

ISLA 240: Introduction to Media Arts & Technologies

Spring 2016, MW: 7:10—9:00AM
Building 2-113 (Cotchett Education)

Instructor: Tara Zepel
Email: tzepel@calpoly.edu
Office: 26M-101 (Graphic Arts Portable)
Office Hours: MW 9:30am-11am, and by appointment

Overview and Objectives:

What makes a book a book? Why do some YouTube videos become so popular? And does the Internet really affect society? This course serves as an introduction to the critical study and production of media. Taking the medium (singular of media) as our subject, we will explore the implications that technologies (in general) and different media arts (in particular) have on personal, interpersonal, and public life. In other words, we're taking a *comparative* approach.

We begin with theoretical perspectives from both media studies and STS then move on to study the book, photography, cinema, the Internet, and what is known as new media. Particular attention will be paid to the close reading and analysis of existing 'texts,' but you will also have the chance to create some media of your own. You have grown up in a constantly changing multi-media environment. This course will give you the skills to be critical of what you consume as well as conscious of what you produce.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Discuss the relationship(s) between media, art, society and technology
- Explain major theoretical and methodological concepts in media studies and STS
- Critically read and analyze existing texts (across different media)
- Understand your role as a consumer and producer of media
- Compare and create media across multiple formats

Activities and Assignments:

In-Class Activities / Discussion	Think of this as your participation. You are expected to take an active role in your learning. Points will be based on your completion and contribution to in-class activities and discussions.	15%
Weekly Blogs / Media LABS	Weekly blogs are short assignments designed to give you the space to record and reflect upon your ideas following each week's material.	25%

	Often, we'll begin doing the work towards these in-class but it up to you to complete everything and turn it in. All blogs are due by 12pm (noon) on Sunday at the end of each week.	
Critical Response Paper	One critical response paper will be due during Week 6 (draft due Week 4). You will be asked to make a thesis-driven argument about a topic of your choosing using the close reading of a selected text.	25%
Media Adaptation Assignment	This final project represents the cumulative effort of your work over the quarter. It is designed to give you the opportunity to learn by doing. You will be asked to put what you have learned to work by remediating and existing text.	35%
More detailed assignment descriptions, specifics, and time lines are located in our PolyLearn class page.	Total = 100%	

Course Logistics and Requirements:

Course Materials: There are no required textbooks for this class. All course materials will be made available through PolyLearn. This is your one-stop shop for all things related to this course (including this syllabus). Any updates or pertinent information will be posted there. I may occasionally contact you via email, so be sure to regularly check your school account.

Attendance and Participation: You are expected to take an active role in class activities and discussions. Simply being present is not enough. At the most basic level, this means coming to class prepared and having read the material for that day **in advance**. The majority of what we talk about in class is tied to specific readings. We cannot effectively discuss different arguments, perspectives, or idea if you have not introduced yourself to the material before hand. Being an active participant also means engaging in discussions with the entire class and in smaller groups.

Failure to attend or participate on a regular basis will adversely affect your grade. That being said, things happen. You have 2 excused absences to use as you wish. Any further absences must be arranged with me **in advance**.

Grading: Assignments will be assessed based upon how well they meet the criteria outlined in their descriptions. All assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade for the course.

Late or Missed Work: It is important that you complete all of your assigned work on time since it often affects not just you, but other members in the class well. If you are not able to finish an assignment on time, please notify me **in advance** with a compelling reason. Legitimate

reasons include personal or family illness, religious holidays, job interviews, and those listed on the Academic Planning and Programs website. Again, the **in advance** is key. I will be far more flexible negotiating alternative arrangements prior to the date the assignment is due. Otherwise, late work will be marked down a full grade for each day late.

Policies & Administrative Details:

Classroom Conduct: The classroom is a safe space for active learning and discussion. You are expected to behave in a way that promotes this. Please respect your classmates, the instructor, and the facilities provided to you by the university. Do not yell, belittle or discriminate against anybody for their ideas or background. We will be talking about some politically and socially charged issues in this class and it is important that we look at these issues academically and not emotionally.

Academic Honesty: Integrity is an important part of being a contributing member of society. Human photocopiers will not be tolerated. Please do not cheat, plagiarize, or engage in any other form of dishonest activity. Doing so will be met with disciplinary action. For a comprehensive understanding of Cal Poly's position on academic dishonesty, visit the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities web site at: <http://www.osrr.calpoly.edu/academicdishonesty/>.

Disability Resource Center: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Disability Resource Center, Building 124, Room 119, at (805) 756-1395, as early as possible in the term.

Writing and Rhetorical Center: The University Writing & Rhetoric Center (<http://writingcenter.calpoly.edu/>) is an excellent resource for helping you with all stages of the writing process, from getting started to polishing your sentence structure and tone. I encourage you to make an appointment if you would like extra help in addition to the feedback that you will get from me and your peers.

Note: Please realize that the center is not simply a last-minute "fix-it shop" where someone corrects your mistakes. You'll want to use this resource to help you develop as a writer. Plan your consultation accordingly so that you will have time to incorporate what you learn.