

**CMST 3210 - Computer-Mediated Communication
Spring 2016**

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:30-11:50 & by appointment

Course Objective

This course focuses on computer-mediated communication (CMC) and its relationship to interpersonal communication. From its infancy as a federally-funded experiment in military communications to its maturity as a self-supporting and self-organizing global network, the World Wide Web has continued to confound the experts and delight its users. All of us rely on computers daily, whether with our prized laptops or the cell phones we cannot live without. This course examines how we communicate through these computerized means. The goal is to explore theory and real life uses to better understand how CMC works, what effects CMC has on human activity and its consequence on our many interpersonal relationships. The goal for the class is to help you better understand the following topics:

- What CMC is and how it is changing the way we communicate and our understanding of communication
- How CMC relates to Interpersonal Communication theories
- CMC, identify and the development and presentation of the self
- CMC and relationship development, maintenance and termination
- CMC and community

Course Materials

Social Media: Principles and Applications. Pavica Shelton (2015)

Personal Connections in the Digital Age, 2nd Edition. Nancy K. Baym (2015)

Readings posted to Moodle

Grades

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Exams | 30% |
| Participation | 15% |
| Presentation of CMC Examples | 10% |
| Reflection/Response Papers | 15% |
| Group Project | 30% |
| TOTAL | 100% |

All grades will be posted to Moodle and you **MUST** discuss a grade *in person within 2 weeks* of its posting. In accordance with the Buckley Amendment, grades will **NOT** be discussed through email or over the phone. **I do NOT round grades!!**

Grading Scale

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| A+ | 97-100 |
| A | 93-96.99 |
| A- | 90-92.99 |
| B+ | 87-89.99 |
| B | 83-86.99 |
| B- | 80-82.99 |
| C+ | 77-79.99 |
| C | 73-76.99 |
| C- | 70-72.99 |
| D+ | 67-69.99 |
| D | 63-68.99 |
| D- | 60-62.99 |
| F | 59.99 and below |

Assignments

Exams

There will be a midterm and final exam given in class. Makeups are only available with a documented excuse found in PS-31. You should notify me BEFORE missing an exam and be prepared that you will not receive the same exam as the one given in class.

Participation

In class we will use a more discussion-focused approach over lectures. Students should come to class prepared. This means you have read the material critically, come up with questions and identified topics for discussion that interest you. For each class day, you will earn a participation grade and I reserve the right to use an in class quiz or homework assignment as a participation grade. Based on your participation that day, you will earn a participation grade of up to 5 points. The point scale will use the following guidelines:

- 5 points – coming to class for the FULL time, making at least ONE interesting and informed comment or asking ONE interesting and informed question during class discussion and/or offering questions or critiques with your group during group work. To earn 5 points, you must be fully engaged and participating in class discussion without being asked to participate or called on to answer a question.
- 4 points – coming to class and participating in class discussion by answering a direct question or working productively in a group activity.
- 3 points – coming to class, sitting quietly, taking notes and paying attention during the discussion or in group work but not contributing.
- 2 points – coming to class and dozing off, using electronic devices (including cell phones and computers) that distract you and others, reading a newspaper, completing homework for other classes and not fully participating in a group work. To avoid receiving this score, please place your cell phone in the OFF position (NOT vibrate) and close it up in your bag or backpack and make sure your computer is used for notes only in class.
- 1 point – not coming to class at all.

Quizzes and homework assignments may be used as Participation grades. In class or as homework, you might be asked to provide a thoughtful answer to a quiz question from the day's readings, information presented in class or other material covered up to that date. To earn the Participation credit, you will complete the work and turn it in on the day due in class. You will also NOT receive FULL participation points if you have missed part of the class because you were tardy or left early. If you are tardy or leave early, I will deduct 1 point from your participation grade for that day.

Your final participation grade will be an average of all the participation days we have at the end of the semester. You cannot make up participation grades if you miss class. I will drop the lowest participation grade at the end of the semester, so consider this wisely when making attendance decisions.

