

University of Washington
Masters of Communication in Digital Media
Autumn 2005

COM 546:

Evolution and Trends in Digital Media and Technologies

Books

Media, Technology and Society. Brian Winston. 1998.
The World is Flat. Thomas L. Friedman. 2005.

Assignments

Reading summaries are due 8 am Monday before Tuesday's class unless otherwise noted.

Week 1 - 4 October - Class Overview/Introduction

Week 2 - 11 October - Communication Theories

- "Introduction" and "Chapter 1: The Telegraph," from *Media Technology and Society*.
- "Social Aspects of New Media Technologies," from *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, 1994. (eReserve)
- "How the Internet killed the phone business," from *The Economist*, 17 September 2005 (eReserve)

Reading Summary: Two "ah-ha's" from these readings. How might the readings apply to your possible research interests?

Week 3 - 18 October - Diffusion of Innovation

- *Everyone*: Chapters 2 & 3 from *Media, Technology and Society*, 1998.
- *Everyone*: *Informing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman, 1990.
Link: <http://www.frostbytes.com/~jimf/informing.html>

Reading Summary: Discuss the importance of "supervening necessity" - can you think of other examples? What about the law of unintended consequences?

For Class Discussion:

Explore why new technologies are adopted, particularly those dealing with communication.

- *Group 1 Also Read:*
"Determining Uses and Gratifications for the Internet," from *Decision Sciences*, Vol 35 No 2, March 2004. Link: <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/bpl/deci/2004/00000035/00000002/art00005>
- *Group 3 Also Read:*
"Around the World Wide Web in 80 Ways: how motives for going online are linked to internet activities among politically interested internet users," from *Social Science Computer Review*, Vol 21 Issue 3, 2003. Link: <http://ssc.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/21/3/304>
- *Group 2&5 Will Serve as Recorders*

Pre-Class Deliverable for Groups 1,3:

Synthesize all readings (class and group) and supplement discussion material with at least one additional reading per group member.

Each group member posts, to the class blog, a reaction to the assigned reading(s)* that includes a short abstract (with link) of the supplemental resource. These blog posts are due 6 pm day of class.

** Each person does not have to read all discussion readings!*

In Class Process:

Each group (1-4) will have about 45 minutes to discuss the readings and the supplemental materials and agree upon key learnings. Group 5 will discuss the core reading and I will work with them on recording roles.

We will then break into groups so that a member of each team is in each group (a group will be composed of one person from 1-2-3-4-5). Now the groups will share the key points and learnings from all the readings and supplemental materials. Members of Group 5 will record. We will then have a class debrief.

Week 4 - 25 October - Diffusion of Innovation

- *Everyone:* "Technologies of the Third Mediamorphosis," by Roger Fidler (eReserve)

Reading Summary: Discuss the effects of applying computing power to communication.

For Class Discussion:

What factors have led to the adoption of computing technologies? Where do you see communication technologies moving in the future? What audiences, applications? Why? How do we, as a society, decide to fund long-range research that may or may not "pay off"?

- *Groups 1&3 Will Serve As Recorders*
- *Group 2 Also Read:* Chapters 9-10 from Winston
- *Group 4 Also Read:* "As We May Think," by Vannevar Bush from The Atlantic Monthly, July 1945. Link:
<http://www.w3.org/History/1945/vbush/vbush.shtml>

Pre-Class Deliverable for Groups 2,4:

Synthesize all readings (class and group) and supplement discussion material with at least one additional reading per group member.

Each group member posts, to the class blog, a reaction to the assigned reading(s)* that includes a short abstract (with link) of the supplemental resource. These blog posts are due 6 pm day of class.

** Each person does not have to read all discussion readings!*

Week 5 - 1 November - Personal Technologies

- *Everyone:*
 - “Ecologizing Mobile Media,” by Howard Rheingold. 2004. Link:
<http://www.thefeaturearchives.com/101022.html>

- *Everyone:* Chapter 1 & 3 from *The World is Flat*, 2005.
 - Group 1 - Chapter 2, Flattener 1 & 2
 - Group 2 - Chapter 2, Flattener 3 & 4
 - Group 3 - Chapter 2, Flattener 5 & 6
 - Group 4 - Chapter 2, Flattener 7 & 8
 - Group 5 - Chapter 2, Flattener 9 & 10

Reading Summary: General reaction to Friedman’s thesis: anything new for you? What do you disagree with? What are the implications for the US economy and position in the world?

