

**MMC 6936 (Section 06A4) – The Psychology of Human-Technology Interaction**  
Fall 2016

**Note:** The final version of the syllabus will be updated after the first week of classes.

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Meeting Times: Wed. 4.05 pm – 7.05 pm in 1074, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Weimer Hall.

Office Hours: Wednesday 3.00 – 4.00 pm, and by appointment.

**Class Philosophy:** “Machines should work; people should think” (The IBM Pollyanna Principle).

**Course Overview:** The growth of the Internet and the World Wide Web have radically transformed the nature of man-machine relationships. Although the application of theory to practice is in a relatively nascent stage of development, the study of human-technology interaction (HTI) is rapidly emerging as a specialty area – with vastly divergent approaches – in several fields and disciplines. This course examines the many nuances of HTI from a psychological perspective. The course will adopt an empirical approach to understanding the several ways in which people respond to computers and other related new communication technologies, and the cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects that are manifested in human-technology interactions. Through a combination of readings, lecture, and discussion, we will examine how – and why – the media and communication landscape has been transformed with the advent of the Internet, the World Wide Web, and other resultant developments. We will showcase the applicability of traditional conceptual frameworks to the study of new media as well as examine important new concepts, particularly as they inform human-technology interaction. You will also learn to critically analyze and evaluate published research, and propose an original research project that will advance our understanding of the psychology of online communication, in general, and HTI, in particular.

**Textbook:** Nass, C., & Yen, C. (2010). *The man who lied to his laptop: What machines teach us about human relationships*. New York, NY: Current (Penguin Group). In addition, I will hand out a list of readings for each class session beginning September 14.

**Research Project Proposal:** In order for you to engage in the research process, you will be required to produce a document that will propose in detail a project that you design (and hopefully conduct next semester). The proposal will require you to demonstrate a rigorous understanding of one or more aspects of communication technology and to propose an essential

research question related to the psychology of HTI. More detailed guidelines will be distributed in class. The research project accounts for 30 percent of the course grade.

**Annotated Bibliography:** In order to get you started on your project proposal, an annotated bibliography and outline will be collected from you on October 26. This bibliography should provide a brief overview of the concepts/variables that are germane to your research topic, followed by a statement of your essential research question. The bibliography *per se* should include at least 8 scholarly journal articles related to your topic of research, along with a paragraph summary of how the article advances conceptual and methodological understanding of your proposed study. Please note that your summaries should NOT simply be copied from the abstract of the articles. Also, your paragraph summaries need to be in your own words and bereft of direct quotations. It is essential that you thoroughly read the articles that you are using to develop a complete understanding of how they fit in with your proposal. This assignment accounts for 10 percent of the course grade.

**Discussion Leading:** In select weeks, students (either individually or in pairs) will be responsible for leading the discussion on the readings assigned for the week. This assignment will require students to provide a comprehensive account of each of the assigned readings including the scope of theory, important research question(s), design and measurement, findings, and implications. Thought-provoking questions and comments that are insightful, especially in spurring future research, are key determinants of the effectiveness of the discussion. The student pair leading the discussion should be prepared to answer questions from the instructor as well as other students in the class. You are encouraged to make PowerPoint/overhead presentations to pinpoint the most salient aspects of the readings. This assignment accounts for 20 percent of the course grade.

**Paper Critique:** This exercise is designed to give you an opportunity to critically analyze and evaluate published research. The specific studies/papers to be critiqued will be handed out in mid-semester and more detailed guidelines will be spelt out later in the semester. This exercise will account for 15 percent of the final grade in the course.

**Class Participation/Discussion Questions:** Another 25 percent of the course grade is devoted to the quality of your participation in class. As you well know, the success of any graduate seminar is predicated on the quality of discussion that we engage in, so, SPEAK UP! Starting with the week of 09/14 (or 09/21), students are required to e-mail me **at least** one question/comment pertinent to the week's readings. These comments/questions should be received by **midnight on Monday** to ensure that the week's discussion leaders have sufficient time to respond to the comments/questions. The level of engagement you display during class meetings, as well as the caliber of your comments and questions will determine this aspect of the grade. Therefore, it is important that you have read the assigned readings ahead of time and come prepared with questions, probes, suggestions, etc.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory for every class meeting. If a student needs to miss a class, prior permission must be obtained from the instructor. In addition, irregular attendance will also negatively affect your class participation score.

**Schedule:** The schedule includes the main topics for each week and the reading required for the meeting. The lectures and discussions will supplement the readings and will add different perspectives to the existing material. Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings BEFORE coming to class.

**Policy on Academic Integrity:** UF students are bound by the Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.”

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. For more information visit the Honor Code web page at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/> or contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

**Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on a minimum of 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these evaluations are available to students at the above website.

**Note:** Based on your input and our progress, I reserve the right to amend and change the syllabus, reading schedules, and grading events during the semester.

#### COURSE SCHEDULE

08/24	INTRODUCTION TO CLASS & A RESEARCH METHODS PRIMER Nass & Yen (Introduction)
08/31	COMPUTERS AS SOCIAL ACTORS Nass & Yen Ch. 1 & 3
09/07	COMPUTERS AS SOCIAL ACTORS Nass & Yen Ch. 2 & 4 (Scan Ch. 5)
09/14	DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS IN HTI
09/21	CONCEPTUALIZING AND MEASURING INTERACTIVITY
09/28	TBA

10/05 IMPRESSION FORMATION, RELATIONSHIPS, & CMC  
10/12 I, ME, MINE: IDENTITY, DISCLOSURE, & THE SELF  
10/19 THE PSYCHOLOGY OF VIDEO GAMES  
10/26 PERSUASION RESEARCH IN HTI  
11/02 THE "M" WORD: MULTIMODALITY & MULTITASKING  
11/09 THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WEB-BASED CUSTOMIZATION  
11/16 IMMERSIVE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS  
11/30 DEMO IN MEDIA EFFECTS AND TECHNOLOGY LAB  
12/07 WRAP UP & PRESENTATIONS