Lisa Nakamura
AMCULT/DIGITAL 601 003: Digital Media Theory
████████████

Office hours: ████████████████████████
 I will be in my office on ██████████████████ for drop in and scheduled office hours.
 Please sign up using the link and send an email to let me know whether you'd rather meet on
 Zoom or in person.
 Email: lnakamur@umich.edu

This graduate reading seminar provides a comprehensive introduction to the major themes and issues in Digital Media Theory. Drawing on scholarship in material and cultural histories of computing, media archaeology, software and platform studies, race/ethnicity/gender and digital culture, post-Marxian theory, digital media analysis, transnational and memetic digital practice, the course mixes theoretical material with more empirically oriented studies. The course focuses particularly on the relation between social, political, and cultural contexts and the development of ideas, practices, tools, and objects within digital studies.

Week 1: 1/29 Introductions, Frameworks and Debates in Digital Theory
 Galloway, "The Paucity of Digital Theory"
 ████████: What do you want to read and learn in this class? Why?

Week 2: 9/12 Genealogies and Methodologies
 Haraway, Donna. 1991. "A Manifesto for Cyborgs," *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. London and New York: Routledge.
 Deleuze, Gilles. 1992. "Postscript on the Societies of Control." *October* 59 3–7.
 Additional: Wynter, Sylvia. 2003. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation--An Argument." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3 (3): 257–337. https://doi.org/10.1353/ncr.2004.0015.
 Additional: Adorno, Theodor, "Schema of Mass Culture and Culture Industry Reconsidered"

Week 3: 9/19 Platforms and Formats
 Bratton, Benjamin H. 2016. "Platform and Stack, Model and Machine," section in *The Stack: On Software and Sovereignty*. Cambridge: MIT Press. pg. 44-72 link to U M library fulltext
 Montfort, Nick, and Ian Bogost. 2009. *Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. Pg 1-55 in files
 Manovich, Lev. 2001. *The Language of New Media*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. Section 1 "What is New Media?" Section 5 "The Forms" fulltext in files
 Additional: Gillespie, Tarleton. 2010. "The Politics of 'Platforms.'" *New Media and Society* 12 (3). http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1601487.
 Stern, Jonathan. 2012. *MP3: The Meaning of a Format*. Durham NC: Duke University Press.

Week 4: 9/26 Computers, Histories of Digital Labor, Digital Materialisms
 Jones-Imhotep, Edward. 2020. "The Ghost Factories: Histories of Automata and Artificial Life." *History and Technology* 36 (1): 3–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/07341512.2020.1757972.
 Franklin, Seb. 2021. *The Digitally Disposed: Racial Capitalism and the Informatics of Value*. 1-69, Ch 6, Ch 8

Atanasoski, Neda, and Kalindi Vora. 2019. *Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures*. Introduction and Chapter 1 1-55

Additional: Nakamura, Lisa. 2014. "Indigenous Circuits: Navajo Women and the Racialization of Early Electronic Manufacture." *American Quarterly* 66 (4): 919–41. https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2014.0070.

Ernst, "Media Archaeological Method,"

Recommended: Abbate, Janet, and Stephanie Dick, eds. 2022. *Abstractions and Embodiments*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Week 5: 10/3 Marxism + Digital Capitalism

Marx, Karl. "The Labour Process and Alienation in Machinery and Science," *Grundrisse*, 583-92. in files

Robinson, Cedric J. 2021. "Racial Capitalism: the Nonobjective Character of Capitalist Development," *Black Marxism, Revised and Updated Third Edition: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition.* University of North Carolina Press. Ch 1: Racial Capitalism (files)

Ekbia, H. R, and Bonnie A Nardi. 2017. *Heteromation, and Other Stories of Computing and Capitalism*. ((link to UM Library copy: https://ieeexplore-ieee-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/servlet/opac?bknumber=7932715) (chs 1-2, ch 5, 8)

Beller, Jonathan. 2021. *The World Computer: Derivative Conditions of Racial Capitalism*. (link to UM Library copy: https://read-dukeupress-edu.proxy.lib.umich.edu/books/book/2856/The-World-ComputerDerivative-Conditions-of-Racial (Introduction, pgs 1-63)

Additional: Srnicek, Nick. 2016. *Platform Capitalism*. Polity Press.

