

Social Implications of Communication Technology

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The world has arrived at an age of cheap complex devices of great reliability;
and something is bound to come of it.

— Vannevar Bush, “As We May Think”

The Atlantic, July 1945

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This is an upper-level course on the social implications of communication technology. 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. 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 Objectives

Students who complete this course will be able to:

- Explain the historical origin of the study of communication technology.
- Apply communication concepts and theories to new media technologies.
- Understand the effects of communication technology on ourselves and society.
- Develop strategies for using and managing communication technology in our daily lives.
- Build critical skills to analyze and interpret communication technologies and their messages.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Textbooks and readings

There is no required text for this course. All readings will be made available on Carmen.

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, 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>

If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with the instructor. More information on accessibility with Canvas LMS can be found at <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-2061>

Mediasite

Mediasite is Ohio State's Lecture Capture System. Lectures will be delivered through Mediasite and shared on Carmen. Help guides on the use of Mediasite can be found at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/mediasite>

Carmen Connect

Office hours will be held through Ohio State's conferencing platform, Carmen Connect.

Students may use the audio and video functions if a webcam and microphone are available, but this is not required. There is still a chat function within Carmen Connect for the student to live chat with the instructor in the virtual office hours room.

Help guides on the use of Carmen Connect can be found at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmenconnect>

Necessary software

A word processor with the ability to save files to PDF format. Note that all Ohio State students have access to free copies of Microsoft's Office suite, which includes Word, for Windows, macOS, Android, iOS, and the web.

EVALUATION

This class will use the standard OSU grading scheme:

A	93-100%	A-	90-92.99%	B+	87-89.99%
B	83-86.99%	B-	80-82.99%	C+	77-79.99%
C	73-76.99%	C-	70-72.99%	D+	67-69.99%
D	60-66.99%	E	0-59.99%		

Grade Disputes

Any dispute about a grade must be done within one week of the grade posting. You should compose an email, making clear that you are challenging the grade, with information about the assignment and details (using the

rubric and guidelines) of why you feel you should receive a different score. Note that decreased scores, in addition to increased scores, are possible following a grade challenge.

Assignments

The final grade in the class will consist of the following:

Syllabus and APA quiz	30 / 6%
Quizzes	100 / 20%
Weekly discussion posts	110 / 22%
Reflection papers	160 / 32%
Exam	100 / 20%
Total	500 / 100%

Detailed explanations of these assignments are provided in a separate document.

COURSE POLICIES

Reasonable Accommodation Policy

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; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Late Policy

Quizzes: Late quizzes are not accepted. The correct answers become available once the deadline passes and at this point people may no longer take the quizzes.

Discussion posts: Late discussion posts are accepted up to 48 hours past the deadline for half credit.

Reflection papers: You will receive a specified portion of the grade you would have received for turning it in on time. The penalties are as follows:

In other words, a paper that is just under 24 hours late will first be assessed as if it is not late, then that grade will be multiplied by 85%. A 90% paper would then be entered as a 76.5% in the gradebook ($.9 \times .85 = .765$).

If there are special circumstances that cause you to be unable to complete assigned work, you may contact the instructor to make arrangements. In all cases, the instructor has discretion over whether the situation justifies excusing late work; further, students must provide documentation of the issue (e.g., signed doctor's note). For

Time past deadline	Maximum grade
0-1 hour	95%
1-24 hours	85%
24-48 hours	75%
48-72 hours	50%
> 72 hours	0% (no credit)

most assigned work, students have a week or longer to complete the assignment; a single-day problem is insufficient reason for missed deadlines except in the most extreme cases.

Discussion and Communication

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class.

- **Writing style:** This course's online format means the best way to assess your understanding is through your writing. With that in mind, it is important for you to take all written assignments seriously. Writing should be in an academic style, which includes citing sources as necessary and supporting opinions with logical arguments.
- **Grammar and clarity:** The use of proper grammar and writing clearly are necessary components of this course. While students may enter the class with different levels of writing skill, these problems can largely be avoided by working carefully and proofreading all submissions.
- **Tone and civility:** This class, in its limited discussions, aims to be a space in which people can feel free to state their points of view respectfully and receive respectful responses (and non-responses) in return. When communicating to the class, please remember that the online context may make it difficult for some classmates to sense the intent behind your statements unless it is clearly written. *Inflammatory, disrespectful, or otherwise inappropriate posts may result in grade penalties and/or academic sanctions.*

Asking questions about the class

When courses are held in-person, many student questions about class policies, assignments, and the like are answered during lectures for everyone to hear. This obviously does not occur in an online course, but students have questions nonetheless. Questions about the course policies, procedures, assignment instructions, etc. should be **posted to designated Carmen discussion boards**, *not emailed to the instructor*.