Presentation of a CMC Example

You will be asked to provide an example of a CMC used in interpersonal relationships at least once, possibly more, this semester. This can be a web page, an academic article, a popular media article or video example. You will explain the CMC, how it works and how it facilitates interpersonal communication. You need to relate it to the day's readings and discussion. You will present to the class in a 3-5 minute presentation on the day assigned.

I expect this presentation to be professional, follow sound presentation rules and stay within the time allotted. You will need to prepare and practice this presentation and should not just talk off the cuff. It should include the following:

1. An **Introduction** that gets the attention of the audience and informs us why this topic is important for us to know about.
2. A **Body** that shares your example in detail and explains how this topic is connected to the day's readings.
3. A **Conclusion** that leaves the audience with something to remember after class is over so they are able to use what you talked about later in the class discussion or class assignments.

Makeups are only available with a documented excuse found in PS-31. You should notify me BEFORE missing your presentation and will need to provide a documented excuse and be prepared to give your presentation on the day returned. If we have time, missed presentations without a documented excuse can be made up at the end of the semester with a 25 point deduction.

Reflection/Response Papers

You will be asked 3-4 times during the semester to write a 1-3 page paper discussing your use of CMC in your Interpersonal Relationships and Communication. These papers will be related to major topics we discuss, such as Presenting Yourself Online, Using CMC to Develop and Maintain Relationships and CMC and Community. You will be expected to discuss the theory we have discussed in class and read about in the textbooks, as well as provide personal examples of CMC in your daily life.

More information and due dates for these papers will be made available on Moodle. Late work is will be accepted with a documented excuse found in PS-31. Late work without a PS-31 documented excuse are subject to a 25 point deduction and will only be accepted for 1 week following the assignment due date.

Group Project

As a group, you will explore how people use CMC in their Interpersonal Relationships. Your group will choose an interpersonal relationship to explore, such as family, friends, romance, groups, organizational, gaming or educational. You may explore relationships that are purely virtual or offline relationships that rely upon CMC. Then, each group member will interview and video record participant thoughts about the use of CMC in Interpersonal Relationships and Communication. Once the videos are complete, the group will use these video interviews, along with their own video and ideas, to create a 10-15 minute video about your topic.

Think of it this way, you are being asked to create a Public Service Announcement on the best way to use CMC in an Interpersonal Relationship. You will take the theory and research we discuss in class and read in your books and add to it the opinions and thoughts of your interview participants to create a "HOW TO" guide for people to use as they rely on CMC more and more in relationships.

This project will have several components and will include both individual grades and group grades to make up the final Group Project Grade. You will work both outside of class and in class on these projects and you will have several checkpoints in throughout the process to show me your work in class. If you are not in class on the days we do the checkpoints, you will not receive credit, even if you worked on them.

I will encourage you to use the Communication Across the Curriculum's Studio 151 as a resource. They offer video cameras and GoPros to loan, a Video Capture room, a sound booth, video editing programs, computers and personnel to help you complete this project. More information about the project itself and its parts will be available on Moodle.

Your Responsibilities and My Expectations

As a member of this class, you have several responsibilities beyond simply showing up:

1. **Attend class and come prepared:** have the readings done and be **ready to discuss**. Consider this your job and treat it accordingly.
2. **Ask any and all questions** about the text, discussion material, or assignments before it's too late.
3. **Understand that communication is a process**, not an object, and that we are trying to understand this process in order to improve the way we live our lives both inside and outside the classroom.
4. **Demonstrate your communication skills** on a regular basis. This means preparing for and giving effective oral presentations, writing with clarity and purpose, working productively in small groups, actively listening to the contributions of other members of the class, and thinking critically about central issues related to communication and society.
5. **Work to establish a cooperative climate**, which means supporting your peers, giving constructive criticism, being open to new ways of thinking, and being considerate of others when discussing different ideas. Remember that other students' opinions may not be the same as yours, but that doesn't make them any less valid. Be respectful of differing opinions and make sure you question or comment on the opinion and not the person who has the opinion!

