

**GL/COMS 2200 3.0 F**  
**Computer tools for communication**  
**Glendon College – Communications**  
**York University**  
**Fall 2017**

---

**Course Instructor:** Roberta Buiani  
e-mail: robb@glendon.yorku.ca  
Office: TBA  
Hours – before class or by appointment

**Time and Location**

Thursday 9:00-12:00 YH144 (PC-lab)

**Expanded Course Description**

*In the world of media convergence, every important story gets told, every brand gets sold, every consumer gets courted across multiple media platforms.*  
(Jenkins, H. 2006)

Most communication today involves using or negotiating with some form of technology or digital media device. Digital media dominate ubiquitous mobile phones, tablets, desktop computers and many other tools, to the extent that sometimes they become transparent, substantially intersecting with the analog aspects of communication (e.g., face to face). It is then crucial to understand these tools and intersections critically not only to become aware of the way in which they affect us at the socio-cultural level, but also to become better communicators. During this course, we will perform two main tasks: each week, we will first examine and discuss a series of technologies, the critical issues they raise, and the practices they generate. Then, we will explore their uses and potentials through a hands-on approach.

**Course Objectives**

This course assists students in developing a sophisticated, responsible and thoughtful approach to a variety of practices in professional communication by providing them with both critical and practical skills in a variety of topics and applications. Particular emphasis is placed here on issues of interoperability and cross-platform compatibility, security and privacy, and accessibility.

**learning outcomes**

- To become familiar with the tools available to them in various professional communication areas.
- To develop the ability to choose appropriate tools and technologies for the fulfilment of specific tasks and to use them responsibly.
- To become a life-long learner able to understand and easily adapt the challenges and the potentials of fast technological turnout

**Course Text / Readings**

Additional readings may be assigned or recommended during the course.

All readings will be available on Moodle  
Hand-outs, assignment instructions and hands-on exercises all available on Moodle

## Evaluation \*

<b>In-class Participation</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>ongoing</b>
<b>Online Participation</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>3 blog entries – signup sheet circulating on Week 2</b>
<b>Assignment #1</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>due Oct 18 at 4:00 pm</b>
<b>Assignment #2</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>due Nov 8 at 4:00 pm</b>
<b>Group Assignment</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>last day of class Nov 30</b>

## Grading, Assignment Submission, Lateness Penalties and Missed Tests

**Grading:** The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests\* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

(For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar - <http://calendars.students.yorku.ca/>)

**Assignment Submission:** Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, assignments for this course must be received on the due date specified for the assignment.

**Lateness Penalty:** Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized **1 grade point per each 3 days** that the assignment is late. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be entertained by the Course Instructor but will require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor's letter).

## IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the Senate Committee on Academic Standards, Curriculum & Pedagogy webpage (see Reports, Initiatives, Documents) <http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/CourseInformationForStudentsAugust20121.pdf>

- Senate Policy on Academic Honesty and the Academic Integrity Website
- Ethics Review Process for research involving human participants
- Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities
- Student Conduct Standards
- Religious Observance Accommodation

November 2013  
Links updated November 2014

## Course Outline

### Week 1 - Sept 7 – Introduction to the course and assignments

**Preliminary workshop:** How to convey a message using technologies?

### Week 2 – Sept 14 – Architectures

#### ◆ Discussion and practices:

— Richards, S., Barker, P., Banerji, A., Lamont, C., & Manji, K. (1994). The Use of Metaphors in Iconic Interface Design. *Intelligent Tutoring Media*, 5(2), 73–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14626269409408345>

— Piesing, M. (2013, May 3). Why we often view digital culture through insect metaphors. *WIRED UK*. Retrieved from <http://www.wired.co.uk/article/insect-technology>

◆ **Activities:**

Computer structures and organization (folders and applications); extensions; basic security

◆ **Introduction to Assignment #1**

**Week 3 – Sept 21 – Old and New Media**

◆ **Discussion and Practices:**

— Manovich, Lev. 1999. *New Media. A User's guide*.

