

# Advanced Computer Mediated Communication

SP 399

Fall 2008

PSU

Instructor: Marianne Leonardi

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Electronic Office Hrs: Tuesdays, 6:30-7:30pm/PST

Bio: Marianne holds an M.A. in international and intercultural communication from the University of Denver and a B.A. in Spanish and International Studies from Santa Clara University. She is currently a third year PhD student at the University of New Mexico. Her research interests include the relationship between culture, identity negotiation, and communication, and the ways in which intercultural interaction, discourse, and power structures work to construct cultural representations, specifically within the context of virtual reality.

## **REQUIRED TEXT**

1 Course Reader entitled: Computer Mediated Communication, which is available at:  
Clean-Copy  
1704 SW Broadway 97201

*All readings are to be completed before participating in class discussions.*

## **MINIMUM TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Access to e-mail and the Internet
- Internet browser Internet Explorer version 5.5 or greater, Netscape 6.2 or greater, or another equivalent level of browser.
- Current version of an operating system, a word processing package, a spreadsheet package, presentation software, and the Macromedia Flash Player.
- Access to Blackboard
- Since this course involves sending and receiving large files of information and meeting online, you may find that a high speed Internet connection is advantageous.

## **TIME COMMITMENT AND WEEKLY INTERACTIONS**

To be successful in this online course, you must be willing to allocate sufficient time to access course materials, participate in online classes and discussion groups, and complete all of the assignments. Similar to traditional classroom courses, you will interact with the content, your teacher, and your classmates on at least a weekly basis through course assignments, asynchronous discussion, and synchronous meetings as indicated in this syllabus. During this course, you should plan on scheduling 10-15 hours per week.

## **KEY DATES**

Beginning Date: September 29, 2008

Last Day to Add: October 5, 2008

Last Day to Drop Without Record: October 12, 2008

Last Day to Withdraw from Class With Record: November 16, 2008

Ending Date: December 7, 2008

**NAVIGATING THE COURSE**

Getting Started:

The electronic classrooms for this course are located in Blackboard.

To gain access to the course you need your ODIN (username) and password.

<b>THE BLACKBOARD CLASSROOMS</b>		
<b>Announcements</b>  Course Announcements	<b>Course Documents</b>  Syllabus Assignments Course Materials Presentations	<b>Staff Information</b>  Contact information for teachers and resource people
<b>Communications</b>  Discussion Boards Group Pages Sending E-mail Chat Rooms Roster Calendar	<b>Discussion Boards</b>  Discussion Forums	<b>External Links</b>  Web page links to external resources outside of Blackboard
<b>Tools</b>  Grades Course Evaluation User Manual	<b>Content Collection Tab</b>  Library E-Reserves (under Institution Content)	

**COMMUNICATING ELECTRONICALLY**

Netiquette Expectations

- Always practice Internet Etiquette when communicating electronically. The purpose of communicating electronically in an online course is to share information.
- Be respectful of other participants, their time, their bandwidth, and their opinions.
- Remember that you are communicating with people who do not have the advantage of seeing your body language or hearing your voice inflections, and who may interpret your message differently than you intended.
  - Using ALL CAPS may be interpreted as shouting
  - Use humor and sarcasm carefully (we can't see the "twinkle in your eye"); add emoticons to provide a visual representation of your intent
  - Keep your critiques constructive; antagonistic criticism is called "flaming" and may cause an unwanted reaction
- Remember that you are judged by the quality of your writing.
  - Be coherent and succinct
  - Do not plagiarize; respect copyrights
  - Do not depend on a single source when contributing new information from external resources
  - Be professional

**SENDING AND RECEIVING EMAILS**

The instructor(s) will respond to all inquiries, questions, and other electronic correspondence within a timely, but not necessarily immediate. Most electronic communications will be answered within 48 hours. All e-mail messages from the instructor(s) will be sent to the student's PSU e-mail address. To avoid having your message mistakenly identified as SPAM, please identify the course in the subject line (SP 399).

