



## RHET 3401: Life In the Network

### Internet Communication: Tools and Issues

This course examines our interactions with technology and the Internet from a pragmatic perspective.

We'll look at a variety of applications and the ways they alter the production, distribution, and use of workplace and personal communications. We'll also contemplate the ways current technologies change our perceptions of ourselves, our communities, and our ethical choices.

#### Contact

Email: [kenne329@umn.edu](mailto:kenne329@umn.edu) (Preferred. With rare exceptions, I respond to all emails within 48 hours.)

AIM: iamkristak

Office Hours: M&W 12:30 - 1:50

Office: 43B Classroom Office Building (enter through COB 64, the main entrance of the Department of Rhetoric, and follow the hall on around.)

#### Texts and Materials

Aoki, Keith, et al. *Bound By Law? Tales From the Public Domain*. Center for the Public Domain, Duke Law School. 2006

Gurak, Laura. *Cyberliteracy: Navigating the Internet with Awareness*. Yale University Press, 2001.

Other required readings will be distributed via our course site. You'll need to make sure you have the most recent version of Adobe Reader so you can view them. (It's linked on the "Resources" page.)

You'll also need to make sure you're set up to consistently and fully participate with us. This means that you have a reliable Internet connection -- and it's even better if you have a relatively fast one. (If you don't have broadband and live in an area that is not served by Time-Warner Cable, you can get a discounted rate with Comcast through the UMN TechMart. Check the link on the "Resources" page.) You should familiarize yourself with Vista email, and remember to check it each time you log in here. You'll also want to make sure that you've done the required work to get your computer ready to work with WebCT Vista. There's information in the "Help" section that will walk you through that.

## Getting Things Done

**Attendance:** You should be participating fully and consistently each week. Since this class relies so heavily on discussion, it is not possible for you to make up missed work or to work ahead. Do not disappear in the middle of the semester with the intention of coming back later, and do not plan on finishing early. This requirement may be difficult for you, depending on your personality. **Let me be very frank: if you are taking this class because you need an easy three hours of credit, you may want to reconsider now.** Online courses can be more difficult than face-to-face ones for the simple reason that there is no place you have to be and no time you have to be there. It's up to you to make yourself show up and do the work. This one also requires you to do more writing than some of your other classes and as well as some technology wrangling.

**Participation:** To succeed in any class, you need to make a point of showing up and participating. The same is true here, but our definition of "showing up" is a bit different. Because we can't see you, you need to be blogging consistently in order to make sure the rest of us know you're there. It's the only way we have of getting to know each other, developing ideas, and figuring out answers to our questions.

Because this is so important, the points you receive from discussions make up more than half your total grade (60%). You should plan on writing at least one substantive blog post each week. There are several requirements here:

- It should have a good title. "Good" means descriptive and original. "Week One Post" is not a good title.
- It should be insightful, articulate, on-topic, and clearly demonstrate an understanding of the readings.
- It should substantiate assertions and contain citations as appropriate. Parenthetical citation is fine. Ex: (Brady, 2006, p. 2).
- It should integrate the tool that we're discussing that week
- It should be at least 250 words long.
- It should be posted by midnight on Wednesday. (More on that below.)

Additionally, you should plan on making thoughtful comments to at least two of your colleagues' posts. "Thoughtful" means articulate and helpful; comments like "Absolutely!" and "Woo-hoo!" do not count. If your contributions meet these basic requirements, you'll receive up to 40 points each week. (These points apply only to comments on the blog, not comments left on other apps such as flickr.)

You can feel free to post more, of course. Extra work (either in posts or comments) means up to three additional points per week. If you see something interesting and pertinent to the course in the news, on YouTube, or elsewhere, post a link and let us know about it!

Do not flame each other. Even if you're working at home in your bunny slippers, you're still at work when you're dealing with this class. Remain professional at all times. Disagreements will inevitably pop up as we talk through our topics, but they should be handled respectfully -- don't ever vent your frustration by ripping someone apart. If your behavior does not meet these guidelines, you and I will have a discussion and your grade will be drastically affected.

Respect works both ways. I do my best to be courteous and fair in all situations and at all costs. If you ever feel that you've been treated otherwise, please come and talk to me about it.

## RHET 3401: Internet Tools & Issues

Criteria	Points
Post meets or exceeds length requirements	5
Post substantiates assertions and contains appropriate citations	5
Post integrates necessary tools as directed	10
Post is insightful, articulate, on-topic, and demonstrates understanding of the readings	10
Comments on at least two other posts are helpful and appropriate	10

**Rhythm:** Our discussions will span the entire week, beginning on Monday morning and ending on Sundays at midnight. **Do not plan on doing your entire week's work on Sunday afternoons. If you do, your grade will be substantially less than you hoped for: submissions posted after the deadline will receive zero points.** As I said above, our initial posts should be up by midnight on Wednesday. Don't dally -- it's rude to wait until the last minute because it robs your classmates of time to read, reflect on, and respond to your thoughts. You should plan on checking in here and on the blog at least three days each week, which is no different than if you were enrolled in a class that meets MWF. If we all make this work right, there will almost always be something new for you to see.

