COMS 660 Definitions and Futures of Media Technology/
COMS 893 Special Topics: Digital Culture and Digital Research Methods
Concordia University
Department of Communication Studies
Dr. Stefanie Duguay
Winter 2021
Thursday 4:15-7:00pm

Office Location: #workfromhome
Office Hours: Over Zoom on Wednesdays from 1:00-3:00pm; use [url] to book or email to arrange a different time if necessary.
Email: stefanie.duguay@concordia.ca
Include COMS 660/893 in subject line; responses generally sent within 24 business hours.

Calendar Description (COMS 660)
This seminar explores the social, cultural, and psychological aspects of media and technology. Media are considered as both containers and expressions of culture. In addition, this seminar focuses on the impacts of new technologies and media. Topics may include the interaction of media and culture, the role of technology in the development of human consciousness and values, and the future of media in the light of emergent technologies and practices.
Note: Students who have received credit for COMS 643 or COMS 658 may not take this course for credit.

Course Description
Within the realm of media and technology, this course will focus on **digital culture** and **digital research methods.** Raymond Williams (1961) defined culture as "a particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values" (p. 57). Contemporary ways of life are thoroughly enmeshed with digital technology and digital media, to the extent that it goes without stating that one's computer or phone is "digital." In turn, cultural values and meanings are imparted into, as well as influenced by, digital technology. This course takes the view that a foundational knowledge of digital culture – including its historical, social, and technological elements – is essential to asking questions about what is yet unknown in this constantly changing landscape. Classes will take you through a journey of discovering interdisciplinary fields of digital research and their contributions to understandings of web history, platformed sociality, user practices of adoption and appropriation, critical data studies, and algorithmic culture. Along the way, you will learn key approaches, techniques, tools, and ethical principles of digital research methods. Several classes will intertwine discussion of digital culture with complimentary methods approaches, enabling you to try these methods out in a collaborative, exploratory environment. Preparation, a sense of curiosity, and persistence will be pivotal as we move from understanding the foundations of digital culture to processes of knowledge creation.

Course objectives/learning outcomes
By the end of this course, you will be able to:
- Critically analyze digital culture within the context of historical, social, cultural, and technological influences;
- Demonstrate awareness of a range of tools, techniques, and approaches to digital research methods;
- Apply digital research methods in response to research questions;
- Exercise ethical conduct in the context of digital research;

- Demonstrate fortified skills related to research design, analysis, presentation and writing.

Course materials
All readings and related materials will be available through Concordia Course Reserves.
Required readings are listed first and must be completed for each week; **additional readings** are provided for further exploration and for application to course assignments, and their completion is not mandatory on a weekly basis. I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus during the semester as necessary with the goal of fully addressing class needs and improving your learning experience.

Format of the Course

As part of emergency COVID-19 measures, this course will be taught remotely and not in-person. It will include both asynchronous and synchronous components. Unless otherwise noted in Moodle, each week you will need to:

1. **Read** – Complete the week's required readings and/or any preparatory video/audio or software set-up, and skim the additional readings (check out introductions, abstracts, and section titles to see what they're about, as they may be helpful for assignments). Submit a QTP if this is a week in which you've chosen to do so.
2. **Watch** – View the short video discussions of the week's readings and topic. These videos will fill in some background and share my understandings of key concepts raised, though they are meant to contribute to further thinking and are not the definitive interpretation of the week's readings or ideas (meaning: it's ok to disagree with me).
3. **Engage** – with your classmates' short Explainer videos pertaining to the additional readings. You can leave comments (especially encouragement!) and questions on the discussion board to further discuss but note that these will not be monitored or graded.
4. **Tune in** – Attend the weekly Zoom session on Thursdays:
   - 4:55-5:05pm – Informal chat
   - 5:05-5:50pm – Discussion co-led by that week's Explainers
   - 5:50-6:00pm – 10-minute break
   - 6:00-7:00pm – Methods activity/workshop (occasionally class will end at 6:00pm)

Every effort will be made to post the asynchronous materials by noon Tuesday on the week prior to class. This will give you ample time to work through them at your own pace but they should not take longer than approximately 1 hour to view (meaning that you could complete them as part of the designated class time from 4:15 – 4:50pm.

Assignments and Grading

Assignment	Weighting (%)	Due Date
• QTPs	10	Ongoing
Three Minute Explainer and Discussion Leader	20	Sign up before January 25

Digital Research Project		
• Research proposal	10	January 29
• Partial journal article	15	Pick: Feb 26, Mar. 8, or Mar. 12
• Research presentation	25	April 8 or 15
• Final paper (optional)	20	April 22

Questions, Thoughts, and Provocations (QTPs) – 10%[1]
For at least 5 weeks of your choosing, you must submit a reading response through Moodle in relation to the week's required readings. This response should include three components:
1. **Questions** that you have about the readings, such as things that were unclear or that you were unsure about;
2. **Thoughts** about how the readings relate to each other and the week's topic (and/or other content in the course), connections with your own work, and general reflections;
3. **Provocations** in terms of further scholarly questioning, challenges, or future lines of thinking or research that the readings raise for you.