— Pearson, J. (host). (2017). *The Lost Art of Canada's Doomed Pre-Internet Web* (Vol. Ep11). Retrieved from [https://video.vice.com/en\\_us/video/the-lost-art-of-canada39s-doomed-pre-internet-web/559588b70d6551143782d428](https://video.vice.com/en_us/video/the-lost-art-of-canada39s-doomed-pre-internet-web/559588b70d6551143782d428)

— Stinson, Liz (Nov 12, 2013). These Incredible Animated GIFs Are More Than 150 Years Old. Retrieved August 28, 2017, from <https://www.wired.com/2013/12/these-150-year-old-gifs-are-insane/>

◆ **Activities** – trends and revivals

Writing to communicate: wordprocessing (Microsoft office, Open Office) bibliographic tools (Zotero, Mendelay); fonts and other writing extensions

**Week 4 – Sept 28 – Protocols and Architectures (a look at different modes of thinking of and organizing content)**

◆ **Discussion and Practices:**

— Galloway, A. (2004). *Physical Media*. In *Protocol* (pp. 28–53). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

◆ **Activities** – From Mindmapping to data Mapping

Presenting your work – creative uses of Power Point, Prezi and other presentation strategies

**Week 5 – Oct 5 – Virtual, Real and vice versa**

◆ **Discussion and Practices:**

— Bogost, I. (2012, April 13). The New Aesthetic Needs to Get Weirder. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/04/the-new-aesthetic-needs-to-get-weirder/255838/>

— Blas, Zach. (2014). Informatic Opacity. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Protests*, (9). Retrieved from <http://www.joaap.org/issue9/zachblas.htm>

◆ **Activities:** turning pixels into tangible products, using analog to disrupt the digital

**Week 6 – Oct 12 Using images**

◆ **Discussion and Practices:**

— Malloonee, L., 2016. How Photos Fuel the Spread of Fake News. *WIRED*.

— Chow, A. R. (2017, July 20). Copyright Case Over Richard Prince Instagram Show to Go Forward. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/20/arts/design/richard-prince-instagram-copyright-lawsuit.html>

— Cromey, D. W. (2013). Digital Images Are Data: And Should Be Treated as Such. *Methods in Molecular Biology (Clifton, N.J.)*, 931, 1–27. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-62703-056-4\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-62703-056-4_1)

◆ **Activities** : How to Cite and use images correctly; Intro to creative commons  
Manipulating your own images

**Week 7 – Oct 19 Cloud computing**

**Assignment 1 due**

◆ **Discussion and Practices:**

— Mosco, V. (2016). After the Internet: Cloud Computing, Big Data and the Internet of Things", *Les Enjeux de l'Information et de la Communication*,(17) 2,145-155 <http://lesenjeux.u-grenoble3.fr/2016-dossier/09-Mosco/>

— Hsu, H. (2015, November 10). How the Metaphor of “the Cloud” Changed Our Attitude Toward the Internet. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/how-the-metaphor-of-the-cloud->

changed-our-attitude-toward-the-internet

◆ **Activities** : Activity – collaborating and working with vulnerable individuals  
Intro to cloud services. anonymous collaboration

### Week 8 – Nov 2 Mobility and space

◆ **Discussion and Practices:**

— Silva, A. de S. e, & Frith, J. (2012). The Public and the Private. In *Mobile interfaces in public spaces: locational privacy, control, and urban sociability* (pp. 50–77). New York: Routledge.

◆ **Activities:** Fieldwork recording and navigating space  
Incorporating sound and video

### Week 9 – Nov 9 – Information Ethics 1: algorithmic personality

**Assignment #2 due**

◆ **Discussion and Practices:**

— Morozov, E. (2014, August 10). Facebook invades your personality, not your privacy. *Financial Time*. Retrieved July 31, 2017, from <https://www.ft.com/content/dd5e5514-198d-11e4-8730-00144feabdc0>

— Marres, N., & Weltevrede, E. (2013). Scraping the Social? *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6(3), 313–335. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2013.772070>

— Ethics – AoIR. (ongoing). Retrieved August 31, 2017, from <https://aoir.org/ethics/>

◆ **Activities:** intro to web scraping

### Week 10 – Nov 16 – Information Ethics 2 : information manipulation

◆ **Discussion and Practices:**

— How Fake News Goes Viral: A Case Study. (n.d.). *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/business/media/how-fake-news-spreads.html>

— *Breaking News*. (2017). Radio Lab Podcast. Retrieved from [http://www.radiolab.org/story/breaking-news/?utm\\_source=sharedUrl&utm\\_medium=metatag&utm\\_campaign=sharedUrl](http://www.radiolab.org/story/breaking-news/?utm_source=sharedUrl&utm_medium=metatag&utm_campaign=sharedUrl)

◆ **Activities:** How to examine Fake News  
Using social networks for communication

### Week 11 – Nov 22 gamification – maps – infographics

◆ **Discussion and Practices:**

— Kim, T., & Werbach, K. (2016). More than just a game: ethical issues in gamification. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 18(2), 157–173

◆ **Activities:** working with maps and infographics apps

### Week 12 – Nov 30 Final class FINAL SHOWCASE

**Groups present their work**