



**SENATE COMMITTEE ON CURRICULAR AFFAIRS**  
**COURSE SUBMISSION AND CONSULTATION FORM**

---

**Principal Faculty Member(s) Proposing Course**

---

Name	User ID	College	Department
Lynette Marie Yarger	lmk12	Information Sciences and Tech (IS)	Not Available
CHRISTIAN WEISSER	CRW17	Berks College (BK)	Not Available

**Academic Home:** Information Sciences and Tech (IS)

**Type of Proposal:**  Add  Change  Drop

**Current Bulletin Listing**

Abbreviation: **IST**

Number: **234**

I am requesting recertification of this course for the new Gen Ed and/or University Requirements Guidelines

This proposal is for prerequisite enforcement.

Message for Reviewers:

**Course Designation**

**(IST 234N) Digital Cultures**

**Course Information**

**Cross-Listed Courses:**

COMM 234N(CM)

**Prerequisites:**

**Corequisites:**

**Concurrents:**

**Recommended Preparations:**

**Abbreviated Title:** DIGITAL CULTURES

**Discipline:** General Education

**Course Listing:** Inter-Domain

**Special categories for Undergraduate (001-499) courses**

---

**Foundations**

Writing/Speaking (GWS)

Quantification (GQ)

**Knowledge Domains**

Health & Wellness (GHW)

Natural Sciences (GN)

Arts (GA)

Humanities (GH)

Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS)

**Additional Designations**

Bachelor of Arts

International Cultures (IL)

- United States Cultures (US)
- Honors Course
- Common course number - x94, x95, x96, x97, x99
- Writing Across the Curriculum

**First-Year Engagement Program**

- First-Year Seminar

**Miscellaneous**

- Common Course

**GE Learning Objectives**

- GenEd Learning Objective: Effective Communication
- GenEd Learning Objective: Creative Thinking
- GenEd Learning Objective: Crit & Analytical Think
- GenEd Learning Objective: Global Learning
- GenEd Learning Objective: Integrative Thinking
- GenEd Learning Objective: Key Literacies
- GenEd Learning Objective: Soc Resp & Ethic Reason

**Bulletin Listing**

---

<b>Minimum Credits:</b>	3
<b>Maximum Credits:</b>	3
<b>Repeatable:</b>	NO
<b>Department with Curricular Responsibility:</b>	Information Sciences And Technology (UPIS_IST)
<b>Effective Semester:</b>	After approval, the Faculty Senate will notify proposers of the effective date for this course change. Please be aware that the course change may not be effective until between 12 to 18 months following approval.
<b>Travel Component:</b>	NO

**Course Outline**

---

**A brief outline or overview of the course content:**

The emergence of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) signals a potentially sweeping change that gives individuals greater control of information, experience and resources. This course surveys a variety of new ICTs (e.g. social media and mobile technologies), and their impact on how individuals and institutions consume, share, resist, and participate in digital culture. The general approach of the course is to learn conceptual frameworks and apply them in the analysis of contemporary cases and events. At the completion of the course, students will gain tangible skills in the framing of socio-technical issues and come to a richer understanding of the significance of the latest ICTs in shaping our identities, behaviors, language, imaginations, and society. Students will create and analyze social media, mobile technologies, and other multimedia texts to explore how individuals and institutions create, consume, share, resist, and participate in digital culture. Students will gain tangible skills in examining and creating new media texts, and they will come to a richer understanding of the significance of communication technologies in shaping their identities, behaviors, language, imaginations, and society.

**A listing of the major topics to be covered with an approximate length of time allotted for their discussion:**

- Digital Culture and New Media (1 week)
- Creativity and New Media (1 week)
- Digital Culture in the News (2 weeks)
- Reading Visual Arguments (1 week)
- Social Media and Identity (1 week)
- Social Media and Inequality (1 week)
- Social Media and Business (1 week)
- Evaluating Digital Sources (1 week)
- Design Studio 1 - Promote an event using digital media (2 weeks)
- Design Studio 2 - Podcast Research and Reflection (2 weeks)
- Design Studio 3 - Video Essay Production and Reflection (2 weeks)

**Course Description:**

This introductory course will combine theory and practice to help students develop a rich understanding of the constantly evolving US digital culture. We will survey a variety of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and their modes of production, distribution, and consumption by individuals and institutions including traditional media, business, and government. Specifically, we will examine the impact of social and mobile technologies on how we consume, share, resist, and participate in digital culture. Students will also develop basic technical and media creation skills. The general theme of the course is analyzing contemporary

cases to understand the significance of new ICTs in shaping our identities, behaviors, language, imaginations, and society. Students will read texts authored by some of the most formative thinkers examining the impact ICTs on society, and apply these core concepts in our analysis of digital cultures. Students will actively use microblogging, RSS feeds, social networking and other Web 2.0 tools to produce and consume content, interact with peers, and reflect critically on this experience. This course will emphasize awareness of current events and technology trends, as well as critical thinking skills and the ability to frame and explore issues through written, visual and verbal communication. This is an introductory course in IST and COMM, and meets the requirements for a Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS) and Humanities (GH) Course. This course is delivered with significant student and instructor interaction with computers and digital media.