QTPs demonstrate your engagement with the course and its readings. They will be graded according to completeness and should show that you have read the texts closely (such as by referring to page numbers, quoting the text, discussing specific ideas, and defining concepts). QTPs that do not demonstrate this or that are missing components will receive partial or zero marks. They can be as short as you wish so long as they meet these criteria, up to a maximum of 500 words.

QTPs must be submitted in Moodle by **10:00am Thursday** before the class to which they relate.

Three Minute Explainer and Discussion Leader – 20%
Remote learning gives us a chance to practice conveying information via multimedia in a clear and concise manner. You will sign up to create a Three Minute Explainer video or audio presentation (think *academic YouTube realness)* of one of the additional readings on a particular week. Your Explainer presentation should include:
- (Only) relevant background about the reading
- Key concepts
- How the reading relates to the week's topic/required readings/main concepts

As per the assignment title, your presentation should aim to be 3 minutes in duration up to a maximum of 5 minutes. You will post it for the rest of the class to view by creating a new thread in that week's discussion board with the title of the reading you've chosen. Your thread post should contain the full citation for the reading and an upload (250MB max) or link to your presentation. Informal recordings made on the phone, through Zoom or PowerPoint, etc, are perfectly fine so long as the presentation can be clearly understood. Bring energy and creativity to your presentation to help viewers retain attention and better understand the information

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[1] Thanks to Dr. Adrienne Massanari for sharing this idea, which she credits to Dr. Annette Markham.

you're conveying! You must **post your Explainer video by noon on Tuesday** of your chosen week (2 days prior to our Zoom class).

You will communicate with the others who signed up for your week to discuss overlaps among the readings as well as the required readings and overarching topic and methods. Together, you will develop 3-5 open-ended questions for discussion during the weekly Zoom session. You will meet with the instructor at 4:45pm in Zoom prior the Thursday session to refine these questions and prepare for co-leading the class discussion. Throughout the discussion portion of the Zoom session, you will be expected to add perspectives, thoughts, and prompts for further inquiry based on your close engagement with the week's topic.

Digital Research Project
Over the course of the semester, you will pilot one of the methods covered and apply it to a topic of your choosing relating to digital culture. This project will be accomplished through multiple phases that resemble the actual progression of a research project, from submitting a preliminary proposal to developing your research question based on literature, conducting research methods, analyzing findings, presenting and discussing conclusions for feedback, and the (optional) composition of a draft journal article. As pilot projects, this research is conducted for the educational purposes of this course only (though it may provide a starting point for dissertation work or conference papers). Note: If you choose to conduct online or telephone interviews, you must use the consent form available through Moodle; no research for this course will take place in-person this semester as a precaution against the spread of COVID-19.

The following assignments will provide incremental steps toward completing this project:

1. **Research proposal – 10%**
   Review the syllabus to gain a sense of the different methods and topics we'll be covering throughout the semester. Then select a research topic that is within the broad area of digital culture and at least one method from the syllabus that you will use in order to investigate this topic. Compose a research proposal of no more than **2 pages** single-spaced (note – this is different from the other written assignment guidelines) that includes the following:
   - Project title
   - Topic background - reference at least 2 sources to provide information about your topic
   - Research question – develop a question based on the research problem you have identified regarding this topic
   - Proposed methods and rationale – identify at least one method and state your rationale for why it would be a feasible approach for investigating your topic; if you are trying to decide among multiple methods, include these and reasons why they would work but identify what you think seems like the most appropriate method
   - A timeline for completing the research and associated assignments (below)
   - A mitigation strategy for addressing unanticipated issues or setbacks

   If you wish to use a research method that is not covered in the syllabus (or is only tangentially covered), this is also feasible but note that you will need to do your own investigation into the uses and limitations of the method.

For those planning to use digital tools for social media data collection, note the limitations of these tools ahead of time (e.g. most Twitter tools only allow data collection from the past 7 days) and consider these in your research design.

2. **Partial journal article – 15%**
   This is a (partial) written paper that extends your initial research proposal into the beginning of a journal article. It should follow a standard research article format that includes the following sections:
   - Introduction – introduces the topic; communicates its importance; summarizes the research aim and methods
   - Literature review/Background – provides further background on the topic from different perspectives; examines other ways the topic has been studied; provides a rationale for why and how you are studying it
   - Methods – explains your chosen method by drawing on methods literature; describes the research design (sample, tools, procedures) and approach to analysis; identifies limitations and ethical considerations involved in the use of this method. Since this course focuses a lot on methods, this section will be longer than it would appear in a regular journal article, including more details from relevant methods readings.

   The paper can contain subsections and different headers but must cover these components. Since it is unlikely you will have completed the research at this point, you can write in the future tense. Don't forget to include a working title for your paper. *Approximately 2,000 words (maximum 2,500) not including reference list.*

3. **Research Presentation – 25%**
   This is a chance for you to present your research project, sharing your findings for constructive feedback from peers. This should resemble a conference presentation – but not the kind where you read from a finished paper, since the objective is to refine your analysis and conclusions through the presentation process and by integrating feedback. You should aim to present your work in a logical format: introduce the topic, provide background literature, explain methods, share findings, analysis, and conclusions. Imagine that you are at a conference and you want the audience to take interest in your work – infuse your presentation with a balance of creativity and professionalism necessary to achieve this. The presentation will be followed by a question period in which you will be evaluated for your preparedness, engagement with classmates, and openness to feedback.