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course offers a critical survey of the relationship between computer-mediated communication (CMC) and the various forms and functions of human activity. The way in which humans use computers to create specific realities and relationships as well as use this medium as a source of knowledge will be explored. Utilizing different computer theories we will identify, explain, and understand the interrelationship between CMC society, language, and identities. Specific course objectives are:

- To introduce the student to the study of computer-mediated communication and the role of technology in the lives of people
- To revisit theories of communication in terms of computer-mediated communication
- To explore and evaluate the different types of available computer-mediated communication (including but not limited to: social-networking sites, blogging, instant messages, message boards)
- To investigate the relationship between CMC, societal norms, and personal and group identities
- To gain a critical perspective on the use and function of CMC within current human activities

\*Please keep in mind this syllabus is a framework from which this class is conducted. The course is subject to change upon the instructor's (my) discretion.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**All graded assignments as well as their due dates are indicated in bold. All readings from the course reader are marked with an 'R' and readings from online sources are marked with an 'I'**

*Unit 1: Welcome to Computer-Mediated Communication*

- Introductions: Please fill out your profile under the 'roster' tab on your toolbar
- I: Video: *Growing Up Online* (You must watch full episode)  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kidsonline/>
- Readings
  - R: Leiner: Histories of the Internet
- **Discussions (Due October 5, 11:59pm)**
- **Questions (Due October 5, 11:59pm)**

*Unit 2: What is CMC?*

- Readings
  - R: Thurlow et al. Defining CMC: An Introduction to the Field
  - R: Lindolf & Taylor-Qualitative Research and Computer-Mediated Communication
  - R: Shedletsky: Why Study Human Communication on the Internet?
- **Discussions (Due October 12, 11:59pm)**
- **Questions (Due October 12, 11:59pm)**

*Unit 3: Perspectives and Theories of CMC*

- Readings
  - R: Thurlow et al.: Theorizing CMC: Technology and Social Interaction
  - R: Bakardjieva :A Pragmatic Approach: Technology As Language
  - R: Bakardjieva: The Social Construction of Technology: Insights and Controversies
  - R: Bakardjieva: Critical Theory of Technology

- R: Hillis: A Critical History of Virtual Reality
- **Discussions (Due October 19, 11:59pm)**
- **Questions (Due October 19, 11:59pm)**
- **Reflection Paper 1 Due (Due October 19, 11:59pm)**

*Unit 4: Issues of Power and Access*

- Readings
  - R: Wood: Accessing The Machine
  - R: Thurlow: Online Ethics and International Inequities
- Video: Facebook Killed the Private Life  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azIW1xjSTCo&feature=related>
- **Discussion (Due October 26, 11:59pm)**
- **Questions (Due October 26, 11:59pm)**

*Unit 5: Presentation of the Self(ves)*

- Readings
  - R: Wood: Forming Online Identities
- **Discussions (Due November 2, 11:59pm)**
- **Questions (Due November 2, 11:59pm)**
- **Final Paper Outline (Due November 2, 11:59pm)**

*Unit 6: Cultural Identities in Cyberspace*

- Readings
  - I: Gender, Identity, and Language Use in Teenage Blogs :  
<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol10/issue2/huffaker.html>
  - I: Beyond Anonymity: <http://nms.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/8/6/859>
- **Discussions (Due November 9, 11:59pm)**
- **Questions (Due November 9, 11:59pm)**
- **Reflection Paper 2 (Due November 9, 11:59pm)**

• *Unit 7: Online Relationships*

- Readings
  - R: Wood: Communicating in Virtual Communities
  - R: Shedletsky: Interpersonal Communication on the Internet
- **Discussions (November 16, 11:59pm)**
- **Questions (November 16, 11:59pm)**

*Unit 8: Political Campaigning in Cyberspace*

- Readings
  - I: <http://www.campaignsonline.org/reports/online.pdf>
  - R: Shah et. al: Campaign Ads, Online Messaging and Participation
- **Discussions (Due November 23, 11:59pm)**
- **Questions (Due November 23, 11:59pm)**
- **Reflection Paper 3 (Due November 23, 11:59pm)**

