

Senior Seminar: New Media

This seminar explores our inexorable movement from atoms to bits—from the centralized media landscape of the twentieth century, to that of the current bazaar of networked digital cultures.



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NMAC 4460 | Spring 2017 | Dr. Gerald Lucas



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*What does it mean to be citizens of a digital world?
Do we invent our technologies, or do they invent us?
Welcome to New Media.*



New Media represents a paradigm shift in the ways we produce and consume culture, and these shifts are, in turn, changing us. This

course examines the theories of media: from those based on the physical (record players, tape recorders, VCRs, newspapers, books, records) to that based on digital information (computers, VR, DVRs, MP3s, etexts, video-on-demand). Both the theoretical and practical will fall under the purview of this course: not only will we consider the art and business of “new media,” but we will extend our digital fingers and participate in the discussion.

Introduction

Welcome to NMAC 4460, your Senior Seminar in New Media. The document you’re reading is your syllabus. Everything you need for this class is on this page or linked off of it. Bookmark it now and return here if you get lost or confused.



We use Slack for primary communications in this class. You should receive an invite soon, if you have not already. More on Slack during our course introduction.

I have tried to make the lessons and procedures as simple to follow and to understand as possible. That said, there is bound to be a bit of confusion, at least at first. Do your best to work through it by reading this document carefully and completely, searching this site, or consulting the [FAQ](#). I promise, there is an answer to your question. If all else fails, you may [contact me](#). Trust yourself to follow directions and find the answers. Be careful and deliberate.

Since you are seniors in the New Media and Communications program, I expect that you are all veteran users of new media. I'm assuming, since you're taking this course, that you are comfortable with working by yourself and have a basic Internet fluency. Much of what we do in this course will involve using digital media, but also challenging our conventional uses and attitudes toward them. Please enter with an open mind. NMAC 4460 is also designed to let you—the students—discover and create your own knowledge using the powerful digital devices we all have access to. You will learn more about my approach shortly. If you're curious to know more right now, you might want to read my [teaching philosophy](#) and peruse the articles under [HackEdu](#).

For a head start on how to approach all work in this course, see "How to Do Well in My Class" and "Research & Response."

Again, read this syllabus through carefully before beginning. You might want to take notes as you go, jotting down questions you have. I bet they are answered by the time you're ready to begin the first lesson. Again, welcome.



Instructor Information

When I have office hours scheduled, I should also be available virtually. Please do not expect a response on any social media after **5pm on**

weekdays or anytime during the weekend. I may be available, but I also need some down time. Thanks for your understanding.

- Dr. Gerald R. Lucas | [@drgrlucas](#) | [About](#)
- Office: CAS-117 (Macon campus)
- Office Hours: MW 12:15–2pm in CAS-117; TR 8–9:30am and 11–11:30am online; and via appointment on Slack and/or Skype
- Email: gerald.lucas [at] mga [dot] edu

I try to make myself as available as possible during the first couple weeks of a semester, including evenings and weekends. If you are unavailable during my scheduled office hours, direct message me (on Slack) several times that you are available.



Course Information

Prerequisite: At least a “C” in ENGL 1102

Description: This is a survey of new media theories and praxis. It positions new media in relation to the humanities and traditional media.

Classroom Hours: Three per week.

Goals

With a successful completion of the NMAC 4460, students will understand:

- the influence of networked digital technologies on communication, art, and culture in a global context;
- the unique properties of new media;

- the historical and cultural contexts of new media from theory to praxis;
- the legal and intellectual property concerns that new media challenges, particularly in the proprietary and open source communities;
- the political responsibilities of new media use;
- the distinction between various theoretical approaches to new media in cultural and academic contexts;
- how new media affects the evolution of the “human.”

Materials

Required Texts

- Murray, Janet. *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*.
- Negroponte, Nicholas. *Being Digital*.
- Wardrip-Fruin, Noah and Nick Montfort. *The New Media Reader*.
- Various PDFs and Weblinks (See below)

Recommended Textbooks

- Kurzweil, Ray. *The Age of Spiritual Machines*.
- Lessig, Lawrence. *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy*.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media*.
- Shirky, Clay. *Here Comes Everybody*.

The assigned book and/or essay(s) should always accompany you to class, as we will make heavy use of it in our daily discussions. Please do not come to class without your assigned readings: we need them for class activities, in-class writing, and all aspects of our study. If you do not have your texts in-class, you will be counted absent.

Supplementary Documents

At several points throughout the semester, your reading assignments will entail essays that are not in the above texts. These additional readings will be made available to you as PDFs or links via [Google Drive](#). You will need to download them, put them on your device (or print them), and bring them on the day we are covering them in class. Failure to do so will earn you an absence.



Policies & Procedures

Students are held accountable for knowing and practicing each of the course policies. Consider them like the law: the excuse “I didn’t know” will carry no weight.

As a Middle Georgia State College student, it is your responsibility to read, understand, and abide by the MGSC Student Code of Conduct.

Students may withdraw from the course and earn a grade of “W” up to and including the midterm date: **March 15, 2016**. After midterm, students who withdraw will receive a grade of “WF.”



