

University of Manitoba – Faculty of Arts – Department of History

Regular Session: Fall 2014

History 3120: History of Digital Culture (3 credit hours)

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30-12:45

Where: 125 St. John's College

Instructor: Prof. Greg Bak (you can call me Greg)

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Email: greg.bak@umanitoba.ca

Office hours: Tues and Thurs 10:00-11:00, or contact me by email to set up an appointment.

Course Information

Course Description: This course will examine the social-cultural meanings of computer and communications technologies. The course will predominantly treat the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, examining the evolution of technologies from the 1930s to today. Focussed on the global west, the course will also consider the worldwide implications and reach of digital cultures and technologies. [from calendar]

Students can expect to:

- Think about what is digital culture and what is the history of digital culture;
- Learn how digital culture is preserved and how it can be researched;
- Gain experience writing, interacting digitally and speaking in class.

Class meetings blend lecture with discussions in small groups and with the class as a whole. Class discussions are initiated and extended on the course website, on D2L. Participation in class discussions and on the course website is essential to understanding course content.

There is no required textbook for this course.

Readings and recordings will be drawn from University of Manitoba Libraries holdings or from items published on the open Internet.

The **Course Website** on D2L provides course documents, links to some readings, and includes a forum for weekly discussions.

Evaluation

Assignment	Value	Length	Due
Participation	20%	--	Ongoing throughout term - In class and on D2L - D2L postings by noon of every Wednesday and Friday
D2L Discussion Ace	10%	5-10 mins presentation	Beginning of Thursday class for your week.
Discussion Report	10%	500-1,000 words	By noon of Monday following your week as Discussion Ace
D2L Profile & My Digital Life	10%	500-1,000 words	By noon of Friday, Sept 19, 2014
History of a Website Proposal	--	250 words	By noon of Wednesday, Sept 30, 2014
History of a Website Research Paper	20%	1500-2000 words	By noon of Monday, Nov 17, 2014
Take home exam	30%	--	By noon of Tuesday, Dec 9, 2014

Course assignments can be submitted as email attachments or uploaded to D2L. Email communications must conform to the UManitoba policy on student email (http://umanitoba.ca/registrar/email_policy/) requiring the use of your university email account.

Evaluative feedback will be provided prior to the voluntary withdrawal (VW) date of November 12, 2014.

Participation (20%)

Like contemporary digital culture, this course is structured around participation. Classes will provide opportunities for discussion, online on D2L, as well as during class meetings in pairs, in small groups and with the class as a whole. D2L postings should explore key themes, questions and critiques arising from the readings and the discussions in class. Personal reflections on the readings and discussions are welcome. Postings should be about 100 words each.

Students are **required to post at least two comments each week** on D2L. The first should be posted by Wednesday at noon, and the second by Friday at noon. This is a minimum; you are heartily encouraged check in regularly throughout the week to see what your peers have written, write responses and start new threads, and “vote up” the posts that you particularly like.

Participation, whether in class or online, is expected to be frequent, thoughtful and always respectful of others. Evaluation of participation will consider, in particular:

- Frequency of participation
- Interaction with others (for example: responding to others respectfully, “voting up” to encourage your classmates, and building on points raised by others)
- Whether postings are on-topic.

D2L Discussion Ace (10%) & Discussion Report (10%)

Each member of the class will sign up to be the D2L **Discussion Ace** for one week of the course (some weeks will have more than one Ace). The Ace is encouraged to shape online discussion that week by posing questions and responding to individual postings on D2L. In the Thursday class, the Ace will make a short presentation (5-10 minutes) that summarizes **three key themes**, questions or critiques that have emerged from the online discussion.

By noon of the Monday following, the Discussion Ace will submit a 500-1,000 word **Discussion Report** that explores the content and differences between online and in-class discussions. The report should be structured into two parts. In Part One you will present an analysis of the online discussion, including a write-up of the three key themes, questions or critiques that you brought to class. In Part Two you will compare the online and in-class discussions in terms of their themes, content and dynamics. Did the discussion in class extend the online discussion, or did it go in a different direction? How well did the online and in-class discussions, together, explore the content and analysis of the week's readings?

D2L Profile & My Digital Life (10%)

Part One: D2L Profile. For the first part of this assignment you are asked to review the article by Kirsty Young discussed in class on September 9 ("Managing online identity and diverse social networks on Facebook"). In light of Young's argument that identities on social network services are constructed but nonetheless authentic, consider how you would like to present yourself on D2L. **Fill out your D2L profile and upload an image** that contributes to your online identity.

Part Two: My Digital Life. The second part of the assignment asks: how would you characterize yourself in relation to digital culture? A participant? A producer? Outside looking in? You are asked to **write a brief (500-1,000 word) description of your digital life**. You are encouraged to describe whatever aspects of your life and social or family relationships that seem relevant to a discussion of how you use digital technologies and interact with digital culture. You are encouraged to identify the tools (e.g. smart phone, tablet, desktop or laptop computer) that you use in your daily and academic life, and the websites and social network services that you often visit.

History of a Website Proposal and Research Paper (20%)

For the **proposal**, you will identify a website that you would like to use as the basis for the report. You will search the Internet Archive to identify a capture of the same website from 2002 or earlier that you will use for the purpose of comparison. Your proposal will identify the website and include its URL. It will also identify, by date, at least one pre-2003 capture that you will use for the purposes of comparison, and provide the link to that capture. Finally, your proposal will present a brief (one or two sentence) justification for why you would like to write your report on this particular website. Your justification can be based on personal interest or social/cultural importance. The proposal is **due by noon of Wednesday, September 30**.