*Unit 9: Workplaces Online*

- Readings
  - I: <http://crab.rutgers.edu/~goertzel/economistnetbusiness.htm>
  - R: Shedletsky: Workplace Contexts
- **Discussions (Due November 30, 11:59pm)**
- **Questions (Due November 30, 11:59pm)**

*Unit 10: Final Paper Due (December 7, 11:59pm)*

**FINAL EXAM (Due December 13, 11:59pm)**

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class listed in the syllabus. Assignments 3, 5, and 6 should be posted/uploaded to the assignment dropbox). **Late work will not be accepted**, nor will make-up or extra-credit assignments be allowed. Makeup work can be arranged for legitimate absences (verified health condition, participation in College-sponsored activities, serious family emergencies, religious observances, etc.). If the absence is known ahead of time, you must make arrangements before the date the assignment is due.

### 1. Discussion Threads

- Discussion Threads provide a forum for students to ask questions and answer important questions about the course material. The discussion questions also allow students to receive feedback from the instructor and other students in the class. A discussion question grade will be posted to the grade sheet for each Unit.
- Rubric for Weekly Discussion Threads:
  - A grade: Substantial (4 or more) postings for EACH question. One post to answer the question and at least 3 posts to other students per question. Original, thoughtful analysis of materials. Clear and fluent writing. Responses are insightful and advance the discussion. Demonstrates an understanding of concepts and how they apply.
  - Displays insight into the subject matter
  - B grade: Several postings (at least 3) to EACH question. Some analysis of materials. Clear writing. Mainly thoughtful responses and comments.
  - C grade: Fair amount of postings (at least 2) for EACH question. Some vague or summary references to materials. Short postings with little detail. Inconsistent and/or unclear writing.
  - D grade: Several missing answers. Minimal postings and/or no interaction with other postings. Significant writing errors.
  - F grade: Majority of answers not submitted. Off-topic postings, no interaction with other postings. Fundamental writing errors. Abusive or inappropriate behavior (consult Program Chair).

### 2. Weekly Questions

- Each week you will send me 2 short answer questions (both questions as well as answer) related to the readings and/or the video for a total of 18 questions this semester
- At the end of the semester I will choose 12 questions generated by the class for your final exam

### 3. Reflection Papers

#### a. Reflection Paper 1: Participation in a chat room

- 3-5 pages
- Over the course of 2 weeks you will participate in a chat room of your choosing
- You should log about 6 hrs in total over the course of the 2 weeks in the same chat room.
- In this paper, you are asked to write about your experiences.. You must address the following:
  - 1) Define and explain the CMC context in which you participated (10pts)
  - 2) Address how your culture and cultural identities influence the way you communicate with others. (20pts)
  - 3) Discuss the type of encounters you experienced. Did they differ from face to face communication interactions? If so, how? If not, why? (30pts)
  - 4) What do you think are the challenges to meaningful computer-mediated communication? (20pts)
  - 5) Address the issue of anonymity and how it affected your communication

#### b. Reflection Paper 2: Analyze a social-networking homepage (20pts)

- 3-5 pages
- With the permission of one of your friends, analyze their homepage on either the social-networking site MySpace or Facebook. Once you have analyzed their page, you will then

have a conversation with you friend regarding your findings. You will address the following in your paper:

1. Describe your interviewee. Who is she/he? How do you know him/her? (10pts)
2. Describe what you have found him/her on his/her homepage. (20pts)
3. What message/identities do you think they are trying to expose through their page? (20pts)
4. Describe your friend's interpretation of their homepage. What message/identities were they trying to represent? (20pts)
5. Discuss how your interpretations of your friend's page either confirmed or conflicted with their interpretation of their own page. What accounts for the confirming or conflicting opinions? (30pts)

c. Reflection Paper 3: Campaigning Online

- 3-5 pages
- You will reflect and respond by providing your opinion (60pts) on the following article: *Campaigns Online: The Profound Impact of the Internet, Blogs, and E-Technologies in Presidential Political Campaigns*. In your paper, also respond to the impact of Internet use in the current 2008 presidential campaigns (40pts).
- The article can be found at the following link:  
<http://www.campaignsonline.org/reports/online.pdf>

4. Exam

- There will be an exam to evaluate your understanding of the material and your ability to synthesize and apply concepts.
- Questions will consist of short answer/essay questions.
- Exam will cover the entire material covered in class.
- No make-up exams will be allowed.