   Presentations will take place on Zoom in the final two weeks of class. Expect to be available for the full class duration 4:15-7:00pm (with breaks!) during these weeks. A schedule will be determined toward the end of the semester; necessarily, some students will need to present in the earlier week – please plan appropriately for this in your timelines.

4. **Final Paper – 20%**
   The ideal progression from a conference paper is a full article in preparation for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. You will have the chance to submit and receive feedback on a full paper – remember that you have already completed this halfway. This paper should add findings, discussion, and conclusions to your Partial Journal Article, incorporating feedback from your presentation. Writing out these sections will not only

deepen your analysis but it will also provide you with practice in terms of formal academic writing. A final article should include the following:

- Introduction – in addition to the components included earlier, re-write your summary paragraph to include mention of findings and overall conclusion
- Literature review/Background – add new sources that you have discovered over the semester; remove literature that is not relevant to your findings/conclusion
- Methods – refine and clarify to match how you actually conducted the research
- Findings and Discussion – some papers include these sections together while others have separate sections; use the most logical format to report your findings, which are the direct outcomes of your research (e.g. data trends, observations, interview quotes and themes), and your discussion, comprised of analysis that links your findings to broader literature and conceptual frameworks
- Conclusion – generally includes a short summary of the research, re-iteration of its main contribution to knowledge and the importance of this contribution, and avenues for future research
- Abstract – generally includes approximately one sentence for each of the following: introduce your topic, nod to the literature, state your method, share your findings, highlight your main contribution to the field

The project's limitations can appear either in the methods or conclusion section. Since your research has now been completed, the paper should be written in the past-tense. Given our emphasis on research methods and concepts, your theory and methods sections are likely to be the most developed while your findings and discussion will likely be smaller than they would be in an actual article. Identify a journal that you think your research would fit best with and follow its guidelines for referencing and formatting (except word count). If you are stumped with article layout, skim relevant journals (e.g. New Media & Society, Social Media + Society) to see how others compose their papers. If you would like to fashion your paper in accordance with a more creative outlet (e.g. a journal featuring research-based narrative essays, etc), please discuss this with me. *Approximately 5,000-5,500 words (maximum 6,000), not including reference list.*

Note: You should plan to write the final paper but it is OPTIONAL. While I encourage you to complete it for the reasons given above and to gain further feedback on your project, some may choose to forego this assignment given their workload or other reasons (we are still in a pandemic). If you choose to not complete the paper, your final grade will be calculated out of 80 (and not 100). If you choose to complete the paper, your paper grade will only be counted if it does not decrease your final grade (i.e. if you grade increases or stays the same). If you will not be writing the paper, you must notify me by email prior to the final day of class.

Guidelines for all written assignments:
- All written work must consistently follow a recognized citation style (e.g. APA, Chicago, MLA, etc).
- Respect the word limit; word counts exceeding +/- 10% of the word limit will affect your grade
- All written work should be in 12-point font, Times New Roman (Arial, Calibri, and Cambria are also acceptable) and double-spaced with regular (MS Word default) page margins
- Include page numbers at the bottom of each page
- Electronic submissions **must** be Microsoft Word documents (**not PDF** or other formats)

- File names should follow the format lastname_short assignment title_course code (e.g. Duguay_Project Proposal_COMS 660)

Attendance and participation – Since these are not regular circumstances, greater flexibility has been built into this course. Much of the content will occur asynchronously through Moodle, allowing you to work through it in your own time. The weekly Zoom sessions are not mandatory but participating in them will be extremely valuable to your learning and skills development in this course. They will help you to think through and apply course concepts with your peers and to prepare for the assignments. **If you miss a Zoom session**, it is recommended that you contact a classmate to obtain their notes and instructions on how to complete any activities that were carried out. If these instructions are unclear or you are unable to find someone to contact, email the instructor.

When participating through Zoom, please be aware of the following:
- If you attend the Zoom session please commit to being near your computer for the full duration (except breaks) and participating when possible, especially if asked to discuss in small groups;
- You can change your screen name to the name you prefer to be called;
- You can attend without your video on;
- Zoom sessions will not be recorded unless requested and agreed to by the entire class;
- Please mute yourself unless you are speaking;
- Anything written in the chat box can be downloaded and seen by the instructor (and possibly other Concordia admins or Zoom employees) after the session, even if you use private messaging;
- Zoom sessions will end on time - if you have further questions, please send them by email or arrange to discuss during office hours; some weeks the instructor may be available after the main session to answer questions or discuss topics further;
- It is important to treat your classmates with the same respect that you would in person and to do everything possible to contribute to making this a safer space and a welcoming learning community.

