COMM 3554
SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES
SUMMER 2025

Instructor:

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Office hours: Thursday/Friday 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. The Zoom link is posted on Carmen.

Course description

This is an upper-level course on the social implications of communication technology. We will cover many communication technologies such as social networking sites, online dating sites, and virtual reality. We will also cover important issues that cut across multiple technologies, such as privacy, digital deception, and cyberbullying. At times, we consider the ways communication technology may affect society as a whole (e.g., the spread of fake news) as well as cases in which communication technologies affect their individual users (e.g., the connection between social media and mental health).

Course learning outcomes

- Students will learn about the characteristics, functionality, and usage of communication technologies; a focus will be placed on identifying the unique properties of new communication technologies.
- Students will be able to explain the historical origin of the study of communication technology.
- Students will increase their knowledge of the effects of communication technology on ourselves and society.
- Students will apply existing theory and research findings to new media technologies.
- Students will develop strategies for using and managing communication technology in our daily lives.
- Students will build critical skills to analyze and interpret communication technologies and their messages.

Embedded Literacies: Expected learning outcomes (ELOs)

This course fulfills the Technology Embedded Literacy in the General Education curriculum.

Students who are taking this course to fulfill their Technology expected learning outcome are expected to develop familiarity with specific forms of technology, and of their practical possibilities and limitations, in relation to particular disciplinary or interdisciplinary projects.

Successful students will develop a critical appreciation of the relations between technologies and their contexts (social, cultural, historical) and of the range of effects and consequences (legal, ethical, political) produced or enabled by particular technologies. They will be able to:

- Critically describe the relationships between technology and society in historical and cultural contexts.
- Recognize how technologies emerge and change.
- Evaluate the social and ethical implications of technology.

How this online course works

Mode of delivery

This course is 100% online. There are no required sessions when you must be logged in to Carmen at a scheduled time.

Pace of online activities

Each week, a new module will become available on the course Carmen site that contains all of the online requirements associated with that week. Each module will include materials (e.g., recorded lectures, reading materials, videos) pertaining to key course concepts, as well as instructions for completing the weekly readings and activities due that week. Students are expected to keep pace with weekly deadlines but may schedule their efforts freely within that time frame.

Credit hours and work expectations

This is a 3-credit-hour course. According to Ohio State policy (go.osu.edu/credithours), students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average.

Attendance and participation requirements

Because this is an online course, your attendance is based on your online activity and participation. The following is a summary of students' expected participation:

- **Participating in online activities: AT LEAST ONCE PER WEEK**

You are expected to log in to the course in Carmen every week. (During most weeks you will probably log in many times.) If you have a situation that might cause you to miss an entire week of class, discuss it with me as soon as possible.

- **Student hours and live sessions: OPTIONAL**
  All live, scheduled events for the course, including my student hours, are optional.

Course materials

There is no required textbook for this course. All reading materials will be provided on Carmen. Details about the assigned readings can be found on the schedule.

Grading

This class has 750 possible points, which are distributed as follows:

Online Quizzes (x5)	250 points (50 points each)
Reflection Papers (x4)	300 points (75 points each)
Final Exam	200 points

Assignments

- **Online Quizzes (50 points x 5).** Five quizzes will be administered on Carmen. The quizzes are designed to assess your understanding of the course materials (i.e., module materials, video lectures, assigned readings).
  - All quizzes are announced and available on your weekly schedule. Specific due dates are listed in the course calendar.
  - The quizzes cannot be made up.
  - Quizzes will open at the beginning of the week and are **due Sundays at 11:59pm EST**. The quiz will be closed and will NOT be open to anyone after it's due.
  - Quizzes will be open book/notes and cover material from the readings, module content, and video lectures.
  - The quizzes are non-cumulative and the quiz description in Carmen will state which material each quiz covers.
  - Students will only have one 45-minute or hour-long attempt (depending on the quiz) to complete each quiz. I do not allow group work on the quizzes and doing so constitutes academic misconduct. Please prepare well and do not wait until the last minute to start a quiz, as technological issues can occur (see technology policy below for more details).
  - Quizzes will progress one question at a time (i.e., you cannot go back to change your answers).

