Media Studies

Description

This course provides a comprehensive introduction to the MIT Program and the study of media as *text, technology,* and *industry*.

In the fall semester, you will explore two methods of grasping media by examining one academic field that focuses on media technologies called *medium theory,* and another that focuses on media content called *cultural studies*.

In the winter semester, we use the *political economy* method to look at power relationships between politics, media, and economics. We'll conclude the year by exploring how all three approaches interact in the age of digital networks.

Organization

We ask the question, '*what is a medium?'* and spend the year slowly exploring three popular academic approaches.

Medium theory sees media as *technologies* that alter human senses and capacities by their speed, rate of participation, and local or global scope.

Cultural studies approaches media and technology as *texts* (involving stories, characters, and symbols) that both shape audiences and are interpreted by them.

Political economy examines issues of ownership and control, which in our market economy means understanding media and technologies as commodities.

Objectives

Throughout the year, we will:

Assess the importance of media, technology and culture in contemporary society.

Explore theoretical approaches to media, technology and culture, including *medium theory*, *cultural studies*, and *political economy* of media.

Practice methods of analyzing media arising from these perspectives.

Materials

You will use Office 365 and OWL to take this class. All required texts are available on the OWL website. Keep all readings, slides, notes, and assignments in a *binder* and cloud-based *folder* on your computer for the year!

Requirements

Four quizzes, three essays, a group presentation, 16 tutorial responses, and a final exam:

(1) **Weekly Tutorial Responses (20%)**

(2) **Essay #1 (5%) Due Oct. 09**

(3) **Oct. Quiz (5%) Week of Oct. 19 via OWL**

(4) **Nov. Quiz (5%) Week of Nov. 23 via OWL**

(5) **Essay #2 (10%) Due Dec. 07**

(6) **Feb. Quiz (5%) Week of Feb. 08 via OWL**

(7) **Presentations (10%) Week of March 1 in tutorials**

(8) **March Quiz (5%) Week of Mar. 15 via OWL**

(9) **Final Essay (15%) Due Mar 22 & Apr 12**

(10) **Final Exam (20%) Date/time TBD**

Outcomes

Students who take this course will:

Understand media in their technological, cultural and economic aspects.

Learn different ways of analyzing media content, media products and modes of media reception.

Gain critical insight into the technical and cultural role of information and communication technologies.

Analyze how people and technologies interweave to produce particular technological cultures or 'technocultures'.

Explore different evaluation methods, from group projects to essay writing, multiple-choice quizzes, and creative responses.

assignments & guidelines

Your weekly workflow: (1) download and skim the *readings* before lecture, (2) view the *lecture,* (3) take *notes* during lecture, (4) attend your *tutorial* and respond to the material each week, and (5) *review* and summarize notes.

You have two OWL sites for this class: Get readings, slides, lectures, and all assignments from the OWL **course mothership**. Attend tutorials and submit all work through your OWL **tutorial page.**

You need Office 365 for this class: Teams for meetings, Word for essays, OneNote for taking notes and saving to the cloud (recommended), and Stream to view lectures and recorded tutorial content. Your TAs will have their own guidelines to distribute in tutorial. Look for them on your OWL tutorial page.

Tutorial Participation Worth 20%

8 responses per semester, submitted to your tutorial site.
One page, double-spaced. Posted to OWL by Sundays during the week of the prompt. Your TA will post prompts each week before tutorial, and groups will sometimes also generate prompts during discussions. Either way, you have until Sunday of that week to post a short response. Think of these as talking points that also help generate ideas for essay topics.

Fall Essay #1 Worth 5%

Oct 09 via OWL tutorial site.
A 750-word essay (3 pages, double-spaced) submitted in Word format to OWL. The details for this assignment will be posted on the OWL course mothership well in advance. It asks you to focus on media as technology and apply readings from that unit.

Two Fall Short Quizzes (5% ea)

Quiz #1 in the week of Oct. 19.
Quiz #2 in the week of Nov. 23.
This multiple-choice, timed short quiz will be released to OWL to review the fundamental concepts of each unit. More details as we hear them. We will post quiz examples and hold a review as the date approaches..

