

American Studies/DTC/English 475 – Digital Diversity
Spring 2010, Washington State University-Tri Cities
T/Th 12:00-1:15, TWST 252

Instructor: Julie Meloni

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Course Syllabus and Assignments:

<http://www.academicsandbox.com/S10/DTC475/>

Office Hours:

By appointment before or after class.

Contact me via e-mail, IM, or Facebook any time.

Google Talk or Yahoo! Chat: jcmeloni

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will facilitate student exploration into the cultural impact of electronic media, especially the World Wide Web and social networking systems. Students will investigate issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, and the body found in their study of cyberculture. The guiding question for the course is, broadly, how does cyberspace and online communities reinforce, transform, and/or resist inequalities found in what we can affectionately call "meatspace" (or "real life")?

REQUIRED TEXTS

- David Bell (ed.), *The Cybercultures Reader* (2nd ed., 2007, ISBN: 0415410673)
- Lisa Nakamura, *Digitizing Race* (ISBN: 0816646139)
- a few other essays downloadable from the course website

COURSE WEBSITE AND INSTRUCTOR CONTACT/EMAIL

You can access the website for this course at <<http://www.academicsandbox.com/S10/DTC475/>>. The schedule will always be up to date, and any handouts will also be available here if you lose your hard copy. You will also find a clear link to the course blog at <<http://www.academicsandbox.com/DTC475blog>> which will include my post-class recaps and other news, as well as links to all of your individual blogs.

Since I live in Pullman and commute to Tri-Cities for class, and because I don't have an office on campus, "office hours" are a little funky. If I know ahead of time that you want to meet with me, I can be in the coffee shop before class. I encourage you to use e-mail, IM, Twitter, and/or Facebook to contact me with any questions. I am available on Google Talk and Yahoo! Chat (username: jcmeloni), you're free to friend me on Facebook, and my regular e-mail address is: julie_meloni@wsu.edu

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Attendance and participation in the classroom is expected. You should come to class prepared to engage in discussion with your instructor and classmates. Preparation includes having given full attention to the material we will be discussing, and having questions in mind when you come to class. Engaged means actively listening and contributing, rather than staring at a screen (that may or may not have anything to do with class).

I do not have a policy regarding automatic failure of class for a certain number of absences. But be a reasonable human being and assume that if you miss a lot of class, you will lose a lot of participation points as well as generally missing out on actual course content, which is never good for your grade.

ASSIGNMENTS

Please note: all assignments will be explained in greater detail in class, and each assignment will have its own assignment sheet to which you can refer for additional instructions.

- **Readings/Class Participation/Quizzes (10%)**: You are responsible for completing the readings prior to the beginning of the class period for which they are assigned. Bring the reading(s) for the day to each class meeting and be ready to talk about them (paper or electronic versions). It's always a good idea to have at least one thought-provoking question ready in your back pocket, so if you've done the reading and discussion isn't swinging your way you can *ask your own question*. Also, doing the readings on time will make it easier for you to keep up with your blog posts. Many class periods will begin with a brief written quiz on material; these quizzes will often be used as conversation starters for the class.
- **Blog Posts & Comments (25%)**: You are responsible for making substantial blog entries by the due date/time on the syllabus. "Substantial" blog entries are those at least 300 words in length, and the specific types of posts may include the following (among others): general thoughts on the reading, discussions of critical articles you have found in your own research, annotated collections of links to other material, questions (and potential answers) that arose during your reading, extension of a discussion we had in class, and lengthy responses to other students' posts. Additionally, you must comment on your classmates' blogs, or at least engage with their material in your own posts (via quoting or linking). Blogging is kind of pointless if everyone is doing it in a vacuum, so remember that you're talking to your classmates and anyone else who might wander by, and engage with them as you would the other texts we read. I will provide a separate and specific assignment sheet detailing the grading and including some examples.
- **Take-Home Mid-Term (25%)**: At the end of week 8 you will complete a take-home midterm exam. This exam will contain a few short answer questions and a longer essay question.
- **Research Project and Presentation (40%)**: This 6 to 8 page essay will be on a topic of your choosing that has to do in some way the topics of the course. The process of writing this essay will take place in several stages: a short proposal (a paragraph or two) with a tentative Works Cited page (at least three sources), a 10-15 minute presentation during the last four weeks of class, and the paper itself. All topics must be approved by me—this approval or extended conversation will happen in the feedback to your short proposal and tentative Works Cited page. I will provide a separate and specific assignment sheet for this project.

