

Syllabus COMM 3554
Social Implications of Communication Technology
Online Class (asynchronous)

The Ohio State University
School of Communication

Instructor:

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Online Office Hours via Carmen Zoom:

Thursdays 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

(Please also see on Carmen Homepage)

Course Objectives, Description, and Work Expectation

This course is an introduction to the social impact of new communication technologies. The course is designed to examine the current and potential effects of widespread use of new communication technologies on the individual and our society. We will cover technologies such as the Internet (incl. Web sites, social network sites, wikis, online dating sites), mobile telephony, video games, and other forms of computer-mediated communication.

Course Objectives:

- To understand the historical origins of the study of communication technologies
- To apply communication concepts and theories to study new technologies
- To understand the effects of new technologies on the individual and society
- To develop strategies for using and managing media technologies in our daily lives
- To provide you with the critical skills to analyze and interpret media technologies and their messages

Why exactly should I be interested in that topic?

Well, it is quite easy to see that communication technology has changed our own communication behaviors and that of others around us. We have changed how we approach our daily lives, how we view the world out there, and how we think

about and treat others. Many of those changes are closely connected to our increasing use of new technologies or are exclusively induced by them. But we are not just observers of those changes. Very often, we take an active role by using new technologies in new ways, but not always to our own or others' benefit. Reflection is key to understand what is good for us, for those around us, for our society, and even future generations. This class is an opportunity to reflect on what we are doing and what it means if we or others are showing certain behaviors. Gaining new knowledge through class discussions and the review of related research will help for a better understanding how new communication technology can be used to make our lives better instead of worse and overwhelming.

What do I need to do for class?

Short Version: Work through the online material/lectures regularly as soon as they are released, reflect on the topics, complete assignments on time, participate in class activities and cooperate with others when possible or mandatory, always cite sources of used material/information, follow academic conduct rules, ask questions and also have a little fun with the class.

Longer Version: Follow online instructions very carefully, participate in online class activities and assignments, take your notes while working through class content, ask questions if you are not sure about a topic, and reflect on things based on your own experiences and ideas. The more you are willing to reflect on class topics and activities, the better the chance to make it a really good learning experience for you and others with whom you may work together.

While the goal of online teaching is to increase learning flexibility and efficiency, students are more challenged to set up their own learning schedule and pace. It is important to keep an oversight of all the online assignments and deadlines to complete the class successfully. All necessary information to do so is posted on Carmen, is part of this syllabus, or is provided through email.

This is a 3-credit hour course. According to Ohio State policy, students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent with instruction material and Carmen activities and 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average. However, the time necessary to succeed in class also depends on every student's learning pace.

How this Course Works - Online Material and Posting

Online classes provide more learning flexibility, but the class still follows a specific schedule (see class schedule below for details).

New lecture materials will be uploaded on Carmen on Tuesdays and Thursdays (12:01 a.m.). Due dates for lecture related assignments will be at the end of the following day on Wednesdays and Fridays (11:59 p.m.).

Thus, I suggest you work through the lecture materials within 48 hours after posting and complete any lecture related assignment during that time to keep the deadlines.

The posted online material will consist of narrated PowerPoint presentations with my voice recorded (as MP4 file) and presentation handouts with accompanying texts (both as PDF files). You can use the MP4 video or the PDF files or both, depending on what works best for you. Just try it out, but I recommend to use both. Additionally, you will find instructions for the bigger assignments as PDF files.

All material will be available under Modules on Carmen/Canvas.

You will receive regular information about the posting of new lecture content, upcoming assignments, and news at the beginning of each week on Mondays per email. Thus, make sure to check your email regularly. However, information about tasks and deadlines is always posted under each topic header under Modules, which follows the class schedule in the syllabus.

Copyright Disclaimer

Per the Study Code of Conduct, you may not share recorded lectures or other class materials with anybody not officially enrolled in this class. Sharing material like this is a copyright violation.