Fall Essay #2 Worth 10%

Dec 07 via OWL tutorial site.
A 1250 word essay (5 pages, double-spaced) submitted in Word format to OWL. The details for this assignment will be posted on the OWL course mothership well in advance. It asks you to focus on media as a text and apply readings from that unit.

**You may request two 48-hour academic accommodations per year for work worth less than 30% of your final grade. Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. Visit [here](#) for more information.

Two Winter Quizzes (5% ea)

Quiz #3 in the week of Feb. 08.
Quiz #4 in the week of Mar. 15.
This multiple-choice, timed short quiz will be released to OWL to review the fundamental concepts of each unit. More details as we hear them. We will post quiz examples and hold a review as the date approaches.

Group Project Worth 10%

March 01–05 in tutorials
You will work with several other students in your tutorial to choose a topic, collaboratively research, and present your findings in a medium of your choosing. You'll produce something that is about 5 minutes, so be concise and to the point! One mark for the entire group. This is chance to record something creative and collaborative. More on this as the deadline approaches.

*Late (unaccommodated) work for all written assignments in this class receives a 10% per day deduction.

A Winter Final Essay Worth 15% (2 parts)

(1) Exercises: March 22 via OWL
(2) Essay: April 12 via OWL

This comprehensive 7-page final essay asks you to look at your own digital media usage through surveillance, tracking and privacy exercises. You will then apply the three approaches we've studied this year to explore how technology, texts, and industry converge through your example. The work contains two portions:
(1) The findings of your tracking exercises.
(2)   A 7-page critical essay using some aspect of those findings.

Open-Book Final Exam Worth 20%

TBA take-home, during the April final exam period.

This is an open-book, mixed-format take-home exam that requires you to use your readings and notes (saved in a binder or backed-up folder, right? RIGHT!).

The exam consists of short answer questions and a more extended essay response. The exam date has not been set at this time, and neither has its exact format or method of delivery. Once this information is set by central administration, we will inform you. Be aware that exams take place after lectures end, during the final exam period. Refrain from making travel plans during this period, as it will not be accommodated. We'll post an example exam on OWL as the date nears, and we will hold a review and Q&A session as well.

Questions about the move to blended instruction

Q: What are the PPE requirements for in-person meetings?

A: Students in in-person classes who fail to comply with the health and safety protocols established by the University to contain the spread of Covid-19 will not be permitted entry to on-campus classes. These protocols include wearing an appropriate face covering, maintaining social distancing, and completing the on-campus health survey. Students will be asked to leave if they remove face coverings or fail to maintain social distancing during the class.

Q: How will this course operate?

A: You will access all lectures, assignments and administrative resources for this course on the **OWL Course Mothership site**. You will also participate in a weekly tutorial. **Tutorials have their own OWL sites**, curated by your TA, and this is where you will submit any work for this course, including both weekly participation responses and graded assignments.

Q: Where can I find the weekly lecture?

A: I will post recorded lecture links to OWL on Mondays, and that link will take you to a Microsoft Stream Group that I created for this class. Lectures will contain a rough transcript, chapter markers, and closed captions. You may download the transcript for reference if you wish. I will also provide (very small) slides.

Q: How can I reach John if I have questions?

A: I am available by email at jreed22@uwo.ca. If you wish to speak in person, we can try to make arrangements. If you want to talk virtually, we can use the video function on Teams to chat.

Q: How will Blended tutorials operate?

A: Your tutorial will have an OWL page that is curated by your tutorial leader. It's your group's unique site. **Whether you meet online or in-person**, you'll submit weekly prompt responses to OWL, upload written work, track your grades, and review assignment feedback and notes there.

As for in-person meetings, central administration requests that we **begin entirely online for the first two weeks of tutorials**, and attempt to transition blended tutorials to face-to-face meetings after week four (around the end of September). However, face-to-face can only occur if the group arrives at a consensus, and the TA can meet in-person. **I strongly suggest that TAs and students find meaningful ways to meet in-person—individually and in groups—during office hours** (see the Office Hours section below for more).