For Discussion: Each group will present a summary of their “flatteners” and be prepared to lead a short discussion (~15 minutes) of their material. We will have some class time for groups to formulate their strategies, learnings, but some pre-conferencing (IM, e-mail, etc) is advised. Someone from each group should be assigned the role of recorder and should post a summary of the reading/learnings to the class blog by 6 pm Friday.

Week 6 - 8 November - Community

- *Everyone*: "Communities in Cyberspace" - eReserve.
- *Everyone*: Chapter 18 and Conclusion, Winston.

Questions to Jumpstart Your Reading Summary: What types of community have you experienced online? How have they differed from off-line communities? What characteristics of the Internet (the computing network) affect the growth, power, effectiveness of online communities?

For Class Discussion:

Explore characteristics of new media. What do you agree with, disagree with? Why? How do these characteristics affect online community?

- o *Groups 2&4 Will Serve As Recorders*
- o *Group 1 Also Read:*
"Networks of Remediation" from Remediation: Understanding New Media by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (1999) OR "The Medium Is The Message" from Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man by Marshall McLuhan (1964)
- o *Group 5 Also Read:*
"Principles of New Media" from The Language of New Media by Lev Manovich (2001)

Pre-Class Deliverable for Groups 1,5:

Synthesize all readings (class and group) and supplement discussion material with at least one additional reading per group member.

Each group member posts, to the class blog, a reaction to the assigned reading(s)* that includes a short abstract (with link) of the supplemental resource. These blog posts are due 6 pm day of class.

** Each person does not have to read all discussion readings!*

Week 7 - 15 November - Activism, Politics

- *Everyone*: "The Tragedy of the Commons" by Garret Hardin from Science Magazine (1968). Link:
<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/162/3859/1243>
- *Everyone*: Netizens: An Anthology, The Net and the Future of Politics: The Ascendency of the Commons
Link: <http://www.columbia.edu/~rh120/ch106.x14>

Questions to Jumpstart Your Reading Summary: What are your experiences with electronic government or eDemocracy; how would you rate them? Is this evolution good or bad, and why?

For Class Discussion:

What do you see as the future role of new media in public discourse? How is it similar to or different from other break-through media? How is the Internet a like public space, a "commons"?

- o *Groups 3&5 Will Serve As Recorders*
- o *Group 2 Also Read:*
[Hate and peace in a connected world: Comparing MoveOn and Stormfront](#) Noriko Hara and Zilia Estrada, *First Monday*, 11 Nov 2003
Link: http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue8_12/hara/index.html
- o *Group 4 Also Read:*
[e-Government, e-Society and Jordan: Strategy, theory, practice, and assessment](#), Michael Blakemore and Roderic Dutton, *First Monday*, 14 Oct 2003
Link:
http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue8_11/blakemore/index.html

Pre-Class Deliverable for Groups 2,4:

Synthesize all readings (class and group) and supplement discussion material with at least one additional reading per group member.

Each group member posts, to the class blog, a reaction to the assigned reading(s)* that includes a short abstract (with link) of the supplemental resource. These blog posts are due 6 pm day of class.

** Each person does not have to read all discussion readings!*

Week 8 - 22 November - Online Media

- Chapter 1: From Tom Paine to Blogs and Beyond from *We The Media*.
Link: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/wemedia/book/ch01.pdf>

Questions to Jumpstart Your Reading Summary:

What are your experiences with blogs - as principle writer, reader, contributor. If you have no experience with blogs, explore these links: <http://www.wiredpen.com/>

For Class Discussion:

How has the Internet affected traditional mass media (newspapers, radio, television) and how have the media responded (suppression or adoption)? Do some crystal ball gazing and hypothesize what the media landscape might look like in 10 years.

- o *Groups 1&4 Will Serve As Recorders*
- o *Group 3 Also Read:*
"Role of the Internet in National and Local News Media Use" from Journal of Online Behavior by Eric Riedel, Amy Gangl, Alina Oxendine, Melinda Jackson, John L. Sullivan, and Eugene Borgida (1:3) (2003).
Link: <http://www.behavior.net/JOB/v1n3/riedel.html>
- o *Group 5 Also Read:*
"Coda: The Advent of the Media" from *The Creation of The Media, Political Origins of Modern Communications* by Paul Starr (2004). (eReserve)

Pre-Class Deliverable for Groups 3,5:

Synthesize all readings (class and group) and supplement discussion material with at least one additional reading per group member.

Each group member posts, to the class blog, a reaction to the assigned reading(s)* that includes a short abstract (with link) of the supplemental resource. These blog posts are due 6 pm day of class.

** Each person does not have to read all discussion readings!*