Terranova, Tiziana. 2000. "Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy." *Social Text* 18 (63): 33–58.

Week 6: 10/10 Black and Indigenous Digital Studies

Guest: Catherine Knight Steele, Associate Professor, University of Maryland, Director, Black Communication and Technology (BCaT) Lab, Director, Graduate Certificate in Digital Studies in the Arts and Humanities **please come with prepared questions; this is not a guest lecture but rather a research Q and A session**

Steele, Catherine Knight. 2022. *Digital Black Feminism*. New York: New York University Press. (Intro, Chs 1-3)

Brock, Andre. 2020. *Distributed Blackness: African American Cybercultures*. New York: NYU Press. (Ch 1, 4, 5)

Duarte, Marisa Elena. 2017. *Network Sovereignty: Building the Internet across Indian Country*. Seattle: University of Washington. (Intro, Ch 1 and 7) https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1530160.

Additional: Browne, Simone. 2015. *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Duke University Press.

Week 7: 10/24 Digital Ethics, Algorithms, the Body

Amoore, Louise. 2020. *Cloud Ethics: Algorithms and the Attributes of Ourselves and Others*. Durham: Duke University Press. Intro, Ch 2, Ch 4 in files

Wiener, Norbert. 1950. *The Human Use of Human Beings; Cybernetics and Society*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. "What is Cybernetics?" and "The First and Second Industrial Revolution" in files

Foucault, Michel, "The Body and Power," 1975.

Additional: Critical Algorithm Studies Reading List from the Social Media Collective

Week 8: 10/31 Global Digital Theory

Terranova, Tiziana, and Ravi Sundaram. 2021. "Colonial Infrastructures and Techno-Social Networks." *E-Flux Journal* #123 (December). https://www.e-flux.com/journal/123/437385/colonial-infrastructures-and-techno-social-networks/.

Achille Mbembe, 2021. "Futures of Life and Futures of Reason." *Public Culture* 33 (1 (93)): 11–33. https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-8742136.

Chaar López, Iván. 2022. "Latina/o/e Technoscience: Labor, Race, and Gender in Cybernetics and Computing." *Social Studies of Science*, July, 03063127221108515. https://doi.org/10.1177/03063127221108515.

brainstorming readings for Week 10

Week 9: 11/7 Surveillance, Data, Discrimination

Chun, Wendy. 2021. *Discriminating Data: Correlation, Neighborhoods, and the New Politics of Recognition*. Cambridge: MIT Press. (Introduction, Ch 1 "Correlating Eugenics")

Sutherland, Tonia. 2017. "Making a Killing: On Race, Ritual, and (Re)Membering in Digital Culture." *Preservation, Digital Technology & Culture* 46 (1): 32–40. https://doi.org/10.1515/pdtc-2017-0025.

Johnson, Jessica Marie. 2018. "Markup Bodies: Black [Life] Studies and Slavery [Death] Studies at the Digital Crossroads." *Social Text* 36 (4 (137)): 57–79. https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-7145658.

Additional and highly recommended: Critical Dataset Studies Reading List

Week 10: 11/14 Seminar Choice: Digital Affect, Black Digital Studies +

Hu, Tung-Hui, *Digital Lethargy* Chs 4-5

Benjamin, Ruha, *Race After Technology* pgs 1-32

Weheliye, Alexander, "Feenin': Posthuman Voices in Contemporary Black Popular Music," *Social Text*, 71 (Volume 20, Number 2), Summer 2002, pp. 21-47

Additional: Russell, Legacy, *Glitch Feminism*

Week 11: 11/21 **Digital Lethargy Edition:** New Histories of Computational Personhood

Cohen, Kris, and Scott C. Richmond, eds. 2022. "New Histories of Computational Personhood." *JCMS* 61 (4): 158–62.

