



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

FALL 2023 - COMM712 - ADVANCED CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL METHODS:
MEDIA AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

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CLASS SESSION: [REDACTED]

OFFICE HOURS: [REDACTED]

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course serves as an advanced seminar in critical methods as applied to media and digital studies. This includes analyses of both text and platform. As a part of our inquiry we will first consider what it means to engage in critical work, situating our work within the larger field. We will then explore different approaches to this work, including production, audience research, and discourse analysis. We then consider methods specific to digital studies including CTDA and digital ethnography. Through careful analysis and play we will consider how the digital humanities allow us to ask new questions in new ways. Throughout the term we will continue to develop our own ethical guidelines for our work building on the work done in internet studies, critical race studies, feminist and queer studies, critical communication and philosophy. Finally, we will consider how the digital positions critical work for public audiences.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the term students in this course will:

- Make distinctions between different types of critical media and digital research including digital rhetoric, audience analysis, critical technocultural discourse analysis and digital ethnography
- Engage with scholarship that exemplifies best practices in using digital tools for research and studying digital objects
- Consider ethics in every aspect of critical research including design and dissemination
- Practice types of writing useful in the research process including: review of the work of others, traditional analysis, and writing for non-academic spaces
- Participate in writing for the public and consider how critical research and activism may become linked together

REQUIRED RESOURCES:

Brock, A. (2020) *Distributed Blackness*, NYU Press.

Select one of the following books:

Gray, K. L. (2020). *Intersectional tech: Black users in digital gaming*. LSU Press.

Massanari, A. (2015). *Participatory culture, community, and play : Learning from reddit* (Digital formations, vol. 75). New York: Peter Lang.

Roberts, S. T. (2019). *Behind the Screen: Content Moderation in the Shadows of Social Media*. Yale University Press.

All other materials available through ELMS or UMD library

ASSESSMENTS

My task as your instructor is to help facilitate your knowledge. Assessments are the mechanism I use to best understand what you have learned and how you are able to take what you have learned and use it productively. The goal is that you are always submitting work you feel confident about with enough time to get feedback.

Ethics review:

Each week beginning in week three 1-2 students will be responsible for posting a news story/ twitter thread/ medium story/ blog post through which we can consider ethics in media and digital studies research. The student responsible for posting the story will write 300-500 word write up on the course discussion board about the link. Students will then engage in commenting on the OP (original post). Student may respond to the author, request clarity or offer new ideas. On your week, you must give classmates at least 3 days prior to class to respond (your OP is due the Friday before class).

Methods paper proposal; and presentation:

Students will submit a 2500-3000 word proposal/extended abstract in which they focus on utilizing one of the critical methods we study during the term to analyze a media artifact, draw comparisons on multiple methods, or craft an argument about the utility of a single or multiple methods in their subfield of study. In addition to the proposal, students should provide insight about where they would submit this article (journal or conference) and a workplan of how they would go about completing. Students will submit their abstract to their classmate and the instructor for review. During the last class session each student will provide a 10-minute conference presentation of their work followed by an audience Q&A

Conference Review assignment:

You will be assigned a peer review for one of your classmates. In this abstract review you will provide feedback on paper in practice for your review of conference submissions or journal articles. Rather than simply providing a score, your task is to provide feedback that enhances the paper for future submission. You will separately provide author and editor (instructor) feedback. We will discuss best strategies and approaches for reviewing during class during the term. A more detailed explanation can be found on ELMS.

Writing for the public:

Students will submit a polished 1500-word essay (or digital production) at the conclusion of the term for the public. This could take the form of a blog post, medium essay, vlogs, or even a TikTok video (paired with explanation of how you used the medium to convey the message). The goal of this assignment is to take a piece of academic work, theory, or research and utilize a strategy to make it usable by a public outside the academy/your field of study. Students could write about their ethics case, their methods paper, or bring synergy to a current debate in the field/public domain. The key is to identify your public and demonstrate your capacity to update your writing/presenting to meet their need and facilitate understanding/change.

EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING PROCEDURES

The goal of providing feedback via grades on assignments is for students to work toward achieving their goals in the course and creating an external measure by which achievement of those goals can be assessed. For every assignment in the class, feedback in advance of submission is possible via office hour consultation with the instructor.

Student's grades will be available on ELMS. All questions regarding grades should be addressed during office hours or by appointment. Calculation errors may be addressed via email.

Ethics Review	15%
Paper Proposal	30%
Presentation	10%
Peer Review	15%
Writing for the Public	30%

COURSE PROCEDURES AND POLICIES:

Official University undergraduate policies can be found here:

<http://www.uqst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>.

COMMUNICATION ABOUT THIS COURSE

This course uses ELMS and email regularly. All course documents, information, grades, and readings will be available on ELMS. Please make sure your email information with UMD is up-to-date so that you can receive all relevant information. You are responsible for receiving information sent through ELMS and email. My preferred method of contact for short clarifying questions is email. However, be sure to first check the syllabus and schedule as the answers to many questions can be found in these documents. ***I will return emails during business hours M-F and within 24 hours on the weekend.*** For extended questions and feedback on assignments, grades, and readings you are encouraged to visit during office hours or set up other times to meet which are mutually convenient.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES:

Please let me know if you need to miss class. All notes are the responsibility of the student. Be sure to consult with classmates to retrieve any missed notes. Feel free to use office hours to provide clarity on anything missed in your absence. Being absent does not remove the requirement to complete work on time. Please make every attempt to be in class on presentation days. If you must be absent, please make a viable alternate arrangement by switching days with a classmate or speaking with the instructor well in advance.

[\[V-100\(G\) University of Maryland Policy on Excused Absence\]](#).

EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

In the event of a university closure or delay or the need to cancel class arises you will be notified via email. If the instructor needs to cancel class, students will be notified as soon as possible and online activities may be provided. Please ensure that you check your email and ELMS for any communication in these instances.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:

Students are expected to be in class on time and leave class only when it is finished. The instructor is committed to doing the same. Frequent late arrival or early departure will be considered as a disturbance to class. Should you leave the class early or arrive late for an unavoidable reason, please let me know before or soon after the class. Please show respect to your peers and me by having your attention on the subject of the day rather than work from other classes or side conversations. This is a course based on the premise that technology is integral to our lives and learning. Therefore laptops, tablets, and cell phone use are allowed and encouraged if they aid in your participation in the class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

(<https://www.president.umd.edu/sites/president.umd.edu/files/documents/policies/III-100A.pdf>). The UMD Honor Code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. On every examination, paper or another academic exercise not exempted by the instructor, students must write by hand and sign the following pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).

Allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Student Honor Council: <http://www.shc.umd.edu>

Students who engage in academic dishonesty in this course will receive no points for the assignment in question and will be immediately reported to the Honor Council and Office of Judicial Programs for further action. There will be no warnings.

Definitions for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, etc. can be found at: <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>.]

If you are concerned about issues of plagiarism, please see the instructor. It is my goal that we all work toward academic integrity and that no one is penalized.

ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY SUPPORT:

<https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/>

The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. The University of Maryland is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS) provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals to provide equal access to services, programs and activities. ADS cannot assist retroactively, so it is generally best to request accommodations several weeks before the semester begins or as soon as a disability becomes known. Any student who needs accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that I have sufficient time to make arrangements.

For assistance in obtaining an accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability Service at 301-314-7682, or email them at adsfrontdesk@umd.edu. Information about sharing your accommodations with instructors, note taking assistance, and more is available from the Counseling Center.

Separately if you would like to talk about ways in which the classroom can be more welcoming and we together can better ensure your success please feel free to reach out via email or in person.