**The name(s) of the faculty member(s) responsible for the development of the course:**

| Name: LYNETTE MARIE YARGER (lmk12)

Title: ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Phone: +1 814 865 6458

Address: 329C INFO SCI & TECH BL UNIVERSITY PARK UNIVERSITY PARK, PA 16802

Campus:

City:

Fax:

| Name: Christian R Weisser (crw17)

Title: Professor of English

Phone: +1 610 396 6416

Address: 0111 Luerksen Science Bldg Reading, PA 19610-6009

Campus:

City: Reading

Fax:

## Course Justification

---

**Instructional, Educational, and Course Objectives:**

**This section should define what the student is expected to learn and what skills the student will develop.**

As a result of taking this course, students will:

- explain the significance of theories of ICTs and social change in the context of individual and institutional use
- consume various ICTs in a thoughtful and engaged manner, and then critically evaluate the experience in a written assignment
- communicate effectively with a range of audiences, formally or informally, through visual, written and spoken media
- create digital artifacts that show thoughtful application of the course content to their own experiences with new media and requires them to critically reflect on what they have learned
- apply skills of persuasion, argument and effective written communication in relation to social issues

**Evaluation Methods:**

**Include a statement that explains how the achievement of the educational objective identified above will be assessed.**

**The procedures for determining students' grades should be specifically identified.**

Participation (10%): online and in-class participation

Assignments (25%): Students will engage with new ICTs and reflect critically on these experiences. Assignments could include live-blogging during an event, using location-based tools such as Foursquare, following technologists on Twitter to learn about a chosen topic, critique a company's social media policy, publish a review of a State College business on Yelp, or write a recommendation for peers on Linked In.

Quizzes (15%) - Three quizzes on main points from readings and class discussion

Weekly personal learning journal (25%): students will create a blog to post text, images, videos, links, quotes and audio to create a coherent story of what was personally learned over the semester. Students will work on their journals weekly to critically reflect on readings, their experiences using new media, and how the readings and experiences apply to their current or future professional lives.

Design Studios (25%): Working in small teams, students will track mainstream and alternative media reports and commentaries related to a current topic in the new media landscape. The results of this research will be disseminated through a team presentation and a collaborative text that summarizes the news that the team has collected over the semester.

**Relationship/Linkage of Course to Other Courses:**

**This statement should relate the course to existing or proposed new courses. It should provide a rationale for the level of instruction, for any prerequisites that may be specified, or for the course's role as a prerequisite for other courses.**

This course has been an introductory course for IST and COMM undergraduates. IST 110 or IST 110S has served as the prerequisite for this course. The new configuration removes this prerequisite and allows for the cross-listing of COMM/IST 234 as part of the new Interdomain focus.

**Relationship of Course to Major, Option, Minor, or General Education:**

**This statement should explain how the course will contribute to the major, option, or minor and indicate how it may function as a service course for other departments.**

This is an introductory course in COMM and IST and meets the requirements for a Humanities (GH) and a Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS) Course. This course addresses the needs of increasing numbers of students interested in new ICTs and their social implications.

**A description of any special facilities:**

This course requires a classroom to serve as a venue for lectures and multimedia demonstrations using sound, still and moving images.

**Frequency of Offering and Enrollment:**

One section of this course will be offered once per academic year at various campuses, with typical class sizes of 25-30 students.

**Justification for Changing The Proposal:**

**Include a justification for each change to the course. Particular attention should be paid to the effects of the course change within the discipline and in other disciplines where the course may be required within a major or used as a service course. When a unit submits several course changes, with or without new course proposals, a general statement covering the programmatic effects of the changes should be submitted.**

We propose to revise the existing course IST234/COMM234 Digital Cultures to meet the requirements of a General Education Integrative course. The course currently meets the requirements for a Social and Behavioral Sciences course (GS) since it focuses on the impact of information and communication technologies in contemporary culture. However, the course must also emphasize the ways in which contemporary digital culture is mediated through multimedia texts such as social media, blogging, podcasting, and video. Because digital culture relies upon the creation, interpretation, and consumption of texts, the course can be revised to meet the requirements for a General Humanities (GH) course. This integrative approach more accurately reflects the importance of multimedia texts in contemporary digital culture, and this will enable us to create a course that students find meaningful and timely. The course currently counts as an introductory course in the Information Sciences and Technology major, and when revised, it will also count toward the Professional Writing major and minor. This combination, in addition to the new Integrative Studies designation, will help to ensure strong enrollments for the course.

**Alignment with General Education Objectives**

**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION** – the ability to exchange information and ideas in oral, written, and visual form in ways that allow for informed and persuasive discourse that builds trust and respect among those engaged in that exchange, and helps create environments where creative ideas and problem-solving flourish.

**KEY LITERACIES** – the ability to identify, interpret, create, communicate and compute using materials in a variety of media and contexts. Literacy acquired in multiple areas, such as textual, quantitative, information/technology, health, intercultural, historical, aesthetic, linguistic (world languages), and scientific, enables individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, to lead healthy and productive lives, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.

**CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL THINKING** – the habit of mind characterized by comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating a conclusion. It is the intellectually disciplined process of conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.

**INTEGRATIVE THINKING** – the ability to synthesize knowledge across multiple domains, modes of inquiry, historical periods, and perspectives, as well as the ability to identify linkages between existing knowledge and new information. Individuals who engage in integrative thinking are able to transfer knowledge within and beyond their current contexts.

**CREATIVE THINKING** – the capacity to synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of performing, making, thinking, or acting in an imaginative way that may be characterized by innovation, divergent thinking, and intellectual risk taking.

