

# Technology / Media / Everyday Life

## Georgia Institute of Technology | Fall 2009

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**Office hours:**  
MW 2-3pm or by  
appointment

### Course Description:

This course has two related goals: first, to fine-tune your multimodal communication skills according to the WOVEN philosophy, and second, to introduce you to a group of thinkers and texts that analyze the relationship among technology, media, and everyday life. We will read select essays on print, photography, film, television, and digital media that emphasize the confluence and intertwined histories of these media. At the same time, you will strengthen your competencies in written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal communication skills. In other words, both readings and assignments underline that the process of communication takes place across multiple channels at all times. Your final project comprises the creation of a multi-media manifesto.

Our class has four units: Language, Writing, History; Visual Culture; New Media; Media Convergence: Television Meets the Internet, plus an interlude on Audio during Week 9.

### Assignment Overview

#### 24hr Media and Technology Use Log

The purpose of this assignment is to make you more aware of what kinds of media and technologies you use during any given day, and what functions you use most frequently on your cell phone, iPods, etc.

#### Personal History of Technology Essay

In this 4-5-page essay, you will use autobiography to make an argument about one medium/technology (e.g. print, photography, film, audio, internet, computer, cell phone, iPod). Your main models for such an essay are N. Katherine Hayles and Lev Manovich (plus, to a lesser extent, Ted Nelson). You are also free to come up with your own model of how to use autobiography in constructing an argument about a particular medium/technology/mode of communication.

#### The "Crazy" Paper

Your task for this assignment is to write a critical reading response. For this assignment, the content follows a fairly precise outline; the format, however, does not. We will look at texts that experiment with unusual fonts and layouts (*Writing Machines* is the prime example). You are encouraged to experiment with the layout for your paper as well. Think about how choices regarding margins, line and character spacing, font, and other typographical elements. The layout of your paper should draw attention to print as more than a vehicle to convey your words and establish a connection between form and content.

#### The Visual Essay

The goal of this assignment is to construct a sequence of ten images as a visual essay that explores a media/technology theme of your choice (for example, old vs. new media; individuality and choice; information overload; storage and access; indexes; materiality; networks). You will explain your essay's themes and conceptualizations in 1,000-word project statements.

### Visual Essay Audio Track

In this assignment, you will add an audio track to your visual essay. The goal of the assignment is to add another critical dimension to your already existing essay. In the spirit of DJ Spooky's "rhythm science," you will explore the art of remixing, sampling and writing with sound.

### Multimodal Manifesto

In this group project, you create a manifesto on media and technology that uses at least three different modes/media of communication (including digital or analog photography, video, audio, writing) and critically engages with course readings.

### **Required Texts:**

- Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*
- N. Katherine Hayles, *Writing Machines*
- Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*
- Selections from other books. Texts will be provided as PDFs on T-square (texts available via T-square are marked with "T" in the reading schedule) or online (URL provided in the reading schedule).

### **Reading and Assignment Schedule**

<b>Unit I:</b>	<b>Language, Writing, History</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>Week 1</b>		
08/17/09	Introduction and Overview of the class	
08/19/09	E-book: "Overview of Writing and Communication," p. 1-8; Ch. 33, "Synergy" 1-23	
08/21/09	Brad Stone, " <a href="#">Breakfast Can Wait. The First Stop is Online.</a> " <i>New York Times</i> , 08/09/09	
<b>Week 2</b>		
08/24/09	Ted Nelson, excerpt from <i>Computer Lib / Dream Machines</i>	Media/Tech log due (T)
08/26/09	Hayles, <i>Writing Machines</i> , Endtroduction, Designer's notes, p. 4-34	
08/28/09	Hayles, <i>Writing Machines</i> , p. 34-46; 64-88; 100-107	
<b>Week 3</b>		
08/31/09	Manovich, "Introduction." In: <i>The Language of New Media</i> (LNM), 2-18.	
09/02/09	Manovich, "What Is New Media?" in LNM, 18-45	
09/04/09	Manovich, "What Is New Media?" in LNM, 45-55	
<b>Week 4</b>		
09/07/09	No class	