NOTICE OF MANDATORY REPORTING:

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible University Employee," and I must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to UMD's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy on Sexual Harassment and Other Sexual Misconduct. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of UMD's confidential resources, such as CARE to Stop Violence (located on the Ground Floor of the Health Center) at 301-741-3442 or the Counseling Center (located at the Shoemaker Building) at 301-314-7651. You may also seek assistance or supportive measures from UMD's Title IX Coordinator, Angela Nastase, by calling 301-405-1142, or emailing titleIXcoordinator@umd.edu. To view further information on the above, please visit the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct's website at ocrsm.umd.edu.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE:

Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted. They may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor. Copyright infringements may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. **The instructor does not permit video or audio recordings of class sessions without consent.**

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCE SEXUAL MISCONDUCT:

[<http://www.president.umd.edu/administration/policies/section-vi-general-administration/vi-160a-0>. You may consider using the following text from the Faculty Handbook:

The University of Maryland is committed to providing support and resources, including academic accommodations, for students who experience sexual or relationship violence as defined by the University's Sexual Misconduct Policy. To report an incident and/or obtain an academic accommodation, contact the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct at 301-405-1142. If you wish to speak confidentially, contact Campus Advocates Respond and Educate (CARE) to Stop Violence at 301-741-3555. As 'responsible

university employees' faculty are required to report any disclosure of sexual misconduct, i.e., they may not hold such disclosures in confidence. For more information: <http://www.umd.edu/ocrsm/>]

DIVERSITY:

[<https://www.president.umd.edu/sites/president.umd.edu/files/documents/policies/III-900A.pdf>]

The University of Maryland values the diversity of its student body. Along with the University, I am committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages the equitable participation of all students regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Potential devaluation of students in the classroom that can occur by reference to demeaning stereotypes of any group and/or overlooking the contributions of a particular group to the topic under discussion is inappropriate.

COURSE EVALUATION

Please submit a course evaluation through Student Feedback on Course Experiences in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to Course Experiences is confidential. Campus will notify you when Student Feedback on Course Experiences is open for you to complete your evaluations at the end of the semester. Please go directly to the [**Student Feedback on Course Experiences**](#) to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing through Testudo the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Course schedule is subject to change with written notice from instructor

August 28	<p>Introductions - Let's start with ethics.</p> <p>Davisson, A. & Booth. P. (2016). <i>Controversies in Digital Ethics</i>. Bloomsbury Academic (Introduction) (ebook)</p> <p>Ess, C. <i>Digital Media Ethics</i>. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication.</p> <p>AoIR ethics (online)</p>
September 4	LABOR DAY - NO CLASS SESSION
September 11	<p>Why a critical approach to media and digital communication research?</p> <p>Fraser, N. (2013). What's critical about critical theory?. In <i>Feminists Read Habermas (RLE Feminist Theory)</i> (pp. 37-72). Routledge.</p> <p>Luker, K. (2008). <i>Salsa dancing into the social sciences : Research in an age of info-glut</i>. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. (2008) (available as e-book) Read as needed with focus on: Introduction Chapter 2: What's it all about? Chapter 4: What's it a case of anyway?</p> <p>Crotty, M. (1998). <i>The foundations of social research : Meaning and perspective in the research process</i>. London: Sage Publications.</p> <p>Read as needed with focus on: Introduction Chapter 6: Critical Inquiry- The Marxist Heritage Chapter 7: Critical Inquiry- Contemporary Critics and Contemporary Critique</p> <p>Markham, A., & Baym, N. (2009). <i>Internet inquiry : Conversations about method</i>. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. (2009). (available as e-book)</p> <p>What Constitutes Quality in Qualitative Internet Research? By Nancy Baym</p> <p>Producing work that is meaningful across Time, Space, and Culture by Annette Markham</p>
September 18	<p>Rhetorical Criticism, (Critical) Discourse Analysis, and Content Analysis, Important distinctions.</p> <p>Hart, R. & Daughton, S. (2005). <i>Modern Rhetorical Criticism</i>, 3rd ed. Boston, Pearson. (Chapter 1).</p> <p>Foss, S. K. (2009). <i>Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice</i>, 4th ed. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. (Chapter 1-2)</p> <p>Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). 18 Critical discourse analysis. <i>The handbook of discourse analysis</i>, 349-371.</p> <p>Wodak, R. (2001). What CDA is about—a summary of its history, important concepts and its developments. <i>Methods of critical discourse analysis</i>, 1, 1-13.</p>