Language and subject matter – At times, course content and discussions are likely to concern subjects of power, oppression, exclusion, discrimination, violence, or other material that may be disturbing. I encourage you to practice care, taking breaks and discussing your responses to these subjects with supportive others. If there is a particular reading or week in which you are unable to engage with the subject matter for personal reasons, then I invite you to instead focus your efforts and assignments on the other materials or weeks of content. As we discuss challenging topics in the classroom, some examples of harmful behaviour or language may be involved in critical analysis. This discussion does not condone the use of these terms outside of analysis or with harmful intention toward others. At all times, the instructor strives toward the use of anti-oppressive language and encourages others to do so. I am not always likely to get it right and I welcome compassionate correction.

Late assignments – Deadlines are listed in the interest of helping you to complete work in a timely manner, especially when assignments build on each other. If you will require an extension, you must bring this to my attention by email **in advance** of the deadline and generally **one week or more in advance**. Given the current circumstances, I am aware of the need for flexibility, so please do get in contact if you require an extension. If I have not granted an extension, the following late policy will apply: 1 grade point will be deducted from the total grade for every 24 hours that an assignment is late for up to 72 hours (accumulating a

maximum 3-point deduction). Assignments more than three days late will receive a **zero** grade. Late assignments may not receive written comments or feedback.

Questions, emails, and grade reassessment – Feel free to ask questions over email and during our weekly Zoom sessions. If you pose questions live during the Zoom sessions, your classmates will also benefit from hearing the responses. If you send a question by email, you may have to wait up to 24 business hours for a response. If you wish for an assignment to be reassessed, you will need to send me a written explanation over email for why the piece should be reassessed and then arrange to discuss the assignment during office hours or by appointment. If you experience any technical difficulties, issues accessing links/resources/readings, or any other challenges to participating in the course, please get in contact as soon as possible.

[Official university policies removed from this version – if you are a student in this course, please use the version distributed to you]

Digital Research Resources

a) AI Now Institute: https://ainowinstitute.org/
b) Algorithmic Justice League: https://www.ajlunited.org/
c) Association of Internet Researchers (join listserv for the latest news/discussions/jobs): https://aoir.org/
d) Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society: https://cyber.harvard.edu/
e) Culture Digitally: http://culturedigitally.org/
f) Datactive: https://data-activism.net/
g) Data Justice Lab: https://datajusticelab.org/
h) Data & Society Institute: https://datasociety.net/
i) Feminist and Accessible Publishing and Communications Technologies (speaker series): https://www.feministandaccessiblepublishingandtechnology.com/
j) Mapping Online Publics: http://mappingonlinepublics.net/
k) Microsoft Research Social Media Collective: https://socialmediacollective.org/
l) Oxford Internet Institute: https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/
m) Ryerson University's Social Media Lab: https://socialmedialab.ca/
n) University of Amsterdam's Digital Methods Initiative: https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/DmiAbout
o) VosonSML (R package for collecting social media data): https://github.com/vosonlab/vosonSML

MAXQDA - Qualitative Data Analysis Software

I have arranged for you to have access to a trial version of MAXQDA 2020 Analytics Pro qualitative data analysis software throughout the semester. This kind of software can be useful for organizing and analyzing your research, providing a centralized space for examining documents, recording field notes and memos, qualitatively coding data, and generating reports. The instructions for downloading and installing the software are posted in Moodle.

You will need to install the software and have it ready to use, as we will be accessing its social media data collection tools later in the semester. Other use of MAXQDA is completely **optional**, as the software is provided as a tool and resource but we will not spend much class time discussing how to use it. However, use of the software and coding techniques can be easily self-taught through MAXQDA's online help resources and tutorial videos as well as the following books about qualitative data analysis:

Miles, M., Huberman, A., Saldaña, J. (2020). Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (4th edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Richards, L., & Morse, J. (2012). Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods (3rd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schedule

Classes begin January 13, 2021.

Week 1: January 14 – Digital culture, digital methods
This week will clarify the aims of this course through a discussion of culture and methods, and what it means when they become intertwined with the digital. If possible, read Rogers' chapter beforehand (and sometime this semester). The additional readings provide a sense of how digital culture and methods are understood across the humanities and social sciences.

Recommended reading:
   a) Rogers, R. (2013). *Digital Methods.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Available online through Concordia library: https://concordiauniversity.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1124342788
      - Ch. 1 The end of the virtual: Digital methods, pp.19-38.

