



**Course** ATEC 6344.501  
**Course Title** History and Culture of Interactive Media:  
Social Technologies and Games  
**Professor** Josef Nguyen  
**Term** Spring 2017  
**Meetings** Tuesdays, 7:00-9:45PM in 4.902

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### Professor's Contact Information

**Office Phone** 972-883-7552  
**Office Location** ATC 1.513  
**Email Address** [jdn160330@utdallas.edu](mailto:jdn160330@utdallas.edu)  
**Office Hours** Mondays, 2:00-3:00PM; Tuesdays, 5:00-6:00PM; and by appointment  
**Other Information** Please allow up to 24 hours for responses to emails  
Please do not leave voicemail messages on the office phone

### General Course Information

**Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, & other restrictions** n/a

**Course Description** This course investigates the material and immaterial technologies, rules, and processes that shape social relations in contemporary digital culture. Students will examine the opportunities and limitations for understanding social dynamics that analyzing games affords—both as objects of study and as a lens for studying social relations. Through readings from a range of fields, including play and game studies, sociology, history, science and technology studies, and media studies, students will explore how games are social and material technologies as well as how sociality is structured in ways like and unlike games. Moreover, course materials will connect contemporary digital culture and games to earlier histories and technologies of sociality.

In addition to participating in seminar discussions, students will produce short analytic writing assignments throughout the semester. Students will also produce a scholarly research paper or a critically informed game-related project by the semester's end, depending on students' interests.

**Learning Outcomes** Students will:

- Become familiar with a range of theories, methods, and frameworks for investigating sociality and technology
- Connect recent digital technologies to earlier historic phenomena
- Examine various ways that games are deeply social technologies
- Investigate how work in game studies does and does not offer conceptual tools for understanding sociality and social relations
- Integrate existing scholarship from a range of fields into their own original research and creative practices

- Required Texts & Materials**
- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*
  - Celia Pearce, *Communities of Play: Emergent Cultures in Multiplayer Games and Virtual Worlds*
  - José van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*
  - Bonnie Nardi, *My Life as a Night Elf Priest: An Anthropological Account of World of Warcraft*
  - Miranda Joseph, *Against the Romance of Community*
  
  - Lucas Pope, *Papers, Please*, [<http://papersplea.se/>]

All other materials will be available online through the learning management system or through links to online articles and videos.

**Course Policies**

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|-------------------------|---|-----|
| <b>Grading Criteria</b> | 4 Position papers (roughly 500 words each)  | 30% |
|                         | Research paper, with abstract (12-15 double spaced pages); or critical project, with 5-page theoretical statement | 45% |
|                         | Class participation and discussion  | 25% |

**Accommodation** Students with disabilities are encouraged to utilize the on-campus resources at the Office of Student AccessAbility. You can contact the office at 972-883-6104 or by email: studentaccessability@utdallas.edu. Their office is located in the Student Service Building (SSB), suite 3.200. They can provide documentation and details for accommodations to address your individual needs. If you need any special accommodations to complete this course successfully, please provide me with this information as soon as possible, so we can make appropriate arrangements.

**Classroom Citizenship** It is our responsibility to work together to produce a classroom environment where everyone can share, discuss, and question the materials being discussed respectfully.

Disagreements and conflicting perspectives will, unavoidably, emerge. To ensure that participants feel comfortable voicing a diverse set of thoughts, comments, and views, we will not use oppressive language, tolerate harassment, personal attacks, and other forms of actions and expressions that unduly distract from the educational mission at-hand and inflict emotional, physical, or psychological harm on those involved.

Part of the role of encouraging a diverse learning environment is acknowledging that individuals should feel safe and respected to contribute to the classroom. This involves not only allowing everyone opportunities to contribute their thoughts but to be mindful of how we recognize and address others. Do not assume things about others' identities, backgrounds, or experiences—whether that is age, race, gender, sexuality, class, etc... Refer to people by the names, pronouns, and other identifiers that they prefer. Avoid insisting on imposing identity markers onto others. Allow people to self-identify as they feel comfortable.

Please discuss with me any concerns you have regarding an unsafe or hostile classroom environment, particularly if something arises that causes distress.

**Late Work** Late work will be penalized 10% (a full letter grade) for each 24-hour period beyond the deadline. If you need an extension, let me know well in advance, so we can make arrangements.