Course Requirements

Rather than quantitative, numerical values, students will be evaluated in a qualitative, holistic way. There will be no specific numbers of assignments, due at any particular time. The class will consider various

topics in new media (see schedule below), and students will engage those topics as their interests dictate in the following ways.

Response (~50%)

Students should keep some sort of online journal that thoughtfully, critically, and creatively engages the course content. Ideas should be well-supported and correctly documented using digital citation methods. The best posts will use a multimedia approach to connect with the most current discussions of the ideas. In other words, they will **engage the topic** in a direct and nuanced way. Examples:

- A blog about an aspect of new media that's updated consistently;
- A Podcast that considers specific issues in new media that does interviews, roundtable discussions, etc.;
- A video series that addresses specific new media topics;
- Any multimodal, digital artifact that engages the materials.

If you choose to blog, as most students will likely do, you may use any platform you choose. However, please read about blogging, choose an appropriate title and design, and practice logical writing for digital media.

Update after midterm: You should aim to respond at **least once a week** to fulfill this requirement. Length is unimportant if your post addresses primary themes of the major topic and how specific texts address them. Be sure your posts **analyze** and **synthesize** the major issues you identify each week under the appropriate focus below. Try to **teach** others about the subject and the unique way you understand it.

Participation (~30%)

Classroom discussion will be the time for students to share what they have discovered about the current topic in new media. Students should actively participate as much as possible in helping the class build its collective understanding of new media. Discussion should be supported with direct references to resources, like recommended texts and those students discover on their own. Strong resources shared about topics will also count toward participation; the best will be promoted to official reading recommendations for the topics.

Leadership (~20%)

Classroom discussion will be lead by students. At least one point during the semester, each student will take a leadership role in directing the discussion around a topic that is of particular interest to him or her—one that has been more thoroughly explored before class.

Schedule

This schedule represents the ideal outline for our semester, but it is tentative and subject to change. The following link suggests texts that I recommend students begin with for each of the major topics below.

New Media Suggested Reading and Viewing

A reading/viewing list for the study of new media.
Compiled for my NMAC 4460 course.

litmuse.net



Defining New Media (#NMC1)

An overview of some of the concerns in our study of “new media” this semester. [Sign up for Slack!](#)

01.09 / 01.11 / 01.18

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Background: Foundational and Transitional Thinking (#NMC2)

This week, some of the early thinkers and scientists who informed much of our thinking about new media.

01.23 / 01.25

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Being Digital: Revolution and Democracy (#NMC3)

Does digital media intrinsically support democracy, or is it just another mechanism of control for the powers-that-be? How does “being digital” influence our thoughts and behaviors?

01.30 / 02.01 / 02.06 / 02.08

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Information Architecture & Hypertext (#NMC4)

02.13 / 02.15

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Open (Source), Free, and Proprietary (#NMC5)

02.20 / 02.22

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Midterm Checkup

Conferences this week; no class. Fill out your self-assessment and send it to me prior to your conference, or bring it with you. You should come ready to discuss your performance in the course so far, with evidence if necessary.

02.27 in Cochran / 03.01 in Macon

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Cyberspace (#NMC6)

03.13 / 03.15

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Participatory Culture & IP (#NMC7)

This section examines what Lawrence Lessig calls *remix* culture and the legal implications of being digital in a legal world that pines for the analog.

03.20 / 03.22 / 03.27 / 03.29

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Cyberdrama & Ludology (#NMC8)

This week in New Media: Janet Murray's cyberbard figuration in *Hamlet on the Holodeck* and the opposing visions of ludology, the study of play, games, and simulation. [[Discussion Questions](#)]

04.03 / 04.05 / 04.10 / 04.12

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Cyborg(ology), Transhumanism, Posthumanism (#NMC9)

The last weeks in New Media will focus on the human as medium as we consider cyborgs, transhumans, posthumans, and the singularity. [[Discussion Questions](#)]

04.17 / 04.19 / 04.24 / 04.26 / 05.01



Student Response Journals

DM me your journal on Slack by 1/25, and I will link it here. Bolded names are model journals.

- **[Sydney Allen](#)**
- **[Stephanie Breitenbach](#)**

- [Robin Daniels](#)
- [**Wes Davis**](#)
- [James Seth De Foor](#)
- Rachel Hastings—[New Media](#)
- [**Joshua Keith Hooker—Democratize the People!**](#)
- [Kyle Jackson](#)
- [Deshaneir King](#)
- [**Kaitlyn Lingefelt**](#)
- [Alisha Merritt](#)
- [Diana Montana](#)
- [Corbin Moye](#)
- [Luke Northrup](#)
- [**Shea Powell**](#)
- [Megan Rosenberger](#)
- [Erika Smith](#)
- [Danielle Washington](#)
- [Tevin West](#)
- [Brian Williams](#)
- [Shanice Williams](#)
- [**J. Chelsea Williford**](#)
- [Clint Wynn](#)

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*This is a hypertextual document from Dr. Lucas' course web site [LitMUSE](#) and is **not** intended for print. The most current and accurate course information will always be online. Last updated: **Mar 13, 2017 at 11:24.***