Use Text

Readings will be posted under Modules on Carmen (also listed in the schedule next to the topics and at the end of the syllabus). Additionally, I may also relate to some chapters of the following book for a better understanding of the class

topic. It is not a mandatory reading for our class but an additional source to find more current research and theories about computer-mediated communication:

Knobloch-Westerwick, S. & Westerwick, A. (2020). Mediated Communication and You. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Class Website via Carmen/Canvas:

Please be sure to check Carmen regularly also for news or changes,...

Assignments and Exams

All assignments need to be uploaded to the corresponding folder, accessible on Carmen under Modules (and Assignments/Discussions) on the assigned days. Papers or text entries in wrong folders will not count and will lead to a zero for the assignment.

Always follow instructions and upload your work in the correct format. For example, if an assignment uses Carmen discussions and you are asked to upload a Word or PDF document, do not use the text/comment field to post your work. Text/Comment fields are to be used for comments or text only if the instructions explicitly say so.

Also, be prepared to sign up for a team at the beginning of the semester, necessary for important assignments (see sign-up time window in class schedule below).

Online Exams

The information taught before an exam will be tested on this exam. It will not be tested on the following exam again (exams in this class are not cumulative).

Exams are designed as Carmen Quizzes (multiple-choice), based on the material from the readings and lectures. The overall exam time is 45 minutes for 28 questions (about 1 ½ minutes per question). Make-up exams will only be offered for medical or other similar, legitimate reasons.

Failure to take an exam will result in a zero for the exam.

The online exams have to be taken within the scheduled time window. Starting toward the end of the time window may reduce the time students have to answer the questions. For example: time window is 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on the scheduled day and students have 45 minutes to complete. A late start at 7:30 p.m. will leave 30 minutes to complete the exam and not 45 minutes because the online exam closes when the time window elapses.

Topic Reflection Assignments (TRA)

Online Lectures (materials) are posted on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On most of those online lecture days, there will be Topic Reflection Assignments (14 over the course of the semester) where you should take a few minutes to work on an assigned topic. TRAs must be completed by the following day (within a time window of about 48 hours – 12:01 a.m. – 11:59 p.m. next day). They should help you to reflect specific topics of the actual lecture. Review the lecture material under Modules regularly on those days not to miss any assignment deadlines.

Two of the TRAs provide the opportunity of bonus points. Only 12 of the 14 TRAs are necessary to obtain the chance to score 100% in this class.

(Example: You have completed all 14 TRAs successfully = 12 regular points + 2 bonus point; you have completed 12 TRAs successfully = 12 regular points and 0 bonus points.).

Topic Reflection Exercises (TRE)

There will be two topic reflection exercises where students are asked to work together on a class topic. Those exercises will allow you to learn about views and attitudes of fellow students and how to take those different thoughts into consideration to discuss the topics and/or to come to a mutual decision. Your group has about 48 hours from the assigned day to complete the exercise.

Assignments

There will be two bigger assignments over the course of the semester (one of them is the final paper). You will be asked to work on an assigned topic, alone or together with another student. The assignments give you the opportunity for a

more in-depth topic reflection and to apply your new knowledge based on the lectures of the class.

If you are working together with other students, all team members will get the same amount of points so that it is a question of fairness and honesty that everyone contributes actively to create an excellent paper. All papers must be uploaded within the given deadline (see schedule). Late submissions will be penalized. Further details about the assignments will be posted on Carmen.

Team-Presentations

At the beginning of the semester, students need to sign up for a team of three and the teams are assigned to one of six different topics. They are asked to prepare a 10-minute presentation about the topic based on reviewed literature. The presentations will take place throughout the semester (see class schedule). Students who do not sign up for a team until the end of the second week of the semester cannot get credit for this assignment. Teams can choose between different presentation modes: They can a) create a presentation that consists of slides and accompanying text, b) they can create a narrated PowerPoint presentation with their voices recorded, or c) they can videotape their presentation (use recording software offered by OSU and save video in common file format usable by classmates). All presentations must be uploaded on Carmen on the assigned day.

