

Prof. Mark Nunes  
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COMM 3160: Media Theory & Practice

Office Hours: M- F: 10:00-11:00  
J-333/678-915-7209

- Aug. 24: Course Overview: Why Theory Matters  
26: Media, Culture, and History  
Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"  
Carey, "Space, Time, and Communications: A Tribute to Harold Innis"
- 31: McLuhan: Media Affordances  
McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (excerpts)
- Sept. 2: Media Ecology  
Strate, *Echoes and Reflections* (excerpts)
- 7: Labor Day: No Class  
9: **Demo Day: Media Ecologies, Media Affordances**
- 14: Medium as Channel: Cybernetics  
Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings* (excerpts)
- 16: Information, Signal and Noise  
Weaver, "Recent Contributions to the Mathematical Theory of Communication"  
Pierce, "Information Theory and Art"
- 21: Medium as Channel: Variations on a Theme  
Bryant & Thompson, "Communication Models"  
Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (excerpt)  
Hall, "Encoding/Decoding"
- 23: Medium as Culture: Ecology Revisited  
Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication"  
Hermes, "Media, Meaning, and Everyday Life"
- 28: **Demo Day: Channels, Codes, and Culture**  
30: Media/Power  
Enzensberger, "Constituents of a Theory of the Media"  
Herman & Chomsky, "A Propaganda Model"
- Oct. 5: Media Effects  
Bryant & Thompson, "History of the Scientific Study of Media Effects"  
Howard, "We Know What You Want: The Media Zone"
- 7: Media as Spectacle  
Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (excerpts)
- 12: Baudrillard: The Hyperreal  
*Simulations* (excerpts)
- 14: Networks of Culture: Cybernetics Revisited  
Baudrillard, "The Implosion of Meaning in the Media"  
Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control"  
Terranova, "Three Propositions on Informational Culture"

- Oct. 19: **Demo Day: Networks**  
 21: New Media  
       Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (excerpts)
- 26: Poster: The Mode of Information  
       Poster, “Words Without Things”  
       Poster, “The Culture of Underdetermination”  
       Poster, “Perfect Transmissions: Evil Bert Laden”
- 28: Links  
       Landow, “Hypertext as Collage-Writing”  
       Lunenfeld, “Myths of Interactive Cinema”  
       Bruns, “Folksonomies: Producers and/of Knowledge Structures”
- Nov. 2: Media Mobility  
       Plant, “On the Mobile”  
       Rafael, “The Cell Phone and the Crowd”
- 4: Remediation: Media Ecology Re-revisited  
       Bolter & Grusin, *Remediation* (excerpts)
- 9: **Demo Day: Interactivity**
- 11: Participatory Culture!  
       Jenkins, *Convergence Culture* (excerpts)
- 16: Participatory Culture!!  
       Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody* (excerpts)
- 18: Participatory Culture !!!  
       Lessig, *Remix* (excerpts)
- 23: Participatory Culture??!?  
       Lovink, *Zero Comments* (excerpts)
- 25: Thanksgiving Break: No Class
- 30: Hacks and Jams  
       Wark, *A Hacker Manifesto* (excerpts)  
       Pickerel et al., “Culture Jams and Meme Warfare”
- Dec. 2: Error and Noise  
       *M/C Special Issue: Error*  
       Cascone, “The Aesthetics of Failure”  
       Hegarty, *Noise/Music* (excerpt)
- 7: **Project Presentation Day**  
 9: **Project Presentation Day**
- Dec. 14-16: Final Exam, Date and Time TBA

## Learning Outcomes for COMM 3160

COMM 3160, Media Theory and Practice, is a new course offered in support of the new BA in English and Professional Communication concentration in Media, Communication, and Culture (MCC). It is also a major elective for the concentration in Professional Writing and for the BS in Technical Communication program. This course will introduce you to major media theorists of the 20th and 21st century. Students will explore theories of print, radio, film, television, and various digital media. Students will also explore applications of theory to the production of media objects. Students will:

- Demonstrate familiarity with major media theorists
- Explain the relationship between media form and media content
- Analyze contemporary media practice in the context of media theory
- Apply media theory to the production of media objects

## Course Requirements & Grading

### Major Project: 30%

You will produce a major media project that addresses a topic of concern in the course. I must approve your topic, but I am open to a range of ideas and interests. I encourage you to be creative in thinking through how—and in what media—you will implement your project. In addition to the media object, you will also write a 1-2 page summary document that explains how your work interrogates ideas raised in the course. You will also provide an annotated bibliography of 8-10 secondary sources that are relevant to your project.

### Demo Days: 15%

Twice per semester, you will be responsible for a short “demo” in class of a media object that brings media theory into practice. Your media object can be an original product, or it can sample from existing material. Your in-class presentation should explain how this media object demonstrates the principles we have discussed in class. In addition to a 10-minute presentation, you will turn in a one-page summary statement that explains the connection between theory and practice, with reference to specific works on the syllabus.

### Response Papers and Class Participation: 15%

We will have weekly (give or take) response papers, each of which should be 150-300 words long. Your response paper should ride the line between formal writing and informal (“gut level”) responses to the day’s texts. I will prompt you with a response question before the class session, and it will be due back to me prior to the start of the next class, submitted through the Vista course site. The class will run as a seminar, which means you will have to be an active participant in class discussions. Once or twice during the semester, I may ask you to lead discussion for a portion of the class.

### Media Diary: 20%

You will “write” five 300-500 word pieces that reflect your ongoing thoughts on the readings in the course. Unlike response papers, this assignment is open-ended and can cover a wider range of readings. These “diary” entries should cover a range of mediated formats (blog, video, podcast, snail mail, etc.) By “writing” across media, this project should help you think through the relationship between media form and media content.

### Final Exam: 20%

The final exam will provide a comprehensive assessment of the material you learned in the course. It will be essay-based, and it will call upon your ability to make connections amongst various texts.

## Policies and Procedures

### Attendance

I will expect you to *attend*. Note that this does not simply mean sitting in class. You should come to class prepared to participate. We will be running the class as a seminar, which means I will have a heightened expectation for participation. If you are not in class, or you are in class but unprepared or inattentive, you will have a negative impact on the classroom dynamic as a whole. For your sake and for the sake of your classmates' learning experience, please come to class, keep up with the readings, and ask lots of questions!

### Late Work

I expect you to turn in all work on time.

**Response Papers** are due by class time. You can turn in a late response paper by 11:59 pm on the day that it is due for a 1 pt. penalty (on a 10-pt. scale). I will not accept response papers after 11:59 pm.

**Media Diaries** are due by 11:59 on presentation days. In other words, your first diary entry is due on Sept. 7, and your fifth and final diary entry is due on December 7. You will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late.

**Project Write-ups** are also due by 11:59 on presentation days. You will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late.

You must turn in all late work by **5pm on December 10** in order to get credit for your work.

### Cheating & Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses, resulting in penalties ranging from an F in the course to expulsion from the University. Please consult your student handbook for university-wide policies. Document *each and every* reference to source material using appropriate MLA-style!

### Equal Access

Southern Poly provides support services for those students who are disabled. Please see the ATTIC for assistance. SPSU also keeps in accordance with all state and federal equal access/equal opportunity policies.