**GLOBAL LEARNING** – the intellectually disciplined abilities to analyze similarities and differences among cultures; evaluate natural, physical, social, cultural, historical, and economic legacies and hierarchies; and engage as community members and leaders who will continue to deal with the intricacies of an ever-changing world. Individuals should acquire the ability to analyze power; identify and critique interdependent global, regional, and local cultures and systems; and evaluate the implications for people's lives.

**SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICAL REASONING** – the ability to assess one's own values within the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, describe how different perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Individuals should acquire the self-knowledge and leadership skills needed to play a role in creating and maintaining healthy, civil, safe, and thriving communities.

**What component(s) of the course will help students achieve the General Education Learning Objectives covered in the course? Provide evidence that students in the course have adequate opportunities to achieve the identified learning objectives.**

Key Literacies: Students in this course will focus on digital literacies, new media, and their role in US culture. They will read texts authored by some of the most formative thinkers examining the impact of new media, and apply these core concepts to the use of digital tools by individuals and institutions such as media, business, and government. Students will actively use blogging, social media, and other online forums to produce and consume content, interact with peers, and reflect critically on this experience.

Integrative Thinking: This course will emphasize awareness of current events and technology trends, as well as critical thinking skills and the ability to frame and explore sociotechnical issues through written, visual and verbal communication. Students will integrate ideas, voices, and textual formats from popular as well as technical sources to better understand the impact of US digital culture. As a result, students will develop a comprehensive, integrative approach to the subject. Students will also create various texts and documents that demonstrate their integrative thinking about digital culture, and these may include blogs, podcasts, videos, landmark assignments, and other textual/visual artifacts that integrate diverse knowledge forums.

**How will students be assessed to determine their attainment of the Learning Objective(s) of General Education covered**

**in this course? This assessment must be included as a portion of the student's overall performance in this course.**

**Key Literacies:** A significant portion of the students grade will measure the ability to recognize and participate in key literacies pertaining to digital culture. Students will demonstrate their mastery of key literacies through comprehensive documents and artifacts which require them to utilize the literacies of digital culture to create effective and successful texts. For example, students may need to learn the "literacies" and genre features involved in blogging to create a successful blog. The types of assignments and genres will vary by instructor and will evolve along with contemporary digital culture.

**Integrative Thinking:** Many students writing projects will be designed for diverse public audiences, which will require integrating knowledge and perspectives from diverse segments of US culture. Digital artifacts like blogs and social media postings, because of their public nature, necessitate the ability to communicate with diverse groups. Students will draw upon their own opinions, diverse expert source material, and public opinion in the creation of their projects.

---

## General Education Domain Criteria

**General Education Designation:** Inter-Domain

### GH Criteria

---

- Explain the methods of inquiry in humanities fields and describe how the contributions of these fields complement inquiry in other areas
- Demonstrate competence in critical thinking about topics and texts in the humanities through clear and well-reasoned responses
- Critically evaluate texts in the humanities— whether verbal, visual, or digital— and identify and explain moral or ethical dimensions within the disciplines of the humanities
- Demonstrate knowledge of major cultural currents, issues, and developments through time, including evidence of exposure to unfamiliar material that challenges their curiosity and stretches their intellectual range
- Become familiar with groups, individuals, ideas, or events that have influenced the experiences and values of different communities

**What components of the course will help students achieve the domain criteria selected above?**

**DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCE:** In IST/COMM 234, students are required to express themselves in writing and speaking through their group projects. They will also blog, which will include hyperlinks to online content, self-authored text, video, images, and re-blogging the content of others. In the group projects and individual blogs, students are required to do research using library and online resources. For homework and/or in-class assignments, students will do small experiments such as the unobtrusive observation of cell phone use in public settings, online opinion polls, and content analysis of news websites.

**CRITICALLY EVALUATE TEXTS:** The course will require a balance of reading, research, and writing that are the hallmarks of the humanities. Students will examine and analyze various issues and perspectives pertaining to digital culture in an effort to better understand its role in shaping human thought, policy, and action. An essential aspect of this inquiry will be the ethical underpinnings of digital culture. For example, students will look at the ethics involved in copyright/copyleft, file sharing, cyberbullying, privacy, and other humanistic issues. To do so, students will read diverse and often conflicting viewpoints on these issues and use them to formulate their own perspectives, which they will share through blogs, videos, podcasts, and other digital texts. These texts will necessarily need to respond to past and present viewpoints to be successful, and assessment will focus on the ability of a text to integrate into existing conversations and contribute something useful to public discussions about digital culture.

**DEMONSTRATE CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE:**

---

### GS Criteria

---

- Explain the various methods of inquiry used in the social and behavioral sciences and describe how the contributions of these fields complement inquiry in other areas
- Identify and explain major foundational theories and bodies of work in a particular area of social and behavioral sciences
- Describe the ways in which many different factors may interact to influence behaviors and/or institutions in historical or contemporary settings
- Explain how social and behavioral science researchers use concepts, theoretical models and data to better understand and address world problems
- Recognize social, cultural, political and/or ethical implications of work in the social and behavioral sciences

**What components of the course will help students achieve the domain criteria selected above?**

**EXPLAIN METHODS:** The course is interdisciplinary in nature and surveys the existing knowledge from related disciplines of information science, humanities, and communications. Students will use social science methods (e.g. surveys, literature review and analysis, content analysis, unobtrusive and participant observation) to examine the interrelationships of individuals, social and cultural institutions, and new technologies.

