Course Syllabus

I399/Z543: Computer-Mediated Communication

Semester: Spring 2016  Instructor: Elii E. Bourlai

Time: Monday, 5:45-8:30 p.m.  Office hours: By appointment

Room: LI 036  Email: ebourlai@indiana.edu

Required Readings:
Articles to be made available on Canvas or on the public Web.

1. Course Description

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is the human-to-human interaction that takes place via computer networks such as the Internet, as well as via mobile digital media. Invented in the 1960s and expanded initially over the Arpanet (the precursor of the Internet), CMC has grown at a dizzying rate over the past five decades to become as ubiquitous as such taken-for-granted communication technologies as radio, the telephone, and television.

Historically, most CMC was text-based; examples include email, mailing lists, web forums, chat, MUDs, Instant Messaging, text messaging (SMS), blogs, microblogs, and wikis. Starting in the mid-1990s, multimodal CMC also became important, in the form of video chat, audio chat, and graphical virtual worlds— and, of course, the World Wide Web. The most recent decade has seen a trend for CMC to converge with other media applications, such as social network sites, video sharing, multiplayer online games, and interactive television.

This course covers practical and theoretical issues associated with social media and computer-mediated communication (CMC) technologies, including email, web forums, chat rooms, instant messaging, text messaging, mobile apps, blogs, microblogs, wikis, social network sites, media sharing sites, virtual worlds, and multiplayer games. It focuses on the effects of social media and CMC on identity, interpersonal relationships, group behavior, and the social structures that emerge when people use social media and CMC. Other topics covered include online language use, blended online-offline communication, communication in convergent media environments, and avatar and robot-mediated communication.

2. Course Objectives

Students will gain an understanding of CMC, social media studies, and contemporary debates in these fields, through reading, in-depth discussion, and hands-on applications of CMC systems. As a result of taking the course, you will be able to identify processes, problems, and advantages associated with the use of CMC in different contexts.

In addition, you will gain:

- a historical perspective on the development of CMC and CMC systems
- a theoretically-grounded, critical understanding of the nature of CMC and its social and technical effects in different contexts of use
- hands-on experience with various CMC modes
- skill in summarizing and synthesizing concepts from published scholarship

3. Course Requirements

For Students Enrolled in I399:

There is no exam or term paper requirement in this course; the final grade will be based on two evenly-spaced activities and participation.
Participation includes attendance, in-class and online discussion of the course readings, and leading at least one in-class discussion.

**Attendance:** You are expected to be physically present and alert during class meetings. You may miss one class, no questions asked, with no effect on your grade. If you must miss two or more class sessions for a legitimate reason, contact me (preferably in advance) for suggestions of what you can do to make up your participation.

**Readings and online discussion:** You are expected to read the assigned readings and participate in discussions about them in the discussion group. Every week, one person will post a summary (2-3 paragraphs, briefly encapsulating each article’s main claims) for each assigned reading, and everyone else will post one or more comments on the summaries. Good comments will engage specifically and thoughtfully with the content of the readings. Time will also be devoted to discussing the readings and applying them to contemporary situations during class meetings.

**Interaction) CMC diary:** To foster critical self-awareness, each day for a continuous specified period you will record your CMC use in a MS Word “diary,” according to a template that will be provided. Your diary will be due in Week 6.

**Video essay and critiques:** To explore current trends in CMC (and to use CMC/social media technologies), you will script and record a short (5 - 10 minutes) video essay on a current issue, phenomenon, or debate related to CMC or social media. For this activity you may work alone (5 mins) or in pairs (10 mins at longest). For this activity you may work alone or in pairs (if you work in pairs, your video should be about 10 minutes long). You must upload your video to Kaltura within Canvas (such that it is viewable without any major technical glitches!) by 10 pm, Friday, April 29th. You will then critique the content of other students’ video essays by posting comments on them by 5 pm, Monday May 2nd.

**For Students Enrolled in Z543:**

There is no exam or term paper requirement in this course; the final grade will be based on two evenly-spaced activities and participation. Participation includes attendance, in-class and online discussion of the course readings, and leading at least one in-class discussion.