5. Final Paper Outline

Rubric

**Thesis**

Points possible 10

- Uses clear thesis statement (what the paper is about).
- Thesis statement is stated as a statement.
- Shows insight into the subject matter
- Shows student is beginning to address aspects of the assignment

**Main points**

Points possible 20

- Three to five main points are clearly identified
- Each point is tied to the thesis statement
- Demonstrates an understanding of concepts of how main points apply to the thesis

**Grammar/Mechanics**

Points possible 10

- Uses correct font size and style (12 pt. Verdana)
- Uses proper punctuation, grammar, spelling, organization, and sentence structure
- Uses concise, active, clear language. Proofread all assignments.

6. Final Paper

- You will write an 8-10 page paper.
- The purpose of this assignment is for you to position yourself within CMC.
- Examples are term paper, original research paper, review of the literature paper, or introspective analysis of your own internet use.
- You must incorporate at least 3 concepts you learn in this class.
- Use at least 5 outside academic sources, including books and peer-reviewed journals.
- Organize your paper according to the essay format.

- Properly cite all your interviews and sources according to APA style.
- Evaluation of your paper will be based on:
  - a. The quality of writing, organization, and originality.
  - b. Successful integration of core concepts and theories to support your central claim.
  - c. Appropriate and relevant application of theories/concepts from the readings.
  - d. Effective and insightful incorporation of outside sources.
  - e. Insightful exploration and critical reflection of your positioning in relation to the issue.

#### Rubric

- **Title Page/APA Style** Points Possible:10
  - Title of Paper Name, Date, Running Head, Class, Instructor, Date
- **Introduction** Possible Points:30
  - Engaging/Creative topic sentence
  - Clear Thesis
  - General Purpose Statement
  - Present the topic and why you have selected this topic
- **Literature Review** Points Possible: 50
  - Discussion of at least 5 academic sources and their relation to your topic
  - Not a summary of works, but a discussion of how works support your thesis/main argument
- **Methods** Possible Points: 50
  - Discussion of how you went about studying this topic (e.g., interview, personal observation, readings, questionnaire)
- **Findings** Possible Points: 100
  - Provide a brief summary of your observation and an in-depth consideration of your analysis.
  - Application of at least 2 concepts from class and 1 theory
- **Conclusion** Possible Points: 40
  - A brief summary with final insights
- **Reference page** Possible Points: 20
  - APA style
  - 5 sources

#### GRADES

Any questions concerning grades should be discussed within one week of its submission and evaluation. After the one week period, grade changes for the specific assignment will not be possible. Please wait at least 24 hrs to present your question via email to the instructor. This ensures both the students and the instructor take time to review the grade, assignment, grading criteria, and to form an articulate response.

Your final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Reflection Paper 1	100 pts
Reflection Paper 2	100 pts
Reflection Paper 3	100 pts
Discussion Threads	200 pts
Weekly Questions	60pts
Final Exam	100 pts
Final Paper Outline	40 pts
Final Paper	300pts
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000 pts.</b>

Your work is expected to be of high quality, demonstrating a genuine understanding of the subject matter.

**DISABILITIES**

Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. Handouts are available in alternative accessible formats upon request.

**ETHICS**

The course emphasizes ethical practices and perspectives. Above all, students and instructors should strive to communicate and act, both in class interactions and in assigned coursework, in a manner directed by personal integrity, honesty, and respect for self and others. Included in this focus is the need for academic honesty by students as stated by PSU. Students need to do original work and properly cite sources. For example, be aware of plagiarism—directly copying more than 3 or 4 words from another author without quoting (not just citing) the author is plagiarism. Further, course content will encourage the ethical practices and analysis of Public Speaking. Plagiarism will be noted and dealt with appropriately by PSU officials, and will minimally result in an F in the course with possibility of expulsion.

**DIVERSITY**

This course encourages different perspectives related to such factors as gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and other relevant cultural identities. This course seeks to foster understanding and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating.