DIGITAL 458/610: Networked Disability Cultures

Fall 2023

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David Adelman

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Office hours: ████████████████████████
 or by appointment
Office: ██████████████
Class website: Link will go here

Other Information: While I will always strive to be responsive to your queries, concerns, and needs, please allow up to 24 hours for responses to emails, 48 hours on the weekend. You do not need to schedule an appointment to take advantage of my office hours. I will be available to you during this time.

Course Description

The internet has long been a space for disability community, mutual aid, and activism. But what does it mean to engage meaningfully (which is to say ethically, empathetically, and creatively with technology) in such that that embraces difference as essential to knowing and making? Kate Ellis and Mike Kent, writing in *Disability and New Media*, suggest that the internet has "opened up" the world for disabled people. How might we complicate this, build on this foundation, and imagine more equitable futures for all? In order to answer these questions and more, this class is a survey of the debates and issues that animate current disability technocultures. No familiarity with disability studies is presumed or required, and we will be taking a deliberately intersectional approach to the study of disability technocultures, paying particular attention to the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class alongside technology, attending to the unique provocations and opportunities these positionalities offer the technologies that surround and envelop us.

This course presents a theoretical survey of online environments and infrastructures, covering a wide variety of networked media—from podcasts and documentary film to social media platforms and digital zines. The quarter will culiminate in a collaborate project that invites our class to critically and creatively reflect on local histories of access, technology, and disability culture.

Learning Outcomes

 Students will:

• Articulate a range of theories and frameworks for understanding disability culture and technology use, particularly as they emerge and are practiced online.
• Become familiar with work in both disability and digital studies, as well as cultural studies and science and technology studies (STS).
• Investigate a range of cultural productions related to disability, community, and culture.
• Explore a range of compositional mediums

• Integrate existing scholarship into their own original research

For the purposes of this course, research as such includes both traditional scholarly product, as well as mixed methodology new media and artistic work.

Required Texts

Design Justice** ISBN info to go here**

Alice Wong, *Year of the Tiger*: *An Activist's Life* (ISBN: 978-0593315392) UM Library Link: https://web.s.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=dcbe017a-1589-43ad-aba5-2e5539d58157%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=3114858&db=nlebk

(All other Readings will be posted to Canvas and Google Drive)

Course Policies

Grading Criteria

Class Participation	5%
Blog Portfolio	20%
Access Audits (4)	20%
Project 1	10%
Project 2	15%
Access Histories Project	30%

Group authored Proposal	5%
Individual Reflection	5%
Final project	20%

A Note on what "Participation" means:

This is a hybrid course, which means that our course time will be distributed across both digital environments and in-person instruction. Modes of engagements will shift across platforms, and

interact differently across individual access needs; however, in general, participation in the context of this course includes arriving on time, (digitally or in person) active listening, completing in-class activities such as ongoing access audits of digital and physical platforms, being prepared to contribute your views on the assigned reading (via speech and/or writing) and contributing to classroom community and citizenship.

Building Classroom Community and Citizenship

It is our responsibility to work together to produce a classroom environment where everyone can share, discuss, and interpret the materials at hand as well as create and contribute their own work respectfully and productively. Disagreements and conflicting perspectives will, unavoidably, emerge. To ensure that participants feel comfortable contributing a diverse set of thoughts, comments, and views, we will not use oppressive or harmful language, tolerate harassment, personal attacks, and other forms of actions and expressions that unduly distract from the educational mission and inflict emotional, physical, or psychological harm on those involved. Part of the role of encouraging a diverse learning environment is acknowledging that individuals should feel safe and respected to contribute to the classroom in good faith. This involves not only allowing everyone opportunities to contribute their thoughts but to be mindful of how we recognize and address others.

Do not assume things about others' identities, backgrounds, or experiences—whether that is age, race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, etc… Refer to people by their names, pronouns, and other identifiers that they disclose. Avoid insisting on imposing identity markers onto others. Allow people to self-identify as they feel comfortable. Please discuss with me any concerns you have regarding an unsafe or hostile classroom environment, particularly if something arises that causes distress.

