

**COMM 3554:  
Social Implications of Communication Technology  
Autumn 2018**

**Instructor:** Dr. Siyue (April) Li      **Office:** 3058 Derby Hall  
**Email:** li.6836@osu.edu              **Office Hours:** Tue. & Thur. 10:30am-11:30am or by appt.

**Class Information:** Tue. & Thur. 3:55pm-5:15pm Journalism Building 360  
**Format:** Lecture

*[Please put "Comm 3554" in the subject line when contacting me.]*

**Course Description:** This is an upper-level course on the social implications of communication technologies. We will cover many communication technologies, including but not limited to social networking sites, online dating sites, video games, health apps. We will also cover important issues that cut across multiple technologies, such as privacy, digital deception, and cyberbullying.

**Course Objectives:**

1. To explain the historical origin of the study of communication technologies.
2. To apply communication concepts and theories to new media technologies.
3. To understand the effects of media technologies on ourselves and society.
4. To develop strategies for using and managing media technologies in our daily lives.
5. To build the critical skills to analyze and interpret media technologies and their messages.

**Required readings will be available on CANVAS.**

**Additional Resources:** During the course of this class and throughout your university career, you may find the following helpful:

\*The Writing Center. This may be the last time in your life that you have easily accessible help available for your writing skills—use it. Being a good writer will give you an advantage in every walk of life, and if you are a Communication major, it is expected. Visit <http://cstw.osu.edu/writingcenter> to learn more or to schedule an appointment.

\**The American Psychological Association (APA) Style Manual*. For those of you pursuing a degree in social science, this book is what will dictate many of the expectations for your research writing. It includes guidelines on citations, formatting, tone, etc. APA style will be required for the final paper submitted in this class. You may also find some information about formatting at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Make-Up Exams:** Make-up exams will not be given except in cases of extreme, unforeseen, and convincingly documented emergencies (notification within 24 hours of the exam time is required) or official University related absences (instructor must be notified at least two weeks in advance). Your instructor reserves the right to determine what qualifies as extreme and what documentation is required. Unacceptable excuses include, but are not limited to: having a cold, being out of town, oversleeping, having to work, not being able to find a parking space, car trouble, and flight delays or cancellations.

**Attendance:** Attendance (both physical and mental) is key to your success in this class. Your grade is largely contingent upon your continued presence in class. Listen, take notes, and ask questions. Much of the material presented in lecture is not found in your readings. If you miss class for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from a classmate. *The instructor will not provide notes in any circumstance and slides are not posted on Canvas.* If you miss class, you will not be able to make up any in-class work or extra credit opportunities.

**Disruptions:** Disruptions and distractions (including talking during lecture; text messaging or other phone use; nonclass computer activity; or reading nonclass materials), threatening behavior, and negative participation (e.g., use of inappropriate language or derogatory speech) will not be tolerated. Any student who engages in such behavior may be asked to leave class, suffer grade penalties, and be reported to the School of Communication Director, the Dean of Students, and/or University Police.

**Web/Email Policy:** For this course, you are required to have online access regularly (i.e., at least 2-3 times a week). Email should be used for quick administrative questions and emergency contact **only**. Additionally, emails should be written using standards of courtesy (address, proper tone, and signature) or they will be returned to you. If you have questions or concerns (e.g., about an assignment, material discussed in class or the text, your grade) make an appointment or drop by our office hours. Updates to the course schedule or readings will be announced in class and also on Canvas; it is your responsibility to stay apprised of these changes.

**Technology:** Students are NOT allowed to take photographs, record video, or record audio during class. Laptops and tablets should be used only for note taking and class related activities. Failure to comply with these policies will result in point deductions.

**Challenging a Grade:** We do not discuss individual grades in the classroom. To challenge a grade, you must meet the instructor during office hours or make an appointment *within one week of the grades being posted* on Canvas. Please note that a challenge may result in grades being raised or lowered. Also note that grading is an exercise in professional judgment that we take very seriously. We spend large amounts of time developing and grading assignments, and we do not arrive at grade decisions

haphazardly. In this regard, do not challenge a grade unless you truly believe there is a legitimate problem with our decision.

\*\*\*Please note that your final grade is final. Do not ask me to reconsider your grade when the semester is over; applying subjective standards after the fact invalidates the standards applied to the class and is unfair to every student. It is your responsibility to keep up with readings and lecture, track your performance, and make timely adjustments well before the end of the semester.

**Academic Integrity:** It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

**Mental Health:** As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life’s Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting [ccs.osu.edu](https://ccs.osu.edu) or calling [614-292-5766](tel:6142925766). CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at [614-292-5766](tel:6142925766) and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

**Diversity:** The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

**Disability Accommodations:** The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To

establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Disclaimer:** The information provided in this syllabus constitutes a list of basic class policies. I reserve the right to modify this information when deemed necessary for any reason. You will be notified in class, via email, and/or on Canvas if and when any changes occur.