**DESCRIBE INTERACTION OF FACTORS:** Students will describe their understanding of social, cultural and behavioral factors that converge in contemporary digital culture. Through three design projects, students will apply their understanding of these factors to create artistic digital artifacts. The weekly blogging assignments are fundamentally about analysis and critical thinking. Each requires students to develop and present analysis in response to specific topic challenges that call for synthesis and analysis of course readings to inform the creation of their blog entries. Students will work in teams to collaboratively learn and engage with technologies throughout the course. There are formal group projects as well as informal class activities that are team-based.

**EXPLAIN SBS CONCEPTS:**

All assignments deal with issues concerning technology and its relation to US culture and societal change. As a consequence, all assignments are directly involved in the presentation of informed analysis of social behavior and community responsibility in the context of new technologies. Students are required to contribute content to and engage with online communities. The dynamics of individual and group behavior and change are examined throughout the course as students analyze the impacts of new technologies on a vast range of human activities including voting and political action, interpersonal communication, forming and maintaining relationships, protecting privacy rights, and accessing mass media. The impacts of new technologies also lead to understanding the theory and practice of human identity exploration and performance through images, speaking, writing, speaking and other forms of self-expression.

---

## Integrative Studies

---

**Explain how the intellectual frameworks And methodologies of the two Knowledge Domains will be explicitly addressed in the course and practiced by the students.**

The course will integrate a Humanities (GH) framework by focusing on key texts in digital culture along with their historical and ethical underpinnings. These texts will be situated within a Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS) perspective, since the texts must be understood within the context of social, civic, governmental, and political settings. Furthermore, student writing assignments and projects will require students to think and write critically to demonstrate their understanding of these humanistic, social, and behavioral contexts in understanding contemporary digital culture.

---

**Demonstrate that each Of the two domains will receive approximately equal attention, providing evidence from course topics, assignments, or other course components, and that students will integrate material from both domains.**

As the attached syllabus indicates, student work will devote equal attention to GH and GS domains. Students will explore topics such as power equations between individuals and institutions, the role of old and new forms of media and multimedia, and the role of business, government, and social organization in digital culture. Most assignments will require students to integrate the two domains, including case studies, podcasts, videos, and presentations. Weekly assignments such as microblogs will often require students to explore one domain topic in more depth, but those will be balanced with equally-weighted blog assignments in alternate weeks.

---

**Briefly explain the staffing plan. Given that each Inter-Domain course is approved for two Knowledge Domains, it will be taught by an instructor (or instructional team) with appropriate expertise in both domains.**

Because digital culture is an inherently interdisciplinary topic, it can be taught by faculty whose primary expertise is in the Humanities or in the Social and Behavioral Sciences. Instructors will require a baseline of expertise in the technical aspects of digital culture, since they will be responsible for guiding students through the creation of various digital and multimedia texts. Similarly, instructors will need expertise in the primary ethical, social, and cultural issues relating to digital culture to lead discussions in an effective way and to evaluate the content of student projects.

---

**Describe the assessments that will be used to determine students' ability to apply integrative thinking.**

- Assign an identical first day/last day writing prompt asking the question: What is Digital Culture? Students find it very insightful to consider how their understanding of a topic change and develop over the semester.
  - Design frequent writing prompts (delivered through a class blog or as brief in-class writing assignments) that ask students to consider how humanistic, technological and sociological factors are integrated in various topics of discussion or reading assignments.
  - Assign digital artifact projects that demonstrate students understanding and mastery of new media, such as blogs, podcasts, videos, social media postings, and other forms of multimedia
  - Develop and implement a pre- and mid-semester student feedback survey specifically addressing the integration of GH and GS in this class. This will reveal if students recognize the integration of these two domains in the course, as well as the extent of the learning based upon the integration. Perhaps the Office for General Education will provide such a survey.
  - Conduct an exit survey with students who have taken the course to elicit their feedback on learning, development, and consistency of instruction.
- 

## Campuses That Have Offered (IST 234) Over The Past 4 Years

---

semester	AB	AL	BK	BR	BW	CR	DS	ER	FE	GA	GV	HB	HN	HY	LV	MA	NK	PC	SH	SL	UP	WB	WC	WS	XC	XP	XS	YK
----------	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

## Potential Impact

---

### Pre-Requisites

IST 234 is listed as a pre-requisite or concurrent course for the following courses:

Note: Not all courses may be listed here, due to lionpath requirement incompleteness.

No pre-requisites or concurrent courses found

---

# IST 234/COMM 234: Digital Cultures



## Integrative Studies Statement

This course is part of the General Education Integrative Studies curriculum. As such, it combines Humanities (GH) and Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS) through the topic of *Digital Cultures*.

To fulfill the GH component of the course, students will examine and analyze various issues and perspectives pertaining to digital culture in an effort to better understand its role in shaping human thought, policy, and action. An essential aspect of this inquiry will be the ethical underpinnings of digital culture. To fulfill the GS component of the course, students will use social science methods (e.g. surveys, literature review and analysis, content analysis, unobtrusive and participant observation) to examine the interrelationships of individuals, social institutions and new technologies. Students will look at cyberdemocracy and the public sphere in their analysis of the impact of new technologies on government, politics and civic engagement.

## Brief Course Description

This course examines the digital media technologies that are central to our personal and social lives, exploring our uses of those technologies and the challenges they create. Throughout the semester, students will study digital media from a critical perspective and create their own "new media" texts. Students will be immersed in mobile and computer technologies throughout the course.