**Attendance:** You are expected to be physically present and alert during class meetings. You may miss one class, no questions asked, with no effect on your grade. If you must miss two or more class sessions for a legitimate reason, contact me (preferably in advance) for suggestions of what you can do to make up your participation.

**Readings and online discussion:** You are expected to read the assigned readings and participate in discussions about them in the discussion group. Every week, one person will post a summary (2-3 paragraphs, briefly encapsulating each article’s main claims) for each assigned reading, and everyone else will post one or more comments on the summaries. Good comments will engage specifically and thoughtfully with the content of the readings. Time will also be devoted to discussing the readings and applying them to contemporary situations during class meetings.

**Annotated bibliography:** To develop focused knowledge and research skill, you will prepare an annotated bibliography on a CMC topic of interest to you. This need not be a topic or type of CMC discussed in the course, but it must have some published research associated with it. For your chosen topic, 10 scholarly works should be selected, read, and each one summarized in 1-2 paragraphs (guidelines will be provided) in a MS Word document. Citations and references in the bibliography should follow APA (American Psychological Association) style, 6th edition. Your annotated bibliography will be due in Week 11.

**Interaction) CMC diary:** To foster critical self-awareness, each day for a continuous specified period you will record your CMC use in a MS Word “diary,” according to a template that will be provided. Your diary will be due in Week 6.

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**All Students:**

You are expected to check the Canvas page at least once a day, including the afternoon before class for last-minute announcements and reminders. Posting and commenting in the discussion group is strongly encouraged, if you find interesting articles or other course related information or activities, please share them with the class through discussion or direct email.
5. Student evaluation

The final grade for students enrolled in I399 will be calculated as follows:

- Attendance and in-class participation: 100
- Summaries of Readings: 200
- Online Discussion: 150
- CMC Diary: 200
- Video essay project: 200
- Video essay critiques: 150

Total: 1000

The final grade for students enrolled in Z543 will be calculated as follows:

- Attendance and in-class participation: 100
- Summaries of Readings: 100
- Online Discussion: 100
- CMC Diary: 200
- Annotated Bibliography: 200
- Video essay project: 200
- Video essay critiques: 100

Total: 1000

Grading policies:

- Late online comments on the readings will be accepted once during the semester, no questions asked, provided they are posted within two days after the class meeting in which the readings were discussed. One letter grade (from A to B, etc.) is lost for each day one of the projects is submitted beyond the due date. (Note: If an assignment is due on Wednesday but is submitted on Thursday, the number of minutes late is not considered. Plan accordingly.)
- No other late work will be accepted. If you have an emergency situation please consult with the instructor for possible alternatives.

Policy regarding personal technology use in the classroom:
Sometimes it is useful for a student to have a laptop or other digital device in the classroom, e.g., for note taking or to search the web for information relevant to the class. This use is permitted provided the student observes the following rules:

1. All students wishing to use a laptop or other digital device must sit in the first two rows of the classroom; and
2. Use of laptops and digital devices during class time is limited to activities that relate directly to the course. Surfing the web for other purposes; reading or replying to email, text messages, or Facebook; and other non-class-related use of digital media is not permitted during either face-to-face or online class meetings. Abuse of the laptop and digital device limitation will lead to a loss of participation points for the class.

**Statement on academic integrity:**

Learning is a collaborative enterprise. However, plagiarism, copyright infringement, and other types of academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated. To help you recognize plagiarism, the IU Writing Center has prepared a short guide: Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It ([http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml)). Please read this guide and refer to it when you produce your written assignments for this course. Other helpful resources include a tutorial ([http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/](http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/)) and test: “How to Recognize Plagiarism” ([http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html)) created by the IU School of Education.

Note that TurnItIn will be used for text submissions. You will have access to the plagiarism report for your submission. Check the report and ask questions before the assignment is due. Note that a “zero” TurnItIn score is not expected.

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<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon Jan 11, 2016</td>
<td><strong>Week 01 Readings</strong> (<a href="https://iu.instructure.com/courses/1528352/assignments/6076135">https://iu.instructure.com/courses/1528352/assignments/6076135</a>)</td>
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