

# New Media and a Democratic Society

MMC 6612 | Fall 2010 | Section 1975 | 1078 Weimer Hall  
Wednesdays 3–6 p.m. (periods 8, 9 and 10)

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**WEB SITE:** <http://mmc6612.wordpress.com/>

## Course Description

This course examines the relationships between communication technologies and democracy, not only in the United States but elsewhere as well. New communication technologies, such as the Internet, will not automatically lead to or improve democracy, but they do contribute to changes in the society as a whole. We will examine how changes related to communication media might enhance or curtail democracy, with a particular emphasis on the relationships among the press, the public, and the government in a democracy. Please note that the press includes TV, Internet, and other media. NGOs (nonprofits) also play a role in today's democracies. This is not a course in political communication.

## Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to identify and discuss, from an informed and up-to-date position, implications and possible consequences of various newer communication tools and systems, such as social networks, blogging, YouTube, RFID chips and other surveillance technologies, changing conditions of copyrights, the mobile Internet, and crowdsourcing.

## Attendance and Attitude

Students are expected to show respect for one another and for the instructor. Attendance and arriving on time for class are necessary. *Lateness and absences will result in a lower final grade.* If you have been absent, you are responsible for finding out about any missed material by going to the instructor's office hours. These matters will not be handled via e-mail.

Mobile devices must be turned OFF during class. Do not check text messages, e-mail, Facebook, etc., during class, as your instructor considers this quite rude and therefore grounds for disciplinary action. Give your full and undivided attention to anyone who is speaking in class, including your fellow students. Students are not permitted to use a computer during class unless instructed to do so.

## Course Deadlines

Late assignments are not accepted. This means that an assignment submitted late is graded as a zero. Assignments are not accepted via e-mail unless requested by the instructor. If an illness or a personal emergency prevents you from completing an assignment on time, advance notice and written documentation are required. No work for "extra credit" is accepted.

## Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty of any kind is not tolerated in this course. It will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs, and *it will result in a failing grade* for the course.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying and pasting the words or images of others and presenting them as your own.
- Using any work done by another person and submitting it for a class assignment.
- Submitting work you did for another class.

UF Student Honor Code

- > <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode.php>

## Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when making a request for accommodations.

Disability Resource Center

- > <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

## Required Readings

Students are required to read assigned scholarly articles pertinent to the weekly discussion topic. The articles are listed in the online syllabus (on the Course Schedule page) and are available through the UF library's Ares Course Reserves:

- > <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/>

## Recommended Books

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th or 6th ed. (You are required to follow APA style for all your citations and reference lists in this course.)

Rubin, R. B., Rubin, A. M., & Haridakis, P.M. (2009). *Communication Research: Strategies and Sources*, 7th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. (If you are a new master's student, this book will help you develop your research skills to meet the expectations of the Graduate Faculty.)

## Course Requirements

Please make sure to check the course Web site at least once a week. If you rely only on a printed copy, you may miss a change in the schedule.

- > WEB SITE: <http://mmc6612.wordpress.com/>

Weekly blog posts

Each blog post is a report or reflection on the assignment for the week. Each post should be 300 to 500 words long. Report as instructed on any activities assigned. Demonstrate your understanding of the

material. Show that you have both read/watched and understood any assigned reading or viewing. See the Web site for details.

### Weekly blog comments

Blog posts seem pointless if no one is reading them, and blog comments show a blogger that someone is paying attention. Thus each week you are asked to comment on three of the posts by your fellow students. THESE COMMENTS COUNT for 36 percent of your grade for the course.

See the Web site for details.

### Topic presentation

The topic presentations are based on the week's reading assignment. For the class meeting in which a student is assigned the topic presentation, that student is responsible for elaborating on and explaining the reading, with prompts from the professor. Each topic presentation must include at least three Web sites and/or blogs relevant to the assigned reading. Each student will be a topic presenter once during the semester. See the Web site for details.

### Media use diary

For one week, you will log all your media activity each day. Once your week begins, you will make one blog post each day (this is in addition to any other blog posts required) for seven days. Ideally you'll post at the end of your day, but you might choose to post first thing in the morning (about the previous day).

See the Web site for details.

### Class attendance and participation

Points will be subtracted if you miss more than one (1) class meeting, are chronically late, leave class early, or show inattention. Participation is expected; points will be subtracted if you do not contribute.

## Grading

Weekly blog posts	20 points
Weekly blog comments	36 points
Topic presentation	20 points
Media use diary	14 points
Class attendance and participation	10 points
TOTAL	100 points

92–100 points	A	72–77 points	C
90–91 points	A–	70–71 points	C–
88–89 points	B+	68–69 points	D+
82–87 points	B	62–67 points	D
80–81 points	B–	60–61 points	D–
78–79 points	C+	59 points or fewer	E

### UF Policies about Student Grades

> <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

## Course Schedule and Required Readings

Please note that many important details are on the Web site (<http://mmc6612.wordpress.com/>) and do not appear herein.

### Week 1 | Aug. 25

Introduction to the course.

### Week 2 | Sept. 1

Blog post 1 due. READ Morozov, 2009. The impact of the Internet on democracy.

### Week 3 | Sept. 8

Blog post 2 due. READ Hess, 2009. Using YouTube for democratic discussion and deliberation.

### Week 4 | Sept. 15

Blog post 3 due. READ Deuze, 2007. Participatory media culture; convergence of production and consumption.

### Week 5 | Sept. 22

Blog post 4 due. READ (a) Shepherd, 2009, AND (b) [Grossman](#) (2009). Twitter, user-generated content, government regulation, and corporation rights vs. individual rights.

