

# **TC 100-101**

## **The Information Society**

### **Summer 2011**

Class Time: Tuesday & Thursday, 9:10 – 12:00  
Location: 173 Communication Arts & Sciences  
Class Dates: Tuesday, May 17 – Thursday, June 30

Instructor: Jessica Vitak  
Office: 249 Communication Arts & Sciences  
E-mail: vitakjes@msu.edu  
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10am-12pm  
Immediately after class (in classroom)  
Other hours by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Han-Ei CHEW  
Office: 348 Communication Arts & Sciences  
E-mail: chewhan@msu.edu  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1-3pm  
Immediately after class (in classroom)  
Other hours by appointment

#### **Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to and overview of the field of telecommunication, information studies, and media. As a survey course, it addresses a wide range of topics, including:

- Critique and analysis of media, including television, radio, film, video games, social media, and the Internet
- Media history, policy, industry structure, and ethics
- Technology, industry and social trends affecting the media in the information society

#### **Course Objectives**

1. To learn the historical development of the media industry, including newspapers, radio, film, television, the Internet, and new media.
2. To learn about the concept of the information society and its economic, political, and social implications.
3. To be informed about the social and policy issues affecting the information society.
4. To be critically aware of the effects of information and communication technologies on yourself, other individuals, social institutions and society.

#### **Required text**

Straubhaar, J., LaRose, R., & Davenport, L. (2009). *Media now: Understanding media, culture, and technology* (6<sup>th</sup> ed). Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth Publishing.

Note: There is a more recent version (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) of this textbook. If you can find this version

for cheaper you can use it, but readings will be assigned based on the 6<sup>th</sup> edition, so be sure to check that you are reading the correct chapters and/or pages.

### **Additional Materials**

We will be relying heavily on online materials to supplement our textbook, so you will need regular access to a computer with Internet access in order to get the online readings. Students are responsible for checking ANGEL and their MSU email accounts regularly to stay abreast of announcements. (If you don't check your MSU email account, you should forward it to an account that you do check. You may also forward your ANGEL mail to a non-MSU account.)

### **Grading Scheme**

The final grade of record will be based on students' achievements in the following areas and weighted according to the following:

At-Home Activities (7 graded)	35 points possible (5 per activity)
Media Research Paper	75 points possible
In-class participation	40 points possible
Midterm Exam	100 points possible
Final Exam	100 points possible

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE 350 points

**Students are responsible for viewing their grades in ANGEL and informing the instructor or teaching assistant of any discrepancies within the specified time period.** You are responsible for checking your grades in ANGEL. If you see any errors or have any questions, you should contact Han Ei immediately via email at [chewhan@msu.edu](mailto:chewhan@msu.edu). Following the midterm, you have one week to submit your queries. After this period, we will not be able to make any adjustments to that portion of the grade. For the second half of the semester, your queries need to be submitted before the final exam. Also, students must keep copies of any work submitted until final grades are submitted.

If you are concerned about your grade, please make an appointment to discuss the situation with the instructor as early in the semester as possible.

The total number of points each student earns will be calculated, and the final grade of record will be determined according to the following scale:

4.0 = 315 to 350 points
3.5 = 297 to 314.9 points
3.0 = 280 to 296.9 points
2.5 = 262 to 279.9 points
2.0 = 245 to 261.9 points
1.5 = 227 to 244.9 points
1.0 = 210 to 226.9 points
0 = 209.9 points and under

### **Exams**

There will be two exams, which will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short-answer questions. **The final exam is not cumulative.**

Only valid, documented medical excuses will be accepted for a missed examination and

students must contact the instructor as soon as possible. **Unless the situation is one of dire illness (e.g., hospitalization) or tragedy (e.g., death in the family), this must happen BEFORE the exam.** Consideration to take a missed examination (or make-up exam) is wholly at the discretion of the instructor. Please make special note of the final examination date and arrange any end-of-term travel plans accordingly. Cheating will not be tolerated and will result in a score of zero for the course. Exam questions are reused and tight exam security must be maintained. Efforts to copy exam questions or to remove them from the examination room will be considered a serious violation.

### **In-Class Participation and At-Home Activities**

Students are encouraged to attend class regularly. In addition, because of the small size of the class, it is essential that students come to class prepared (i.e., having read the assigned reading prior to class). Therefore, students' grades include 40 points for class participation. Students who regularly attend class and participate in class discussions should receive full credit for this portion of the grade.

Additionally, students will be assigned eight at-home activities throughout the semester (four prior to the midterm and four following the midterm). These will be announced in class and will be posted in ANGEL. Students are responsible for any information distributed in class and should communicate with other students to find out what they have missed after an absence. Please note that late assignments will not be accepted. At the end of the semester, **the lowest score from the eight take-home activities will be dropped.**

### **Media Research Paper**

A primary purpose of this class is to encourage students to think critically about media. Therefore, students will be expected to write a short (1200-1500 word) paper analyzing the impact of technological changes on a medium (newspapers, books, radio, TV, film, Internet, or telephony). More detailed instructions will be provided early in the semester, but each paper should include the following sections:

1. A brief history of the development of the medium, highlighting the impact this medium had on society when it first launched.
2. How the medium has evolved with technological advancements.
3. A critical analysis of whether technology has been more beneficial or harmful to the medium.

