CA 360: Communication and the Internet
Dr. Brett Lunceford
W: 2.30-5.00PM
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Course Description

From the Course Catalog: "Intensive study and application of rhetorical and communication theories to understanding problems that arise as the Internet and the World Wide Web begin to render fixed media-based communication obsolete. Implications for advertising, journalism, organizational record keeping and management, interpersonal communication, training, entertainment, etc."

My Description: This course explores how the medium of the Internet influences how messages are created and received. In this course, we will discuss issues such as the digital divide, interface design, and media literacy. We will consider the broader implications of living in an information society for both society and individuals. This course also includes instruction on elements of basic web design so students can learn to create effective online messages. That said, the purpose of this course is not to teach you to become a web designer—the practical aspects of the course are there to help you more fully understand the theory.

This course has two primary goals:

- Provide students with a greater understanding of how technology influences communication and behavior.
- Provide students with a greater understanding of how technology influences society.
- Provide students with the tools to create and critically assess mediated messages.

These goals will be assessed through assignments designed to help the student critically think about technology and communication (Reflection Papers, Email Assignments) and to create online messages (Website).

I expect that each student will come to class prepared to discuss the readings for the day. According to the University of South Alabama's Academic Policies and Procedures, "Each hour of lecture usually requires two hours of outside preparation. Thus, a student carrying sixteen semester hours should be prepared to spend at least 48 hours in class and study per week."

Required Texts

Bishop, Sherry. *Macromedia Dreamweaver MX 2004 - Illustrated Introductory*. Boston, MA: Thomson Course Technology, 2004.

Farkas, David and Jean Farkas. *Principles of Web Design*. New York, NY: Longman Publishing
    Group, 2001.

Lecture readings will be available through the library's online course reserves.

Class Climate

The questions that we will grapple with have no easy answers. There will be points where you
may disagree with someone else. This is appropriate and, to some degree, desirable. However,
respect for others in the class is an essential component of this class. Arguments should be made
in a spirit of inquiry rather than as personal attacks.

Attendance Policy

This is a junior level course, so I assume that by now you recognize the value of regular class
attendance. This course relies heavily on in-class discussion. Excessive absences—even excused
absences—will negatively impact your participation grade in this course. If you are not present,
you are not able to participate and it is impossible to make up the discussion. Because this course
meets only once per week, you get one absence free—no questions asked. However, after one
absence, each unexcused absence will decrease your final grade by one letter grade, so use it
wisely. In order for an absence to be excused, I need appropriate documentation when you return
to class. In addition, there may be in-class activities that are not practical to make up. If you are
absent, please do not email me asking, "What did I miss?" Make friends with your classmates
and get the notes from them and/or come to my office hours.

Academic Honesty

From the Student Academic Conduct Policies: "Any dishonesty related to academic work or
records constitutes academic misconduct including, but not limited to, activities such as giving or
receiving unauthorized aid in tests and examinations, improperly obtaining a copy of an
examination, plagiarism, misrepresentation of information, or altering transcripts or university
records. . . . Penalties may range from the loss of credit for a particular assignment to dismissal
from the University" (*The Lowdown*, p. 249). In short, don't do it. I don't like to bust students for
plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty but I will. It isn't fair to others and it isn't fair
to yourself. If you have any questions on what constitutes plagiarism, see
http://www.southalabama.edu/univlib/sauer/plagiarismforstudents.html.

Assignments

Reflection Papers: Throughout the course, I will ask you to consider specific questions
concerning how online technologies influence your life.

Advocacy Website: Each student will choose a particular advocacy group or cause and build a
basic website that promotes that cause. The purpose of this assignment is not to mimic an already
existing website; rather, the purpose is to demonstrate your ability to craft a website that

considers the audience for the website and displays competence in creating online messages. When I evaluate your website, I will be more interested in how you craft your message than in how slick the website looks. A well written website is still more effective than a slick, but poorly written, website. I will expect you to defend your choices in how you created the website.

Email Communications: As the course progresses, I will ask for short, email communications that address particular issues concerning your website—for example, the audience for the website.

Late work policy for the Reflection Papers and Email Communications: Late assignments will receive half credit at the most and will only be accepted by the next scheduled class. No assignments will be accepted one week past the original due date. If you know that you will be absent when an assignment is due, have a classmate bring it to class or bring it to my office before the class period on which it is due. I will not accept reflection papers by email.

Late work policy for the Website: Because there is no final exam and you will be creating the website through the entire semester, the website must be posted by the due date. They will not be graded after the due date.

There will be no final exam in this course; the website will serve that purpose.