### Week 6 | Sept. 29

Blog post 5 due. READ (a) Cammaerts, 2009, OR (b) Maynor, 2009. Hate speech, politics, and blogs.

### Week 7 | Oct. 6

Blog post 6 due. READ Mutz, 2009. Online shopping (seriously!): Social trust and civil society.

### Week 8 | Oct. 13

Blog post 7 due. READ (a) Xenos and Becker, 2009, and SCAN (b) Baum, 2003. *The Daily Show*, news, and an informed public.

### Week 9 | Oct. 20

Blog post 8 due. READ (a) Rohlinger and Brown, 2009, AND (b) [Talbot](#) (2007). Activism and the Internet.

### Week 10 | Oct. 27

Video: *Unconstitutional*, directed by Nonny de la Peña (2004). Or maybe *Burma VJ*, directed by Anders Østergaard (2008).

### Week 11 | Nov. 3

Blog post 9 due. READ (a) [Michael Nielsen](#) (2010) AND (b) [Steven Johnson](#) (2010). Open vs. closed systems.

### Week 12 | Nov. 10

Blog post 10 due. READING TBA. Or possibly the video *RIP: A Remix Manifesto* (<http://ripremix.com/>). Remix culture and intellectual property concerns.

Week 13 | Nov. 17

Blog post 11 due. READ (a) Muthukumaraswamy, 2010, AND (b) [Giridharadas](#) (2010). Crowdsourcing and its implications: Pros and cons.

Week 14 | Nov. 24

Thursday is Thanksgiving. Class will not meet on Wednesday.

Week 15 | Dec. 1

Blog post 12 due. READ (a) Sanderson, 2009, AND (b) Abe, 2009. Surveillance and privacy in the digital era.

Week 16 | Dec. 8

Summary and conclusions.

## Reading List

Abe, K. (2009). The myth of media interactivity: Technology, communications and surveillance in Japan. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26(2–3), 73–88. doi:[10.1177/0263276409103119](https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409103119)

Baum, M. A. (2003). Soft news and political knowledge: Evidence of absence or absence of evidence? *Political Communication*, 20(2), 173–190. doi:[10.1080/10584600390211181](https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600390211181)

Cammaerts, B. (2009). Radical pluralism and free speech in online public spaces: The case of North Belgian extreme right discourses. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 12(6), 555–575. doi:[10.1177/1367877909342479](https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877909342479)

Deuze, M. (2007). Convergence culture in the creative industries. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 10(2), 243–263. doi:[10.1177/1367877907076793](https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877907076793)

Giridharadas, A. (2010, March 12). Africa's gift to Silicon Valley: How to track a crisis. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/14/weekinreview/14giridharadas.html>

Grossman, L. (2009, June 17). Iran's protests: Why Twitter is the medium of the movement. *Time* magazine. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1905125,00.html>

Hess, A. (2009). Resistance up in smoke: Analyzing the limitations of deliberation on YouTube. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 26(5), 411–434. doi:[10.1080/15295030903325347](https://doi.org/10.1080/15295030903325347)

Johnson, S. (2010, April 23). The glass box and the commonplace book. Retrieved from <http://www.stevenberlinjohnson.com/2010/04/the-glass-box-and-the-commonplace-book.html>

Maynor, J. W. (2009). Blogging for democracy: Deliberation, autonomy, and reasonableness in the blogosphere. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 12(3), 443–468. doi:[10.1080/13698230903127937](https://doi.org/10.1080/13698230903127937)

- Morozov, E. (2009). The Internet: A room of our own? *Dissent*, 56(3), 80–85.
- Muthukumaraswamy, K. (2010). When the media meet crowds of wisdom. *Journalism Practice*, 4(1), 48–65. doi:[10.1080/17512780903068874](https://doi.org/10.1080/17512780903068874)
- Mutz, D. C. (2009). Effects of Internet commerce on social trust. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 73(3), 439–461. doi:[10.1093/pog/nfp042](https://doi.org/10.1093/pog/nfp042)
- Nielsen, M. (2010, April 17). Open architecture democracy. Retrieved from <http://michaelnielsen.org/blog/open-architecture-democracy/>
- Rohlinger, D. A., & Brown, J. (2009). Democracy, action, and the Internet after 9/11. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53(1), 133–150. doi:[10.1177/0002764209338791](https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764209338791)
- Sanderson, J. (2009). Professional athletes’ shrinking privacy boundaries: Fans, information and communication technologies, and athlete monitoring. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 2(2), 240–256.
- Shepherd, T. (2009). Twittering in the OECD’s “participative Web”: Microblogging and new media policy. *Global Media Journal—Canadian Edition*, 2(1), 149–165. Retrieved from [http://www.gmj.uottawa.ca/0901/v2i1\\_shepherd.pdf](http://www.gmj.uottawa.ca/0901/v2i1_shepherd.pdf)
- Talbot, D. (2007, October 3). Burma’s Internet crackdown. *Technology Review*. Retrieved from <http://www.technologyreview.com/web/19474/>
- Xenos, M. A., & Becker, A. B. (2009). Moments of Zen: Effects of *The Daily Show* on information seeking and political learning. *Political Communication*, 26(3), 317–332. doi:[10.1080/10584600903053569](https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600903053569)

## UF Dates

Classes begin	Aug. 23
Drop/Add	Aug. 23–27
Classes end	Dec. 8
Final exams	Dec. 11, 13–17
Sept. 6	Labor Day
Oct. 15–16	Homecoming
Nov. 11	Veterans Day
Nov. 25–27	Thanksgiving