## Course Learning Objectives

- Understand the significance of digital and information technologies in contemporary culture
- Recognize the relationship between information technology and social change in the context of individual and institutional use
- Use various digital and information technologies in a thoughtful and engaged manner, and then critically evaluate the experience in written assignments
- Communicate effectively with a range of audiences, formally or informally, through visual, written and spoken media
- Create digital artifacts that show thoughtful application of the course content to their own experiences with new media and requires them to critically reflect on what they have learned
- Apply skills of persuasion, argument, and effective written communication in relation to social issues
- Design and execute a collaborative research project using social science methods

## Course Logistics

Class meeting times and locations will be structured differently than many other classes. This course will employ *hybrid pedagogy*, since it will blend together face-to-face discussions with online learning through our class blog.

*NOTE: This model uses a M+W+Hybrid Friday format, though other structures could be used.*

In most weeks, students will meet in a classroom on Monday and Wednesday and will use **Friday's** class time to interact on a blog and other online forums. The flex time on Friday will also allow students to focus upon the blogs, the writing assignments, and the readings, which will require significant time and energy. Students should remember that the blog is worth a significant portion of the final grade and will require regular attention.

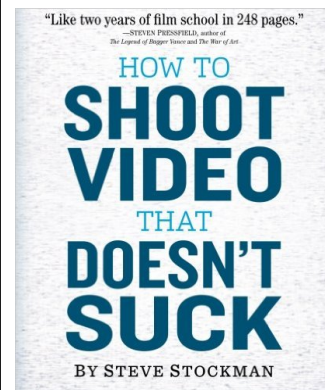
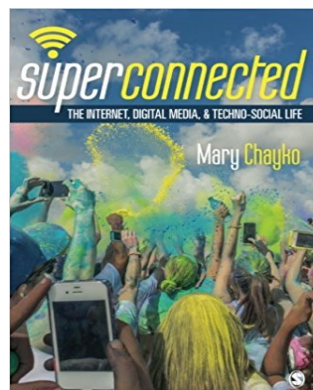


In short, this class will require a degree of autonomy not common in the academic classroom but “status quo” in the workplace. The structure of this course reflects the changing nature of work in today's digital culture, where a portion of the work, interaction, and communication may take place online.

Much of our class interaction will take place on a class blog. Instructors are free to view the class blog for the Pilot section of this course, offered in Spring 2018: <http://sites.psu.edu/comm234spring2018/>

If you have any questions about this class, feel free to contact Dr. Christian Weisser through email at: [crw17@psu.edu](mailto:crw17@psu.edu)

### Texts and Materials



<p>The New Media Writer Sean Morey, Fountainhead Press</p>	<p>Superconnected Mary Chayko, Sage Press</p>	<p>How to Shoot Video That <b>Doesn't</b> Suck Steve Stockman, Workman Publishing</p>
--	---	---

#### GRADED WORK

Brandmark Assignment	10%
Flyer Advertisement	10%
Podcast Assignment	10%
Digital Culture Video	20%
Case Study Research Project	30%
Class Blog	20%

Brandmark Assignment: Most organizations employ a brandmark to represent themselves. You encounter brandmarks every day, from the Nike “swoosh” to McDonald’s “Golden Arches.” For this assignment, you will analyze an existing brandmark of your choice, then redesign it to better represent the **company’s** goals or mission. The document you produce should consist of two halves. The first part of the document should analyze the existing brandmark, describing what it represents as well as any history you can incorporate. The second half should reveal the new brandmark **you’ve** created, describing how you believe it engages more effectively with the **company’s** audiences and mission. The overall document should consist of 3-4 pages of text, including images of the brandmarks **you’re** analyzing as well as the new brandmark **you’ve** created.

NOTE: It would be difficult to improve upon the swoosh or the golden arches, since those were created by teams of designers and marketers. You may find more productive ground by analyzing/redesigning the brandmark for a smaller, local, or

community-based organization. BONUS points if the organization decides to adopt your landmark.

**Flyer Advertisement:** For this assignment, you will create a one-page flyer advertising a service, solving a problem, or promoting a future event. You may create a flyer for an existing company or organization—such as a campus club, a volunteer organization, or your employer—or you may create a flyer advertising services you can offer—such as tutoring, web-design, or babysitting. You will need to combine text and images in a way that emphasizes important details and also captures the attention of your intended audience. We will spend time in class and on our blog discussing the rhetorical and ecological choices of your flyer, and you will showcase the flyer in a brief class presentation. Bonus points if an organization uses your flyer to promote a service or event to a public audience.

**Podcast:** For this project, you will create a 6-10 minute podcast focusing on one of the many campus clubs and student organizations at Penn State Berks. Your podcast should describe the club, discuss club events and activities, and provide an overview of what students might expect if they join the club. Your target audience is students who are considering a campus club and want to know more about it.

You will need to do extensive research to find out more about the club, even if you are already a member. You should also interview club members or the club president and incorporate their voices into your podcast. You will also need to include background music in your intro and conclusion. The podcast must be carefully planned with a script or outline, and the production of your podcast must sound professional.

**Digital Culture Video:** For this assignment, you will create a video essay addressing some aspect of digital culture. In your video, you will make an argument or present a position about a topic relating to digital culture, such as cyberbullying, internet privacy, copyright or file-sharing, online personas, computer hacking, or the role of social media in politics. The topic you choose is up to you, but the video must address digital culture in some way and it must also provide a useful analysis for a broad audience.