For the **History of a Website Research Paper** you will describe and analyze the changes in your website over time, making reference to the current version of the website and at least one

previous capture of the website from the Internet Archive. You will write a 1,500 to 2,000 word report, structured into three sections: (1) an analysis of the changes in the structure, design and functionalities of the website over time, including an analysis of the extent to which the Internet Archive succeeds or fails in preserving these aspects of the website; (2) a contextual history of the website, exploring how its content, structure, design and functionalities reflect changing expectations of either the creators or the viewers of the website; (3) your general reflections and conclusions.

Take Home Exam (30%)

The take home exam will be distributed during the final class of the term. It will consist of questions that address the readings, themes and discussions of the entire course.

Grade Scale:

A+	90% and over	C+	65-69%
A	80-89%	C	60-64%
B+	75-79%	D	50-59%
B	70-74%	F	49% and lower

Rules and Policies

Late Penalties

D2L postings must be submitted by Wednesdays and Fridays at noon to allow that week's Discussion Ace sufficient time to review and analyze all of the postings. Students are allowed two missed posting and three late postings without penalty. Additional missed or late postings will result in a loss of two marks each from your overall participation grade.

Other term work will be penalized by 5% for each week or part of a week that it is late.

Academic Integrity

The common penalty in Arts for plagiarism on a written assignment is a grade of F on the paper and a final grade of F (DISC) (for Disciplinary Action) for the course. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as purchase of an essay and repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five (5) years from registration in courses taught in a particular department/program in Arts or from all courses taught in this Faculty.

The Faculty also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism or to other experts for authentication.

If you are at all uncertain of your responsibilities with regard to academic integrity and student conduct, you are encouraged to complete the online, self-guided *Academic Integrity and Student Conduct Tutorials* available from the University's Student Affairs website:

http://umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student_advocacy/AI-and-Student-Conduct-Tutorials.html

Grade Appeal

Students who wish to appeal a grade given for term work must do so within TEN (10) working days after the grade for the term work has been made available to them.

Uncollected term work will become the property of the Faculty of Arts and will be subject to confidential destruction.

Referencing Style Guide

Students are asked to provide all citations and references in Chicago format. For a brief overview, consult the UManitoba Libraries website:

<http://libguides.lib.umanitoba.ca/content.php?pid=356868&sid=2918540>

A note about the instructor, and my approach to teaching

Prior to July 2011 I was a digital archivist at Library and Archives Canada, specializing in digital preservation and digital information management. I was hired by the University of Manitoba to teach in the Master's Program in Archival Studies, a program of the Department of History. My interest in the History of Digital Culture emerges from my on-going research into the challenges of creating digital archives that express the complexity and fluidity of digital communications.

It has been my experience that one can only learn about digital systems by engaging with them. We have all likely had someone try to explain to us how to use a particular computer program or app. No amount of abstract explanation can provide the level of understanding attained by even fifteen minutes logged in and using the system.

I believe that this holds true for all learning. I bring to my teaching a variety of active learning strategies, hoping to create opportunities for you to engage with course content through discussions, assignments and presentations. Since not everyone is comfortable speaking in front of the class I make use of online discussion and, in class, I frequently ask that you work in pairs or small groups. As we get to know each other over the term, I hope that everyone will become more comfortable speaking out in class.

The readings that I assign are the necessary foundations to the discussions that occur on D2L and in class. Completing the readings, logging into D2L and coming to class, then, are essential to your success in the class. If you miss classes or don't join into the discussion on D2L your learning will suffer. The real learning in this class does not occur just through the readings, or through my lectures: it occurs through your active engagement with the readings in class and on D2L. What you get out of this class is exactly proportionate to the effort that you put into it.

What I enjoy most about teaching is your learning. I value your feedback on the course content and on my teaching, and I encourage you to talk to me before or after class, during my office hours or by appointment.

I look forward to getting to know you over the coming term. I hope that you have an enjoyable and academically rewarding experience in this course.

Term at a Glance

This outline gives you an idea of the content we will be covering. Topics may be shifted or changed, depending on how the term develops.

Start of Term: 4 Sept 2014

1. R Sept 4 Policies & intro
2. T Sept 9 Digital identity
3. R Sept 11 Information society
4. T Sept 16 Digital history
5. R Sept 18 History of the digital future: Bush and Engelbart

My Digital Life Due by Noon of Friday, Sept 19

6. T Sept 23 Before commercial computing
7. R Sept 25 Archives & early information technology
8. T Sept 29 Mainframe computing in global context

History of a Website Proposal Due by Noon of Wednesday, Sept 30

9. R Oct 2 Changing office technologies
10. T Oct 7 Selling computers
11. R Oct 9 Origins of Internet
12. T Oct 14 Desktop computing
13. R Oct 16 Documenting desktop computing
14. T Oct 21 Internet before the World Wide Web
15. R Oct 23 Hypertext

16. T Oct 28 World Wide Web and social networking

17. R Oct 30 Preserving WWW

18. T Nov 4 Polar bears vs. lions

19. R Nov 6 Digital Aboriginal

T Nov 11 Remembrance Day (No Class)

20. R Nov 13 Ubiquitous computing

History of a Website Report Due by Noon of Monday, Nov 17

21. T Nov 18 Digital inequalities

22. R Nov 20 History of search

23. T Nov 25 Digital preservation

24. R Nov 27 Preserving digital culture

25. T Dec 2 Review & exam distribution

Take Home Exam due by noon Tuesday Dec 9