

MMC 6660: Communication, Technology & Society (Online)



Fall 2021

Wednesdays 7:20 to 10:10 p.m. EST

Instructor: Dr. Nicki Karimipour

nkarimipour@ufl.edu

Zoom Office Hours: Tuesdays 12 to 1 p.m.
ET or by appointment

Welcome to the course! I am excited for a fast-paced, interesting semester ahead and getting to know all of you.

I. What is this class about?

Communication and technology are key cornerstones of the human experience and can have a lasting impact on societies around the world. As part of this class, we will explore issues relating to traditional and new media, information dissemination in societies, and the role of technology in changing our world and how we communicate. You will learn about and apply critical perspectives and theories to these issues and collaborate with classmates on a culminating project.

Learning Objectives

As part of this class, you will:

- Learn about and be able to describe the history of communication, communication-related technologies, and how they have impacted society over time.
- Evaluate the role of communication-related theories in current issues within technology and society.
- Apply communication-related ethics to the ways in which we think about current issues.
- Summarize how various modalities and technological advances have changed our view on communication and the way we communicate.
- Collaborate with classmates in a small group to brainstorm, research, write and present on a topic of your choosing that relates to communication, society, and technology.

(Virtual) Classroom Policies

Attendance

Although this class is online, attendance is required and expected each week unless you have a documented absence, such as illness, jury duty, university event, religious observance, etc.

Excused absences must be consistent with [university policies in the Graduate Catalog](#). I give each student one “freebie” absence during the semester to be used in whatever manner you choose. You don’t have to inform me beforehand that you are using your “freebie” absence. After that one “freebie” absence, I will deduct three points off your overall grade per unexcused absence.

Students who miss a class for excused or unexcused reasons are still responsible for getting the

notes, watching the lecture recording, turning in assignments on time, and getting any new assignments from other students. Make sure to exchange contact information with at least two classmates so you will have someone to reach out to in case you need more information about a class that you missed. Don't worry, we'll do this during the first week to ensure you have a couple of classmates to whom you can reach out.

In-Class Etiquette

I expect respect and professionalism towards me, your fellow classmates and guest speakers. As part of this course, we'll be discussing important but sometimes sensitive topics, and we may happen to disagree.

Tardiness is disruptive to your fellow students and me. I will take roll at the beginning of class. Students arriving to a Zoom class meeting more than 10 minutes late will be counted as absent for that day. Please be sure to silence cell phones or other devices during class. You are encouraged but by no means required to have your camera on during class. The Zoom class sessions will be recorded and posted on our Canvas page only. Please speak with me privately if you are uncomfortable with being recorded. Finally, if for any reason Zoom is not working, [we'll use this alternative WebEx link](#) to join class.

Required Readings

There is no assigned textbook for this course. Instead, I will be providing access to all required readings via PDF or hyperlink at no charge to you. [This textbook](#), which can be accessed for free online, is a great orienting text if you are new to the field of communications or just need to brush up on theories, key words, and fundamentals of communication.

Academic Writing

Make sure to use best practices for academic writing—that means organizing your paper thoughtfully and logically, using active voice, and proofreading for proper grammar/spelling throughout your paper before submitting to me for grading. Please use APA style when citing sources and creating reference pages. I will provide resources and tips for writing academic papers well.

Canvas & Email

I will be using Canvas and UF email to communicate with you. I will post the readings, my lectures, assignments, your grades, and other important course-related materials onto Canvas, so log onto Canvas regularly to ensure you don't miss anything.

Communicating with Me

I check email in the evenings after work and will respond to messages during that time. I will respond to messages within 24-48 hours (usually sooner) unless there are extenuating circumstances. Please note that I am in Los Angeles and there is a three-hour time difference (Pacific Time zone). When you email me, please make sure that you identify yourself clearly using both your full name and the course number. I will only answer specific questions about assignments, lectures, or papers via email. If you have more detailed questions about critical concepts or wish to discuss your paper or assignments, you should schedule an appointment to meet with me. Please be aware that I only have your UF email address, and all my emails will be sent to your UF account. It is your responsibility to check your email on regular basis and make sure it is working.

My office hours are “drop-in” style on Zoom, which means you can just drop by to talk with me. You can also schedule an appointment during my office hours if that works better for you. If you would like to schedule a time to talk with me outside of my office hours, please send me an email so we can schedule a time for us to talk. My Zoom office hours are Tuesdays from 12 to 1 p.m. ET or by appointment.