**Students will be required to turn in a one-paragraph overview of their topic, including at least three non-textbook references, by Tuesday, May 31,** and they will receive feedback from the instructor within one week. Failure to turn in this outline will result in a 15-point penalty on the final paper.

The final paper must be submitted electronically by **Sunday, June 26 at 9pm.**

### **Extra Credit**

Extra credit assignments may be assigned throughout the semester at the instructor's discretion. Students are responsible for checking that ANGEL has correctly registered their participation and will have one week to inform the instructor about any problems. After this, scores will not be adjusted. Regardless of how many extra credit opportunities are offered, students can receive a maximum of 10 points in extra credit during the semester.

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic Honesty: Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states: "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades,

and professional standards.” In addition, TC 100-101 adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site [www.msu.edu](http://www.msu.edu).)

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, papers, and exams, without assistance from any source. Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Signing another student’s name on attendance sheets is considered lying to the instructor.

**Courtesy to Fellow Students and Instructors**

Please try to come on time so your arrival is not disruptive. If you do come in late, please enter from the back and choose a seat quietly. If you need to have a conversation with your neighbor, please pass a short note so that others in the classroom are not distracted. When you are in the classroom, it is expected that you are actively engaged in the class and not another activity, such as texting or reading the newspaper. Bringing your laptop and engaging in non-class related activities is distracting to others and to the instructor. Additionally it defeats the purpose of coming to class (learning). If you bring a laptop, limit its use to taking notes or supplementing the discussion with online research.

**Some Tips for Doing Well in this Course**

1. Come to class regularly. The PowerPoint slides are NOT substitutes for coming to class and are not comprehensive.
2. Take notes! This will help you retain information and will help you with studying for the exam. You might want to get the notes from ANGEL and add to them with your own comments.
3. Do the reading BEFORE class and don’t be afraid to ask questions. Don’t try to read everything right before the exam. Study for the review session, so that you can ask questions.
4. Find a friend in class with whom you can study and share information.
5. See the instructor as soon as possible if you are having trouble with course content.
6. Check ANGEL frequently and let the instructor know immediately if there are any discrepancies regarding your scores. Note that there are deadlines for this.

**Tentative Content and Reading Schedule**

Note: Any aspect of this syllabus, including the content and reading schedule, may be adjusted throughout the semester. Any changes will be announced in class and via ANGEL. Students are responsible for checking ANGEL on a regular basis and coming to class.

<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Assignment*</b>
Tu	5/17/11	Intro to course/syllabus; overview of the info society; infrastructure	Media Now, Ch. 1 and Ch. 12	
Th	5/19/11	History of traditional media (print, audio, visual, telephony)	Determined during first class	

Tu	5/24/11	(Continued) History of traditional media	Determined during first class	
Th	5/25/11	Media Literacy	On ANGEL: (1) Livingstone, S. (2004). <i>Media Literacy and the Challenge of New Information and Communication Technologies</i> . (2) Gillmor, D. (2008) <i>Principles for a New Media Literacy</i> . (Okay to skim the section on "Principles of Media Creation" starting on p. 7 of PDF.)	Soundtrack of your life
Tu	5/31/11	Media & Society; intro to theories and methods	Media Now Ch. 2 (read in full), Ch. 13 (only read pp. 402-418)	CARS
Th	6/2/11	Media Ethics, Policy & Law; Review for Exam 1	Media Now Ch. 14 & 15	News story critique
Tu	6/7/11	<b>EXAM 1</b>	n/a	
Th	6/9/11	History of Media Effects; time spent with mass media	Sparks Ch. 3 & 4 (on ANGEL)	
Tu	6/14/11	Effects of Sex & Violence in Media	Sparks Ch. 5 & 6 (on ANGEL)	Uses & Grats
Th	6/16/11	Media Stereotypes/ Psychological Effects	Sparks, pp. 199-210 (on ANGEL)	Media Effects Forum post
Tu	6/21/11	PR, Advertising, & Persuasion	Media Now Ch. 10 & 11	Media Stereotypes Example
Th	6/23/11	Children & Media	Calvert, "Children as Consumers: Advertising and Marketing" (PDF in ANGEL)	Children's Ad
Tu	6/28/11	Internet & New Media; Review for Exam 2	Media Now, Ch. 9; boyd & Ellison, <i>Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship</i> . (on ANGEL)	
Th	6/30/11	<b>EXAM 2</b>	n/a	

\*All assignments must be submitted electronically by midnight on the day before class unless otherwise specified.

**OTHER IMPORTANT DATES:**

May 31: Overview of final paper due electronically by class time

June 26: Final paper due electronically by 9pm