Each week, 12 times per semester, your TA will post one or two idea prompts to the OWL site, and maybe send them out as an announcement or message. You will **respond to 8** of these and submit the equivalent of a **1-page, 250-word, double-spaced** response to the tutorial OWL site **by Sunday of that week**. Your TA will **distribute guidelines,** explaining the expectations, grading, and submission process for these submissions. But honestly, you're just **jotting down your thoughts** on an issue related to the material, nothing more. It's a check-in. Your grade will not hinge on perfect grammar or spelling or style or citations. **For each decent submission—don't try to game the system by submitting just a couple of lines—you will receive a 'completed' checkmark.** Complete 8 that semester and receive 10 points toward your final grade. Hand in 16 by year's end (during the week they are due), and you'll have 20 points. If you hand in fewer, your grade drops. No back-posting!

When your tutorial meets synchronously online, you will use **Teams** to join the group discussion (it's similar to Zoom). You do not have to enable the video function for these meetings, and it will not count against your grade. To conserve lag, it's often best to turn your camera off after first joining the group. If you wish to ask a question, you may turn your camera on at that time or post a question in the live group chat on **Teams**.

Your TA may also use other Office 365 apps to undertake live discussions. Some of these might include **Powerpoint** (to present slides), **OneNote** (to share cloud-based notes), **Sway** (a multimedia version of Powerpoint), **Forms** (a way to pose and respond to questions in real-time), and **Whiteboard** (a real-time collaboration board). If the group approves, the TA may **record** the session and save it to Teams for viewing later. You'll have to be added to the Teams tutorial group to access these videos, and they will not play for anyone outside of the tutorial. You can access them only through your UWO username/password.

Q: How will Online 'asynchronous' tutorials operate?

A: Your tutorial will have an OWL page that is curated by your tutorial leader. It's your group's unique site. You'll submit weekly prompt responses to OWL, upload written work, track your grades, and review assignment feedback and notes there. Within a given week, you're accessing material and responding in your own time. But don't forget weekly deadlines!

Each week, 12 times per semester, your TA will post one or two idea prompts to the OWL site, and maybe send them out as an announcement or message. You will **respond to 8** of these and submit the equivalent of a **1-page, 250-word, double-spaced** response to the tutorial OWL site **by Sunday of that week**. Your TA will **distribute guidelines** on OWL that explain the expectations, grading, and submission process for these responses. But honestly, you're just **jotting down your thoughts** on an issue related to the material, nothing more. It's a check-in. You will not be graded on grammar or spelling or style or citations. **For each decent submission—don't try to game the system by submitting just a couple of lines—you will receive a 'completed' checkmark.** Complete 8 that semester and receive 10 points toward your final grade. Hand in 16 by year's end (during the week they are due), and you'll have 20 points. Your grade drops if you hand in fewer. No back-posting!

Several times during the semester, your group may vote to meet synchronously online (at the same time). You will use **Teams** to join the group discussion (it's similar to Zoom). You do not have to enable the video function for these meetings, and it will not count against your grade. To conserve lag, it's often

best to turn your camera off after first joining the group. If you wish to ask a question, you may turn your camera on at that time or post a question in the live group chat on **Teams**.

Your TA may also use other Office 365 apps to undertake live discussions. Some of these might include **Powerpoint** (to present slides), **OneNote** (to share cloud-based notes), **Sway** (a multimedia version of Powerpoint), **Forms** (a way to pose and respond to questions in real-time), and **Whiteboard** (a real-time collaboration board). If the group approves, the TA may **record** the session and save it to Teams for viewing later. You'll have to be added to the Teams tutorial group to access these videos, and they will not play for anyone outside of the tutorial. You can access them only through your UWO username/password.

Q: Can students record Teams meetings?

A: Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant **has the prior written permission of the instructor**.

Q: What is the university policy on Teams tutorial recording?