LATE WORK POLICIES

- In the case of the **take-home mid-term**, I will accept late work **within seven days of the item's original due date**. However, be it one day late or seven, you will automatically receive a **15%** deduction of the assignment grade. If you know of a serious conflict ahead of time, talk to me.
- In the case of the **blog posts**, graded on a scale of 0-4 (explained on the blog assignment sheet), posts that appear **within seven days of the original due date** will be accepted but with a one point deduction.
- Quizzes **cannot** be made up.
- **No late research projects will be accepted.**

GRADES

This course demands **student involvement**. If you do not take an active participation in your own learning process, the grade you earn will illustrate this. **Your instructor does not negotiate grades.** When letter grades are assigned, the following percentage ranges will yield the corresponding letter grade:

93-100 (A)	90-92 (A-)	
87-89 (B+)	83-86 (B)	80-82 (B-)
77-79 (C+)	73-76 (C)	70-72 (C-)
67-69 (D+)	60-66 (D)	0-59 (F)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As an institution of higher education, WSU is committed to principles of truth and academic honesty. All members of the University community share the responsibility for maintaining and supporting these principles. When a student enrolls in WSU, the student assumes an obligation to pursue academic endeavors in a manner consistent with the standards of academic integrity adopted by the University. To maintain the academic integrity of the community, the University cannot tolerate acts of academic dishonesty including any forms of cheating, plagiarism, or fabrication. WSU reserves the right and the power to discipline or to exclude students who engage in academic dishonesty. **If I find strong evidence of academic dishonesty of any kind in your work, you will fail the course and I will report the offense to the board of student conduct.**

STATEMENT ON DISABILITIES

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Classroom accommodation forms are available through the Disability Services Office. If you have a documented disability, even temporary, make an appointment as soon as possible with the Disability Services Coordinator, Cherish Tijerina, Room 269D West Building. You will need to provide your instructor with the appropriate classroom accommodation form. The form should be completed and submitted during the first week of class. Late notification can delay your accommodations or cause them to be unavailable. All accommodations for disabilities must be approved through the Disability Services Coordinator.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

You are all adults, so please make every effort to act accordingly. Arrive on time to class and do not behave disruptively during class discussions. Be prepared to complete in-class assignments and engage in fruitful discussion with your classmates. While in class, turn off your cell phones or put them on silent mode. If you bring your laptop, use it only for purposes related to the class, which **can** include "Google Jockeying" during discussions.

GENERAL CLASS SCHEDULE

The following two pages detail the class schedule. All reading assignments and project due dates are listed here, but the instructor reserves the right to revise these requirements. The current syllabus can always be found on the course website <<http://www.academicsandbox.com/S10/DTC475/>>.

WEEK ONE - BASICS		
TUE	(01/12)	The mechanics of the class, syllabus overview, standard first-day stuff.
THU	(01/14)	Read for Today: Benedikt, "Cyberspace: First Steps" (CR 19-33) ➔ DUE by FRI (01/15) 5:00pm: blog post #1 (see assignment sheet)
WEEK TWO - CYBERCULTURE, COMMUNITY, & THE DIGITAL DIVIDE		
TUE	(01/19)	Read for Today: Carvin, "Mind the Gap: The Digital Divide as the Civil Rights Issue of the New Millennium " (online); Warschauer, "Reconceptualizing the Digital Divide" (online)
THU	(01/21)	Read for Today: Wilson, "Community in the Abstract: A Political and Ethical Dilemma?" (CR 213-226); Bakardjieva, "Virtual Togetherness: An Everyday-Life Perspective" (CR 236-253) ➔ DUE by FRI (01/22) 5:00pm: blog post #2 (see assignment sheet)
WEEK THREE - CYBERCULTURE, COMMUNITY, & THE DIGITAL DIVIDE		
TUE	(01/26)	Read for Today: Robins "Against Virtual Community" (CR 227-235); Bell, "Webs as Pegs" (CR 254-264)
THU	(01/28)	Read for Today: Lenoir & Alt, "Flow, Process, Fold" (CR 664-687); Adriana de Souza e Silva, "From Cyber to Hybrid: Mobile Technologies as Interfaces of Hybrid Spaces" (CR 757-772) ➔ DUE by FRI (01/29) 5:00pm: blog post #3 (see assignment sheet)
WEEK FOUR - RACE		
TUE	(02/02)	Read for Today: Nakamura, <i>Digitizing Race</i> – Introduction (1-36)
THU	(02/04)	Read for Today: Nakamura, <i>Digitizing Race</i> – ch 1, "'Ramadan is Almost Here!' The Visual Culture of AIM Buddies, Race, Gender, and Nation on the Internet (37-69) ➔ DUE by FRI (02/05) 5:00pm: blog post #4 (see assignment sheet)
WEEK FIVE - RACE		
TUE	(02/09)	Read for Today: Nakamura, <i>Digitizing Race</i> – ch 2, "Alllooksame? Mediating Visual Culturs of Race on the Web" (70-94)
THU	(02/11)	Read for Today: Nakamura, <i>Digitizing Race</i> – ch 4, "Avatars and the Visual Culture of Reproduction on the Web" (111-170) ➔ DUE by FRI (02/12) 5:00pm: blog post #5 (see assignment sheet)
WEEK SIX - RACE		
TUE	(02/16)	Read for Today: Nakamura, <i>Digitizing Race</i> – ch 5, "Measuring Race on the Internet: Users, Identity, and Cultural Difference in the United States" (171-201)
THU	(02/18)	*** NO CLASS MEETING *** ➔ DUE by FRI (02/19) 5:00pm: blog post #6 (see assignment sheet)
WEEK SEVEN - GENDER & SEXUALITY		
TUE	(02/23)	Read for Today: Rehack, "Mapping the Bit Girl" (CR 159-173); Schleiner, "Does Lara Croft Wear Fake Polygons?" (download)
THU	(02/25)	Read for Today: Kendall, "Oh No! I'm a Nerd!' Hegemonic Masculinity in an Online Forum" (download); Dibbell, "A Rape in Cyberspace" (online) ➔ DUE by FRI (02/26) 5:00pm: blog post #7 (see assignment sheet)