Additional reading:
   b) Berry, D. (2019). Critical digital humanities. *Conditionhumana.io.* Retrieved from https://conditiohumana.io/critical-digital-humanities/
   c) Sandvig, C. & Hargittai, E. (2016). How to think about digital research. In E. Hargittai and C. Sandvig (Eds.), *Digital Research Confidential: The Secrets of Studying Behavior Online,* pp. 1-28. MIT Press. (ebook available through Concordia Library)
   d) Savage, M. & Burrows, R. (2007). The coming crisis of empirical sociology. *Sociology, 41*(5), 885-899.
   e) Lupton, D. (2015). Chapter 1 - Introduction: Life is digital, pp. 1-19. *Digital Sociology.* Abingdon: Routledge.
   f) Berry, D. (2012). Introduction: Understanding the digital humanities. In D. Berry (Ed.), *Understanding digital humanities,* pp. 1-20. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
   g) Striphas, T. (2016). Culture. In B. Peters (Ed), *Digital keywords: A vocabulary of information society & culture,* pp. 70-80. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
   h) Peters, B. (2016). Digital. In B. Peters (Ed), *Digital keywords: A vocabulary of information society & culture,* pp. 93-108. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Week 2: January 21 – Digital Research Ethics
Starting with practical guidelines for digital researchers and moving into discussion of why such guidelines exist, we will discuss ethical conduct for digital research, which will extend across the weeks as we focus on particular methods and associated ethical best practices.

Required reading:
   a) franzke, a.s., Bechmann, A., Zimmer, M., Ess, C. & the Association of Internet Researchers. (2020). Internet Research: Ethical Guidelines 3.0. Retrieved from https://aoir.org/reports/ethics3.pdf
   - Read at least p. 1-25; review the Companion Resources as time allows

Additional reading:
   a) Tiidenberg, K. (2018). Ethics in digital research. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection, pp. 466-479.* SAGE.
   b) Bruckman, A., Luther, K., & Fiesler, C. (2016). When should we use real names in published accounts of internet research? In E. Hargittai and C. Sandvig (Eds.), *Digital*

Research Confidential: The Secrets of Studying Behavior Online, pp. 243-258. MIT Press.
c) Ess, C. (2019). *Digital media ethics* [2nd ed.]. Polity.
d) Zimmer, M. (2010). "But the data is already public": On the ethics of research in Facebook. *Ethics of Information Technology, 12,* 313-325.
e) Markham, A. N., Herman, A., & Tiidenberg, K. (Eds.). (2018). Special Issue: Ethics as Method. *Social Media + Society.*
https://journals.sagepub.com/page/sms/collections/ethics-as-method

Course add/drop deadline January 26

Week 3: January 28 – Early digital culture and tracing internet history
We will discuss discourses and economic impetuses driving early digital cultures and shaping the web's overarching design. Then we will consider the use of web archives in digital research and delve into the Internet Archive's Wayback machine to compare websites across time.

Required reading:
a) Ankerson, M. S. (2018). *Dot-com design: The rise of a usable, social, commercial web.* New York: NYU Press.
   - Introduction: Web histories and imagined futures, pp. 1-24
b) Rogers, R. (2019). *Doing digital methods.* London: Sage.
   - Ch. 5 Website history: Screencast documentaries with the Internet Archive, pp. 87-106
c) Explore the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine: https://archive.org/web/

Additional reading:
a) Turner, F. (2005). Where the counterculture met the new economy: The WELL and the origins of virtual community. *Technology and Culture, 46*(3), 485-512.
b) Ankerson, M.S. (2016). Read/write the digital archive: Strategies for historical web research. In E. Hargittai and C. Sandvig (Eds.), *Digital Research Confidential: The Secrets of Studying Behavior Online,* pp. 29-54. MIT Press.
c) Schroeder, R., Brügger, N., & Cowls, J. (2018). Historical web as a tool for analyzing social change. In J. Hunsinger, M. M. Allen, L. Klastrup (Eds.), *Second international handbook of Internet research* (pp. 1-16). Springer.
d) Barlow, J. P. (1996). A declaration of the independence of cyberspace. *Electronic Frontier Foundation.* Retrieved from https://www.eff.org/cyberspace-independence
e) Geocities Archives: https://www.geocitiesarchive.org/
f) One terabyte of kilobyte age: Digging through the Geocities torrent [Blog]. https://blog.geocities.institute/

Research Proposal due in Moodle on Friday, January 29 by 9:00pm

Week 4: February 4 – Networked publics and digital ethnography
This discussion will focus on networked publics, arising from the affordances of social media, as a key element of digital ethnographic research. We will consider definitions of networked publics and shifting approaches to researching social media discussions, communities and actors, identifying how networked platforms pose challenges for digital ethnography. Then you will have a chance to conduct an observation in a networked public with these sensitizing concepts guiding you.

Required reading:
   a) boyd, d. (2011). Social network sites as networked publics: Affordances, dynamics, and implications. In Z. Papacharissi (Ed), *A networked self: Identity, community, and culture on social network sites,* pp. 39-58. New York and London: Routledge.
   b) Hine, C. (2017). Ethnography and the Internet: Taking account of emerging technological landscapes. *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences, 10*(3), 315-329.

