COMM 299 Digital Media and the Environment
TR 100-215p
Cuneo 311

Loyola University Chicago
School of Communication
Dr. Meghan Dougherty
Office hours: TR 1100a-1230p
Engrained Café in IES

Course Description
Digital Media and the Environment explores the environmental impact of digital media. Our digital devices and virtual spaces have an impact on the natural and built environment – from mining precious metals from global conflict zones to manufacture devices, to burning fossil fuels that provide energy to run data centers, to the global black market trade of electronic waste. Students will explore the points at which the digital world meets the physical world, learn to identify and define environmental sustainability problems, and work toward creative solutions to mitigate those problems. Students will learn that ethical consumers/producers of digital media have a responsibility to understand what makes their virtual worlds possible.

Course Outcomes
By the end of this course, students will…
- Gain basic knowledge and factual information about digital media ecology, digital media infrastructure, and the impact of digital media technology on the environment.
- Develop ethical reasoning and ethical decision making regarding environmental impact resulting from personal and professional use of digital media.
- Learn to critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view regarding digital culture, communication infrastructure worldwide, and its relationship with the environment.
- Learn to apply knowledge and skills to benefit others or serve the global public good.

Schedule
Week One | 14 & 16 January | Introductions

PART 1 DIGITAL CULTURE

Week Two | 21 & 23 January | Digital Media Ecology

Part 1 QTC Essay due by 28 January

Quiz 1 due by 23 January

PART 2 DIGITAL DEVICES

Week Three | 28 & 30 January | Entanglement and Innovation

Week Four | 4 & 6 February | Design, Manufacture, and Circular Economies

Final Project Project Proposal due 6 February

Week Five | 11 & 13 February | E-waste: waste streams, hazards, accumulation

Week Six | 18 & 20 February | E-ewaste: activism, regulation, responsibilities

Week Seven | 25 & 27 February | open class for planning guest lecturers

Project Progress Report #1 due 27 February

Part 2 QTC Essay due by 27 February

Quiz 2 due by 27 February

Week Eight | 3 & 5 March | !SPRING BREAK!

PART 3 INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Week Nine | 10 & 12 March | Cables, Satellites and Signal Space

Week Ten | 17 & 19 March | Post-colonial practices and labor

Week Eleven | 24 & 26 March | Infrastructural Inversion, Software and Platforms

Project Progress Report #2 due 26 March

Week Twelve | 31 March & 2 April | Imaginaries and Stories about Infrastructure

Part 3 QTC Essay due by 2 April

Quiz 3 due by 2 April

PART 4 ENERGY

Week Thirteen | 7 April | Low Energy Internet?

9 April - no class meeting, Easter Break

Week Fourteen | 14 & 16 April | Ecological Ethics for Media

Part 4 QTC Essay due by 16 April

Quiz 4 due by 16 April

Week Fifteen | 21 & 23 April | Final Project Poster Sessions

Final Project Due Friday 1 May by 3pm.

Assignments
In this course you'll complete a number of different assignments that will help you process the course content. Those assignments include:

4 Quizzes

Quizzes for each Part of class are posted on Sakai along with the course content. They will be graded pass/fail. Missed pop quizzes may not be made up after their due date. You may complete the quiz any time before the due date.

4 Short essays reflecting on readings

Students will write four one-page essays - one for each Part of class. The essay will reflect a thoughtful discussion of the student's Questions, Thoughts, and Contentions (QTCs) with regard to readings and other class content. Please see QTC Essay Assignment Requirements posted in each Part of course in the Tools menu. QTCs will be graded pass/fail.

4 Forum discussion posts

Students will participate in forum discussion for each Part of class. Students will post at least 1 questions/comment, and respond to at least one classmate for each Part of class for a total of 4 questions/comments, and 4 responses.

1 Final semester-long project

Students will complete a semester-long project of their choice. The project will be completed in stages including a proposal, 2 progress reports, a final project, and a presentation. Students may work alone or in groups. The proposal, progress reports, and presentation will be graded pass/fail. The project itself will be graded on a 100-point grade scale.

Course and University Policies

CENTER FOR STUDENT ASSISTANCE AND ADVOCACY
Should you encounter any unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), please contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral (LUC.edu/csaa) for yourself or a peer in need of support. If you are uncomfortable doing so on your own, please know that I can submit a referral on your behalf – just email me or schedule a meeting with me during office hours. To learn more about the Office of the Dean of Students, please find their websites here: LUC.edu/dos or LUC.edu/csaa.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY
Any student who may need special accommodation for accessibility to learning during exams or class periods should provide documentation from the Student Accessibility Office confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of the course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY
Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (e.g., failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours).
This is an academic community; being uninformed or naïve is not an acceptable excuse for not properly referencing your sources.
It is dishonest to:
turn in the same work for two classes without speaking to your profs first;
turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam, unless otherwise allowed by the course professor.

CLASSROOM CITIZENSHIP
Students are expected to respect each other. When you enter a classroom, you are a member of a cohort - a community of learning. Your success depends on your neighbors' success. Learning is a collaborative effort - in discussion, group work, and even lecture, understanding is co- produced. Your questions and perspectives matter, and so do your classmates'. Treat each other with tolerance and understanding. The people you'll interact with in class are your peers and future colleagues. Strive to do better on your own, but also strive to help your classmates to elevate the level of conversation in the classroom. You are responsible for your own work, but you are also responsible to your teacher and

your peers - your positive substantive participation in discussion and group work is a valuable aspect of the class.

LATE WORK/ LOST WORK
Late work will not be accepted. Extensions will not be granted. Incompletes will not be assigned. Make-up work will not be assigned unless pre-arranged, or due to an authorized documented absence. If you anticipate you will miss an assignment, please discuss it with the professor early in the semester to arrange an alternative. You must give at least one week notice to arrange alternative exam/quiz locations and times. Save early, save often, and archive your emails. If an assignment is lost or you discover a discrepancy later in the semester, email documentation will be required (e.g., if you are sure you handed in an assignment that I do not have a grade listed for, be prepared to show me your dated original files or dated emailed work). Always double- check your emails when you send in assignments - all files should be PDFs; all links should be functioning. It is your responsibility to make sure I get your work - it is not my responsibility to tell you your file was corrupted, or your email bounced, or to remind you to hand in work.

GRADING POLICY
This course will be graded using a letter system rather than a point system.

Grades will be posted in Sakai.

If you have a question or concern about a grade earned, please revisit the assignment requirements and rubrics before contacting the professor. If after revisiting the assignment requirements, you feel you want a grade reassessed, email the professor with a message explaining where you believe you completed the assignment above and beyond the average.

QTC essays will be graded Pass/Fail. The grades entered into Sakai will be 1 for a Pass, 0 for a Fail.

Forum participation will be graded on a scale of 0-4, 0 indicating F up to 4 indicating A.

Final projects will earn grades on a 100 point scale that translates to a standard letter grade.