Grading Scale

There are 100 points available in this course:

Reflection Papers: 30
Email Communications: 15
Website: 30
Participation: 25

A=90-100; B=80-89.99; C=70-79.99; D=60-69.99; F=below 60

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with bona fide disabilities will be afforded reasonable accommodation. The Office of Special Student Services will certify a disability and advise faculty members of reasonable accommodations.

If you will need special accommodations please talk to me as soon as possible.

A Note on my Teaching Philosophy

I believe that every student in my class has the ability to succeed in this course. My goal is to create a comfortable environment in which you can explore and improve your ability to think critically and skillfully present your ideas to an audience. I do not "give" grades; students earn grades—no one is entitled to get an "A" in a class unless they earn it. I cannot grade on effort—I

must grade what you actually do. My job is to push students to do their best and to then exceed that standard. I recognize that this is futile unless I also provide the support and assistance that each student needs to excel. Therefore, I provide office hours and expect students to use them and am generally available through email. I assume that attaining a university degree is your first priority. If this is not the case, it is less likely that you will excel. Some of you are here because you want to get a better job. I believe that education should do much more than job training, but if you see it as job training, at least take it seriously. Recognize that you will probably be required to work 40 hours a week (or more) from 8am until 5pm. If you are chronically late, they fire you. If you do not do your work, they fire you. If you drop the ball, you probably will not get a raise, they may fire you, and in some cases legal action may be taken against you. Bottom line—you do your part to excel and I will be there to help you reach that goal.

Reading Schedule

Week 1

8/22   Overview of course: Technological Determinism in the Course Catalog

                Lab: The Medium is the Message

Week 2

8/29   A Brief History of Technology

                Mowery, David C., and Timothy Simcoe. "Is the Internet a US Invention?--an
                        Economic and Technological History of Computer Networking." *Research
                        Policy* 31, no. 8-9 (2002): 1369-87.

                Lab: Appendix A (Farkas and Farkas): 25 Guidelines for Getting Started

Week 3

9/5   The Rise of the Net Generation

                Costello, Barbara, Robert Lenholt, and Judson Stryker. "Using Blackboard in
                        Library Instruction: Addressing the Learning Styles of Generations X and
                        Y." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 30, no. 6 (2004): 452-60.

                Leung, Louis. "Impacts of Net-Generation Attributes, Seductive Properties of the
                        Internet, and Gratifications-Obtained on Internet Use." *Telematics and
                        Informatics* 20, no. 2 (2003): 107-29.

                Lab: Getting familiar with Dreamweaver: Unit A (Bishop)
                        Chapter 2 (Farkas and Farkas): Planning the Project

Week 4

9/12   Design Online: Why Are Web Pages Different From Print?

Sorapure, Madeleine, Pamela Inglesby, and George Yatchisin. "Web Literacy: Challenges and Opportunities for Research in a New Medium." *Computers and Composition* 15, no. 3 (1998): 409-24.

Sullivan, Patricia. "Practicing Safe Visual Rhetoric on the World Wide Web." *Computers and Composition* 18, no. 2 (2001): 103-21.

Lab: Basic Web Elements I: Unit B (Bishop)
Chapter 3 (Farkas and Farkas): Designing and Building the Project

Week 5

9/19   Online Language

Derks, Daantje, Agneta H. Fischer, and Arjan E. R. Bos. "The Role of Emotion in Computer-Mediated Communication: A Review." *Computers in Human Behavior* In Press, Corrected Proof: 945.

Guadagno, Rosanna E., and Robert B. Cialdini. "Persuade Him by Email, but See Her in Person: Online Persuasion Revisited." *Computers in Human Behavior* 23, no. 2 (2007): 999-1015.

Lab: Basic Web Elements II: Unit C (Bishop)
Chapter 9 (Farkas and Farkas): Designing Effective Links

Week 6

9/26   The Rhetoric of Interface Design

Karper, Erin. "'Ordinary People Do This': Rhetorical Examinations of Novice Web Design." *Business Communication Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (2005): 340-44.

Kensicki, Linda Jean. "Building Credibility for Non-Profit Organizations through Webpage Interface Design." *Journal of Visual Literacy* 23, no. 2 (2003): 139-62.

Lab: Links and Navigation: Unit F (Bishop)
Chapter 8 (Farkas and Farkas): The Navigational Interface

Week 7

10/3   Social Construction of Technology

            Mantovani, Giuseppe. "The Psychological Construction of the Internet: From
                Information Foraging to Social Gathering to Cultural Mediation."
                CyberPsychology & Behavior 4, no. 1 (2001): 47-56.

            Dibbell, Julian. "A Rape in Cyberspace." In *Cyberreader*, edited by Victor J.
                Vitanza, 454-72. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999.