Students are asked to comment on one presentation of their classmates per presentation day (except the presenters of that day). Comments must be posted on Carmen and are good for 1 point. You need to post a comment on the five presentation days where you are not the presenter to keep the chance to score 100% in this class.

You will find all details in the instructions of the team presentation assignment on Carmen (team sign-up will start on Friday at the end of the first week – see class schedule).

Grade Distribution

Topic Reflection Assignments	11% (12 points – 12*1)
Assignment 1	9% (10 points)
Assignment 2 Final Paper	11% (12 points)
Topic Reflection Exercises	5% (6 points – 2*3)
Team Presentation	9% (10 points)
Presentation Comments	5% (5 points – 5*1)
Exams (weighted equally)	50% (56 points – 2*28)
<i>Total</i>	<i>100% (111 points)</i>

The grading in this class is based on OSU's grading scheme (posted on Carmen under Syllabus and Modules).

Grade Change Requests

Students are strongly encouraged to check posted points for all assignments and exams regularly on Carmen. Any missing points have to be reported 14 days after posting of the score in question. Later requests will not be considered. The last day for requesting any score changes is the first day of the last week of regular classes, Monday, 11/30/2020.

Late Assignments

Assignment papers, text entries, or comments need to be uploaded/posted by the deadline to the corresponding assignment folder or discussion to receive credit. Submissions to wrong folders cannot be considered for grading. Late submissions won't be accepted if not explicitly stated in the assignment instructions.

Makeup of missed Assignments

Completing missed assignments late will only be allowed for serious, legitimate reasons (documentation needed like doctor's note). Students are required to inform the instructor before the originally scheduled assignment/exam time. Otherwise, a makeup opportunity cannot be granted. If a student is missing more than 3 assignments throughout the semester, make-up opportunities cannot be granted even if documentation is presented.

Instructor Illness or Absence

If the *instructor* is too ill to teach the course for a period of time, the designated backup for this course will step in. You will be notified via email from the School of Communication.

Instructor Feedback and Response Times

I am always happy to help and suggest that you make use of my office hours, especially with more personal or more complex questions and any grade/assignment issues. Just email me to set up a Carmen Zoom meeting. If you have technical problems, you should call 614-688-HELP for the OSU helpline.

You can also email me with questions, and I will reply within 24 hours on school days. There will also be a Q&A Discussion on Carmen (on our homepage and under Modules) where you can ask topic related questions. I will reply to those questions within 24 hours on school days.

You can expect to see your points for smaller assignments within 2-3 days and for larger ones within 7-14 days.

Discussion and Communication Guidelines

The best learning experience is when everyone is participating in class activities and discussions, sharing topic related views, standpoints, and experiences. We are all different and can learn a lot from each other. To take full advantage of this, we need a positive learning environment of respectful and thoughtful communication.

I expect that everybody is supportive to others so that we all feel safe, even if we should disagree on certain topics/issues. Thus, please remain civilized and

respectful in your email and discussions. You will see that I work very hard to provide a positive learning experience.

Also keep in mind to cite your sources. For most assignments you are asked to use APA style for all used sources (for online sources, be sure to include a link).

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 24x7.

- **Carmen:**

- Carmen, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen ([Carmen accessibility](#)), visit [Carmen.osu.edu](https://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>

- **Carmen Zoom:**

- Office hours will be held through Ohio State's conferencing platform, Carmen Zoom in addition to some live class sessions.
- 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 office hours room.
- [Carmen Zoom](#) help guide

Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen and Carmen Zoom

Necessary equipment

- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- Web cam and microphone

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 free of charge. To install, please visit https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=kb04733

Other Course 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/welcome.shtml>

Student Services

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

Accessibility Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

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 via email immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. 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 ; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu ; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct

It is imperative that all work you submit be your own. When you use someone else's ideas, you must give proper credit to the original author(s). Please adhere to the 5th edition of the APA manual of style when citing others' work.

According to the Committee on Academic Misconduct "Academic misconduct is defined as any activity which tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution, or subvert the educational process." Further, the term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed and is 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). It is the responsibility of the Committee of Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>).