**Readings:** Because you don't get the great joy of showing up to listen to me lecture each week, you'll need to be sure to do the readings. This is particularly important because your final grade will reflect your understanding of the course materials. These readings range from the very simple to the theoretical and abstract, but you should make a point of pushing through even if you find the material difficult. If you don't understand something, talk to me about it or ask the rest of us on the blog. (Chances are that if you have a question, someone else does too. This means that everyone can benefit from the discussion.)

**Technology:** The work you do for this class will require familiarity with the basic uses of computers to compose documents; to save and backup your work; to send files as email attachments; to upload and download documents; and to download, install, and launch applications. None of the things we'll be working with require you to do any programming or have any special knowledge, but they do require that you be prepared to push yourself and ask questions when you need to. This means keeping an open mind, being willing to read help files and fiddle a bit on your own, and being willing to call Tech Support when you need to. (Please remember that I am the teacher, not a technical support specialist. I am always willing to help you as much as I can, but there will be specific quirks for your machine that you may need to address with someone else. )

All required readings will be posted on WebCT Vista. All of our discussions will be on the external blog. Your identity has been shielded there through the use of pseudonyms, but you should remember that the blog is a public document. Never forget that *anyone* can read it.

# RHET 3401: Internet Tools & Issues

If you have any concerns about the role of technology in this course, you should contact me within the first week of the semester. You should also plan to take advantage of email and my office hours for questions that come up along the way.

**Major assignments:** You will complete two major assignments over the course of the semester.

Assignment #1, 150 points: A 2500-word (10-12 page) paper that examines a current Internet-related issue in light of one of the larger topics we've discussed by that point in the semester.

Assignment #2, 250 points: An alternative media production that examines one of the topics discussed in the second half of the course. You may use any of the applications we discuss to produce the project. The final product should be the functional equivalent of a 10-12 page paper.

You'll receive detailed instructions about both of these as we move along in the semester.

An important point to note about citation in this class:

Your projects should cite a wide variety of sources, both print and digital. Google Scholar is a wonderful tool, but you should also be taking advantage of our Libraries' rich resources. (The UMN Libraries rank in the top 15 in the country!) There will be more specifics on this aspect in the assignment details, but you should know now that I will not accept a paper that cites only electronic resources.

Your final course grade will be calculated according to the usual criteria:

A	940 – 1000	Represents work that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	900 - 939	
B+	880 – 899	Represents work that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B	840 – 879	
B-	800 - 839	
C+	780 – 799	Represents work that meets the basic course requirements in every aspect.
C	740 – 779	
C-	700 - 739	
D	600 - 699	Represents work that is worthy of credit even though it does not fully meet the basic course requirements.
F	599 and below	Signifies that the work was either completed but at a level that was not worthy of credit or else was not completed at all.

I do not give incompletes. If you are in the D or F range at midterm, you and I will schedule a conference. This may be a time for you to withdraw from the class or sign a contract with me stating that we've discussed the matter and you intend to continue the class.

**Grade Disputes:** If you have a question about your grade, please wait 24 hours before you discuss it with me. Take some time to think about the situation and carefully formulate your argument. When we talk, you should have a specific rationale for why you deserve a higher grade. Then schedule a time to meet with me and we'll discuss it.

**Late work:** I do not accept late work, and I will not accept technology problems as an excuse. If your home system becomes unusable for some reason, you should go to one of the many labs on campus to complete your assignments. The only acceptable technology-related excuse is a city-wide blackout.

## RHET 3401: Internet Tools & Issues

**Academic Dishonesty:** If you have a question about documentation and/or plagiarism as you complete your work, just ask me. I'll be more than happy to discuss it with you. That said, all students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own will result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

*Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.*

Bottom line: if you engage in academic dishonesty, you will most likely fail the course.

**Special Needs and Accommodations:** Students who need special consideration because of any sort of documented disability should make an appointment to see me right away. The information you share with me will remain confidential. You should also contact the Office of Disability Service for information and/or assistance.