Please spend 30% less time on this class than you normally would. Class will go from ██████ for individual consultations, sign ups: cake, and therapy dog

Week 12: 11/28 <mark>Please bring your computer for this one! If you'd like to borrow a laptop please let me know by Sunday the 27th at noon.</mark> Recap discussion (please present the three most valuable/memorable points from your presentation in class in 5 mins or less), research collaboration activity, ████████. co-author matchmaking, co-working on paper drafts link to week 12 and week 13 ppt

Week 13: 12/5 Paper draft workshopping, individual paper consultations ████████████
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Work for the seminar includes reading approximately 200-300 pages per week, 400-600 word weekly reading responses posted to Canvas, one in-class presentation (15 minutes presentation plus 15-20 minutes discussion, and one paper.

Accommodations and Access: Please contact me to arrange these.

Absences: Please give me advance warning if you know you will be absent.

Lecture Capture: I will turn on Lecture Capture for people who request it in order to catch up on a missed seminar meeting. In the interest of preserving the privacy of participants these recordings will only be available to those who have missed class.

This course fulfills the core course requirement for students enrolled (or planning to enroll) in the Digital Studies Graduate Certificate Program. While some background in digital technology and media theory is helpful, the course does not require any particular expertise.

Grading

        Please let me know if an assignment will arrive late.

1. Scholarly paper: 10-12 page original paper on **a topic related to our class,** employing a majority of materials and examples taken from our syllabus and connected to your own disciplinary interests. Please do not submit a recycled or revised paper from another class. Late papers may not receive written feedback. (10-12 pages) **50%**.
2. One visual in-class presentation / class leader session of 15 minutes on a topic of your own research interest and another 15-20 minutes of class discussion led by you. A sign-up sheet will be distributed in the first week of classes. If needed, share extra reading and other materials prior to class through Google docs or email them to instructors for Canvas upload. **25%**.
3. Class Participation + Reading Responses: ~~including engaged commenting on your colleagues' reading responses:~~ **25%.**

In-class presentation and discussion (25%):

- Read the assigned text(s) for that week and choose the one(s) you will present on. Please coordinate with other presenters if there are any to avoid overlap. Share other materials of your choice that relate to the topic of the week in advance to class.
- Prepare a one-page handout as an aid to class discussion. This handout should list what you consider to be the three or four most interesting analytical points you want to discuss, and especially how they relate to the main assignments of the class. The handout should also offer two questions designed to provoke interesting, wide-ranging general class discussion. The questions should focus on the concepts, theories, and critical frames from the readings.
- Distribute this handout to all class members at the start of the seminar.
- You will receive a 5-minute warning. A timer will go off at the 15-minute mark, and you must stop talking then. Again, this is not intended to embarrass you. Rather, it is meant to prepare you for professional presentations, which are always time-limited. Speaking concisely and effectively is an important skill in any profession.
- At the end of the presentation, presenters will lead the class discussion. You should be prepared to pose discussion-worthy questions about the readings, call on your peers, and listen to contributions and facilitate productive conversation among class members.

GUIDELINES FOR DIALOGUE

We will do our best to:

1. Maintain confidentiality. We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange.

2. Commit to learning from each other. We will listen to other and not talk at each other. We acknowledge differences among us in backgrounds, skills, interests, identities and values. We realize that it is these very differences that will increase our awareness and understanding through this process.

3. Not demean, devalue, or "put down" people for their experiences, lack of experiences, or difference in interpretation of those experiences.

4. Trust that people are always doing the best they can.
   We will give each other the benefit of the doubt. We will assume we are all trying our hardest and that our intentions are good even when the impact is not.

5. Challenge the idea and not the person. If we wish to challenge something that has been said, we will challenge the idea or the practice referred to, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.

6. Speak our discomfort. If something is bothering us, we will share this with the group. Often our emotional reactions to this process offer the most valuable learning opportunities.

7. Step Up, Step Back. We will be mindful of taking up much more space than others. On the same note, empower ourselves to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.

8. Not to freeze people in time. We are all works in progress. We will be willing to change and make space for others to do so. Therefore we will not assume that one comment or one opinion made at one time captures the whole of a person's character.

source: The Program on Intergroup Relations, University of Michigan, 2012