Students Requiring Accommodations

If you require accommodations, please work with the [Disability Resource Center](#) and inform me as early as possible in the semester so we can work together to make the proper arrangements.

Plagiarism & the Student Honor Code

Plagiarism is a serious offense and will result in automatic failure of the assignment and potentially failure of the course. If you have any questions about how to properly cite a source, it is your responsibility to discuss with me prior to submitting an assignment. In addition, you are required to abide by the [Student Honor Code](#). Any violation of the academic integrity expected of you will result in automatic failure of the assignment and potentially more serious consequences depending on the nature of the offense. Any alleged violations of the Student Honor Code will result in a referral to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

II. Class Structure

We will meet on Zoom on Tuesdays starting at 7:20 p.m. EST. Outside of class, you’ll be expected to access our Canvas page regularly to view any additional modules, articles, videos and complete the assignments as noted in the syllabus.

III. Class Activities/Assignments

This semester, class activities will include the following:

1. **Exams:** You will have two exams—one midterm and one final. Content on the exams will be based on my PowerPoint lectures, the readings, and our in-class discussions, so it is crucial that you attend class to ensure you are well-prepared for the exams. A study guide will be provided in advance of each exam. Questions will be a mix of multiple choice, true/false, essay questions, etc. The exams will not be cumulative. Exams will be timed and administered via Canvas.
2. **Practical applications group project:** Along with one or two classmates of your choosing, you will be responsible for selecting a topic, researching, and writing about it, and presenting it together. Your collective task is to think of something that interests you, but it must pertain to communication, society, and technology (or all three). I find it easiest to start by posing a question that you and your group members are interested in addressing or finding out more about. After selecting a topic, you and your team will put together a [research proposal](#), a report, a presentation, a self-evaluation and evaluate your project partner(s). More information, including a rubric, is available on Canvas.

Example topic:

- Start with an area of interest: Let’s say my group members and I are interested in media and health.
- Then pose a broad question: How does a celebrity’s experience with a disease influence Americans to look online for health information and/or seek preventive medical care?
- Next, think of more detailed examples: Angelina Jolie’s double mastectomy, Katie

Couric's husband's public colon cancer diagnosis and subsequent death, Chadwick Boseman's death from colon cancer.

- Arrival to more targeted topic by posing a more specific question: How did the death of Chadwick Boseman increase Americans' interest in learning about colon cancer online? How did Angelina Jolie's double mastectomy influence other preventive mastectomies nationally?
 - Find credible sources (more than two, of course! But these are here to get you started). Then, write your report together and upload to Canvas.
 - [Naik, H., Johnson, M.D.D., & Johnson, M.R. \(2021\). "Internet interest in colon cancer following the death of Chadwick Boseman: Infoveillance study." Journal of Medical Internet Research, 23\(6\), e27052.](#)
 - [Liede, A., et al. \(2018\). "Risk-reducing mastectomy rates in the U.S.: A closer examination of the Angelina Jolie effect." Breast Cancer Research & Treatment, 171\(2\), 435-442.](#)
 - After writing your report, put together a presentation based on your report and upload to Canvas. Practice the presentation with your group mates to ensure you're prepared to present your findings to the class.
 - Finally, evaluate your group mates' and your contributions to the project using the self and group evaluation rubrics, and upload these documents to Canvas.
3. Response papers: You will write four response papers throughout the semester, related to the readings, and based on a prompt that I will provide. For these papers, I am interested in seeing your viewpoint and perspective, which needs to be backed up with evidence (i.e., sources like peer-reviewed journal articles, news articles from credible sources, etc. that you have read, understood, and cited appropriately).
4. Posting and responding to Canvas message board: When you do the weekly readings, you will formulate thoughtful questions and post them on the class Canvas page message board. You will also read and respond to at least two classmates' posts per week.
5. Class participation/attendance: Part of what makes class fun and engaging is lively discourse, so I am interested in hearing your perspectives, lived experiences, opinions, and feedback. Please share freely. Our class is a safe space to share, and I ask that everyone respect each other even if we happen to disagree.

Late Assignment Policy

It's important to submit assignments on time. Late assignments will lose 20% from the total points per each day that the assignment is late. I will not accept late assignments five days past the due date.

Communication about Grades

Any discussions about grades must be done during office hours or by appointment. If for some reason you believe you deserve a higher grade, you must go through the following appeal process: To appeal your grade, you must: (1) wait 24 hours to contact me (i.e., I will not be answering questions about grades immediately after an assignment or exam has been returned); (2) set up a time to meet with me to discuss your grade; (3) email me the specific reason you would like to question or appeal your grade. In this email, you should include an argument for why you believe your work should be reviewed. It is not sufficient to say, "I think my paper is better than this grade indicates." Instead, you must point to specific examples that you think should be reviewed and provide evidence to support your claims. To appeal your grade, must contact me within one week of receiving your grade. I will not review grades re-submitted after this time has elapsed.