- Academic Honesty** All work must be original for this class. Unless you are specifically told to collaborate with classmates, complete your graded work individually. Plagiarism is using the words and materials of others as if they were your own. It is a serious offense with serious consequences. Use proper citation to indicate the use of other people's work to support your own. All suspicions of plagiarism will be investigated.
- For more information on academic honesty, please consult <http://www.utdallas.edu/dept/graddean/gspolDishonesty.htm>
- Class Attendance** Attend class regularly and in full. Any absences should include documentation of a valid excuse (family or medical emergency, for example). Unexcused absences may impact course grades. Discuss upcoming potential absences with me to make appropriate arrangements.
- Arriving more than 30 minutes late or leaving more than 30 minutes early, without prior clearance, may be grounds for marking that day as an absence. Failure to prepare for class participation (such as not having done the necessary reading) will also be regarded as conditions for an absence.
- Technology in the Classroom** Laptops and computers can be used in the classroom solely for purposes directly pertinent to the activities and discussions at-hand. Do not use computers for other purposes, including but not limited to idle web-surfing, social media management, and completing work for other courses. The use of cell phones is prohibited during class time. I should not see them on your desk or in your hand at any point. Excessive misuse of technology in the classroom will result in an absence for the day.
- Campus Carry** For more on campus carry policy, see <http://www.utdallas.edu/campuscarry/>
- Comet Creed** *This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:*
- “As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”*
- UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures** *The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.*

### Assignments & Academic Calendar

- Week 1: Tuesday, 10 January 2017**  
**Media and Technology** COURSE INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW  
Marshall McLuhan, “The Medium is the Message,” in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*  
Benedict Anderson, “Cultural Roots,” “The Origins of National Consciousness,” in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*  
Lucas Pope, *Papers, Please*, [<http://papersplea.se/>]
- Week 2: Tuesday, 17 January 2017**  
**Social Technologies** Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1* [entire text]
- Week 3: Tuesday, 24 January 2017**  
**Social Games** Jane McGonigal, “Introduction” and “What Exactly is a Game?” in *Reality is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They*

*Can Change the World*

Marshall McLuhan, "Games: The Extensions of Man," in

*Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*

Georg Simmel, "The Sociology of Sociability"

Erving Goffman, "Fun in Games," in *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction*

**Friday, 27 January 2017**

**Position Paper 1 (for Weeks 1-3) due by 5PM**

- Week 4: Tuesday, 31 January 2017**  
**Communities as/at Play** Celia Pearce, *Communities of Play: Emergent Cultures in Multiplayer Games and Virtual Worlds* [entire text]
- Week 5: Tuesday, 7 February 2017**  
**Platforms for Sociality** Tom Standage, "The Roman Media: The First Social-Media Ecosystem," *Writing on the Wall: Social Media – The First 2,000 Years*  
Fred Turner, "Introduction," "The Museum of Modern Art Makes the World a Family," in *The Democratic Surround: Multimedia and American Liberalism from World War II to the Psychedelic Sixties*  
Manuel Castells, "The Information Technology Revolution," in *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*  
Chris Kelty, "Geeks and Recursive Publics," in *Two Bits: The Cultural Significance of Free Software*
- Week 6: Tuesday, 14 February 2017**  
**Rules for Sociality** Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Control Societies"  
Alexander Galloway, "Introduction," in *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization*  
Wendy Hui-Kyong Chun, "Introduction," in *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics*  
Lawrence Lessig, "The Laws of Cyberspace," in *Readings in Cyberethics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (ed. by Richard A. Spinello and Herman T. Tavani)
- Friday, 17 February 2017**  
**Position Paper 2 (for Weeks 4-6) due by 5PM**
- Week 7: Tuesday, 21 February 2017**  
**Collectives and Crowds** Pierre Lévy, "Introduction," in *Collective Intelligence: Mankind's Emerging World in Cyberspace*  
Henry Jenkins, "Spoiling Survivor: The Anatomy of a Knowledge Community," in *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*  
Clay Shirky, "Publish, Then Filter," in *Here Comes Everybody: How Change Happens When People Come Together*  
Andrew Keen, "The Noble Amateur," in *The Cult of the Amateur: How Blogs, MySpace, YouTube, and the Rest of Today's User-*

