

**English/DTC 561, Studies in Technology and Culture
Avery 12**

Dr. Mike Edwards
Avery 341

**Spring 2017
Mondays 3:10–5:40 p.m.**

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@PRETERITE

{DAMAGEKITTY} **Overview:**

This graduate seminar develops historical, ethical, rhetorical, and cultural understandings of technologies and cultures by merging theory and practice with an emphasis on cultural needs, historical trajectories, and lived practices. Students will examine the key concepts, debates, tools and possibilities afforded by engaging technology through a critical cultural lens. The course challenges both technologically determinist and celebratory narratives by building a critical vocabulary and in-depth knowledge of the historical, political, social and ethical decisions, projects and processes that define practical implementations of technologies that are never culturally neutral or value-free.

The seminar therefore asks: how can participants better respond to increasingly pervasive flows of ambient information in culturally responsible ways? And how can we do so in ways that do not imagine that a graduate seminar can simply transfer familiar material cultural *topoi* into new digital environments, but that rather understand that digital environments are no less material than any other aspects of our culture, and that investigate their complications as such, rather than assuming a project of somehow remediating those familiar cultural *topoi* into the digital? Students in the seminar will collaboratively examine the cultural and material effects of the intersection of process and information in such areas of culture as archiving, privacy, regulation, expression, coercion, surveillance, research, security, representation, and persuasion.

{BURSTDRESSER} **Course Outcomes:**

- Students will develop and critique understandings of foundational concepts concerning the applications of digital technologies to aspects of contemporary culture.
- Students will gain expertise and flexibility in the use of contemporary digital technologies for scholarly, pedagogical, and cultural purposes.
- Students will critically examine the cultural problems and possibilities posed by historic and contemporary technologies.

{SENTENCELAUNDRY} **Materials:**

- Finn Brunton and Helen Nissenbaum, *Obfuscation: A User's Guide for Privacy and Protest* (MIT, 2016: 9780262529860)
- Philip N. Howard, *Pax Technica* (Yale, 2015: 9780300199475)

- Tung-Hui Hu, *A Prehistory of the Cloud* (MIT, 2016; 9780262029513)
- Fred Kaplan, *Dark Territory: The Secret History of Cyber War* (Simon & Schuster, 2016: 9781476763255)
- Julie Thompson Klein, *Interdisciplining Digital Humanities* (University of Michigan, 2015: 9780472052547; available free)
- Frank Pasquale, *The Black Box Society* (Harvard, 2015: 9780674368279)
- Jeffrey Pomerantz, *Metadata: A Very Brief Introduction* (MIT, 2015: 9780262528511)
- Bruce Schneier, *Data and Goliath* (Norton, 2015: 9780393244816)

Additionally, students will choose to read one of two novels: either *Count Zero* by William Gibson or *Homeland* by Cory Doctorow.

Students should plan on bringing a networked digital composing device (smartphone, tablet, or laptop) to class each week or arranging to borrow one from the AML or making arrangements to share with no more than one other student in the seminar.

{PLIERCOACH} **Contributions:**

Each week, one student will identify problems raised by the readings and link those problems to previous discussions in order to present an **agenda** for the discussion. A second student will investigate the lists of works cited in the readings in order to present a genealogical and theoretical **background** for the discussion, including an annotated bibliography of key academic antecedents: doing so will also help to emphasize for students the ways in which histories and archives are always constructed and never disinterested. A third student will present use cases and instructions on ways to use a digital **tool** to extend that week's discussion, either for information management, collaboration management, data analysis, data presentation, or data archiving (possible examples: DEVONThink, Git, Mallet, Gephi, Splunk, Mukurtu, GPG, Eli Review).

{YOGURTSPOON} **Assignments:**

On 2/27, students will turn in midterm problem statements outlining a possible controversy or intervention based on course readings that they wish to investigate more deeply in an end-of-semester multimodal seminar project.

For 1/23, 1/30, 2/6, 2/13, 3/6, 3/27, 4/3, 4/10, and 4/17, students who are not presenting an **agenda**, **background**, or **tool** will be responsible for writing a total of 8 short informal responses (400–600) words to the readings and posting and them and responding to others' in Eli Review. (Since that totals 9 weeks, students who are presenting will not be responsible for writing responses.) Students will also use the discussion forums when we don't meet face-to-face, and will use the writing-tracking application 750words.

On 3/20, students will turn in short papers that extend the work of their problem statements into review essays, investigating and evaluating at least four additional scholarly sources that help shape their perspectives on the challenges they wish to investigate.

The end-of-semester multimodal seminar project will be collaborative in the sense that students will be expected to quote and make use of some of the resources and responses their classmates have presented and incorporate material from their own informal responses. During the final week of class, students will present their projects.