Extra Credit

Each student can earn 10 points on your lowest exam score by completing the extra credit assignment. I have multiple options for you to choose from. Directions for this opportunity are posted on our Canvas site.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available [here](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email, they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or on [this website](#).

IV. Evaluation & Grading Scale

Breakdown	Assignment	Points
Exams: 300 pts (30%)	Midterm exam	150
	Final exam	150
Group project and evaluation: 250 points (25%)	Proposal	20
	Report	80
	Group presentation	100
	Self and peer evaluations	50 (25 points each)
Response papers: 200 points (20%)	Response paper 1	50
	Response paper 2	50
	Response paper 3	50
	Response paper 4	50
Canvas message board participation/engagement: 150 points (15%)	Crafting and posting thoughtful questions about the reading on the Canvas message board on a weekly basis; commenting on classmates' posts	150
Class attendance and participation: 100 points (10%)	Attendance/punctuality, in-class participation, and engagement	100

I encourage you to add up your points to calculate your grade on a regular basis instead of relying on the Canvas gradebook. You can calculate your grade by adding up your points – the course is out of 1,000 total points. If you have questions about how to add up your grade, please visit me during Zoom office hours.

Points	Percentage	Letter Grade
1000-930	100-93%	A
929-900	92.9-90%	A-
899-870	89.9-87%	B+
869-830	86.9-83%	B
829-800	82.9-80%	B-
799-770	79.9-77%	C+
769-730	76.9-73%	C
729-700	72.9-70%	C-
699-670	69.9-67%	D+
669-630	66.9-63%	D
629-600	62.9-60%	D-
599-0	59.9-0%	E

V. University Resources and Important Websites

[Click here](#) to access the 2021 Graduate School Academic Calendar to keep apprised of key dates.

E-Learning Technical Support

If you experience issues with Canvas, please contact [E-Learning Technical Support](#) at 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or via e-mail Learning-support@ufl.edu.

Teaching Center

If you need tutoring or assistance with improving your study skills, contact [the Teaching Center](#).

Writing Studio

I encourage you to use [the Writing Studio](#) if you haven't already. Their staff provides assistance and resources to help you become a better writer, researcher and communicator.

UF Libraries

If you need assistance with academic research consulting, accessing texts and other library-related services, [click here](#).

Career Connection Center

If you need career assistance and counseling in person or virtually, [click here](#) for more information.

Mental Health Resources

Mental health is an important public health topic. If you or someone you know are experiencing anxiety, depression, loneliness or just need to talk to someone, I encourage you to reach out to [U Matter, We Care](#) or the [UF Counseling and Wellness Center](#). If you don't feel comfortable reaching out to them, please let me know. I am happy to help.

VI. **Course Schedule** (subject to change based on course needs)
 *Assignments and due dates are indicated in blue; all deadlines are in the Eastern time zone

Class Date	Activities	What to read before the next class
Week 1 W 8/25	<u>Introduction to Mass Communication, Technology, and Society</u> Student/instructor introductions Go over syllabus; exchange contact information with two classmates	Review the syllabus in detail before the next class – there will be a quiz! Read the following texts in Canvas before the next class: 1) The Medium is the Message (McLuhan, 1964) 2) The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (Goffman, 1959), p. 120-129 3) Do Artifacts Have Politics? (Winner, 1980)
Week 2 W 9/1	<u>Understanding the Role of Messages, Channels, and Mediums</u> <u>Syllabus quiz (10 min during class)</u>	Read the following texts in Canvas before the next class: 1) A Cultural Approach to Communication (Carey, 2009) 2) The Semiotics of Mass Media (Danesi, 2015) 3) Optional reading: Simulacra and Simulation, Chapter 1: The Precession of Simulacra (Baudrillard, 1981)
Week 3 W 9/8	<u>Semiotics: The Signs and Symbols that Help Us Communicate and Find Meaning</u> <u>Response paper 1 due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.</u>	Read the following texts in Canvas before the next class: 1) Functions and Theories of Mass Communication 2) Diffusion of Innovations (Everett, 1983), p. 1-37 3) Uses and Gratifications (Papacharissi, 2014)
Week 4 W 9/15	<u>Diffusion of Technology; Relevant Theoretical Underpinnings</u>	Read the following texts in Canvas before the next class: 1) Digital Divide Persists Even as Americans with Lower Incomes Make Gains in Tech Adoption (Vogels, 2021) 2) How to Close the Digital Divide in the U.S.