Additional reading:
   a) Markham, A. (2017). Ethnography in the digital internet era: From fields to flows, descriptions to interventions. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 650-668. Sage.
   b) Renninger, B. (2015). "Where I can be myself…where I can speak my mind": Networked counterpublics in a polymedia environment. *New Media & Society, 17*(9), 1513-1529.
   c) Pink, S. et al. (2016). *Digital ethnography: Principles and practice.* SAGE.
      • Ch. 1 Ethnography in a digital world pp. 1-18.
   d) Cho, A. (2018). Default publicness: Queer youth of color, social media, and being outed by the machine. *New Media & Society, 20*(9), 3183-3200.
   e) Gehl, R. W. (2016). Power/freedom on the dark web: A digital ethnography of the Dark Web Social Network. *New Media & Society, 18*(7), 1219-1235. (See also Gehl's book *Weaving the Dark Web*, ebook available through Concordia Library)
   f) boyd. d. (2016). Making sense of teen life: Strategies for capturing ethnographic data in a networked era. In E. Hargittai and C. Sandvig (Eds.), *Digital Research Confidential: The Secrets of Studying Behavior Online,* pp. 79-102. MIT Press.
   g) boyd, d. (2014). *It's complicated: The social lives of networked teens.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (print book in library)
   h) Papacharissi, Z. (2015). *Affective publics: Sentiment, technology, and politics.* Oxford University Press. (print book in library)

Week 5: February 11 - Interrogating apps and platforms
Platforms and mobile apps bring together many elements for analysis, including their discursive positioning, business models, governance policies, and technical design. We will consider how these elements combine to shape user engagement with these technologies. Then we will conduct the walkthrough method to analyze how they come into play with regard to particular apps.

Required reading:
   a) van Dijck, J. (2013). *Culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
      • Chapter 2: Disassembling platforms, reassembling sociality, pp. 24-44.
   b) Light, B., Burgess, J., Duguay, S. (2018). The walkthrough method: An approach to the study of apps. *New Media & Society, 20*(3), 881-900.

Additional readings:
   a) Plantin, C-J., Lagoze, C., Edwards, P. N., & Sandvig, C. (2018). Infrastructure studies meets platform studies in the age of Google and Facebook. *New Media & Society, 20*(1), 293-310.

b) Bucher, T., & Helmond, A. (2017). The affordances of social media platforms. In J. Burgess, T. Poell, & A. Marwick (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of social media*, pp. 233-253. London and New York: Sage.
c) Nieborg, D. & Poell, T. (2018). The platformization of cultural production: Theorizing the contingent cultural commodity. *New Media & Society, 20*(11), 4275-4292.
d) Dieter, M., Gerlitz, C., Helmond, A., Tkacz, N., van der Vlist, F. N., & Weltevrede, E. (2019). Multi-situated app studies: Methods and propositions. *Social Media + Society, 5*(2), 1-15.

Week 6: February 18 – Digital cultural imaginations, experiences, and interviewing
Users form particular perceptions of and approaches to digital technologies, often based on their experiences and interactions with others. Interviews provide one way of accessing a user's point of view but asking them to reflect on their platform experiences, app use, and the data produced in their digital activities can require specific techniques. We'll discuss some of these and put them into action in mini-interviews.

Required reading:
a) Bucher, T. (2017). The algorithmic imaginary: Exploring the ordinary affects of Facebook algorithms. *Information, Communication & Society, 20*(1), 30-44. (See also Bucher's book "If…then: Algorithmic Power and Politics")
b) Jørgensen, K. (2016). The media go-along: Researching mobilities with media at hand. *MedieKultur: Journal of Media and Communication Research, 60*, 32-49.

Additional reading:
a) Carlson, B. (2019). Love and hate at the cultural interface: Indigenous Australians and dating apps. *Journal of Sociology.* doi.10.1177/1440783319833181
b) Robards, B. & Lincoln, S. (2017). Uncovering longitudinal life narratives: Scrolling back on Facebook. *Qualitative Research, 17*(6), 715-730.
c) Watson, A., Lupton, D., Michael, M. (2020). Enacting intimacy and sociality at a distance in the COVID-19 crisis: The sociomaterialities of home-based communication technologies. *Media International Australia*. First published online October 3. 1-15.
d) Dubois, E. & Ford, H. (2015). Trace interviews: An actor-centered approach. *International Journal of Communication, 9*, 2067-2091.
e) O'Connor, H., & Madge, C. (2017). Online interviewing. In N.G. Fielding, R.M. Lee, & G. Blank (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of online research methods* [2nd edition]*, pp. 416-434. London: Sage.

Week 7: February 25 – Vernacular creativity and studying visual (digital) artifacts
We can only scrape the surface of the broader study of the visual turn in digital media. Burgess's concept of vernacular creativity helps with understanding the recombination of cultural discourse and technological affordances involved in visual cultures across many platforms. From there, one could branch into meme studies, emoji or gif analysis, or examine platform-specific visual cultures, such as on Instagram or Tumblr. We will consider approaches to collecting and analyzing visual artifacts (photos, videos, etc.) and their metadata.

Required reading:
a) Burgess, J. (2006). Hearing ordinary voices: Cultural studies, vernacular creativity and digital storytelling. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies, 20*(2), 201-214.

b) Highfield, T., & Leaver, T. (2016). Instagrammatics and digital methods: Studying visual social media, from selfies and GIFs to memes and emoji. *Communication and Research Practice, 2*(1), 47-62.