# Schedule of Events

<b>Week One</b> (1/15 - 1/21)	History of the Internet, Web 2.0 Apps of the Week: Movable Type, Sparklit	Peters, "The History of the Internet" (link) O'Reilly, "What is Web 2.0?" (link)
<b>Week Two</b> (1/22 - 1/28)	The Internet as Public Space Apps of the Week: Flickr	Gurak, Chapters 1 and 2 Sturz, "Communal Categorization: The Folksonomy" (link)
<b>Week Three</b> (1/29 - 2/4)	Identity App of the Week: Second Life	Turkle, "Life on the Screen," Chapters 7 & 10 (PDF) Kirkpatrick, "Second Life: It's Not a Game." (PDF) Second Life, Community Page (Link)
<b>Week Four</b> (2/5 - 2/11)	Identity, Part II: Gender App of the Week: Meez	Gurak, Chapter 4 Turkle, "Tinysex and Gender Trouble" (PDF)
<b>Week Five</b> (2/12 - 2/18)	Community on the Net App of the Week: your choice	Baym, "Interpreting Soap Operas and Creating Community: Inside a Computer-Mediated Fan Culture" (PDF) boyd, "Friends, Friendsters, and Top 8" (link) <i>The Daily Show</i> , Friendster episode
<b>Week Six</b> (2/19 - 2/25)	Issues of Power: Privacy App of the Week: Facebook	Gurak, 110-116 PEW, "Social Networking Sites and Teens: An Overview" (link) Cornell University Facebook Statement (link) UMN Guide to Living in Online Communities (link) Schneier, "Lessons from the Facebook Riots" Optional Text: PostSecret (link) Optional Text: "Master Plan" (link)
<b>Week Seven</b> (2/26 - 3/4)	Issues of Power: The Digital Divide App of the Week That's Not An App: The \$100 Laptop	Couldry, "The Digital Divide" (PDF) PEW, "Internet Penetration and Impact," "The Ever-Shifting Internet Population," "Are Wired Seniors Sitting Ducks?"
<b>Week Eight</b> (3/5 - 3/11)	Crime on the Net <b>Major Assignment #1 Due by midnight on Friday, 3/9</b>	Gurak, Chapter 5 Dhamija, et al, "Why Phishing Works" (link) ABC News report on the Nigerian 419 scams (link) McCarthy, "Colbert Speaks, America Follows: All Hail Wikiality!" (link) Diaz, "Gutknecht joins Wikipedia tweak-ers." (link)
<b>Week Nine</b> (3/12 - 3/18)	Spring Break	Spring Break

<b>Week Ten</b> (3/19 - 3/25)	The Transformation of Text App of the Week: ComicLife (Mac) or Tabblo (PC or Mac)	Landow, "Twenty Minutes Into the Future" (PDF) Birkerts, "Into the Electronic Millennium" (PDF)
<b>Week Eleven</b> (3/26 - 4/1)	Distributed Authorship App of the Week: Wikipedia	Lih, "Wikipedia as Participatory Journalism" (link) Lanier, "Digital Maoism" (link) Brier, "Viral Marketing" Subservient Chicken (link) Anderson, "Dissecting Subservient Chicken"
<b>Week Twelve</b> (4/2 - 4/8)	Intellectual Property App of the Week: Creative Commons	Barlow, "The Economy of Ideas" (link) Aoki, et al, "Bound By Law" (text) Creative Commons, "Get Creative" Optional text: Walker, "Cyberspace's Legal Visionary" (link)
<b>Week Thirteen</b> (4/9 - 4/15)	Filesharing and DRM App of the Week: iTunes	Barlow, "The Next Economy of Ideas" (link) Spring, "Three Minutes with Jack Valenti" (link) Jobs, "Thoughts on Music" (link) Doctorow, "Steve Jobs' iTunes Dance" (link) CNN.com, "EMI-Apple Pen Deal to Sell Songs" (link)
<b>Week Fourteen</b> (4/16 - 4/22)	Transformation of the Media, I App of the Week: YouTube	IHE, Shock and Anger at UCLA (link) IHE, Taser Case Continues to Reverberate (link) Grossman, "Time's Person of the Year: You" (link) Davis, "The Secret World of LonelyGirl" (link) Optional Text: Rocketboom, "Interview with the Creators of Lonely Girl15"
<b>Week Fifteen</b> (4/23 - 4/29)	Transformation of the Media, II: Podcasting App of the Week: Odeo	Campbell, "There's Something in the Air: Podcasting in Education" (link) Newitz, "Adam Curry Wants to Make You an iPod Radio Star" (link) MIT OpenCourseWare (link)
<b>Week Sixteen</b> (4/30 - 5/4)	Net Neutrality <b>Major Assignment #2 Due Midnight, Friday 5/4.</b>	NCTA, "Mumbo Jumbo" (link) "Humanity Lobotomy" (link) Orlowski, "How AT&T Chewed Up and Spat Out Net Neutrality" (link)