6. **Realize that your opinions are valuable.** You have something important to say that others will benefit from hearing. Silencing yourself is the best way to avoid learning.
7. **Remove distractions:** Most distractions come from the use of technology in class. I am aware we will be talking a lot about technology and how it is used in relationships. However, class time is not the time to practice your CMC!!
 - Your cell phone should be turned OFF and put away in a bag or backpack. Vibrate is NOT OFF. You will NOT need your cell phone in class and I will not tolerate it being turned on and outside of a bag! Basically, I should never see a cell phone, in your hand, on your desk, under your desk or hidden in your notebook. I will take it if I see it.
 - Computers may be used for notes but not for checking the web, doing homework, checking twitter, or watching videos. This especially holds true during group work in class! I will ask you to close all computers during presentations. If you are using a computer in a way that does not benefit the learning environment in class, I will ask you to close the computer and will not allow you to use it the rest of the semester.
8. **Be ON Time to class:** It is important to be in class ON TIME! We will work strategically in class and if one person is tardy, the whole class has to stop and backtrack to catch the tardy person up! You may also miss vital information you will need for the next class. If you are tardy and a student is giving his/her Example of CMC Presentation or any other presentation, please wait outside the room for applause and do not disturb your classmate!
9. **Most importantly, you must have a desire to learn.** I think it's generally true that what you get out of an experience depends on what you put into it; so be ready to offer your insights, to study the convergence of CMC and relationships, and to have fun doing it.

If you don't think you can follow these standards, please find another course.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken daily. ***It is YOUR responsibility to sign the roll sheet and I will not allow you to sign the roll AFTER class is over or give you credit for being in class or for completing the assignments we worked on in class.***

In missing class, you also risk NOT being ready for the next class period. I will frequently give homework assignments during class that are due the next class day. Not being in class to get the homework assignment is not an excuse. You will NOT get the chance to make up homework you were not aware of because you missed class. You will also NOT receive FULL participation points if you have missed part of the class because you were tardy or left early.

Keep in mind that part of your attendance is to check Moodle and Emails. I post all assignments and other information you need on Moodle. I will also email you important information you need for class. If you are not checking Moodle or reading my emails, you will miss something that could affect your grade. Not reading my email or checking Moodle is not an excuse for a make up, so please pay attention to these things.

Finally, we will ALL miss a class this semester. If I miss a class, I will contact you by email as far ahead of time as I can. If YOU miss a class and want to know what you missed, check with another student in class to see what you missed. My pet peeve is emails that read, "I missed class today. What did we do?" or worse, "I missed

class, did we do anything important?" I really, really hate these types of emails and typically don't respond to them. If you miss, check with a classmate to see what you missed and catch up on notes. After you have done that, please feel free to come by office hours and I'm happy to help you fill in gaps or answer questions.

Schedule Changes

Your instructor will work to minimize schedule changes and will announce such changes as far as in advance as possible. By the same token, it is your responsibility to keep informed of these changes and resolve with your instructor any complications that may arise. Check MOODLE and your email daily, as I will update and post messages when needed.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work, ideas, quotes, etc. without due credit. It is easy to plagiarize in a presentation. Just like a research paper, you must cite the source of your information when you talk about it in your presentation. The penalty for plagiarism or cheating may include failing the assignment, failing the course, or expulsion from LSU. Please see the University's Code of Student Conduct for information regarding this policy. Sometimes these standards are subtle. Feel free to ask if you have questions or concerns so we can keep you from overstepping this fine line.

CHEATING of any kind will not be tolerated and will be immediately passed along to the Dean of Students.

The American with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a Coordinator in the Office for Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations within the first 2 weeks of class.