		<p>(Chakravorti, 2021)</p> <p>3) Equal Access to Online Information? Google's Suicide-Prevention Disparities May Amplify a Global Digital Divide (Scherr, Haim, & Arendt, 2018)</p>
Week 5 W 9/22	<p>Computers and Connection; The Digital Divide</p> <p>Explanation of group assignment</p> <p>Response paper 2 due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.</p>	<p>Read the following texts in Canvas before the next class:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) AI-Mediated Communication: Definition, Research Agenda, and Ethical Considerations (Hancock, Naaman, & Levy, 2020) 2) I, Teacher: Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Social Robots in Communication and Instruction (Edwards, Edwards, Spence, & Lin, 2018) 3) The Fairytale of Second Life: Virtual Social Worlds and How to Use Them (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009) 4) When AI Meets PC: Exploring the Implications of Workplace Social Robots and a Human-Robot Psychological Contract (Bankins & Formosa, 2019)
Week 6 W 9/29	<p>Robots, AI, and Other Oddities</p> <p>In-class breakout room meetings to discuss group project</p>	<p>Read the following text in Canvas before the next class:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) New Media, the Self, and Relationships 2) Tweens' Wishful Identification and Parasocial Relationships with YouTubers (Tolbert & Drogos, 2019) 3) Blind Trust? The Importance and Interplay of Parasocial Relationships and Advertising Disclosures in Explaining Influencers' Persuasive Effects on their Followers (Breves, Amrehn, Heidenreich, Liebers, &

		<u>Schramm, 2021)</u>
Week 7 W 10/6	<u>Identity Formation, Self-Presentation, and Parasocial Relationships</u> <u>Proposal for group project due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.</u>	Read the following text in Canvas before the next class: 1) <u>Meaning and Identity in "Cyberspace": The Performance of Gender, Class, and Race Online (Kendall, 1998)</u> 2) <u>When Computers Were Women (Light, 1999)</u> 3) <u>I Got all my Sisters with me (on Black Twitter): Second Screening of How to Get Away with Murder as a Discourse on Black Womanhood (Williams & Gonlin, 2017)</u> 4) <u>Three Faces of Eva: Perpetuation of the Hot Latina Stereotype in Desperate Housewives (Merskin, 2007)</u> 5) <u>Sluts and Soyboys: MGTOW and the Production of Misogynistic Online Harassment (Jones, Trott, & Wright, 2019)</u>
Week 8 W 10/13	<u>Gender and Technology</u> <u>Exam 1 due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.</u>	Read article in Canvas before the next class: 1) <u>Researchers just released profile data on 70,000 OKCupid users without permission (Resnick, 2016)</u> 2) <u>'Least desirable'? How racial discrimination plays out in online dating (Brown, 2018)</u> 3) <u>Date lab: Daters say they don't tolerate racial bias. Their actions say they do have racial preferences (Hoffman, 2020)</u> 4) <u>Millennials don't love capitalism but can't stop using Amazon (Dollinger, 2018)</u>
Week 9 W 10/20	<u>Commodified and Simplified: Are Apps the Answer?</u>	Read the following texts in Canvas before the next class: 1) <u>Crowds and Collectivities in</u>

	Midterm faculty evaluation	<p><u>Networked Electoral Politics (Kreiss, 2012)</u></p> <p>2) <u>Addressing Global Warming Denialism: The Efficacy of Mechanism-Based Explanations in Changing Global Warming Beliefs (Rotman, Weber, & Perkins, 2020)</u></p> <p>3) <u>Geo-ethnic Storytelling: An Examination of Ethnic Media Content in Contemporary Immigrant Communities (Ying & Song, 2006)</u></p>
Week 10 W 10/27	<u>Globalization of Communications</u>	<p>Read the following texts in Canvas before the next class:</p> <p>1) <u>"Thank you, Black Twitter": State Violence, Digital Counterpublics, and Pedagogies of Resistance (Hill, 2018)</u></p> <p>2) <u>The Growing Up Asian American Tag: An Asian American Networked Counterpublic on YouTube (Kim, 2021)</u></p> <p>3) <u>Diasporic Disclosures: Social Networking, Neda, and the 2009 Iranian Presidential Elections (Naghibi, 2011)</u></p>
Week 11 W 11/3	<p><u>Community Mobilization and Activism through Technology</u></p> <p>Group project report due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.</p>	<p>Read the following texts in Canvas before the next class:</p> <p>1) <u>Technology's Invisible Women: Black Geek Girls in Silicon Valley and the Failure of Diversity Initiatives (Twine, 2018)</u></p> <p>2) <u>Race, again: How Face Recognition Technology Reinforces Racial Discrimination (Bacchini & Lorusso, 2019)</u></p> <p>3) <u>Theorizing Digital and Urban Inequalities (Gilbert, 2010)</u></p>
Week 12 W 11/10	<u>The Intersection of Communication, Race, and Technology</u>	<p>Read the following texts in Canvas before the next class:</p> <p>1) <u>A New Dimension of Health</u></p>

