

# **J3555F/J395 47 Living in the Information Age (08103/08294)**

University of Texas  
School of Journalism  
Fall 2016

**Instructor:** Dr. Tom Johnson

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**Office Hours:** by appointment and when you least expect it

**Class Time:** TTH 11-12:30, CMA 4.150

## **I. Course Description**

Living in the Information Age will examine information technologies with particular emphasis on social and mobile media. In particular, this course will examine how digital and mobile technologies are used by the Millennial Generation and with what effects. The goal of the course is to understand how the communication and information technologies evolve and the cultural, economic, political and social implications of such technologies for society.

## **II. Goals and Objectives**

Living in the Information Age is intended to provide students with a broad understanding of the social, cultural, and economic consequences of new communication technologies and to encourage critical thinking about “new media” generally. Through exams and media-related assignments, students will learn to analyze the evolving information ecology as it affects media consumers. Through course projects, students will examine issues involving digital and mobile media and the impact of new media use on consumers.

## **III. Required Texts & Readings**

There are no textbooks for this class. Texts on this subject get dated quickly. Readings are available through the class Canvas page.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Exams:** There will be three one-hour exams. The exams will be equally weighted and will not be comprehensive. The tests will be multiple choice, definitions and short answer questions.

**Book Review:** Each undergrad student will read a recent book (one written in 2012 or after) and prepare a 3-5 page book review which provides a description of the scope of the book and analyzes its strengths and weaknesses. Graduate students are required to write a 6-8 page review on a book written 2012 or after. The book can deal with any aspect of the Internet or its components (e.g. social media, blogs) or other new media (e.g. mobile phones, iPods, video games, digital movies). The book cannot be a handbook (e.g. tips for using your iPod). Book titles must be approved in advance. You will also give a 7-10 minute oral review of the book to the class. You need to have a copy of your paper or a typed outline for each member of the class. A powerpoint presentation is also required. We will be picking for due dates for the oral book reports.

**Final paper:** Each undergraduate student will write a 7-10 page essay on any topic concerning digital or mobile media. Graduate students will write a 10-15 page essay. You need to choose a manageable topic (such as how international students use Facebook to keep in touch with friends back home) rather than a general topic such as mobile phones. A half-page description of your assignment is due at the beginning of class **Thursday, Oct. 6**. The paper is due **Monday, Dec. 5 at 4:30 p.m.**

**Discussion questions:** To make sure that you are doing the readings and to try to generate discussion, every Thursday I will ask you to turn in at the beginning of class the answer to discussion questions that I will give to you the week before. Also look at the Facebook Group Millennials and the News each Tuesday and be prepared to talk about an article that you found of interest. You don't need to turn in anything in regard to Millennials and the News, just be ready to talk.

## GRADING:

First exam .....100 points  
Second exam .....100 points  
Final exam .....100 points  
Term Paper.....100 points/ graduate students 125 points  
Book report.....50 points  
Discussion questions..... 50 points  
Participation..... 50 points

Class participation will also be factored in. This includes discussing interesting articles on Millennials and News as well as general discussion during class. We also have a Facebook group Living in the Information Age (J359T Living in the Information Age) which is your place to ask questions or post things relevant material you find.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

I will allow you three unexcused absences. After the third absence, I will deduct half a letter grade for each additional absence. You need to contact me **in advance** if you are going to miss a class. All tests must be taken during their scheduled time unless you have made prior arrangements. Assignments are due by 4:30 on the dates indicated, except for discussion questions that are due after the class discussion. I will deduct 10 percent for every day the assignment is late. I will not accept any papers more than a week late.

### **Religious Holy Days Observance Policy:**

The Texas Education Code specifies that an institution of higher education shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

<http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi03-04/ch4/ch4g.html#attendance>

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Please notify your instructor of any modification/adaptation you may require to accommodate a disability-related need. You will be requested to provide documentation to the Dean of Student's Office in order that the most appropriate accommodations can be determined. Specialized services are available on campus through Services for Students with Disabilities.

<http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

### **Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty:**

The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes,

but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University.

[http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php).

### **The Honor Code:**

The core values of the University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

### **Cell Phones**

Few things are more annoying than a cell phone going off during class, so be sure to turn them off before class. I will try to remember too. I also do not want to see them out as texting during class is distracting to me and the students around you.