Your video should be 4-6 minutes long, and you will start with a storyboard or outline to plan it out. You will be evaluated on the strength and clarity of your argument as well as on the professionalism and expertise of your video production and editing. The video you create should combine video clips, images, and music. You may use short clips and samples from other sources—but be sure to follow U.S. Copyright Law section 107, which we will discuss in class: <https://www.copyright.gov/fair-use/more-info.html>

**Case Study Research Project:** The purpose of this team project is to conduct a research project that will examine some contemporary case that exemplifies both the risks and benefits of new media in American and/or some other society. This

assignment has two deliverables (a written component and a team presentation) that will be evaluated for a grade. Interim deliverables (a project title and abstract, an outline and a work plan) will be reviewed with the intent of helping you to develop and organize the conceptual framework for your research. Some time will be provided in class for team meetings to plan and organize the project, but you will need to devote some time outside of class as well.

Your team can find topics by paying attention to current events and news stories. Find some big news story related to new media and society. Some examples include legal battles between employers and employees that focus on social media use outside of the workplace; solicitation for illegal activities using social media; wikileaks and freedom of information; controversial iPhone or Android apps; physiological and psychological effects of smartphones on users; the media campaign for a popular television show, album or movie. The idea here is to find a topic with sustained discussion across media outlets that will enable you can weave a coherent and compelling analysis of the topic.

Class Blog or Discussion Group: To continue our discussions outside of class, we'll use a class discussion blog or a Canvas Discussion Group (**Instructor's preference**). You are responsible for creating at least one detailed comment on the blog per week. Generally, the instructor will post a question or writing prompt to the blog at the beginning of the week. You should send your response by the end of the week (Friday), since these responses will often be the focus of our in-class discussions. I encourage you to post additional comments and to create new threads on our blog; feel free to discuss class projects, current events, or related readings that deal with sustainability—**really** anything that might be of interest and use to your classmates.

Each message you post to the blog should be approximately 2-3 paragraphs, though some may be longer. Overall, we'll generate about 50 messages per week on the blog, and it is important that you read your **classmates'** comments, too. Your grade on this assignment will be based upon the completion of the responses in a timely fashion as well as the degree to which you interact with your classmates and lead our blog discussions. Occasionally, I'll give BONUS prompts, to which you can reply to earn additional credit.

You can visit a sample of the class blog at:  
<http://sites.psu.edu/comm234spring2018/>

You will need to login using your PSU Access Account

NOTE: As referenced above, this project may be replaced with weekly Discussion Groups, samples of which may be found in Canvas.

Class Participation/Quizzes/Policies: Class participation and in-class quizzes can “swing” your final grade for the course as much as a full letter grade in either direction. The following components of class participation are expected:

- you are present in class
- you arrive on time
- you are prepared for class
  - you completed the reading and writing assignments due for that class period
  - you completed the in-class assignment
  - you brought assigned readings with you;
  - and you brought your in-progress work to class
- you are attentive and engaged
- you contribute to group work and class discussions.

### Class Attendance

You are expected to attend all classes, with the exception of University-approved curricular and extracurricular activities (such as field trips, debate trips, choir trips, and athletic contests) and religious holidays.

When you are absent, it is your responsibility to make up the work and find out what you missed. Please call or email a classmate to find out about missed assignments and class work. Please do not email me before or after absences unless you will need to miss class for an extended period.

- Excessive unexcused absences will negatively impact your “swing grade.”
- Students with more than six unexcused absences will fail this course.
- Students with more than nine combined unexcused and excused absences will fail this course.

### Lateness

You are expected to be in class on time. Although arriving late is sometimes unavoidable (traffic jam, for instance), repeated lateness will result in a lowered grade.

### Email

I regularly correspond with my students via email. I expect you to check your Penn State email twice daily. Usually, my emails have to do with changes in assignments. I expect you to use professional language when corresponding with me by email. As we will discuss in class, the audience and subject of your writing should dictate the level of formality rather than the genre. In other words, email messages may be formal or informal depending upon who you are writing to and why you are writing.

### Instructor Availability

I want to help you to be successful in this course, and I encourage you to visit my

office during office hours to discuss the readings, your essays, or any part of the course. If you "drop by" at other times, if I am free, I will gladly talk to you, but sometimes I am preparing for class, grading papers, or preparing for a meeting. You can reach me most any time at my email address as well.

#### Academic Integrity Pennsylvania State University, Senate Policy 49-20

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at Penn State, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

#### The Writing Center

Campus Writing Centers provide free assistance to writers at all levels and in all stages of the writing process. The writing center tutors do not edit or proofread student writing, but they can provide valuable help with brainstorming, revising, and other stages of the writing process. I encourage you to visit the Writing Center at least once this semester.

#### Disability Statement

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. The Pennsylvania State University does not discriminate against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the campus disability liaison as soon as possible: (name, office, telephone, email). For additional information, check the university web site:

NOTE: Accommodations require documentation.