- **Reflection Papers (75 points x 4).** There will be four reflection assignments over the course of the semester.

- o Reflection papers are available on the weekly schedule. Specific due dates are listed in the course calendar.
- o Reflection papers will open at the beginning of the week and will be due **Fridays at 11:59pm EST**.
- o Reflection papers will be 600-800 words formatted using APA style (i.e., double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins) and citations for outside references (either 6th or 7th APA style citations are fine).
- o A complete rubric and description for each reflection paper will be provided on Carmen when the paper is assigned.
- o A high-quality submission will briefly explain the theory or concept and then go into depth, making a connection between the concept and a real-world application.
- o Note that we can only grade what you have submitted. Please double check before submitting your work.

- **Exam (200 points x 1).** One final exam will be delivered on Carmen to assess comprehension of reading and lecture materials at the end of the semester.
  - o The exam will cover information from the assigned readings, course modules, and video lectures.
  - o The exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and matching style questions. The questions will be designed to assess your definitional understanding of course content and ability to accurately apply, interpret, and evaluate human communication and behavior through the lens of course concepts.
  - o The exam will be timed and progress one question at a time (i.e., you cannot go back to change your answers).

Late assignments

All deadlines are in Eastern Standard Time (EST). Students may submit reflection papers late with a penalty. Penalties for late work increase cumulatively. Submitting work after the deadline yields a -10% point penalty for the submission. For each additional day after the deadline, students lose an additional -10% off the submission.

Quizzes and the final exam will be closed after the due date and will not be reopened.

Extensions: Students may receive an extension for an assignment if they **contact the Graduate Student Instructor 48 hours prior to the submission deadline**. The length of an extension will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion and communication guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style:** While there is no need to participate in class discussions as if you were writing a research paper, you should remember to write using good grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A more conversational tone is fine for non-academic topics.
- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across online.
- **Citing your sources:** When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up what you say. For the textbook or other course materials, list at least the title and page numbers. For online sources, include a link.
- **Backing up your work:** Consider composing your academic posts in a word processor, such as Microsoft Word, where you can save your work, and then copy it into the Carmen discussion.

Grading scale

Please note that Carmen Canvas, OSU's grading and class management software, does not round fractions up. Please take that into account in computing grades. I do not manually round up grades. The official grading scale is as follows:

93 – 100: A
90 – 92.9: A-
87 – 89.9: B+
83 – 86.9: B
80 – 82.9: B-
77 – 79.9: C+
73 – 76.9: C
70 – 72.9: C-
67 – 69.9: D+
60 – 66.9: D
Below 60: E

Instructor feedback and response time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can call **614-688-HELP** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

Grading and feedback

For large weekly assignments, you can generally expect feedback within **7 days**. If it is going to take longer than 7 days, you will receive a course announcement from me.

E-mail

The course instructors will reply to e-mails within **24 hours on school days**. We do not respond to emails over the weekend, and we do not expect you to respond to emails over the weekend. Please email us through OSU email and not the Carmen messaging system, as Carmen sometimes does not notify us that we have an unread message.

Virtual student hours

Virtual student hours will be held through Ohio State's conferencing platform, Carmen Zoom. The digital meeting room can be accessed during posted student hours. Students may use the audio and video functions if a webcam and microphone are available. If not, there is still a chat function within Zoom for the student to live chat with the professor or graduate student instructor in the virtual office hours room. A guide to accessing Zoom is available <u>online here</u> and students can <u>access support for Carmen Zoom here</u>.

Common issues to avoid…

- **Carmen mail/messenger + submission comments.** These are unreliable forms of communication, and the instructors will not check them regularly.
- **Weekend + evening emails.** Under most circumstances, we will respond to messages of this sort on the next business day.
- **Sending emails NOT from your OSU email.** Messages to our OSU accounts from non-OSU email services are regularly marked as spam and since OSU cannot confirm their delivery, you may not use them as evidence of communication attempts.
- **Unprofessional emails.** Please ensure that your email messages are professional and informative by including your course info in the subject line, a salutation, adequate yet concise body text, closing, and your full name.
- **Emails that require immediate attention.** We aim to answer emails within 24 hours of receipt on business days. Be proactive and plan ahead.