### **Laptops**

I encourage you to bring your laptops to class. I post the powerpoints online before class and I encourage you to download them and to take notes on the lectures. I cannot police you to see if you are taking notes or updating your Facebook page. Those who pay attention to class, however, perform better. If you are disrupting the class with your laptop use, you will be asked to put it away.

## **LECTURE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

**Note: Dates for the exams and assignments may change depending on progress of the class.** Readings should be completed *before* the class for which they are assigned.

### ***Part 1: The Millennial Generation***

#### **A. Who are the Millennials?**

1. Pew Internet, *Millennials: Confident, Connected, Open to Change*, Overview, Chapt. 4

2. Samantha Raphelson (2014, November). Amid the stereotypes, some facts about Millennials. NPR
3. Pew Internet, “Most Millennials reject the millennial label”

#### **B. Millennials and News Use**

1. Gangadharbatla, H., Bright, L, F, & Logan, K. (2013). Social media and news gathering: Tapping into the Millennial mindset. *The Journal of Social Media in Society*, 3(1), 45-63.
2. Amy Mitchell, Jeffrey Gottfried, Katerina Eva Matsa. (2015). Facebook top source for political news among Millennials. Pew Internet.

### ***Part II: Media Theories: Understanding Media Use by Millennials***

#### **A. Diffusion of Innovation Theory**

1. “Adoption of new media.” In John Carey and Martin Elon , *When media are new: Understanding the dynamics of news media adoption and use*.
2. Sylvia Chan-Olmsted, Hyejoon Rim and Amy Zerba. (2013). “Mobile news adoption among young adults: Examining roles of perceptions, news consumption, and media usage.” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*

#### **B. Uses and Gratifications and Media Substitution**

1. Angela M. Lee. (2013). “News audiences revisited: Theorizing the link between audience motivations and adoption.” *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*
2. Thomas Kilian, Nadine Hennigs and Sascha Langner. (2012). “Do Millennials read books or blogs? Introducing a media usage typology of the Internet generation.” *Journal of Consumer Marketing*.

### ***Part III. New Technologies, Old Technologies and Millennials***

#### **A. Millennials and news**

1. Paula Poindexter. (2012). “Why Millennials aren’t into news.” *Millennials, news, and social media*

- 2 John McDermott. (2014, Aug. 27). “Turns out traditional publishers do just fine with Millennials.” Digiday. Retrieved from <http://digiday.com/publishers/traditional-publishers-millennials/>

### **B. Millennials and Social Media**

1. Paula Poindexter. (2012). “Too busy for news; unlimited time for social media” . *Millennials, News, and social media*
2. Ruth N. Bolton, A Parasuraman, Ankie Hoefnagels, Nanne Migchels, Sertan Kabadayi, Thorsten Gruber, Komaraova Loureiro and David Solnet (2013). “Understanding Generation Y and their use of social media: A review and research agenda.” *Journal of Social Management*.

### **First exam: Thursday, Sept. 29**

#### **C. Millennials and Twitter**

1. Eszter Hargittai and Eden Litt (2012). “Becoming a tweep: How prior online experiences influence Twitter Use.” *Information, Communication & Society*.

#### **E. Millennials and mobile technology**

1. Paula Poindexter, “Millennials in a mobile news and social media world,” in Poindexter, *News for a mobile-first consumer*

## ***Part IV: Dark Side of the Internet***

### **A. Social media and Narcissism**

1. Andrew Mendelson and Zizi Papacharissi, “Look at us: Collective narcissism in college student Facebook photo galleries.” In *Networked Selves*.
2. Shaun W. Davenport, Shawn M. Bergman, Jacqueline Z. Bergman, and Matthew E. Fearrington (2014). Twitter versus Facebook: Exploring the role of narcissism in the motives and usage of different social media platforms. *Computers in Human Behavior*
3. Theresa M. Senft and Nancy K. Baym. (2015). What does the selfie say? Investigating a global phenomenon. *International Journal of Communication*

#### **D. Internet Addiction and Isolation**

1. Robert LaRose, Junghyun Kim and Wei Peng (2012). Social networking: Addictive, compulsive, problematic or just another media habit? In Z. Papacharissi, *A networked self*
2. Sherry Turkle, (2011). “The Tethered self: Technology reinvents intimacy and solitude” *Continuing Higher Education Review*.
3. Mihailidis, P. (2014). A tethered generation: Exploring the role of mobile phones in the daily life of young people *Mobile Media & Communication*

#### **Second Exam: Thursday, Nov. 3**

#### **C. Selective exposure and political polarization**

1. Cass R. Sunstein. (2008). “Enclave Extremism and Journalism's Brave New World,” *Nieman Reports*.
- 2, Natalie (Talia) Jomini Stroud and Ashley Muddimen. (2015). The American media system today: Is the public fragmenting?” In Ridout, *New Directions in Media and Politics*

#### **2. Part V: Light Side of the Internet**

##### **A. Networking and Community**

1. Clay Shirky. (2008). “It takes a village to find a phone,” in *Here Comes Everybody*
2. Hampton, K. Goulet, L, S., Raine, L, & Purcell, K. (2011) Social network users have more friends and more close friends. Pew Internet

##### *Recommended*

1. Hampton et al (2011). Trust, support, perspective taking and democratic engagement. Pew Internet.

##### **B. Social Capital**

1. Ellison, N. B. & Vitak, J. (2015). Social Network Site Affordances and their Relationship to Social Capital Processes. In Sundar, S. (Ed.) *The Handbook of the Psychology of Communication Technology*.
2. Campbell, S. W., & Kwak, N. (2012). Mobile communication and strong network ties: Shrinking or expanding spheres of public discourse? *New Media & Society*.

##### **C. Internet and Civic Engagement**

1. Shelley Boulianne (2015) Social media use and participation: a meta-analysis of current research, *Information, Communication & Society*, 18:5,

524-538

2. Dimitrova, D. V., Shehata A., Stromback J., & Nord L. W. (2014) The effects of digital media on political knowledge and participation in election campaigns: Evidence from panel data. *Communication Research* 41(1), 95-118.
3. Jason A. Martin, Mobile media and political participation: Defining and developing an emerging field. *Mobile Media & Communication*.

**Third Exam: Thursday, Dec. 1**



## **Term paper assignment (Undergraduate)**

Each undergraduate student will write a 7-10 page essay on any topic concerning the Internet or new media. You need to choose a manageable topic (such as how international students use Facebook to keep in touch with friends back home) rather than a general topic such as mobile phones.

The paper should have an introduction similar to a newspaper lead where you identify the main point of the paper and hopefully do it in an interesting way. Your second paragraph should be a thesis statement where you set out exactly what you will be exploring. Think of organizing it like a news story where you keep the stuff that belongs together together. But this should differ from news story in at least three ways. First, you need to rely primarily on documentary sources. These can include articles from news magazines, trade journals, research organizations or research books and research articles. Using Google Scholar through UT is a good place to find sources as is the library website (both the book section and data base section). I won't prohibit interviews but they should be from experts, not just random students. Second, you need to use in-text citations rather than the normal attribution of a news article. I am less hung up on citation style, as long as I can look it up. Third, you need a conclusion to summarize the article.

You need to have at least five sources. Please include a cover page and do not put your name elsewhere on the paper. You need a bibliography with the sources you use. While I prefer APA style, as long as I can look up the source I am happy.

A half page description of your assignment is due **Thursday, Oct. 6 by 4:30 p.m.**  
The paper is due **Dec. 5 by 4:30 p.m.**

## **Final paper (Graduate Student):**

Each graduate student will write a 10-15 page essay on any topic concerning the Internet or new media. You need to choose a manageable topic (such as how international students use Facebook to keep in touch with friends back home) rather than a general topic such as mobile phones.

The paper should have an introduction similar to a newspaper lead where you identify the main point of the paper and hopefully do it in an interesting way. Your second paragraph should be a thesis statement where you set out exactly what you will be exploring. Think of organizing it like a news story where you keep the stuff that belongs together together. But this should differ from news story in at least three ways. First, you need to rely primarily on documentary sources. These can include articles from news magazines, trade journals, research organizations or research books and research articles. Using Google Scholar through UT is a good place to find sources as is the library website (both the book section and data base section). I won't prohibit interviews but they should be from experts, not just random students. Second, you need to use in-text citations rather than the normal attribution of a news article. I am less hung up on citation style, as long as I can look it up. Third, you need a conclusion to summarize the article.

You need to have at least 10 sources. Please include a cover page and do not put your name elsewhere on the paper. You need a bibliography with the sources you use. While I prefer APA style, as long as I can look up the source I am happy.

A half page description of your assignment is due **Thursday, Oct. 6 by 4:30 p.m.**  
The paper is due **Dec. 5 at 4:30.**