As in any course, it is expected that you will need some questions answered throughout the semester. To avoid the need for the instructor to respond individually to each and every one, there are FAQ discussion boards on Carmen designed for questions. All class questions should be asked on the FAQ board rather than emailed to the instructor. In many cases, students will find that their question has already been asked (and answered) on these discussion boards. The instructor will respond to questions within 2 business days, though often sooner. Students are welcome to help their classmates by answering these questions.

The **exceptions** to this procedure are when the questions regard private matters and when they are highly specific to the student's project, in which case students can message the instructor through the Carmen messaging system.

Faculty 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 10-14 days. We of course may be able to give feedback sooner than that – we're sure you won't mind in that case.

E-mail

I will typically respond to emails within 24 hours on school days. There may be times in which I notify the entire class that I may be unavailable for some time longer than 24 hours; I may also respond to your email to let you know I need more time if the request is complicated.

Discussion board

Either the instructor or the TA will check and reply to messages in the discussion boards every 24 hours on school days.

Generally speaking, if you need an answer soon and more time has passed than what has been outlined above, feel free to try to reach out again to make sure your initial message was not lost or forgotten.

Attendance

Because this is a distance-education course, your attendance is based on your online activity and participation. The following is a summary of everyone's expected participation:

- Viewing lectures: Recorded lectures will be uploaded to Mediasite on a weekly basis. Typically, each week will consist of multiple videos on a related topics. The videos aim to be short to make it as easy as possible to pay full attention to each individual video. You should feel free to watch a video, take a break or do something else, and then return to any remaining videos later. I make efforts to publish videos reasonably far in advance to offer as much flexibility as possible, but they will be published no later than 48 hours before any subsequent quizzes or discussion posts are due.
- Office hours and private consultation: We are available to help you to learn, understand, and grow as individuals. If your question is something that you believe may be of interest to others in the class, please post to the "Ask the instructor" discussion board. Office hours are digital via Carmen Connect.

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

Written Assignments

All written work must be typed and must conform to APA formatting, citing, and referencing guidelines (see <http://www.apastyle.org/> and <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). A portion of the class will be devoted to learning the fundamentals of APA style, but students may not treat ignorance of the guidelines as an excuse for improper formatting.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments must be uploaded to the dropbox no later than 11:59 p.m. on the assigned due date.

Academic Misconduct

Cheating and plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3325-23-04) defines academic misconduct as "any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process" (p. 2). Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination.

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/>.

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 (COAM). If COAM determines you have violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, 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 this policy or what constitutes academic misconduct, please contact me or visit <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html>.

CHANGING NATURE OF THIS SYLLABUS

The assignments, policies, and readings in this syllabus are subject to change at any time. If this occurs, the changes will be announced and an updated version of the syllabus will be posted to Carmen.

For a quick way to see which version of the syllabus you are looking at, the right side of the footer on the first page of this document includes a date followed by an alphanumeric code (known as a hash) in parentheses. The date represents the day of the most recent change to the syllabus and should be treated as more reliable than the "last modified" date your computer shows you. The alphanumeric hash is given for the rare circumstance in which more than one change is issued on the same day; no two versions of the syllabus will have the same alphanumeric hash, regardless of the edit date.

Below is a summary of all changes:

- May 7 — first public version

CALENDAR

Most weeks will follow a regular schedule:

- **Wednesday:** First discussion post due.
- **Friday:** Discussion responses due. Quiz (if any) is due.

Reflection papers are due on Mondays.

Unless otherwise specified, quizzes, discussion posts, and other assignments are due at 11:59 PM on the date they are due. Note that most weeks do not have an assignment due on Monday.

If the information on Carmen contradicts this syllabus, assume the information on Carmen is correct.

This schedule provides a broad overview. More details will be available on Carmen, where you will access the lectures and other materials. Each week, I include a “reading memo,” in which I give instructions on what to focus on in the assigned readings, the recommended reading order, and (typically) parts of the readings that may be skipped.

Week 1, 5/7 – 5/13: Introduction

Wednesday, 5/9: Syllabus and APA style quiz

Week 2, 5/14 – 5/20: What is communication technology?

Wednesday, 5/16: Discussion posts due

Fri, 5/18: Discussion responses due

Castells, M. (1999). The social implications of information and communication technologies. UNESCO World Social Science Report.

Rheingold, H. (1996). A slice of my life in my virtual community. In P. Ludlow (Ed.), *High noon on the electronic frontier: Conceptual issues in cyberspace* (pp. 413–436).