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.

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 Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF (Mental Health Statement)

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 / National: 800-273-8255); or text (4hope to 741741); or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Class Schedule and Reading List			
Day	Date	Topic	Reading
August			
T	25	Course Overview and Introduction TRA1 Due 8/26 11:59 p.m.	
R	27	Team Presentation Assignment Team sign-up between 8/28 and 9/4/2020	
September			
T	1	Communication Technology (Definitions, Perspectives, and Social Implications) TRA2 Due 9/2 11:59 p.m.	Rheingold, 1992; Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010; McOmber, 1999; Pew, 2018
R	3	Concepts & Theoretical Perspectives TRA3 Due 9/4 11:59 p.m.	Reeves & Nass, 1996, Chapt. 1 & 13
T	8	Concepts & Theoretical Perspectives (cont.) TRA4 Due 9/9 11:59 p.m.	Lee & Sundar, 2009; Walther et al, 2005; Fox & McEwan, 2017
R	10	Introduction Assignment 1	
T	15	"Digital Nation" <i>From Multitasking to Digital Divide</i> TRA5 Due 9/16 11:59 p.m.	Hargittai, 2003; Ophir et al, 2009

R	17	Psychological Effects <i>Video Game Play</i> TRA6 Due 9/18 11:59 p.m.	Griffith, 2010; Lee & Peng, 2006; Burney, Bushman & Laroi, 2019
T	22	Team Presentation 1: Effects of Video Game Play Due 11:59 p.m. Comment Due 9/23 11:59 p.m.	
R	24	Deadline Assignment 1 11:59 p.m.	
T	29	Psychological Effects <i>Internet and Adolescents</i> TRA7 Due 9/30 11:59 p.m.	Valkenburg, 2009
October			
R	1	Exam I Between 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.	
T	6	Identity & Selves <i>Identity Construction on Facebook</i> TRA8 Due 10/7 11:59 p.m.	Zhao et al, 2008
R	8	Team Presentation 2: Use of Social Network Sites Due 11:59 p.m. Comment Due 10/9 11:59 p.m.	
T	13	Self-Presentation <i>Online Dating</i> TRA9 Due 10/14 11:59 p.m.	Ellison et al, 2006; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007; Pew, 2020

R	15	Team Presentation 3: Gender Differences in the Use of Technology Due 11:59 p.m. Comment Due 10/16 11:59 p.m.	
T	20	Internet and Sexuality TRA10 Due 10/21 11:59 p.m.	Döring, 2009; Peter & Valkenburg, 2010
R	22	Online Information Credibility From Wikipedia to Google TRA11 Due 10/23 11:59 p.m.	Flanagin & Metzger, 2007; Westerwick, 2011
T	27	Team Presentation 4: Reliance/Dependency on Technologies Due 11:59 p.m. Comment Due 10/28 11:59 p.m.	
R	29	Persuasive Technologies TRA12 Due 10/30 11:59 p.m.	Fogg, 2003, Chapt. 3 & 8
November			
T	3	Team Presentation 5: Persuasive Technologies Due 11:59 p.m. Comment Due 11/4 11:59 p.m.	
R	5	Topic Reflection Exercise 1 Due 11/6 11:59 p.m.	
T	10	Introduction Assignment 2: Final Paper	
R	12	New Media & Youth <i>Generation Like</i> TRA13 Due 11/13 11:59 p.m.	

T	17	Education & Media Literacy TRA14 Due 11/18 11:59 p.m.	Metzger, 2007
R	19	Topic Reflection Exercise 2 Due 11/20 11:59 p.m.	
T	24	Team Presentation 6: The influence of New Media on Children Due 11:59 p.m. Comment Due 11/25 11:59 p.m.	
R	26	Thanksgiving Break	
December			
T	1	Exam Review	
R	3	Exam II Between 8: a.m. – 8:00 p.m.	
M	7 11:59 p.m.	Final Paper Due	

Caveat

I reserve the right to update or change portions of this syllabus to make the class a better experience for everyone. Any changes will be posted on Carmen.

