Roots of Digital Culture
DIG 4905, section 0408

Instructor: Marko Suvađdzic, MFA, Visiting Assistant Professor, Digital Worlds Institute
Class meetings: Tuesdays, Periods 5-6 11:45AM-1:40PM, Thursdays, Period 6 12:50PM-1:40PM
Classroom: E413 SAGE, Computer Sciences/Engineering
Office hours: Tuesdays, 2:00pm – 3:30pm; Thursdays, 2:00PM – 3:30PM
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PRE-REQUISITES
Undergraduate standing at UF.

INTRODUCTION
This is the syllabus of an undergraduate survey course on digital cultures and social media. The course is changing according to the needs of the students and the pace of our learning, and the syllabus may change during the semester to meet the needs of students and the instructor.

The last decade has witnessed an explosive growth of digital media across all domains in contemporary world culture. “Roots of Digital Culture” is as an introductory graduate course offering an interdisciplinary approach to the examination of the technological and cultural underpinnings that continue to shape current electronic media internationally (including video games, the Internet, computer-animated movies and virtual reality.) The focus of this course is on the dizzying array of relationships that constitute digital culture – international social and cultural practices, ethnic and gender identity, legal structures, and emerging technological forms, in both economically-developing and economically-developed societies.

In this course students are exposed to a wide variety of contemporary and historic media theories, practices, artifacts and cultural movements. Students’ investigations and written analyses will serve to heighten their critical and analytical skills across traditional and electronic media and encourage further examination of media artifacts in the 21st century world.

Classroom interaction includes both real-time and pre-rendered media and requires students to participate fully in the development of individual and team projects and reports. Projects will allow each student to explore individuated perspectives and interests in the emerging digital culture of the 21st century. Research results will be presented in both written and digital media formats.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe and articulate major trends and trajectories in digital culture, digital literacy and digital media.
2. Describe the major perspectives on how changes in digital culture are changing the way people participate, engage, learn and work.
3. Use different perspectives to analyze and investigate events, communities and media in digital culture.
4. Present findings from your own research into some particular aspect of digital culture.

CLASS TEXTBOOKS

GRADING SCALE

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<tr>
<th>GRADING SCALE Letter Grade</th>
<th>% Equivalency</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>94 – 100%</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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SUBMISSION OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS
Unless otherwise specified, all class assignments are to be submitted via the course web site. Said email submissions will be made no later than 6AM on the day upon which the assignment is due.

GRADES
20% Written assignments and comments.
20% Photo project
20% Research projects with in-class presentation
10% Final Paper/Project Proposal
30% Final Paper/Project

ASSIGNMENTS AND DELIVERABLES

1. Papers and comments – You will be required to write a one eight-hundred words or more paper and post them on the course web site discussing and analyzing a reading theme. This online essay can analyze a digital community, even in digital culture or a piece of digital media as it relates to one of our reading themes. Additionally, you are required to write four (4) one-hundred word comments on another students post. You are required to have two of these posts done by class on Week 8 and two of the blog comments done by class on Week 10. Extra credit up to one letter grade will be given for additional paper writing and comments on the course web site and forums.

2. Final Paper or Project – In lieu of a final exam, this course requires that you either a) write a one thousand word paper on a reading theme or digital tool/community of your choice, or b) work with a group of two-to-four other students to create a digital media project. The project you create can be, but is not limited to, a piece of digital film (animation, video collage, mash-up, etc.), a computer game, a piece of digital software, or a digitally-augmented presentation or performance in the Digital Worlds’ REVE (Research, Education and Visualization Environment) in Norman Gym. Digital project must be approved by the instructor BEFORE it begins.

FOCUS OF THE GRADING
I will be grading your writing only insofar as it adds or detracts from the ideas you are trying to communicate. In other words, the focus of the grading will not be on your writing abilities. I will mostly be looking at your understanding of the assigned readings and class discussions, and the quality of your ideas about them. You should make sure your writing is adequate enough to communicate your understanding and ideas.

Your papers will be graded according to the following rubric:

1. A clear and concise thesis, central argument or main point
2. Evidence that clearly supports that main thesis
3. Relationship between the thesis and the readings and material discussed in class
4. Clarity in writing, use of proper formatting and use of proper paragraph structure in articulating your ideas
5. The relevance, creativity and strength of your arguments and analysis in examining an potent and important issue related to some aspect of digital culture.

CLASS POLICIES
Attendance is required. Contents of missed sessions will not be repeated for individual students; it is your responsibility to obtain notes and other information discussed during any given session from classmates or web postings.

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATION
Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.
EMAIL
Each student is required to maintain and check their registered UF email account capable of sending and receiving 1-3MB files. Information necessary for upcoming classes will be discussed in weekly class sessions and if any changes or modifications to existing schedule or requirements become necessary, will be emailed to students 24 hours in advance of the next class meeting.

UF HONOR CODE
All students are expected to abide by the UF Honor Code at all times, which reads, in part: “I affirm that this work in its entirety is mine alone, and that I have received no outside assistance from anyone else, including classmates, other students, or faculty. I understand that plagiarism, seeking or receiving other unauthorized assistance, or any false representations regarding this exam [or other work] are serious offenses punishable under the Student Honor Code.” Academic dishonesty, as defined by UF polices will not be tolerated and will carry appropriate penalties. All Intellectual Property created by other entities must be given proper reference in all materials submitted in class.

READING AND WRITING CENTER
If you have trouble with the writing required by this course, you are encouraged to a) visit the instructor and/or TA during office hours; and b) visit the University of Florida Reading and Writing Center (RWC), which offers mentorship and editing services to University of Florida students. Here is how the RWC’s website (http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-center/) describes the center and its services: “The Reading and Writing Center (RWC) is committed to helping University of Florida students become better writers and readers. We aim to support independent learning and encourage scholarship by fostering writing and reading skills. We provide individual assistance to those wishing to develop their writing, better understand the writing process, and improve reading comprehension and study skills. Students of all levels and disciplines are welcome!”

STUDENT CONCERNS
If you have any concerns or questions about any situation in the course please consult the instructor ASAP. If after consultation with the Instructor, the student has unresolved concerns or questions, they may request an appointment with the program director.

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