Copyright, Fair Use, and Plagiarism

Working in digital environments poses all sorts of new questions regarding copyright and intellectual property, and we will discuss these issues during our time together. Importantly, and especially if you wish to publish/present digital content outside the confines of this course, Fair Use is an affirmative defense. That is, it does not foreclose the possibility of other parties litigating your work. We will discuss the ramifications of this more in depth as we progress in our work. In short, however, in the course we will continuously practice ***ethical citation and sourcing of content.***

 Plagiarism is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. person. If you are found to have knowingly plagiarized, you may fail the assignment and potentially the course, your case may be sent to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, and you may be placed on academic probation. Please read the LSA's policies on academic misconduct. The college's

policy may be found in full here: https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity/academic-misconduct.html. If you have questions about how to reference material or what constitutes plagiarism, please email me, come to my office hours, or make an appointment.

Access and Accommodations

Services for Students with Disabilities, located in G-664 Haven Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. With or without documentation, it is my intent to make our learning experience as accessible as possible. Regardless of whether or not you are registered with SSD, please let me know what we can do to maximize your participation and general access in this course. You can contact SSD via http://ssd.umich.edu/.

Put another way, I do not need to be presented with a letter of accommodation in order to have a conversation with you about access and/or accommodation. However, if you have a disability, you may also be able to register with SSD. Please let me know how we can make your class experience more accessible.

Attendance

Much of our learning in this class will be through discussion and class activities—both online and off. Attendance is therefore essential to the success of this class. Excessive unexcused absences may result in the lowering of your final grade (beyond 3), especially without communicating with me. Note: If you are sick, **PLEASE STAY HOME**. Building community also involves community care. Do not stress if you are actively experiencing crises. Please use the resources listed further on in this document as necessary.

While excused absences include those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or travel for intercollegiate athletics, if life circumstances arise, please talk with me as early as possible. We can make arrangements and find a way to keep you involved and engaged with class material.

Resources

LSA Instructional Support Services

 ISS provides equipment and technical support to students enrolled in LSA classes. ISS operates two centers where students may check out AV equipment for short-term loans: G340 Mason and 2001 MLB. To check out equipment, you must provide your U-M ID, along with a course title and number to support your student status. You can contact ISS via http://lsa.umich.edu/iss.

Writing Center

The Sweetland Center for Writing is available to provide free writing tutoring and consultation during *any stage* of the writing process. Services include face-to-face tutorials in 1310 North Quad and online tutorials. You can contact Sweetland at (734) 764-0429 or http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/.

Mental Health Resources

As a student, you may experience challenges that negatively affect your learning, such as anxiety, depression, interpersonal or sexual violence, difficulty with eating or sleeping, grief/loss, and alcohol or drug dependencies. UM offers several confidential services that you might find helpful, including:

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 734-764-8312, https://caps.umich.edu/

Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) 24-Hour Crisis Line: 734-936-3333, https://sapac.umich.edu/

Schedule (Tentative and subject to change with advanced notice)

Week	Readings	Guiding Questions	Assignments (due by 11:59 PM, where applicable)
Week 1: Introductions	N/A	What does it mean to teach and learn in a "hybrid" environment? What is Disability? Technology?	Access Survey (Due at the end of week 2) First Blog Post (Due at the end of week 1)
	Keywords for Disability Studies, "Culture " and "Technology"	Brainstorm platforms for first digital access audit	First blog post introducing yourself to the class due on Friday
Week 2: Access and the Interface	Aimi Hamraie, Building Access, Introduction	What is Access? What is Knowledge? How do we bring the two together?	
	Joanna Drucker, Graphesis, Interface Design	What is a ditigal interface? How does it invite interaction,	Digital Access Audit due Wednesday, Access Surveys, Due