Readings**Topic: Communication Technology (Definitions, Perspectives, and Social Implications)**

Rheingold, H. (1992). A slice of life in my virtual community. In P. Ludlow, *High noon on the electronic frontier: Conceptual issues in cyberspace* (pp. 413-436). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kaiser Family Foundation (2010, January). *Generation M²: Media in the lives of 8- to 18-year-olds*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation.

McOmber, J. B. (1999). Technological autonomy and three definitions of technology. *Journal of Communication*, 137-153.

Pew Research Center, May 2018, "Teens, Social Media & Technology 2018"

Topic: Concepts & Theoretical Perspectives

Reeves, B., & Nass, C. (1996). *The media equation*. New York: Cambridge.

Walther, J. B., Gay, G., and Hancock, J. T. (2005). How do communication and technology researchers study the Internet? *Journal of Communication*, 55(3), 632-657.

Lee, E., & Sundar, S. S. (2009). Human-Computer Interaction. In C. R. Berger, M. Roloff, & D. R. Ewoldsen (Eds.), *The Handbook of Communication Science* (Second Ed., pp. 507-523). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fox, J., & McEwan, B. (2017). Distinguishing technologies for social interaction: The perceived social affordances of communication channels scale. *Communication Monographs*, 84:3, 298-318.

Topic: Digital Nation: From Multitasking to Digital Divide

Hargittai, E. (2003). The digital divide and what to do about it. In D. C. Jones (Ed.), *New Economy Handbook* (pp. 821-839). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Ophir, E., Nass, C., and Wagner, A.d. (2009). Cognitive control in media multitaskers. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 106(37), 15583-15587.

Topic: Psychological Effects: Video Game Play

Griffith, M. (2010). Online video gaming: What should educational psychologists know? *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 26(1), 35-40.

Lee, K. M. and Peng, W. (2006). What do we know about social and psychological effects of computer games? A comprehensive review of the current literature. In P. Vorderer & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Playing Video Games* (pp. 327-345). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Burney, J., Bushman, B.J., & Laroi, F. (2019). Effects of sexualized video games on online sexual harassment. *Aggressive Behavior*, 45(2), 214-223.

Topic: Psychological Effects: Internet and Adolescents

Valkenburg, P. M. & Peter, J. (20). Social consequences of the Internet for adolescents. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 18(1), 1-5.

Topic: Identity & Selves: Identity Construction of Facebook

Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S., & Martin, J. (2008). Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 24, 1816-1836.

Topic: Self-Presentation: Online Dating

Ellison, N., Heino, R., & Gibbs, J. (2006). Managing impressions online: Self-presentation processes in the online dating environment. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11, 415-441.

Valkenburg, P. M., & Peter, J. (2007). Who visits online dating sites? Exploring some characteristics of online daters. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 10, 849-852.

Pew Research Center, February 2020, "Ten facts about Americans and online dating"

Topic: Internet and Sexuality

Doring, N. M. (2009). The Internet's impact on sexuality: A critical review of 15 years of research. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 25, 1089-1101.

Peter, J. & Valkenburg, P. M. (2010). Adolescents use of sexually explicit Internet material and sexual uncertainty: The role of involvement and gender. *Communication Monographs*, 77(3), 357-375.

Topic: Online Information Credibility: From Wikipedia to Google

Flanagin, A. J., & Metzger, M. J. (2007). The role of site features, user attributes, and information verification behaviors on the perceived credibility of web-based information. *New Media & Society*, 9(2), 319-342.

Westerwick, A. (2011). Wikipedia and Friends: Influences on users' credibility perceptions of online information on Wikipedia. *Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the International Communication Association 2011*, Boston, MA, USA.

Topic: Persuasive Technologies

Fogg, B. J. (2003). *Persuasive technology: Using computers to change what we think and do*. San Francisco, CA: Morgan Kaufman.

Topic: Education & Media Literacy

Gillmor, D. (2008). *Principles for a new media literacy*. Cambridge, MA: Berkman Center for Internet & Society.