09/09/09	Friedrich Kittler, " <a href="#">The History of Communication Media.</a> "	Personal media history essay due
09/11/09	Wolfgang Hagen, "The Style of Sources: Remarks on the Theory and History of Programming Languages" (T). 20 p.	
<b>Week 5</b>		
09/14/09	Reflection Day; Tour of library multimedia resources (meet @ library)	
09/16/09	Peer review chapter in e-book (chapter 18); Wolfgang Hagen, "The Style of Sources: Remarks on the Theory and History of Programming Languages", cont. (T)	
09/18/09	Peer review	Bring summary paragraph and outline of "crazy" paper to class
<b>Unit II: Visual Culture</b>		
<b>Week 6</b>		
09/21/09	Nicholas Mirzoeff, "What Is Visual Culture?" (T). 11p.	
09/23/09	E-book, Chapter 68, "Reading and Writing About Visual Images"	"Crazy" paper due; Start A Week in Pics
09/25/09	Barthes, <i>Camera Lucida</i> , 3-21 ("Specialty of the Photograph" to "Duality")	Progress report grades posted tomorrow
<b>Week 7</b>		
09/28/09	Barthes, <i>Camera Lucida</i> , 23-60 ("Duality" to end of Part 1); 106-end ("Camera Lucida"-end)	
09/30/09	Project Day on visual culture; intro to flickr	A Week in Pics due
10/02/09	<i>La Jetee</i> (film by Chris Marker, 28min. Shown in class)	
<b>Week 8</b>		
10/05/09	Fall break	
10/07/09	Musser, Charles. "Introduction." in: <i>The Emergence of Cinema</i> (T). 11p.	
10/09/09	Manovich, "What is Cinema?" in LNM, 286-308	
<b>Week 9</b>		
10/12/09	Reflection Day; Manovich, "The Operations" in LMN, 117-135	
<b>&lt;interlude on Audio&gt;</b>		
10/14/	Paul D. Miller aka Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid. " <a href="#">In Through the Out Door: Sampling and the Creative Act.</a> " in: <i>Sound Unbound: Sampling Digital Music and Culture</i> (2008).	Resubmit Personal Media History essay (voluntary)

10/16/09	Selections from Paul D. Miller aka Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid. <i>Rhythm Science</i> (2004). (T). Make your own remix: Explore DJ Spooky's project <a href="#">Errata Erratum</a> (if you are curious, read more about the project here: <a href="http://www.djspooky.com/articles/errata.php">http://www.djspooky.com/articles/errata.php</a> )	Visual Essay due
<b>Unit III: New Media</b>		
<b>Week 10</b>		
10/19/09	Manovich, "The Interface," p. 63-78	
10/21/09	"The Interface," cont., p. 78-93	
10/23/09	Julian Dibbel, "Viruses Are Good for You." (T). 24p.	
<b>Week 11</b>		
10/26/09	Alexander Galloway. Excerpts from <i>Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization</i> . 14p. (T)	
10/28/09	Lawrence Lessig. <i>Free Culture</i> . (excerpts). Download the entire book here: <a href="http://www.free-culture.cc/">http://www.free-culture.cc/</a>  Richard Stallman, " <a href="#">The GNU Manifesto</a> ." 8p.	
10/30/09	Lessig, cont.  Also read this short article: " <a href="#">Meet the 42 lucky people who got to see the secret copyright treaty</a> ."	
<b>Week 12</b>		
11/02/09	Critical Art Ensemble, " <a href="#">Electronic Civil Disobedience</a> ." 27p.	
11/04/09	Project Day on media manifestos	
11/06/09	Dreamweaver tutorial (meet Sherri Brown @ Homer Rice lab in Library 1 West)	Audio Tracks for Visual Essay Due
<b>Unit IV: Media Convergence: Television Meets the Internet</b>		
<b>Week 13</b>		
11/09/09	Henry Jenkins, Introduction to <i>Convergence Culture</i> . 23p.	Concept for manifesto due
11/11/09	Haenschen, Katherine. " <a href="#">Introduction to the Writers' Strike Issue</a> ." Atkins, Dante. " <a href="#">The WGA Strike, the Internet and Media Decentralization</a> ." Giannini, Erin. " <a href="#">Fan Support and its Effect (or its Lack thereof) on the Strike</a> ." Joss Whedon, creator of <i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i> , comments on the strike: <a href="http://whedonesque.com/comments/14650">http://whedonesque.com/comments/14650</a>	
11/13/09	1. Mittell, Jason. "Fan Cultures." In <i>Television and</i>	