            Lab: Text and CSS: Unit D (Bishop)
                Chapter 10 (Farkas and Farkas): Writing For the Web

Week 8

10/10   Does the Internet Democratize the Media?

            Deuze, Mark. "The Web and Its Journalisms: Considering the Consequences of
                Different Types of Newsmedia Online." *New Media & Society* 5, no. 2
                (2003): 203-30.

            Platon, Sara, and Mark Deuze. "Indymedia Journalism: A Radical Way of
                Making, Selecting and Sharing News?" *Journalism* 4, no. 3 (2003): 336-
                55.

            Lab: Images: Unit E (Bishop)
                Chapter 11 (Farkas and Farkas): Graphic Design

Week 9

10/17   YouTube Culture

            Andrejevic, Mark. "The Work of Being Watched: Interactive Media and the
                Exploration of Self-Disclosure." *Critical Studies in Media Communication*
                19, no. 2 (2002): 231-48.

            Christensen, Christian. "You Tube: The Evolution of Media?" *Screen Education*,
                no. 45 (2007): 36-40.

            Fernando, Angelo. "Social Media Change the Rules." *Communication World* 24,
                no. 1 (2007): 9-10.

            Guthrie, Marisa. "On CNN, Web Will Rock the Vote." *Broadcasting & Cable*
                137, no. 29 (2007): 12.

Palser, Barb. "Artful Disguises." *American Journalism Review* 28, no. 5 (2006): 90.

Lab: Tables: Unit G (Bishop)
Chapter 4 (Farkas and Farkas): Using Content Types Effectively

Week 10

10/24   Theories of the Information Society: Digital Divide

Selwyn, Neil. "Digital Division or Digital Decision? A Study of Non-Users and Low-Users of Computers." *Poetics* 34, no. 4-5 (2006): 273-92.

Warren, Martyn. "The Digital Vicious Cycle: Links between Social Disadvantage and Digital Exclusion in Rural Areas." *Telecommunications Policy* 31, no. 6-7 (2007): 374-88.

Lab: Frames: Unit H (Bishop)
Chapter 5 (Farkas and Farkas): Societal Implications and Ethical Choices

Week 11

10/31   Politics Online

Howard, Philip N. "Deep Democracy, Thin Citizenship: The Impact of Digital Media in Political Campaign Strategy." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 597, no. 1 (2005): 153-70.

Nisbet, Matthew C., and Dietram A. Scheufele. "Political Talk as a Catalyst for Online Citizenship." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 81, no. 4 (2004): 877-96.

Lab: Forms: Unit I (Bishop)

Week 12

11/7   Social Consequences of Ubiquitous Computing

Aoun, Steven. "Ipod and Youtube and Everyone We Know." *Metro*, no. 152 (2007): 166-75.

Floridi, Luciano. "A Look into the Future Impact of ICT on Our Lives." *The Information Society* 23, no. 1 (2007): 59-64.

Lab: FTP, Etc.

Week 13

11/14   Love (and Lust) Online

             Donn, Jessica E., and Richard C. Sherman. "Attitudes and Practices Regarding the
                 Formation of Romantic Relationships on the Internet." *CyberPsychology
                 & Behavior* 5, no. 2 (2002): 107-23.

             Hardey, Michael. "Mediated Relationships." *Information, Communication &
                 Society* 7, no. 2 (2004): 207-22.

             Kibby, Marjorie, and Brigid Costello. "Between the Image and the Act:
                 Interactive Sex Entertainment on the Internet." *Sexualities* 4, no. 3 (2001):
                 353-69.

             Lab: Open Lab Time

Week 14

11/21   No Class: Thanksgiving Break

Week 15

11/28   Cyberspace and the Law

             Hedley, Steve. "Nations, Markets and Other Imaginary Places: Who Makes the
                 Law in Cyberspace?" *Information & Communications Technology Law*
                 12, no. 3 (2003): 215-24.

             Lessig, Lawrence. "The Zones of Cyberspace." *Stanford Law Review* 48, no. 5
                 (1996): 1403-11.

             Lab: Open Lab Time

Week 16

12/4   Classes end. No class, but websites are due by this date.

Regarding Changes in Course Requirements

Since all classes do not progress at the same rate, the instructor may wish to modify the above
requirements or their timing as circumstances dictate. For example, the instructor may wish to
change the number and frequency of exams, or the number and sequence of assignments.
However, the students must be given adequate notification. Moreover, there may be non-typical
classes for which these requirements are not strictly applicable in each instance and may need

modification. If such modification is needed, it must be in writing and conform to the spirit of this policy statement.