Stafford-Fraser, Q. (2001). On site: The life and times of the first web cam. *Communications of the ACM*, 44(7), 25–26. doi:10.1145/379300.379327.

Week 3, 5/21 – 5/27: Concepts and affordances

Wednesday, 5/23: Discussion posts due

Fri, 5/25: Discussion responses due; **Quiz 1**

Evans, S. K., Pearce, K. E., Vitak, J., & Treem, J. W. (2017). Explicating affordances: A conceptual framework for understanding affordances in communication research. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 22, 35–52. doi:10.1111/jcc4.12180.

Fox, J., & McEwan, B. (2017). Distinguishing technologies for social interaction: The perceived social affordances of communication channels scale. *Communication Monographs*, 84, 298–318. doi:10.1080/03637751.2017.1332418.

Treem, J. W., & Leonardi, P. M. (2012). Social media use in organizations: Exploring the affordances of visibility, editability, persistence, and association. *Communication Yearbook*, 36, 143–189.

Week 4, 5/28 – 6/3: Theories

Wednesday, 5/30: Discussion posts due

Fri, 6/1: Discussion responses due

Reeves, B., & Nass, C. I. (1996). The media equation. In *The media equation: How people treat computers, television, and new media like real people and places* (pp. 3–15). Stanford, Calif.: CSLI Publications.

Walther, J. B. (2011). Theories of computer-mediated communication and interpersonal relations. In *The handbook of interpersonal communication* (4th, pp. 443–479). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Week 5, 6/4 – 6/10: Psychological effects

Wednesday, 6/6: Discussion posts due

Fri, 6/8: Discussion responses due

Baker, D. A., & Algorta, G. P. (2016). The relationship between online social networking and depression: A systematic review of quantitative studies. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *19*, 638–648. doi:10.1089/cyber.2016.0206.

Huesmann, L. R., Dubow, E. F., & Yang, G. (2018). Why it is hard to believe that media violence causes aggression. In K. E. Dill (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of media psychology* (pp. 159–172). New York: Oxford University Press.

Singh, M. (2014, June 30). Online psychotherapy gains fans and raises privacy concerns. NPR. retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2014/06/30/325488110/online-psychotherapy-gains-fans-and-raises-privacy-concerns>.

Twenge, J. M. (2017, September). Have smartphones destroyed a generation? *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/09/has-the-smartphone-destroyed-a-generation/534198/>.

Week 6, 6/11 – 6/17: Sociological effects

Monday, 6/11: **Reflection Paper 1** due

Wednesday, 6/13: Discussion posts due

Fri, 6/15: Discussion responses due; **Quiz 2**

boyd, d. (2017, January 5). Did media literacy backfire? *Data & Society*. Retrieved May 13, 2018, from <https://points.datasociety.net/did-media-literacy-backfire-7418c084d88d>.

Hu, W., & Goodman, J. D. (2013, July 17). Wake-up call for New Yorkers as police seek abducted boy. *The New York Times: N.Y. / Region*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/18/nyregion/early-morning-alert-issued-after-7-month-old-boy-is-abducted.html>.

Lazer, D. M. J., Baum, M. A., Benkler, Y., Berinsky, A. J., Greenhill, K. M., Menczer, F., ... Zittrain, J. L. (2018). The science of fake news. *Science*, *359*, 1094–1096. doi:10.1126/science.aa02998. pmid: 29590025.

Marcus, J. (2013, September 12). All hail MOOCS! Just don't ask if they actually work. *Time*. Retrieved from <http://nation.time.com/2013/09/12/all-hail-moocs-just-dont-ask-if-they-actually-work/print/>.

Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, *359*, 1146–1151. doi:10.1126/science.aap9559. pmid: 29590045.

Week 7, 6/18 – 6/24: Personal relationships

Wednesday, 6/20: Discussion posts due

Fri, 6/22: Discussion responses due

Baym, N. K. (2010). Digital media in relational development and maintenance. In *Personal connections in the digital age* (pp. 122–149). New York: Polity.

Marwick, A. E., & boyd, d. (2011). I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience. *New Media & Society*, *13*, 114–133. doi:10.1177/1461444810365313.

Vaterlaus, J. M., Barnett, K., Roche, C., & Young, J. A. (2016). “Snapchat is more personal”: An exploratory study on Snapchat behaviors and young adult interpersonal relationships. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *62*, 594–601. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2016.04.029.