## Tentative Syllabus

Week #	Topic
1	Introduction/Policies; NMW Ch 1; Begin Blog
2	MONDAY NO CLASS; NMW Ch 2 & 3
3	NMW Ch 4; Discuss Brandmark Assignment
4	Peer Workshop; Brandmark Assignment Due; SC Ch 1
5	NMW Ch 5; Discuss Flyer Advertisement; SC Ch 2
6	NMW Ch 10; Writing Workshop; SC Ch 3
7	Flyer Advertisement Due; NMW Ch 7; SC Ch 4
8	NMW Ch 8 & 9; Discuss Podcast Assignment; SC Ch 5
9	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
10	Podcast Due; Video Part 1; SC Ch 6
11	Discuss Video Assignment; Video Part 2
12	Video Part 3 &4; Video Workshop
13	Video Part 5&6; Video Due
14	SC Ch 7; Begin Case Study Research Project
15	SC Ch 8
16	SC Ch 9; Case Study Research Draft Due
17	SC Ch 10; Case Study Research Project Due
18	Case Study Presentations

**Course Abbreviation and Number:** IST234 / COM 234

**Credits:** 3

**Prerequisites/Co-requisites/Concurrent Requirements/Recommended Preparation:** none

**Course Attributes/Designations:** GenEd (GH & GS)

**General Education Learning Objectives:** Integrative Thinking, Key Literacies

**Course Description:** This introductory course will combine theory and practice to help students develop a rich understanding of the constantly evolving new media landscape. Students will read texts authored by some of the most formative thinkers in our field examining the impact of new media, and apply these core concepts to the use of digital tools by individuals and institutions such as media, business, and government. Students will actively use microblogging, RSS feeds, social media and other Web 2.0 tools to produce and consume content, interact with peers, and reflect critically on this experience. This course will emphasize awareness of current events and technology trends, as well as critical thinking skills and the ability to frame and explore socio-technical issues through written, visual and verbal communication.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

- As a result of taking this course, students will:
- Understand the significance of digital and information technologies in contemporary culture
- Use various digital and information technologies in a thoughtful and engaged manner, and then critically evaluate the experience in written assignments
- Recognize the relationship between information technology and social change in the context of individual and institutional use
- Communicate effectively with a range of audiences, formally or informally, through
- Create digital artifacts that show thoughtful application of the course content to their own experiences with new media and requires them to critically reflect on what they have learned
- Apply skills of persuasion, argument, and effective written communication in relation to social issues
- Design and execute a collaborative research project using social science methods

**Evaluation Methods:**

- Brandmark Assignment (10%)
- Flyer Assignment (10%)
- Podcast Assignment (10%)
- Digital Culture Video (20%)
- Case Study Research Project (30%)
- Class Blog (20%)

*Brandmark Assignment:* Most organizations employ a brandmark to represent themselves. You encounter brandmarks every day, from the Nike “swoosh” to



McDonald's "Golden Arches." For this assignment, you will analyze an existing brandmark of your choice, then redesign it to better represent the company's goals or mission. The document you produce should consist of two halves. The first part of the document should analyze the existing brandmark, describing what it represents as well as any history you can incorporate. The second half should reveal the new brandmark you've created, describing how you believe it engages more effectively with the company's audiences and mission. The overall document should consist of 3-4 pages of text, including images of the brandmarks you're analyzing as well as the new brandmark you've created. NOTE: It would be difficult to improve upon the swoosh or the golden arches, since those were created by teams of designers and marketers. You may find more productive ground by analyzing/redesigning the brandmark for a smaller, local, or community-based organization. Bonus points if the organization decides to adopt your brandmark.

*Flyer Advertisement:* For this assignment, you will create a one-page flyer advertising a service, solving a problem, or promoting a future event. You may create a flyer for an existing company or organization—such as a campus club, a volunteer organization, or your employer—or you may create a flyer advertising services you can offer—such as tutoring, web-design, or babysitting. You will need to combine text and images in a way that emphasizes important details and also captures the attention of your intended audience. We will spend time in class and on our blog discussing the rhetorical and ecological choices of your flyer, and you will showcase the flyer in a brief class presentation. Bonus points if an organization uses your flyer to promote a service or event to a public audience.

*Podcast:* For this project, you will create a 6-10 minute podcast focusing on one of the many campus clubs and student organizations at Penn State Berks. Your podcast should describe the club, discuss club events and activities, and provide an overview of what students might expect if they join the club. Your target audience is students who are considering a campus club and want to know more about it. You will need to do extensive research to find out more about the club, even if you are already a member. You should also interview club members or the club president and incorporate their voices into your podcast. You will also need to include background music in your intro and conclusion. The podcast must be carefully planned with a script or outline, and the production of your podcast must sound professional.

*Digital Culture Video:* For this assignment, you will create a video essay addressing some aspect of digital culture. In your video, you will make an argument or present a position about a topic relating to digital culture, such as cyberbullying, internet privacy, copyright or file-sharing, online personas, computer hacking, or the role of social media in politics. The topic you choose is up to you, but the video must address digital culture in some way and it must also provide a useful analysis for a broad audience.

Your video should be 4-6 minutes long, and you will start with a storyboard or outline to plan it out. You will be evaluated on the strength and clarity of your argument as well as on the professionalism and expertise of your video production and editing. The video

you create should combine video clips, images, and music. You may use short clips and samples from other sources—but be sure to follow U.S. Copyright Law section 107, which we will discuss in class: <https://www.copyright.gov/fair-use/more-info.html>

*Case Study Research Project:* The purpose of this team project is to conduct a research project that will examine some contemporary case that exemplifies both the risks and benefits of new media in American and/or some other society. This assignment has two deliverables (a written component and a team presentation) that will be evaluated for a grade. Interim deliverables (a project title and abstract, an outline and a work plan) will be reviewed with the intent of helping you to develop and organize the conceptual framework for your research. Some time will be provided in class for team meetings to plan and organize the project, but you will need to devote some time outside of class as well.