Course Technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours, and support for urgent issues is available 24/7.

- **Carmen:**
    - Carmen, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit Carmen.osu.edu. Log in to Carmen using your name.# and password. If you have not setup a name.# and password, visit my.osu.edu.
    - Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen
    - **This online course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools.**

>> **If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.**
>> - Carmen accessibility

- o You will need to use BuckeyePass (buckeyepass.osu.edu) multi-factor authentication to access your courses in Carmen. To ensure that you are able to connect to Carmen at all times, it is recommended that you take the following steps:
  - Register multiple devices in case something happens to your primary device. Visit the BuckeyePass - Adding a Device help article for step-by-step instructions (go.osu.edu/add-device).
  - Request passcodes to keep as a backup authentication option. When you see the Duo login screen on your computer, click Enter a Passcode and then click the Text me new codes button that appears. This will text you ten passcodes good for 365 days that can each be used once.
  - Download the Duo Mobile application (go.osu.edu/install-duo) to all of your registered devices for the ability to generate one-time codes in the event that you lose cell, data, or Wi-Fi service.
  - If none of these options will meet the needs of your situation, you can contact the IT Service Desk at 614-688-4357(HELP) and IT support staff will work out a solution with you.

- **Carmen Zoom:**
  - o Office hours will be held through Ohio State's conferencing platform, Carmen Zoom. A separate guide to accessing Carmen Zoom and our office hours is posted on the course Carmen page under Files.
  - o Students may use the audio and video functions if a webcam and microphone are available. If not, there is still a chat function within Carmen Zoom for the student to live chat with the professor or TA in the virtual student hours room.
  - o Carmen Zoom help guide.

- **Turnitin:**
  - o Students at The Ohio State University are accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Therefore, you should be familiar with the guidelines provided by the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) and Section A of OSU's Code of Student Conduct in order to meet the academic expectations concerning appropriate documentation of sources. In addition, OSU has made Turnitin, a learning tool and plagiarism prevention system, available to instructors. For this class, you will submit your papers to Turnitin from Carmen. When grading your work, I will interpret the originality report, following Section A of OSU's Code of Student Conduct as appropriate. For more information about Turnitin, please see the vendor's guide for students. Note that submitted final papers become part of the OSU database.

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice
- **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
- **Email:** servicedesk@osu.edu
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen (go.osu.edu/canvasstudent)

Necessary equipment

- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- Web cam and microphone
- Other: a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) to use for BuckeyePass authentication

Necessary software

- Word processor with the ability to save files under .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf. Most popular word processing software programs including Microsoft Word and Mac Pages have these abilities.
- OSU students have access to Microsoft Office products <u>free of charge</u>. To install, please visit https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=kb04733

University Policies

Student Academic Services

Arts and Sciences Advising and Academic Services' website provides support for student academic success. Information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors can be obtained through this website. The site is: http://advising.osu.edu.

Student Services

The Student Service Center assists with financial aid matters, tuition and fee payments. Please see their site at: https://contactbuckeyelink.osu.edu/

Copyright Disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Additional Disclaimer

This syllabus represents a contract "in the works." Events that transpire over the semester may require modifications to the course. In the event of a change, I will announce the change and update the syllabus on Carmen. Ultimately it is your responsibility to keep up with any such modifications

and to be aware of current policies, deadlines, etc. I reserve the right to modify course policies throughout the semester.

Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a community to reflect diversity and to improve opportunities for all. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Office of Institutional Equity:

1. Online reporting form at **equity.osu.edu**,
2. Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605,
3. Or Email **equity@osu.edu**

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. All university employees have reporting responsibilities to the Office of Institutional Equity to ensure the university can take appropriate action:

- All university employees, except those exempted by legal privilege of confidentiality or expressly identified as a confidential reporter, have an obligation to report incidents of sexual assault immediately.
- The following employees have an obligation to report all other forms of sexual misconduct as soon as practicable but at most within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at http://titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Interim Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at titleix@osu.edu

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 are or someone you know is 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 or calling 614--292--5766. 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. If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24-hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445).