Week 8, 6/25 – 7/1: Romance, sexuality, & dating

Monday, 6/25: **Reflection Paper 2** due

Wednesday, 6/27: Discussion posts due

Fri, 6/29: Discussion responses due

Fox, J., & Anderegg, C. (2014). Romantic relationship stages and social networking sites: Uncertainty reduction strategies and perceived relational norms on Facebook. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *17*, 685–691. doi:10.1089/cyber.2014.0232.

Fox, J., & Ralston, R. (2016). Queer identity online: Informal learning and teaching experiences of LGBTQ individuals on social media. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *65*, 635–642. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2016.06.009.

Pelley, L. (2016, March 15). The messiness of modern breakups. *Toronto Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thestar.com/life/relationships/2016/03/15/the-messiness-of-modern-breakups.html>.

Singal, J. (2015, August 12). Has Tinder really sparked a dating apocalypse? Retrieved from <https://www.thecut.com/2015/08/has-tinder-really-sparked-a-dating-apocalypse.html>.

Week 9, 7/2 – 7/8: Privacy and surveillance

Fri, 7/6: Discussion posts due

Sunday, 7/8: Discussion responses due; **Quiz 3**

Acquisti, A., Brandimarte, L., & Loewenstein, G. (2015). Privacy and human behavior in the age of information. *Science*, *347*, 509–514. doi:10.1126/science.aaa1465.

Hindman, M. (2018, March 30). How Cambridge Analytica’s Facebook targeting model really worked – according to the person who built it. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from <http://theconversation.com/how-cambridge-analyticas-facebook-targeting-model-really-worked-according-to-the-person-who-built-it-94078>.

Parker, M. (2018, May 15). What does GDPR mean for me? An explainer. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/what-does-gdpr-mean-for-me-an-explainer-96630>.

Week 10, 7/9 – 7/15: Video games & virtual reality

Wednesday, 7/11: Discussion posts due

Fri, 7/13: Discussion responses due

- Bushman, B. (2016, July 26). Violent video games and real violence: There's a link but it's not so simple. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from <http://theconversation.com/violent-video-games-and-real-violence-theres-a-link-but-its-not-so-simple-63038>.
- Chesney, B., & Citron, D. (2018, February 21). Deep fakes: A looming crisis for national security, democracy and privacy? *Lawfare*. Retrieved from <https://www.lawfareblog.com/deep-fakes-looming-crisis-national-security-democracy-and-privacy>.
- Shahani, A. (2017, April 19). Facebook's new grand plan to draw you in. NPR. retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2017/04/19/524643659/facebooks-new-grand-plan-to-draw-you-in>.
- Sherry, J. L. (2004). Flow and media enjoyment. *Communication Theory*, 14, 328–347. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2004.tb00318.x.

Week 11, 7/16 – 7/22: Social influence

Monday, 7/16: **Reflection Paper 3** due

Wednesday, 7/18: Discussion posts due

Fri, 7/20: Discussion responses due; **Quiz 4**

- Meyer, R. (2014, June 28). Everything we know about Facebook's secret mood manipulation experiment. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/06/everything-we-know-about-facebooks-secret-mood-manipulation-experiment/373648/>.
- Shakya, H. B., & Christakis, N. A. (2017a, April 10). A new, more rigorous study confirms: The more you use Facebook, the worse you feel. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2017/04/a-new-more-rigorous-study-confirms-the-more-you-use-facebook-the-worse-you-feel>.
- Wright, K. B. (2015). Computer-mediated support for health outcomes: Psychological influences on support processes. In S. S. Sundar (Ed.), *The Handbook of the Psychology of Communication Technology* (pp. 488–506). doi:10.1002/9781118426456.ch22.

Related, optional:

- Shakya, H. B., & Christakis, N. A. (2017b). Association of Facebook use with compromised well-being: A longitudinal study. *American Journal of Epidemiology*. doi:10.1093/aje/kww189.

Week 12, 7/23 – 7/29: Dark sides of communication technology

Fri, 7/27: **Reflection Paper 4** due

- Brownell, K. (2016, August 26). 6 concerns about kids and technology: What the research shows. Policy 360. Retrieved from <https://sanford.duke.edu/articles/6-concerns-about-kids-and-technology-what-research-shows-podcast>.
- Hancock, J. T., Thom-Santelli, J., & Ritchie, T. (2004). Deception and design: The impact of communication technology on lying behavior. In *Proceedings of the 2004 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 129–134). The ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems. doi:10.1145/985692.985709.
- Jeong, S.-H., & Hwang, Y. (2016). Media multitasking effects on cognitive vs. attitudinal outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Human Communication Research*, 42, 599–618. doi:10.1111/hcre.12089.

Week 13, 7/30 – 8/5: Final week

Monday, 7/30: **Final exam**

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