*generated Media are Destroying Our Economy, Our Culture, and Our Values*

**Week 8: Tuesday, 28 February 2017**  
**Social Networks** José van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* [entire text]

**Week 9: Tuesday, 7 March 2017**  
**On/Off-line Matters** Daniel Miller and Don Slater, “Conclusions,” in *The Internet: An Ethnographic Approach*  
Jordan Kraemer, “Friend or Freund: Social Media and Transnational Connections in Berlin”  
Paulo Gerbaudo, “Introduction,” “‘We Are Not on Facebook, We Are on the Streets!’: The Harvesting of Indignation,” in *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism*

**Friday, 10 March 2017**  
**Position Paper 3 (for Weeks 7-9) due by 5PM**

**SPRING BREAK** **Tuesday, 14 March 2017**  
**NO CLASS MEETING**

**Week 10: Tuesday, 21 March 2017**  
**Social (Media) Literacies: A Case Study in Selfies** Anne Balsamo, “Public Interactives and the Design of Technological Literacy,” in *Designing Culture: The Technological Imagination at Work*  
Adam Levin, “The Selfie in the Age of Digital Recursion,” [<http://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/the-selfie-in-the-age-of-digital-recursion/>]  
Kris Fallon, “Streams of the Self: The Instagram Feed as Narrative Autobiography,” [<http://interactiveconference.spanport.utoronto.ca/resources/Fallon.pdf>]  
“Prologue” and “Act One: Finding the Self in Selfie,” in “573: Status Update,” *This American Life*, [<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/573/status-update>]  
“Prologue” and “Act One: Finding the Self in Selfie,” in “573: Status Update -- Transcript,” *This American Life*, [<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/573/transcript>]  
Selffeed, [<http://selffeed.com/>]  
Selfiecity, [<http://www.selfiecity.net/>]  
Selfies at Funerals, [<http://selfiesatfunerals.tumblr.com/>]

**Week 11: Tuesday, 28 March 2017**  
**Spatial Technologies** Langdon Winner, “Do Artifacts Have Politics”  
Steve Benford, Andy Crabtree, Martin Flintham, Adam Drozd, Rob Anastasi, Mark Paxton, Nick Tandavanitj, Matt Adams, and Ju

Row-Farr, "Can You See Me Now?"

Emily Troshynski, Charlotte Lee, and Paul Dourish, "Accountabilities of Presence: Reframing Location-Based Systems"

Nathan Hulsey and Joshua Reeves, "The Gift that Keeps on Giving: Google, *Ingress*, and the Gift of Surveillance"

**Week 12: Tuesday, 4 April 2017**

**Market  
Games and  
Rules**

E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd"

Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed," in *The Field of Cultural Production*

Steve Gelber, "Constructing a Collector's Market," in *Hobbies: Leisure and the Culture of Work in America*

Steven Jones, "Collecting *Katamari Damacy*," in *The Meaning of Video Games: Gaming and Textual Strategies*

**Week 13: Tuesday, 11 April 2017**

**Economic  
Platforms**

Eden Medina, "Designing Freedom, Regulating a Nation: Socialist Cybernetics in Allende's Chile"

Julia Velkova, "Open Cultural Production and the Online Gift Economy: The Case of Blender,"

[<http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/6944>]

Lilly Irani and M. Six Silberman, "Stories We Tell About Labor: Turkothon and the Trouble with 'Design'"

Sharon Zukin, Scarlett Lindeman, and Laurie Hurson, "The Omnivore's Neighborhood? Online Restaurant Reviews, Race, and Gentrification"

**Friday, 14 April 2017**

**Position Paper 4 (for Weeks 11-13) due by 5PM**

**Week 14: Tuesday, 18 April 2017**

**Virtual Lives**

Bonnie Nardi, *My Life as a Night Elf Priest: An Anthropological Account of World of Warcraft* [entire text]

**Week 15: Tuesday, 25 April 2017**

**Community as  
Technology**

Miranda Joseph, *Against the Romance of Community* [entire text]

**Finals Week Sunday, 7 May 2017**

**NO CLASS MEETING**

**Research papers and critical projects due by 11:59PM\***

\*Contact instructor to make arrangements for non-digital submissions

*The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.*