A: The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings will be used for educational purposes related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals under special circumstances. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings. Remember that **if your tutorial agrees to the recording of meetings, it will be placed on Stream for viewing with a UWO username/password by members of that tutorial only**. Please also remember that **you may decline to engage your camera** during meetings.

Q: How can I reach my TA if I have questions?

A: Email them! Get your TA's email address below, and drop them a line. They might also be available on your tutorial's own Teams group (groups are limited to members of that particular tutorial only). Remember, your TA is also a scholar, with deadlines just like you. Give them a day or two to respond, and try again if you don't hear from them. And please use some common courtesy

when reaching out! I've told TAs to ignore messages that are not respectful. We are not customer service or tech support!

Q: What about tutorial office hours?

A: Your TA will make themselves available to meet each week in-person or via Teams video/audio for about an hour. Reach out to them and make arrangements before dropping in, just in case there's demand :) Since all tutorial meetings are beginning online, **office hours might become a place where TAs use a variety of meeting formats—from virtual group sessions with real-time chats to in-person meetings outside—with breakout groups that workshop common problems, leaving room for your TA to answer individual questions.** Let's not forget video chats and in-person meetings by appointment.

Q: What technological challenges might I encounter?

A: Some of the headaches you might encounter are: video lag, audio lag, slow Internet in rural areas, WIFI interruptions due to competing electronic devices (like microwaves), buildings where there are too many WIFI hotspots (like apartment buildings), closed public WIFI areas if there is an outbreak, ISP bandwidth overages, device failure, device expense, geographic issues (if you're half-way around the world it will be unreasonable to attend the in-person discussion at certain times), and geo-blocking due to content censorship.

We are attempting to run a course that considers these challenges! Tutorials are, for the most part, self-guided in terms of graded work; if you cannot attend synchronous tutorials, you will not be punished. You'll be missed, however! Lectures are also self-guided in terms of when to watch. Just make sure to watch! Of course, if you don't review the videos and don't connect with your TA, you will surely see lower grades. **I would recommend that you find a partner for this class**, to minimize the pain in going it alone! If you don't have a class partner, **your TA will be happy to pair you** with someone.

If you experience geographic, technological, or economic challenges, please reach out to your TA or to me before it becomes a problem. We are here to help you!

Q: What social challenges might I encounter?

A: Alienation, awkwardness, overstimulation, discomfort with sharing your image, discomfort with nobody sharing their image! I will sound like a dad for saying this, but stop working after about an hour and get some exercise; get regular amounts of sleep; and create a calendar for ALL activities in your day, including socializing, eating, and showering! Remember to eat healthy food!

We are attempting to run a course that considers these challenges! **I again recommend that you find a partner for this class, to minimize the pain of going it alone!** If you don't have a class partner, **we are happy to pair you with someone.** If you are taking this class from a country that takes issue with some of the content of this course, beware! Please contact your TA, and we can work to find a safe way for you to satisfy the requirements of this course :)

Q: What is the academic code of conduct?

A: I won't bore you, but remember that what you say and do online can be held against you. Office 365 apps, email, and OWL are a service provided for all of us—we're merely allowed to access it :)

Q: When is work due if I submit a Self-Reported Absence (SRA)?

A: The duration of the excused absence is for a maximum of 48 hours. Students can request that the period covered include Yesterday and Today, or Today and Tomorrow. Absences start at midnight (12:00 a.m.) on the first requested day and end at 11:59 p.m. the following day.

