: Wednesday, February 10th

STATUS, BRANDING, & ONLINE REPUTATION


Recommended/Background:


Lampe, C. (2012). The role of reputation systems in managing online communities. In H. Masum & M. Tovey (Eds.), The reputation society: How online opinions are reshaping the offline world (pp. 77-88). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.


Week #7: Monday, February 22nd
THE NETWORKED PRESS:
MAKING & CIRCULATING NEWS ONLINE


Pariser, E. (2011). The user is the content. The filter bubble (pp. 47-76). New York, NY.


Recommended/Background:


Week #7: Wednesday, February 24th
CREATING & NAVIGATING MEDIATED SPACE: MAPS, PLACE-MAKING & DISTANCE THROUGH COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES


Recommended/Background:


Week #8: Monday, February 29th
CREATING A PRODUCT IN A START-UP CULTURE
Guest: Jaime Mendez
*Head of Product, Whisper*

+ MID-TERM EXAM REVIEW


Week #8: Wednesday, March 2nd
MID-TERM EXAM (in class)

Week #9: Monday, March 7th
INTERNET MEMES
Guest: Prof. Limor Shifman
*Associate Professor of Communication & Journalism*
*The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*


**Background/Recommended:**


**Recommended/Background:**


Week #10: Monday, March 14th & March 16th – SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

Week #11: Monday, March 21st

GENDER & DIVERSITY IN CULTURES OF COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY
Guest: Prof. Christina Dunbar-Hester
Assistant Professor of Communication, USC


Background/Recommended:


Week #11: Monday, March 23rd

ALGORITHMS & AUTOMATION


Recommended/Background:


Week #12: Monday, March 28th

BIG DATA


Recommended/Background:


“DISCONNECTION”: WHEN & WHY COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES ARE NOT USED


Recommended/Background:


Recommended/Background:


**Recommended/Background:**


**Watch:** All 3 parts of Anita Sarkeesian video series “Damsels in Distress”

- **Part 1:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6p5AZp7r_Q&index=1&list=PLn4ob_S_ttEaA_vc8F3fjzE62esf9yP61](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6p5AZp7r_Q&index=1&list=PLn4ob_S_ttEaA_vc8F3fjzE62esf9yP61)
- **Part 2:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=toa_vH6xGqs&index=2&list=PLn4ob_S_ttEaA_vc8F3fjzE62esf9yP61](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=toa_vH6xGqs&index=2&list=PLn4ob_S_ttEaA_vc8F3fjzE62esf9yP61)
- **Part 3:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjImnqH_KwM&index=3&list=PLn4ob_S_ttEaA_vc8F3fjzE62esf9yP61](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjImnqH_KwM&index=3&list=PLn4ob_S_ttEaA_vc8F3fjzE62esf9yP61)


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**Recommended/Background:**


Week #14: Wednesday, April 13th

**HACKTIVISM & ONLINE RESISTANCE: CASE STUDIES OF NETWORKED PROTEST**

**Guest: Sarah Myers West**  
**Doctoral Student & Wallis Annenberg Graduate Research Fellow, USC Annenberg**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>URL</th>
<th>Date Retrieved</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Recommended/Background:**

- "We are Legion", [http://wearelegionthdocumentary.com/](http://wearelegionthdocumentary.com/)
- "The Internet's own boy: The story of Aaron Swartz" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXr-2hwTk58](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXr-2hwTk58)


**Recommended/Background:**
The “Los Angeles Payment Project”: http://alippman.com/


### Week #15: Wednesday, April 20th

**NETWORKED LABOR, CROWDWORK, & “SHARING” ECONOMIES**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
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**Background/Recommended:**


widespread-report-says.html


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**Week #16: Monday, April 25th**

**SCIENCE FICTION: MAKING & MAKING SENSE OF COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES**

**Guest: Prof. Henry Jenkins**

*Provost Professor of Communication, Journalism, Cinematic Arts and Education, USC*

**Reading / Listening Due**


**Recommended/Background:**


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**Week #16: Wednesday, April 27th**

**COURSE REVIEW, EXAM PREPARATION, OPEN Q&A ON ANY ASPECT OF COURSE.**

**FINAL EXAM**

**Friday, May 6, 11am-1pm**

Set by university: http://classes.usc.edu/term-20161 finals/ (Only covering only material since the midterm exam)