Academic Integrity Policy

See **Descriptions of major course assignments**, above, for my specific guidelines about collaboration and academic integrity in the context of this online class.

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/.

Furthermore, there are now many new generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, available and their use in certain situations may violate academic integrity policies. **In this course, you may not submit material for assignments (e.g., discussion board posts, reflection papers) that were created using generative AI as if it is your own work; this constitutes plagiarism and will be considered a violation of academic integrity.**

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by university rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the university's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

- Committee on Academic Misconduct web page (go.osu.edu/coam)
- Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity (go.osu.edu/ten-suggestions)

Requesting Accommodations

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. 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.

If you are ill and need to miss class, including if you are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of a viral infection or fever, please let me know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

Accessibility of course technology

This online course requires use of CarmenCanvas (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.

- Canvas accessibility (go.osu.edu/canvas-accessibility)
- Streaming audio and video
- CarmenZoom accessibility (go.osu.edu/zoom-accessibility)
- Collaborative course tools

Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the land that The Ohio State University occupies is the ancestral and contemporary territory of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe and Cherokee peoples. Specifically, the university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of Greeneville and the forced removal of tribes through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. I/We want to honor the resiliency of these tribal nations and recognize the historical contexts that has and continues to affect the Indigenous peoples of this land. More information on OSU's land acknowledgement can be found here: https://mcc.osu.edu/about-us/land-acknowledgement

Course Schedule/Summer 2025

Most weeks will follow a regular schedule:

- Weekly modules will be posted to Carmen on Mondays.
- Quizzes are due on Sundays at 11:59pm EST.
- Reflection papers are due on Fridays at 11:59pm EST.

Modules	Dates	Weekly Topics	Assignments
Week 1	5/6-5/11	**Introduction** - Readings - Syllabus - Resources for Academic Writing **What is Technology?** - Readings - Downs (2019) - Fox & McEwan (2017)	**Quiz 1** Syllabus & APA
Week 2	5/12-5/18	**Theories of Technology's Impacts** - Readings - Walther et al. (2015) - McEwan (2015) **Technology & News** - Readings - Pariser (2011) - Zúñiga et al. (2017)	**Reflection Paper 1**
Week 3	5/19-5/25	**Identity & Self-presentation Online** - Readings - Miller (2016) - Baym (2010), Chapter 5 **Online Dating & Deception** - Readings	**Quiz 2**

Week	Date	Topic & Readings	Assignments
		o Toma (2016) o Hancock & Guillory (2015)	

Week 4	5/26-6/1	**Cyberbullying & Disruptive Interactions Online**
		
		• <u>Readings</u>
		  o Savage & Deiss (2019)
		
		Social Support Online & How do we make the internet nicer?
		
		• <u>Readings</u>
		  o Wright (2015)
		  o Meyer (2020)
		  o Baughan (2022)
			Quiz 3

Week 5	6/2-6/8	**Children & Media**
		
		• <u>Readings</u>
		  o Austin & Kistler (2016)
		  o Valkenburg & Piotrowski (2017, Chapter 11)
			Reflection Paper 2

Week 6	6/9-6/15	**Media Use & Well-being: Part 1**
		
		• <u>Readings</u>
		  o High et al. (2022)
		
		Media Use & Well-being: Part 2
		
		• <u>Readings</u>
		  o Fox & Moreland (2015)
		  o Reeves, Robinson, & Ram (2020)
			Quiz 4
			
			Reflection Paper 3

Week 7	6/16-6/22	**Avatars, Agents, & Social Robots**
		
		• <u>Readings</u>
		  o Nowak (2015)
		  o Fox & Gambino (2021)
		
		Privacy, Surveillance, & Algorithms
		
		• <u>Readings</u>
			Quiz 5
			
			Reflection Paper 4

		o Acquisti et al. (2015) o Hartzog & Selinger (2013)	

Week 8	6/23-6/27	**Digital Divide & Differences**
		
		• <u>Readings</u>
		    o boyd, Chapter 7
		    o Rice & Pearce (2015)
		
		Final Exam Online
			Final Exam

~ This schedule is subject to change per the needs of the course ~