{CREDITBRANDY} **Grading:**

Because we meet once per week, I expect regular attendance, but I also understand that life happens in ways that are sometimes beyond our control. Be professional: one unplanned absence is fine, but more than that will affect your grade. If you know you're going to be absent, I expect you to make arrangements with me ahead of time. Because we meet on Mondays, and Mondays are disproportionately affected by holidays in the Spring semester, I will ask you to read and interact on some weeks when we don't have classes.

discussion forums participation (2 @ 30)	60 points
in-class participation and preparedness	100 points
Eli Review responses, feedback, revision plans (8 @ 25)	200 points
presentations (agenda, technology, or background: 2 @ 60)	120 points
midterm project proposal and review essay (70 each)	140 points
750words data reporting (40 each @ midterm and final)	80 points
final reflective self-analysis	50 points
final project	250 points
TOTAL	1000 points

{LOTIONSCANNER} **Academic Integrity:**

Academic work builds upon, responds to, and explicitly acknowledges the work of others. The Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) [Statement on Plagiarism](#) notes that "In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." The WSU Academic Integrity Policy, which is based on State of Washington Code, expands the CWPA definition of plagiarism and explains other categories of academic misconduct. As a professionalizing WSU graduate student, you are responsible for abiding by these policies.

{WINDCHIMENEPHEW} **Campus Safety:**

Please be aware of the Campus Safety Plan (<http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/>) and visit the Office of Emergency Management web site (<http://oem.wsu.edu/>) for a comprehensive listing of university policies, procedures, statistics, and information related to campus safety, emergency management, and the health and welfare of the campus community.

{THUNDERCURRENT} **Discrimination, Harassment, and Misconduct:**

According to the [WSU Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct](#) and [WSU Standards of Conduct for Students](#), discrimination, discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct (including stalking, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence) are prohibited. If you have experienced or witnessed discriminatory conduct, contact the WSU Office for Equal Opportunity (<http://oeo.wsu.edu>) or a WSU Title

IX Coordinator (<http://oeo.wsu.edu/title-ix/>) to discuss reporting options and resources, including a list of confidential resources. WSU employees who have information regarding sexual harassment or sexual misconduct are required to report the information to OEO or a Title IX Coordinator. I require students to respect one another's individual identities, including respect for race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, ability, and veteran status.

{CICADABURMA} **Disability:**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities or chronic medical conditions. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Access Center (<http://www.accesscenter.wsu.edu>). You may also either call or visit the Access Center 509 335 3417; Washington 217). Accommodations must be approved through the Access Center. If you have an approved accommodation, discuss logistics with me early in the semester.

{FRIDGERHYTHM} **Calendar:**

Date	Preparation	Activity / Topic
PHASE LINE DELTA		
1/9	T zero Sign up for Eli Review and 750words	Course overview; view <i>CitizenFour</i>
1/16	T+01 <i>Count Zero or Homeland</i>	No class; introductions on Discussions
1/23	T+02 <i>Metadata</i> 1–207; Crawford, “Asking the Oracle” 138–151	Eli Review; metadata
1/30	T+03 <i>Interdisciplining Digital Humanities</i> Chapters 1–6 and Resourcing; Derrida, <i>Archive Fever</i> excerpts 1–3	Secure communications; collaboration
2/6	T+04 <i>Data and Goliath</i> 13–154 (Chapters 1–11); Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control” 3–7	Identity part 1
2/13	T+05 <i>Data and Goliath</i> 155–237 (Chapters 12–16); Dush, “When Writing Becomes Content” 172–194	Git (possible); nationalism part 1
PHASE LINE TANGO		
2/20	T+06 <i>A Prehistory of the Cloud</i> 1–143	No class; Discussions

Date	Preparation	Activity / Topic
2/27	T+07 Midterm due	Workshopping; information theory and Turing machines
3/6	T+08 <i>Pax Technica</i> 1–106 (Chapters 1–3); Kline, “What Is Technology” 210–212; Horning, “ <u>Savior Machines</u> ”; Feenberg, “Democratic Rationalization” 652–664	Infrastructure
3/13	<i>Pax Technica</i> 107–257 (Chapters 4–7)	Spring Break; optional Discussions make-up
3/20	T+09 <i>Dark Territory</i> 1–143 (Chapters 1–8); Marx “ <u>Fragment on Machines</u> ” 690–712; short review essay	Review essay presentations and feedback
3/27	T+10 <i>Dark Territory</i> 145–284 (Chapters 9–15); Sterne, “Compression: A Loose History” 31–52	Nationalism part 2
PHASE LINE CHARLIE	SEEKING AND HIDING	
4/3	T+11 <i>Black Box Society</i> 19–139 (Chapters 2–4); Dourish, “Protocols, Packets, and Proximity” 183–204	Identity part 2
4/10	T+12 <i>Black Box Society</i> 140–218 (Chapters 5–6); Reyman, “ <u>User Data</u> ”; Allison et al., “ <u>Quantitative Formalism</u> ”	
4/17	T+13 <i>Obfuscation</i> 1–98; Ohmann, “ <u>Literacy, Technology</u> ”; Benjamin, “ <u>Age of Mechanical Reproduction</u> ”	
4/24	T+14 Draft due	Workshopping; wrap-up; optional Discussions make-up
5/1	execute Finals due	DTC awards