Tutorials

Tuesday: Synchronous online or in-person when possible

| 7:00-7:50pm | SEB-2200 | SEC 003 | Blended | Stanley Park | jpark648@uwo.ca |
| 7:00-7:50pm | SEB-2100 | SEC 004 | Blended | Anton Savitch | asavitch@uwo.ca |

Wednesday: Synchronous online or in-person when possible

9:30-10:20pm	FNB-1240	SEC 006	Blended	Samantha Richard	srich8@uwo.ca
9:30-10:20pm	FNB-1250	SEC 008	Blended	Karuna Dsouza	kdsouz9@uwo.ca
11:30-12:20pm	FNB-1250	SEC 009	Blended	Charlotte Nau	cnau@uwo.ca
12:30-1:20pm	FNB-1250	SEC 011	Blended	Danica Facca	dfacca2@uwo.ca

Thursday: Synchronous online or in-person when possible

9:30-10:20am	SEB-2200	SEC 012	Blended	Effie Sapuridis	esapurid@uwo.ca
9:30-10:20am	SEB-2100	SEC 013	Blended	Mikayla Finnerty	mfinnert@uwo.ca
3:30-4:20pm	FNB-3210	SEC 016	Blended	Jayme Russell	jrusse67@uwo.ca
3:30-4:20pm	SEB-2100	SEC 017	Blended	Marta Kopp	mkopp4@uwo.ca
10:30-11:20am	SSC-2024	SEC 019	Blended	Annie Drysdale	adrysda@uwo.ca

Online: Asynchronous, flexible tutorials (with weekly deadlines)

Time n/a	Asynchronous	SEC 010	Online	Avery Page	apage24@uwo.ca
Time n/a	Asynchronous	SEC 014	Online	Percy Sherwood	asherwoo@uwo.ca
Time n/a	Asynchronous	SEC 015	Online	Jelena Belenzada	jbelenza@uwo.ca
Time n/a	Asynchronous	SEC 018	Online	Saveena Atwal	satwal26@uwo.ca

Land Acknowledgement

Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.

More: https://indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/land-acknowledgement.html

Still more: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8h1cODvA9g

Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments, including take-home exams, in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. All papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software Turnitin under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- during exam periods,
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are NOT met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate or equivalent documentation, if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact the FIMS Undergraduate Student Services Office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see Policy on Academic Consideration For Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

In the event of a Covid-19 resurgence, it is possible that different procedures may need to be put in place on short notice.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Academic Calendar.

Grading at FIMS

- Normally, first year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.
- Normally, second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%.
- Normally, third year required courses (MIT 3000, 3100) are expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

Elective courses and 4th year seminars have no recommended course averages.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/

SUPPORT SERVICES – LINKS

Office of the Registrar:
www.registrar.uwo.ca
Mental Health Support:
https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html
Accessible Education:
http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html
Accessibility Information:
www.accessibility.uwo.ca/
Writing Support Centre:
http://writing.uwo.ca/
Learning Skills Services:
https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/
Academic Learning and Support for Online Learning:
https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/types/academic-and-learning-support.html
Indigenous Services:
https://indigenous.uwo.ca/
Western International:
https://international.uwo.ca/
Career Centre:
http://careerexperience.uwo.ca/

Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

Stages in the Appeals Process:

The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor. For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee. Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.

If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:

1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2..if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.

The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.

Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.

FALL SCHEDULE

01

Sept 9 **Introduction and Technical Requirements**

Watch the intro lecture on OWL

—>You need <u>Office 365</u> and access to <u>OWL</u> to take this course!
—>Get lectures, readings, and assignments from the OWL **course** page.
—>Discuss material and submit work to your OWL **tutorial** page.
—>All tutorials begin the year online.
—>Blended tutorials will meet in-person on a case-by-case basis.

02

Sept 14 **What is a Medium?**

Watch lecture on OWL

Tutorials begin via OWL

Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (1964, excerpts)

03

Sept 21 **Can Media Define and Shape a Culture or Historical Moment?**

Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (1964, excerpts)
Nicholas Carr, 'How Technology Literally Changes Our Brains'

04

Sept 28 **Design and Values**

Lena Groeger 'Discrimination by Design'
Sara Wachter-Boettcher, 'Inclusive Design, Ethical Tech and You'

05

Oct. 05   **Networks and Tracking**

*Essay 1 due to your OWL tutorial group by 11:59pm **Fri. Oct 09**

Amber Case, *Calm Technology* (excerpts)

Kashmir Hill & Surya Mattu, 'The House That Spied on Me'