	<p>Maier, M. (2017). Content analysis: advantages and disadvantages. In M. Allen (Ed.), <i>The sage encyclopedia of communication research methods</i> (Vol. 1, pp. 240-242). SAGE Publications, Inc,</p> <p>Maier, M. (2017). Content analysis, definition of. In M. Allen (Ed.), <i>The sage encyclopedia of communication research methods</i> (Vol. 1, pp. 243-245). SAGE Publications, Inc,</p> <p>Holman, A. (2017). Content analysis, process of. In M. Allen (Ed.), <i>The sage encyclopedia of communication research methods</i> (Vol. 1, pp. 246-248). SAGE</p>
September 25	<p>Digital Rhetorical Criticism</p> <p>Boyle, C., Brown Jr, J. J., & Ceraso, S. (2018). The digital: Rhetoric behind and beyond the screen. <i>Rhetoric Society Quarterly</i>, 48(3), 251-259.</p> <p>Dan Ehrenfeld. (2020) "Sharing a World with Others": Rhetoric's Ecological Turn and the Transformation of the Networked Public Sphere. <i>Rhetoric Society Quarterly</i> 50:5, pages 305-320</p> <p>Zhaozhe Wang. (2023) Transnational Rhetorical Circulation in the Splinternet Age. <i>Rhetoric Society Quarterly</i> 0:0, pages 1-15.</p> <p>Rossette-Crake, F. (2020). 'the new oratory': public speaking practice in the digital, neoliberal age. <i>Discourse Studies</i>, 22(5), 571–589. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445620916363</p> <p>Miles Coleman. (2021) Leveraging the Rhetorical Energies of Machines: COVID-19, Misinformation, and Persuasive Labor. <i>Human-Machine Communication</i> 3, pages 11-26.</p>
October 2	<p>Audience and Reception Studies</p> <p>Radway, J. A. (1983). Women read the romance: The interaction of text and context. <i>Feminist studies</i>, 9(1), 53-78.</p> <p>Radway, J. (1988). Reception study: Ethnography and the problems of dispersed audiences and nomadic subjects. <i>Cultural studies</i>, 2(3), 359-376.</p> <p>Hall, S. (2001). Encoding/decoding. <i>Media and cultural studies: Keywords</i>, 2.</p> <p>Hall, S. (2005). The rediscovery of 'ideology': Return of the repressed in media studies. In <i>Culture, society and the media</i>(pp. 61-95). Routledge.</p> <p>Morley, D. (2006). Unanswered questions in audience research. <i>The Communication Review</i>, 9(2), 101-121.</p> <p>Schrøder, K. C. (2019). Audience Reception Research in a Post-broadcasting Digital Age. <i>Television & New Media</i>, 20(2), 155–169.</p>