	<p>Group presentations during class: You must submit your presentation files to Canvas by 11:59 p.m.</p>	<p><u>Care: Systematic Review of the Uses, Benefits, and Limitations of Social Media for Health Communication (Moorhead et al., 2013)</u></p> <p>2) <u>The Digital Divide in Healthcare: It's not just Access (Fitzpatrick, Sikka, & Underwood, 2021)</u></p> <p>3) <u>Is the Digital Divide the New Social Determinant of Health? (Heath, 2021)</u></p>
Week 13 W 11/17	<p><u>Health Communications, Technology and Media</u></p> <p>Response paper 3 due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.</p>	<p>Read the following texts in Canvas before the next class:</p> <p>1) <u>Mental Illness, the Media, and the Moral Politics of Mass Violence (Duxbury, Frizzell, & Lindsay, 2018)</u></p> <p>2) <u>A Pandemic within a Pandemic—Intimate Partner Violence during COVID-19 (Evans, Lindauer, & Farrell, 2020)</u></p> <p>3) <u>Spreading Hate on TikTok (Weimann & Masri, 2020)</u></p> <p>4) <u>Online Harassment and its Implications for the Journalist-Audience Relationship (Lewis, Zamith, & Coddington, 2020)</u></p>
Week 14 W 11/24	<u>Violence in Society and Online</u>	<p>Read the following texts in Canvas before the next class:</p> <p>1) <u>When Friends Who Talk Together Stalk Together: Online Gossip as Metacommunication (Jones, Schieffelin, & Smith, 2011), p. 26-44</u></p> <p>2) <u>Evaluating the Fake News Problem at the Scale of the Information Ecosystem (Allen, Howland, Mobius, Rothschild, & Watts, 2020)</u></p> <p>3) <u>Effect of Exposure to Gun Violence in Video Games on Children's Dangerous Behavior with Real Guns: A Randomized Clinical Trial (Chang & Bushman, 2019)</u></p>

Week 15 W 12/1	<p><u>Gossip, Fake News, and Drama: How Rumors Spread Online</u></p> <p>Response paper 4 due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.</p> <p>Turn in self and group mate evaluations on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.</p>	<p>Read the following texts in Canvas before the next class:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <u>Justice for "Data Janitors" (Irani, 2015)</u> 2) <u>Millennials and Gen Z get Scammed More than their Grandparents, Sorry (Strachan, 2020)</u> 3) <u>What do Gen Z Shoppers Really Want? (Haller, Glass, Wong, & Cheung, 2021)</u> 4) <u>What's in a Name? How Recruitment Discriminates Against "Foreign" Applicants (Adamovic, 2021)</u>
Week 16 W 12/8	<p><u>Money and Labor</u></p> <p>End-of-the year faculty evaluation during class</p>	<p>Read the following texts and watch the following video in Canvas before the next class:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <u>Cash in the Era of the Digital Payments Panopticon (Scott, 2017)</u> 2) <u>"You're just Disposable": Former Amazon Workers Speak Out (PBS Frontline, 2020)</u> 3) Conversation between Amara.org's <u>Dean Jansen</u> and Mary L. Gray, the author of <i>Ghost Work: How to Stop Silicon Valley from Building a New Global Underclass</i>: <u>Listen to podcast on this page</u> <p>Come with your questions relating to communications-related career options, how to get a job, writing a good cover letter, resume tips, interview preparation, networking, etc.</p>

Week 17 W 12/15	<p><u>Future of Society, Technology, and Communications</u></p> <p>Career Q&A session</p> <p>Final Exam due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m. (Exam is NOT cumulative)</p> <p>Extra credit due by 11:59 p.m. (optional)</p>	<p>No readings.</p> <p>Have a great rest of the year! It was a pleasure to have you in class.</p>
--------------------	---	---