<p><i>American Culture</i>, 373-381. (T)  2. The Organization for Transformative Works (OTW).  Please read sections on "<a href="#">Who We Are</a>" and "<a href="#">What We Believe</a>"  OTW, "<a href="#">Archive News Post #4: Colocation and Open Beta</a>"  "<a href="#">Iimeem removes fan vids along with all UGV</a>"</p>		
<b>Week 14</b>		
11/16/09	<p>A basic history of vidding: <a href="http://fanlore.org/wiki/Vidding">http://fanlore.org/wiki/Vidding</a>  Hill, Logan. "The Vidder: Luminosity Upgrades Fan Videos."  <a href="http://nymag.com/movies/features/videos/40622/">http://nymag.com/movies/features/videos/40622/</a></p> <p>Ulaby, Neda. "<a href="#">Vidders Talk Back to Their Pop Culture Muses</a>." 5min NPR interview.</p>	
11/18/09	Review of drafts for Media Manifesto	Media Manifesto draft due
11/20/09	Gaming: read Henry Jenkins' <a href="#">interview</a> with Georgia Tech professor Michael Nitsche.	
<b>Week 15</b>		
11/23/09	Project Day	
11/25/09	Project Day	Manifesto due
<b>Week 16</b>		
11/30/09	Student presentations	
12/02/09	Student presentations	
12/04/09	Student presentations	
12/08/09		E-portfolio due

**Assignments:**

You must complete **ALL** assignments in order to successfully pass this course. There are both graded and pass/fail assignments. You will receive detailed instructions about every assignment at least two weeks before the assignment is due (exception: media/technology log). In addition to the assignments listed here, I might ask you to complete small homework tasks, such as bringing in examples to illustrate the essays we are reading.

Extensions and incompletes are only permitted for valid non-academic reasons (see attendance).

**Assignment schedule (IC = due in class; T = due on T-square by noon; TBA = method and time of submission are to be announced):**

<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
08/24/09, T	24hr media+technology use log (pass = 50; fail = 0)	50
09/09/09, T	Personal history of technology paper (graded)	200
09/23/09, printed, IC	The "crazy" paper: a critical reading response (graded)	200
09/30/09, TBA	A week in pictures (pass/fail)	50
10/16/09, TBA	Visual essay (graded)	100
11/06/09, TBA	Audio track for visual essay (graded)	100
11/25/09, TBA	Multimodal Manifesto (graded group project)	200(+50)
12/08/09, T	E-portfolio (pass/fail)	50
	Total possible points:	1000

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed three unexcused absences during the semester —use them wisely (if your unexcused absences exceed that limit, you put yourself at risk of failing the course). All other absences must be for valid, non-academic reasons, such as medical emergencies (confirmed by a doctor's note); family or personal emergencies (dean's note; pre-Thanksgiving travel does not count as family emergency); athletic competitions/obligations (coach's note, due at the beginning of the semester).

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to catch up on the work we have done during class. Also note that showing up more than ten minutes late to class automatically translates into an unexcused absence for that class meeting.

### **Participation**

This class is a discussion-based seminar. Consequently, your participation in class is crucial to the overall success of the class. You are expected to keep up with the readings and come to class prepared for discussion. Consistent good participation (i.e. completing the readings and contributing insightful comments and questions during class) will earn you up to an additional 50 points towards your overall grade.

**Plagiarism and the Honor Code**

You are responsible for knowing and abiding by Tech's policy for academic integrity. Consult the Honor Code online at <http://www.honor.gatech.edu>. Work that violates the honor code will receive zero credit and may result in failure of the entire course. I will also report any serious misconduct to the Dean of Students.

**Americans with Disabilities Act**

Accommodation: If you require accommodation to compensate for a disability, please speak with me outside of class so that we can identify an appropriate course of action.

**Note on Discrimination and Appropriate Language in the Classroom**

No form of harassment or discrimination is allowed in this class. In keeping with the professional nature of this course, only professional behavior is acceptable between the instructor and students and between students. No harassment of any kind is allowed in class including but not limited to gender, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.