### Assignments & Their Point Values

Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2	100 points
Quizzes	50 points
Project	100 points
Peer evaluations	10 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>360 points</b>

### Grade Break Downs (in percentage points):

93-100% = A	90-92.99% = A-	
87-89.99% = B+	83-86.99% = B	80-82.99% = B-
77-79.99 % = C+	73-76.99% = C	70-72.99% = C-
67-69.99% = D+	60-66.99% = D	below 60% = E

**Exams:** There will be two exams, each consisting of multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer questions. For the most part, the exams will NOT be cumulative. However, some major concepts discussed throughout the semester may appear on multiple exams. I will make a study guide available about a week before the exam. Please understand that the guide is meant to be just that—a guide. Although I try to stick to the information as presented on the study guide, I do consider all reading and lecture material to be fair game for exam questions.

**Quizzes:** You will regularly be asked to complete quizzes in class. Students can expect roughly 7-8 of these quizzes throughout the semester, though you will not know in advance which days these will occur. These quizzes cannot be made up outside of class. That is, you must be in class in order to earn these points. There are no exceptions to this policy, even for "legitimate" class absences. However, I will drop your two lowest scores providing you some cushion should you need to miss a class on a day that a quiz is given. Once quizzes are passed out and students begin them, I reserve the right to not pass out

any additional quizzes. Students with late enrollments will have to accept the fact that missed quizzes cannot be made up.

**Final Project:** Throughout the semester, you will be working on a group project. Each group may consist of 4 to 5 students. A recommended size is 4 members. Each group will produce some creative materials, write a paper, and give a presentation on a topic related to communication technologies. Each student will be evaluated individually based on their unique contribution to the project as well as evaluations that they will receive from other group members. Further details about the project will be announced in class and be available on Canvas.

**Research Participation:** This course is enrolled in the School of Communication's C-REP participant pool. C-REP is designed to give students direct exposure to the topics, goals, methods, and ethical issues of communication research. You can participate in C-REP studies to earn extra credits in the course. One research credit in C-REP corresponds to 2 points in this course; therefore, to receive the maximum possible 6 points you need to complete 3 research credits. You should definitely NOT wait until the last minute to sign up for participation because people tend to procrastinate and research opportunities will be limited. In fact, it is probably wise to complete your C-REP requirement as early as possible in the semester when you have more time.

Note that the same C-REP participation cannot be counted for more than one course. To sign up for studies, go to the website <https://osucomm.sona-systems.com/>. If you have questions about C-REP, email Shannon Poulsen ([poulsen.6@osu.edu](mailto:poulsen.6@osu.edu))

## Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Date	Assignments	Topic	Readings
1	8/21		Syllabus	Syllabus
	8/23		Basics of communication technology	Rheingold; Castells
2	8/28	Read final project document	Concepts and theories	Reeves & Nass, ch.1
	8/30	Brainstorm and propose project ideas	Concepts and theories cont.	Walther, 2011
3	9/4		Concepts and theories cont.	Walther, 2011
	9/6	Group and topic due	Psychological effects	Levitin
4	9/11	Feedback on topics	Online identity	“Generation Like”
	9/13		Friendship in CMC	Baym, 2010; Vaterlaus et al., 2016
5	9/18		Romantic relationships in CMC	Toma & Hancock, 2011
	9/20		Romantic relationships in CMC cont.	Utz, Muscanell, & Khalid, 2015; Weisskirch & Delevi, 2012
6	9/25	Proposal due	Review class	
	9/27		Exam 1	
7	10/2	Feedback on proposals	Video games and virtual reality	Sherry, 2004
	10/4		Video games and virtual reality cont.	Deterding et al., 2011
8	10/9		Social influence	Blascovich & Bailenson, ch. 4
	10/11		<i>Fall Break (No Class)</i>	
9	10/16		Social influence cont.	Fogg, ch.5
	10/18		eHealth.	Wright, Sparks, & O’Hair, ch. 7
10	10/23		eHealth cont.	Wright, 2015
	10/25		Work and other applications	Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2014
11	10/30		Project work day	
	11/1		Privacy and surveillance	Scherker, 2014 Pew Research, 2015
12	11/6		Digital deception	Hancock et al., 2004
	11/8		<i>Instructor at ICA (No Class)</i>	
13	11/13		Dark side of technologies	Sales, 2013
	11/15		Project finalization	
14	11/20	Final project due	Project presentation day	
	11/22		<i>Thanksgiving Day (No Class)</i>	
15	11/27		Project presentation day	
	11/29		Project presentation day	
16	12/4		Exam Review	

**Final Exam: Wednesday Dec 12<sup>th</sup> 4:00pm-5:45pm**