		or not?	Friday
Week 3: Dusability and the Internet ■	Disability and the Internet Chapter 1	What does it mean to be a digital subject? How does we provide disabled people access to technology?	Love Letter to an object assigned.
■	Disability and the Internet Chapter 2	Is the law a technology? How does the ADA work in this conversation?	In class activity—read the Americans with Disabilities Act: Link will go here
Week 4: Prehistories of the Internet ■	Disability and Pop Culture, Chapter 5, Pop Culture as Politics	Why does disability representation matter? What does disability Representation tell us about culture and technology?	Love letter to an object due, Word Press Access Audit assigned
■	Restricted Access, Liz Ellcessor, Introduction, Chapter 2	What is Cultural Access? What are its technological implications?	
Week 5: Access expanded, Intimacy and Simulation ■	Mia Mingus, Access Initamcy: URL here Eisenhaur Reading TBD	What is Access initimacy? What are some pitfalls of disability simulation?	
■	*Watch In the Garden of Sounds* (Kanopy link here)	How does sound influence our perception of the environment, and immersion? Hiw does moving image influence our perception of the world?	Project 1 Audio Walk Introduced
Week 6: Technologies of Sound and Sight ■	Read Special Issue of Film Quaterly on New Disability Film	What is audio description? How does it influence our experience of film/television? What are its technological implications?	Class Activity: Watch audio described portions of T*he Sessions* (link here)
■	Read portions of	What are Tactile	Possible trip to on-

	Kleege's What Blindness Brings to Art, sections TBD	tours? Sensory Design?	campus art museum here, to explore design interfaces and disability culture
Week 7: ■	Read Chapter 1 of Design Justice	What is design justice? What is intersectional design? How does this relate to disability?	Access Audit of WC3 Schools and WCAG assigned, potential guest speaker.
■	Read Chapter 3 of Design Justice	What does Nothing About us without Us mean? What is crip centered design	Guest speaker could also slot here
Week 8 Crip Technoscience ■	Read Criptechnoscience Manifestio	What is Crip Technoscience? How does it influence art and design?	First Blog round Due Begin thinking about Final Project groups and proposals
■	Read More of the Catalyst Issue on Crip Technoscience, OR First Monday, This Feature has been disabled	How do disabled people move through the world? What does the built environment allow?	Audio Walk Due. Potential space for a roundtable, workshop, of other sponsored activity. Access Audit of UM central campus assigned
Week 9 ■	Lev Mannovich piece TBD, Disability and Documentary TBD	How do digital tools change disability representation? What the the technological aftershocks?	Project 2: Video essay to practice for the final project assigned Be
■	Work day to be moved as needed		Possible Shapiro Design Lab Vist
Week 10: Sex, Disability, Activism	Read Alice Wong, Year of the Tiger, sections TBD	How do digital platforms imagine, invite of disallow activism	Listen to the Disability Visibility Podcast. **Final Project Proposal submission due**
■	Read selections from Exile and Pride	How does centered Gender and Sexual Minorities change our	In class Activity: Explore Sins Invalid website, also

		experience of technology and culture	potential guest speaker
Week 11 Community Knowledge as Activism ■	Read Selections from Pleasure Activisn	How does pleasure activism offer alternatives to disability simulation/the "helper" mindset?	Identify potential teams for final project.
■	Watch Code of the Freaks, Kanopy Link here	How is this film an archive? How does it build on or complicate our understanding of technology and disability?	subjects to interview, work with.
David at ASA (American Studies Association) work on Final Projects			
Week 13 Algorythms and the Laboring Body ■	Read Body Matters of Design, section TBD	How do Algorthyms invite or curtail bodily autonomy	Second round of Blogs Due Friday
■	Something on the Mechanical Turk	What is a Shelter workshop? How are disabled bodies made productive?	Final Access Audit assigned, due Friday of Week 15. Also potential spot for guest speaker.
Week 14 ■	Read Kafer, Feminist Queer Crip, pages TBD	What are our queer crip futures? What does ethical design mean?	
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Week 15 ■	**Draft Workshop**		
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Week 16	**Final draft submission (project + reflection)**:		

	Thursday, December 14		