Additional reading:
a) Gibbs, M., Meese, J., Arnold, M., Nansen, B., & Carter, M. (2015). #Funeral and Instagram: Death, social media, and platform vernacular. *Information, Communication & Society, 18*(3), 255-268.
b) Shifman, L. (2014). The cultural logic of photo-based meme genres. *Journal of Visual Culture, 13*(3), 340-358. (see also Shifman's book *Memes in Digital Culture* and the rest of this special issue on memes: https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/vcua/13/3)
c) de Seta, G. (2018). Biaoqing: The circulation of emoticons, emoji, stickers, and custom images on Chinese digital media platforms. *First Monday, 23*(9). https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/9391/7566 (see also the rest of this special issue on emoji: https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/issue/view/607)
d) Kanai, A. (2016). Sociality and classification: Reading gender, race, and class in a humorous meme. *Social Media + Society, 2*(4), 1-12. (see also Kanai's book *Gender and Relatability in Digital Culture: Managing affect, intimacy and value* – ebook available through Concordia Library*)
e) Abidin, C., Leaver, T., & Highfield, T. (2020). *Instagram: Visual social media cultures.* Wiley. (ebook available through Concordia Library)
f) McCracken, A., Cho, A., Stein, L., & Neill, I. (Eds.). (2020). *A Tumblr book: Platforms and cultures.* University of Michigan Press. Open access: https://www.fulcrum.org/concern/monographs/x346d608w

Partial Journal Article rolling deadline – submit in Moodle by 9:00pm on February 26, March 5, or March 12

Mid-Semester Break March 1-5; no class on March 4

Week 8: March 11 – Catch-up Week/Screening
Shalini Kantayya's documentary is a gripping introduction to the following week's topic of critical data studies. Although we'll be examining early critiques of "big data" and the limits of tool-based data analysis in Week 9, this film illustrates how the application of big data has progressed in directions toward automated and "AI" technologies that reinforce bias and systems of oppression.

Use this week to catch up and work on your research project. An optional discussion/project troubleshooting session will be held on Thursday from 6:00-7:00pm. Details to be posted on Moodle.

Watch:
Kantayya, S. (2020). *Coded bias* [Documentary film]. 7th Empire Media. [1:25:32]
Available at: https://medial.library.concordia.ca/Play/4011

Additional reading:
a) Benjamin, R. (2019). *Race after technology: Abolitionist tools for the New Jim Code.* Wiley. (ebook available through Concordia Library)
b) Noble, S.U. (2018). *Algorithms of oppression.* NYU Press. (print book in library)

c) O'Neil, C. (2017). *Weapons of math destruction: How big data increases inequality and threatens democracy.* Crown. (print book in library)
d) Eubanks, V. (2019). *Automating inequality: How high-tech tools profile, police, and punish the poor.* Picador. (print book in library)

Week 9: March 18 – Critiques, limitations, and opportunities of "Big data" and out-of-the-box tools
Early suspicions of the promises of Big Data have now fully expanded into the field of Critical Data Studies. We'll take a step back to look at some key questions about big data and its associated assumptions that still shape this field and how researchers approach big datasets and social media data sets in general. Then we'll use some preconfigured tools for gathering social media data, discussing what can be gleaned from the datasets they produce and cautions we should take in drawing conclusions from these approaches.

Required reading:
a) boyd, d., & Crawford, K. (2012). Critical questions for Big Data. *Information, Communication & Society, 15*(5), 662-679.
b) Foucault Welles, B. (2016). Big data, big problems, big opportunities: Using internet log data to conduct social network analysis research. In E. Hargittai and C. Sandvig (Eds.), *Digital Research Confidential: The Secrets of Studying Behavior Online,* pp. 223-242. MIT Press.

Set up MAXQDA and review instructions for collecting social media data:
- https://www.maxqda.com/how-to-analyze-twitter-data
- https://www.maxqda.com/youtube-analysis-with-maxqda-2018-1

Explore digital media research tool databases:
- DMI Tools database: https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolDatabase
- Social Media Lab Tools & Apps: https://socialmedialab.ca/apps/

Additional reading:
a) D'Ignazio, C. & Klein, L.F. (2020). *Data feminism.* MIT Press. (ebook available through Concordia Library)
   - Introduction: Why data science needs feminism and Ch 1. The power chapter
b) Rieder, B., & Röhle, T. (2012). Digital methods: Five challenges. In D.M. Berry (Ed.), *Understanding digital humanities,* pp. 67-84. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
c) Burgess, J. & Bruns, A. (2015). Easy data, hard data: The politics and pragmatics of Twitter research after the computational turn. In G. Langlois, J., Redden, & Elmer, G. (Eds.), *Compromised data: From social media to big data,* pp. 93-111. New York: Bloomsbury.
d) Kitchin, R. (2014). Big data, new epistemologies and paradigm shifts. *Big Data & Society, 1*(1), 1-12.
e) Iliadis, A., & Russo, F. (2016). Critical data studies: An introduction. *Big Data & Society, 3*(2), 1-7. See also the entire special issue: https://journals.sagepub.com/page/bds/collections/critical-data-studies
f) Bruns, A. (2018). Facebook shuts the gate after the horse has bolted, and hurts real research in the process. *Internet Policy Review.* Retrieved from: https://policyreview.info/articles/news/facebook-shuts-gate-after-horse-has-bolted-and-hurts-real-research-process/786

g) Cifor, M. et al. (2019). Feminist data manifest-no. Retrieved from
https://www.manifestno.com/

Week 10: March 25 – Algorithmic culture and tracing networks
Digital technologies are also understood as networked technologies: they rely on networked infrastructures and generate networked connections among actors (modems, websites, people). We will consider algorithmic recommendation networks and how they influence the visibility of social media content. Then we will use the YouTube Data Tools to examine video rankings and recommendation networks.