Your team can find topics by paying attention to current events and news stories. Find some big news story related to new media and society. Some examples include legal battles between employers and employees that focus on social media use outside of the workplace; illegal activities on the Dark Web; social media influencers; “fake news”; hate groups online; controversial iPhone or Android apps; physiological and psychological effects of smartphone use; the media campaign for a popular television show, album or movie. The idea here is to find a topic with sustained discussion across media outlets that will enable you can weave a coherent and compelling analysis of the topic.

*Class Blog or Discussion Group:* To continue our discussions outside of class, we’ll use a class discussion blog or a Canvas Discussion Group (Instructor’s preference). You are responsible for creating at least one detailed comment on the blog per week. Generally, the instructor will post a question or writing prompt to the blog at the beginning of the week. You should send your response by the end of the week (Friday), since these responses will often be the focus of our in-class discussions. I encourage you to post additional comments and to create new threads on our blog; feel free to discuss class projects, current events, or related readings that deal with sustainability—really anything that might be of interest and use to your classmates.

Each message you post to the blog should be approximately 2-3 paragraphs, though some may be longer. Overall, we’ll generate about 50 messages per week on the blog, and it is important that you read your classmates’ comments, too. Your grade on this assignment will be based upon the completion of the responses in a timely fashion as well as the degree to which you interact with your classmates and lead our blog discussions.

**Class Participation Expectations and Policies:** Class participation is essential for this course. This means that you are present in class, you arrive on time, you are prepared for class, you completed the reading and writing assignments due for that class period, you completed the in-class assignment, you are attentive and engaged, and you

brought your in-progress work to class.

### **Class Attendance Expectations and Policies**

You are expected to attend all classes, with the exception of University-approved curricular and extracurricular activities (such as field trips, debate trips, choir trips, and athletic contests) and religious holidays. When you are absent, it is your responsibility to make up the work and find out what you missed. Please email for excused absences, and consult Canvas to find out about missed assignments and class work. Students with more than six unexcused absences will fail this course.

### **Email**

I regularly correspond with students via Canvas email. I expect you to check your Penn State email daily. Usually, my emails have to do with changes in assignments. I expect you to use professional language when corresponding with me by email. As we will discuss in class, the audience and subject of your writing should dictate the level of formality rather than the genre. In other words, email messages may be formal or informal depending upon who you are writing to and why you are writing.

### **Instructor Availability**

I want to help you to be successful in this course, and I encourage you to visit my office during office hours to discuss the readings, your essays, or any part of the course. If you “drop by” at other times, if I am free, I will gladly talk to you, but sometimes I am preparing for class, grading papers, or preparing for a meeting. You can reach me most any time at my email address as well.

### **Course Logistics**

Class meeting times and locations will be structured differently than many other classes. This course will employ hybrid pedagogy, since it will blend together face-to-face discussions with online learning through our class blog.

NOTE: This model uses a M+W+Hybrid Friday format, though other structures could be used.

In most weeks, students will meet in a classroom on Monday and Wednesday and will use Friday’s class time to interact on a blog and other online forums. The flex time on Friday will also allow students to focus upon the blogs, the writing assignments, and the readings, which will require significant time and energy. Students should remember that the blog is worth a significant portion of the final grade and will require regular attention.

In short, this class will require a degree of autonomy not common in the academic classroom but “status quo” in the workplace. The structure of this course reflects the changing nature of work in today's digital culture, where a portion of the work, interaction, and communication may take place online.

## Texts and Materials

- *The New Media Writer* by Sean Morey, Fountainhead Press (NMW)
- *Superconnected* by Mary Chako, Sage Press (SC)
- *How to Shoot Video that Doesn't Suck*, by Steven Stockman, Workman Publishing (Video)

## Course Schedule (Tentative)

Week #	Readings / Assignments
1	Introduction/Policies; NMW Ch 1; Begin Blog
2	MONDAY NO CLASS; NMW Ch 2 & 3
3	NMW Ch 4; Discuss Brandmark Assignment
4	SC Ch 1; NMW Ch 5; Discuss Flyer Advertisement; SC Ch 2 <b>Brandmark Assignment Due;</b>
5	NMW Ch 10; Writing Workshop; SC Ch 3
6	NMW Ch 7; SC Ch 4 <b>Flyer Advertisement Due</b>
7	NMW Ch 8 & 9; Discuss Podcast Assignment; SC Ch 5
8	Video Part 1; SC Ch 6 <b>Podcast Due;</b>
9	Spring Break
10	Discuss Video Assignment; Video Part 2
11	Video Part 3 & 4; Video Workshop
12	Video Part 5 & 6 <b>Video Due</b>
13	SC Ch 7 & 8; Begin Case Study Research Project
14	SC Ch 9; Case Study Research Draft Due
15	SC Ch 10; <b>Case Study Research Project Due; Case Study Presentations</b>

## The Writing Center

Campus Writing Centers provide free assistance to writers at all levels and in all stages of the writing process. The writing center tutors do not edit or proofread student writing, but they can provide valuable help with brainstorming, revising, and other

stages of the writing process. I encourage you to visit the Writing Center at least once this semester.

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

### **Disability Accommodation Statement**

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator>). For further information, please visit [Student Disability Resources website](http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/)(<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/>).

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: [See documentation guidelines](http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines) (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines>). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

### **Counseling and Psychological Services Statement**

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park (CAPS)  
(<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>): 814-863-0395

Counseling and Psychological Services at Commonwealth Campuses  
(<http://senate.psu.edu/faculty/counseling-services-at-commonwealth-campuses/>)

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400  
Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

### **Educational Equity/Report Bias Statement**

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the Report Bias webpage (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>).