October 9	<p>Digital Humanities – From theory to practice</p> <p><i>Choose 3 of the following:</i></p> <p>The Digital in the Humanities: An Interview with Marisa Parham By Melissa Dinsman</p> <p>Gold, Matthew K., & Klein, L.F. (2019). A DH that Matters," in Debates in Digital Humanities. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press.</p> <p>Liu, A. (2012). Where is cultural criticism in the digital humanities?. Debates in the digital humanities, 490-509.</p> <p>Liu, A. (2013). The meaning of the digital humanities. pmla, 128(2), 409-423.</p> <p>Kirschenbaum, M. G. (2012). What is Digital Humanities?. Is a Tactical Term." Debates in the Digital Humanities, 415-428.</p> <p><i>Choose 3 of the following:</i></p> <p>Gallon, K. (2016). Making a case for the Black digital humanities. Debates in the Digital Humanities, 42-49.</p> <p>Lothian, A., & Phillips, A. (2013). Can digital humanities mean transformative critique?. Journal of E-Media Studies, 3(1), 4.</p> <p>Bailey, M. (2015). # transform (ing) DH Writing and Research: An Autoethnography of Digital Humanities and Feminist Ethics. DHQ: Digital Humanities Quarterly, 9(2).</p> <p>Risam, R. (2018). Decolonizing the digital humanities in theory and practice. In The Routledge companion to media studies and digital humanities (pp. 78-86). Routledge.</p> <p>Ruberg, B., Boyd, J., & Howe, J. (2018). Toward a queer digital humanities. Bodies of information: Intersectional feminism and the digital humanities, 108-128.</p> <p>Posner, M. (2017, December). What's Next: The Radical Unrealised Potential of Digital Humanities." dhdebates.(nd). Web.</p>
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October 16	<p>DH Tools Workshop</p> <p>Posner, M. (2013). How did they make that?. Miriam Posner's Blog, 29.</p> <p>Tools TBD</p>
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October 23	<p>CTDA Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis</p> <p>Brock, A. (2018). Critical technocultural discourse analysis. New Media & Society, 20(3), 1012–1030.</p> <p>Brock, A. (2021) Distributed Blackness, NYU Press.</p>
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October 30	<p>CTDA Pt2</p> <p>Lu, J. H., & Steele, C. K. (2019). 'Joy is resistance': cross-platform resilience and (re) invention of Black oral culture online. <i>Information, Communication & Society</i>, 22(6), 823-837.</p> <p>Maragh, R. S. (2018). Authenticity on "black Twitter": Reading racial performance and social networking. <i>Television & New Media</i>, 19(7), 591-609.</p> <p>Sweeney, M. E. (2016). The Ms. Dewey "experience": Technoculture, gender, and race. <i>Digital sociologies</i>, 401-420.</p> <p>Williams, J. M. (2022). Reconstituting Indigenous Identity on# NativeTikTok: Navigating narratives of erasure mediated by the 'For You'algorithm.</p>
November 6	<p>Digital Ethnography</p> <p>Markham, A. N. (2016). Ethnography in the digital internet era. <i>Sage handbook of qualitative research</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.</p> <p>Florini, S. (2019). Beyond Hashtags: Racial Politics and Black Digital Networks (Vol. 19). NYU Press. (methods appendix)</p> <p>Postill, J., & Pink, S. (2012). Social Media Ethnography: The Digital Researcher in a Messy Web. <i>Media International Australia</i>, 145(1), 123–134.</p> <p>TBD</p>
November 13	<p>Digital Ethnography Pt 2</p> <p>One of the books below:</p> <p>Gray, K. L. (2020). <i>Intersectional tech: Black users in digital gaming</i>. LSU Press.</p> <p>Roberts, S. T. (2019). <i>Behind the Screen: Content Moderation in the Shadows of Social Media</i>. Yale University Press.</p> <p>Massanari, A. (2015). Participatory culture, community, and play : Learning from reddit (Digital formations, vol. 75). New York: Peter Lang.</p>
November 20	<p>NO CLASS SESSION (Individual meetings as needed)</p> <p>PROPOSAL DUE by 11/26</p>
November 27	<p>Reviewing with Care and Critic as Advocate/Activist (Writing for the public)</p> <p>The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods Activism and Social Justice</p> <p>Making a Difference: (Re)Connecting Communication Scholarship with Pedagogy</p> <p>Communication Activism Communication Activism Research: Engaged</p>

	<p>Communication Scholarship for Social Justice</p> <p>Three cases:</p> <p>Algorithms of Oppression</p> <p>Race after Technology</p> <p>Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest</p>
December 4	NO CLASS SESSION – REVIEW DUE
December 11	FINAL PRESENTATIONS IN CLASS
December 15	NO CLASS MEETING – WRITING FOR THE PUBLIC ASSIGNMENT DUE by 5pm