Required reading:
a) Cheney-Lippold, J. (2017). *We are data: Algorithms and the making of our digital selves.* NYU Press.
   • Introduction p. 1-36
b) Hogan, B. (2017). Online social networks: Concepts for data collection and analysis. In N.G. Fielding, R.M. Lee, & G. Blank (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of online research methods* [2nd edition]*,* pp. 241-257. London: Sage.
c) Install the social network visualization software Gephi: https://gephi.org/
d) Check out the YouTube Data Tools: https://tools.digitalmethods.net/netvizz/youtube/

Additional reading:
a) Gillespie, T. (2012). The relevance of algorithms. In T. Gillespie, P. Boczkowski, & K. Foot (Eds.), *Media technologies: Essays on communication, materiality, and society,* pp. 167-194. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
b) Bishop, S. (2018). Anxiety, panic and self-optimization: Inequalities and the YouTube algorithm. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies, 24*(1), 69-84.
c) Wang, S. (2020). Calculating dating goals: Data gaming and algorithmic sociality on Blued, a Chinese gay dating app. *Information, Communication & Society, 23*(2), 181-197.
d) Rieder, B., Matamoros-Fernandez, A., Coromina, Ò. (2018). From ranking algorithms to 'ranking cultures': Investigating the modulation of visibility in YouTube search results. *Convergence, 24*(1), 50-68.
e) Ackland, R., & Zu, J. (2015). Social network analysis. In P. Halfpenny & R. Procter (Eds.), *Innovations in digital research methods,* pp. 221-244. London: Sage.
f) Lewis, R. (2018). Alternative influence: Broadcasting the reactionary right on YouTube. *Data & Society.* Retrieved from: https://datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/DS_Alternative_Influence.pdf
g) Gillespie, T. & Seaver, N. (2016). Critical algorithm studies: A reading list [Blog post]. https://socialmediacollective.org/reading-lists/critical-algorithm-studies/

DISC deadline March 29

Week 11: April 1 – Critical technocultural discourse analysis and blended data
Platforms, users, content – we have discussed approaches to collecting and analysing data pertaining to each of these, but how to understand them together? Brock's conceptual framework of Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis (CTDA) demonstrates a way to consider these aspects of digital media practice in relation to each other. Along with blended

data analysis, or close and distant readings of social media data, these approaches emphasize awareness of the data's cultural context.

Required reading:
   a) Brock, A. (2020). *Distributed Blackness: African American cybercultures.* NYU Press.
      - Introduction p. 1-17
      - Ch. 3 "The Black purposes of space travel": Black Twitter as Black technoculture p. 79-124

      Available open access: http://opensquare.nyupress.org/books/9781479820375/

      And/or watch/listen to Dr. Brock's talk:
      Brock, A. (2020). Databite No. 132: On race and technoculture with André Brock [YouTube video]. *Data & Society Research Institute.* https://youtu.be/-6lbAZ8mxfE (still read p. 8-10 about CTDA)

Additional reading:
   a) croeser, s., & Highfield, T. (2018). Blended data: Critiquing and complementing social media datasets, big and small. In J. Hunsinger, M. M. Allen, L. Klastrup (Eds.), *Second international handbook of Internet research* (pp. 1-19). Springer.
   b) Shaw, F., Burgess, J., Crawford, K., & Bruns, A. (2013). Sharing news, making sense, saying thanks: Patterns of talk on Twitter during the Queensland floods. *Australian Journal of Communication, 40*(1), 23-39.
   c) Highfield, T., Harrington, S., Bruns, A. (2013). Twitter as a technology for audiencing and fandom. *Information, Communication & Society, 16*(3), 315-339.
   d) Brock, A. (2015). Deeper data: A response to boyd and Crawford. *Media, Culture & Society, 37*(7), 1084-1088.
   e) Weller, K., Bruns, A., Burgess, J., Mahrt, M., & Puschmann (Eds). (2014). *Twitter and society.* New York: Peter Lang.

Optional: Try using the Twitter tool TAGS (https://tags.hawksey.info/) and examine a tweet dataset both through a distant view at the dataset level and zooming in on specific tweets to examine discourses in individuals' content. Pair this with a broader understanding of the issue or group of people tweeting through analysis of other media representation, historical pieces, etc.

Week 12: April 8 – Presentation Day 1

Week 13: April 15 – Presentation Day 2

Last day of classes April 20, 2021

Final Paper due in Moodle by 9:00pm on Thursday, April 22