06

Oct. 12   **Interface**

Hari Kunzru, 'Donna Haraway Says You Are Cyborg' (1997)

07

Oct. 19   **Making Meaning Using Signs, Fixed by Codes, Within Languages**

*Quiz via OWL this week

Roland Barthes, selections from *Mythologies* (1957) and *Image-Music-Text* (1977)

08

Oct. 26   **Codes, Advertising and Identity**

Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements* (1978, selections)

09

Nov 02   **Reading Week: Enjoy the Break!**

10

Nov 09   **Fetishism of Commodities**

Food Empowerment Project, 'Peeling Back the Truth on Bananas'

11

Nov 16 Audiences and Reception

Stuart Hall, 'Encoding/Decoding' (1973, excerpts)

12

Nov 23 Reading Digital Games as Texts

*Quiz via OWL this week

Karen Collins, 'Being in the Game: A Sonic Approach'

Josef Nguyen, 'Performing As Video Game Players in Let's Plays'

13

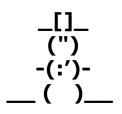**Nov 30 Fan Culture**

*Last week of the fall tutorials

Michael Schulman, 'Superfans, A Love Story'

14

Dec 07 Submit Your Essay!

*Essay #2 due to your OWL tutorial group by 11:55pm on **Wed Dec 09**

No lecture

No readings

No tutorials

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Enjoy the break :)

WINTER SCHEDULE

01

Jan 11   **Welcome Back!**

No readings

—>Watch *Okja* (2017) dir. Bong Joon-ho (link available on OWL)

02

Jan 18   **The Industrial Economy: Standardization and Mass Production**

Janet Staiger, 'The Hollywood Mode of Production'

03

Jan 25   **Efficiency: Rationalization and its 'Iron Cage'**

George Ritzer, 'The McDonaldization of Society'

04

Feb 01   **The Rise of the Information and Service Economy**

Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, 'Postmodernism, or the Informatization of Production'

05

Feb 08   **Property, Services, and Ownership**

Simpson Garfinkel, 'A Cloud Over Ownership'

Jeff Jarvis, 'Google Eats'

06

Feb 15   **Winter Reading Week: Enjoy!**

07

Feb 22   **The Sublime: Natural, Industrial and Digital**

Vincent Mosco, 'The Digital Sublime'

08

Mar 01   **The Surveillance Economy**

Shoshanna Zuboff, 'On Surveillance Capitalism's Threat to Democracy'

09

Mar 08   **The Surveillance Economy, continued**

Quinn Norton, 'The Hypocrisy of the Internet Journalist'

—>Watch *Ex Machina* (2014) dir. Alex Garland (link available on OWL)

10

Mar 15   **AI and Ideology: When Algorithms Reproduce or Worsen Inequality**

Cathy O'Neil, 'How Algorithms Rule Our Working Lives'

Safiya Noble, 'Google Has a Striking History of Bias Against Black Girls'

11

Mar 22

Transhumanism and Extreme Efficiency

Ray Kurzweil, 'The Coming Merging of Mind and Machine'

Max More, 'A Letter to Mother Nature'

12

Mar 29

Two Binary Representations of the Future

Theodore Kaczynski, 'Industrial Society and Its Future'

Dmitry Itskov, 'The Path to Neo-Humanity as the Foundation of the Ideology of the Evolution 2045 Party'

13

Apr 05

*Last week of tutorials

Ex Machina as a Way to Review the Year

Angela Watercutter, 'Ex Machina Has a Serious Fembot Problem'

Sharon Chang, 'How Ex Machina Abuses Women of Color and Nobody Cares Cause It's Smart'

14

April 12

Final lecture: Course Overview

No readings, no tutorials, start preparing for your final exam

!!

tba

Final Exam

I'll produce a review video beforehand.

The exam will be open-book, with multiple choice short answer questions in Part One, and a short essay in Part Two. It will prioritize material from weeks 7-13, as well as selected key concepts discussed throughout the year.