

# ***Communication Technology and Society***

## **JLMC 574**

### Course Overview

This course is designed to provide students with a better understanding of the relationships between communication technology and society through a series of lectures, in-class discussions, written and oral reports, and online assignments.

New communication technologies are affecting traditional media both in the United States and abroad. New media forms, new distribution channels and new delivery systems have emerged. The course will focus on several key aspects of the Internet and other new media technologies through the lens of diffusion of innovations theory. We will discuss new media industry trends, regulatory and digital divide issues, impacts of new technologies on the telecommunications industry and the broader society. A premise in this course is that technology is partly a cause and partly a response to larger social changes. We will discuss such changes at the individual, organizational and societal level.

More information about course structure and requirements is outlined below and is also available on the course Web site. Please note that it is your responsibility to read this syllabus carefully. Feel free to approach me with any questions about course topics, goals, requirements or policies at any point during the semester.

### Textbook

#### *Required Book:*

Rogers, Everett. (2003). Diffusion of Innovations (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Free Press.

#### *Recommended Books:*

Bugeja, Michael. (2004). The Interpersonal Divide: The Search for Community in a Technological Age. Oxford University Press.

Lievrouw, Leah A. & Livingstone, Sonia. (2002). The Handbook of New Media: Social Shaping and Consequences of ICTs. London: Sage.

Lin, Carolyn A. & Atkin, David J. (2002). Communication Technology and Society: Audience Adoption and Uses. Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press.

Rogers, Everett. (1986). Communication Technology: The New Media in Society. New York: Free Press.

### Supplementary Materials

In addition to the primary textbook, supplementary readings from the recommended books and other sources will be assigned and put on reserve in the Journalism Library, on the class Web site, or distributed in class. Due to the nature of this course, current readings must be assigned. These include news and feature stories from the trade press as well as academic articles and research reports.

## Requirements

This is a graduate level, discussion-based course. You are encouraged to bring readings and examples of communication technology. Using the WebCT software will be an important part of the class. To access it, you will need an ISU email account. I will give detailed instructions on WebCT the first week of the semester. If you need additional assistance or feel that your computer skills are inadequate, meet with me as soon as possible.

We will have one in-class exam during the semester based on the readings, lectures, and class discussions. The exam will include essay-type questions and test understanding basic theoretical assumptions dealing with communication technologies and ability to apply concepts and ideas. Attending class and participating in class discussions will be essential for your success.

Each of you will be given the opportunity to lead our class discussion. I will have a list of topics that you can choose from early in the semester (first come, first serve). You will be responsible for researching your topic and finding relevant readings for your classmates. As this is a graduate level course, you are expected to work independently and be able to foster intellectual discussion and debate. I will be there to help, but this will be your time to shine. Each discussion leader needs to meet with me during regular office hours the week before their topic is due and bring selected readings to this conference meeting.

The final paper is the culminating assignment in this class. The paper should be 12-14 pages long, double-spaced, and discuss the impact of communication technology on society. You need to meet with me before you choose your topic. You will be required to give a presentation based on your final paper.

WebCT will be used to make 10 bulletin board discussion postings. Each week you will be expected to discuss an idea from the assigned reading on the class bulletin board. Your comments should be posted **by** midnight on Sunday.

Additional information about each assignment will be distributed in class.

## Grading

Grades will be assigned as follows:

| <i>Assignment</i>            | <i>Percentage</i>   |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Midterm Exam                 | 25                  |
| Final Paper                  | 25                  |
| Online Postings              | 30 (10x3 pts. each) |
| Discussion Leader            | 15                  |
| Attendance and Participation | 5                   |
| <i>Total</i>                 | <i>100 %</i>        |

## Creating a Good Learning Environment

You are expected to come to class on time and notify me ahead of time if you will miss class. I encourage you to ask questions, think critically, respond to lectures, and actively participate in class discussions.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about the class. I am available to meet during office hours or, if those don't work, we can schedule an appointment at another time.

#### Academic Honesty

All work presented in class must be your own. Cheating in any form will not be tolerated in this class. This applies to all online content you turn in as your own as well as to your written work. For more details on academic dishonesty contact Student Services.

#### Students with Disabilities

I will make special arrangements as needed for students with disabilities. Please let me know of such needs at the beginning of the semester.

#### Counseling

Counseling services and related resources are available at Iowa State University. Please let me know if you need assistance finding related resources on campus.

#### Inclusiveness

Every attempt is made to make all JLMC courses non-sexist and multicultural in content. Should the instructor fail to meet this goal, please visit with me or the Department Executive Officer.