WEEK EIGHT - GENDER & SEXUALITY		
TUE	(03/02)	Read for Today: Plant, "On the Matrix: Cyberfeminist Simulations" (CR 340-351); Sandoval, "New Sciences: Cyborg Feminism and the Methodology of the Oppressed" (CR 352-364)
THU	(03/04)	Read for Today: Adam, "Feminist AI Projects and Cyberspace" (CR 386-410) ➔ I will hand out the TAKE HOME MID-TERM (DUE via e-mail by MON 03/08 9:00am)
WEEK NINE - THE BODY		
TUE	(03/09)	Read for Today: Lupton, "The Embodied Computer/User" (CR 422-432); Stone, "Will the Real Body Please Stand Up? Boundary Stories About Virtual Cultures" (CR 433-455)
THU	(03/11)	Read for Today: Hayles, "Computing the Human" (CR 557-574) ➔ DUE by FRI (03/12) 5:00pm: blog post #8 (see assignment sheet)
SPRING BREAK [03/16 to 03/18]		
WEEK TEN - CYBERPOLITICS		
TUE	(03/23)	Read for Today: Sassen, "Digital Networks and the State: Some Governance Questions" (CR 582-593); Jordan, "Technopower and Its Cyberfutures" (CR 594-601)
THU	(03/25)	Read for Today: Taylor, "Hackers – Cyperpunks or Microserfs?" (CR 602-617) ➔ DUE by FRI (03/26) 5:00pm: blog post #9 (see assignment sheet)
WEEK ELEVEN - CYBERPOLITICS		
TUE	(03/30)	Read for Today: Kahn and Kellner, "Technopolitics and Oppositional Media" (CR 618-637)
THU	(04/01)	Read for Today: Holcomb, Bakelaar, and Zizzamia, "The Internet in the Aftermath of the World Trade Center Attack" (CR 638-650) ➔ DUE by FRI (04/02) 5:00pm: blog post #10 (see assignment sheet)
WEEKS TWELVE TO FIFTEEN - PRESENTATIONS		
TUE	(04/06)	Presentations/Discussions
THU	(04/08)	Presentations/Discussions ➔ DUE by FRI (04/09) 5:00pm: blog post #11 (see assignment sheet)
TUE	(04/13)	Presentations/Discussions
THU	(04/15)	Presentations/Discussions ➔ DUE by FRI (04/16) 5:00pm: blog post #12 (see assignment sheet)
TUE	(04/20)	Presentations/Discussions
THU	(04/22)	Presentations/Discussions ➔ DUE by FRI (04/23) 5:00pm: blog post #13 (see assignment sheet)
TUE	(04/27)	Presentations/Discussions
THU	(04/29)	Presentations/Discussions ➔ DUE by FRI (04/30) 5:00pm: blog post #14 (see assignment sheet)

**** THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM IN THIS CLASS ****

However, your **research papers** will be due via e-mail on **Thursday, May 6th, by 9pm.**