**History of Digital Culture (Fall 2022)**

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| **Professor – Tom Scheinfeldt** Email: [tom.scheinfeldt@uconn.edu](mailto:tom.scheinfeldt@uconn.edu) Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00-12:00 (Greenhouse Studios, 1st Floor of the Library) | **Lecture:** Mon / Wed 12:20-1:10 – [UTEB175](https://classrooms.uconn.edu/classroom/uteb-175/) |
| **Teaching Assistant – Lexy Vecchio** Email: [lexy.vecchio@uconn.edu](mailto:lexy.vecchio@uconn.edu) | **Sections:** 001D – Friday 10:10-11:00 – BISH146 002D – Friday 11:15-12:05 – BISH146 003D – Friday 12:20-1:10 – BISH146 |

Welcome to DMD 2010: The History of Digital Culture for Fall 2022! This is the course website. It is your main source for information about the course. At the top of the page you will find links to the [syllabus/schedule](https://dmd2010.uconn.edu/schedule/) (including readings for each class), course [assessments](https://dmd2010.uconn.edu/assessments/) (including how your final grade will be calculated), and course [policies](https://dmd2010.uconn.edu/course-policies/) (including the late work and grading policies). Please make sure you visit the website regularly to stay abreast of any updates. It is your responsibility to keep up with what’s posted here.

Thank you for joining the course. Please always feel free to talk to me in class, come to office hours (listed below), or shoot me an [email](mailto:tom.scheinfeldt@uconn.edu) if you have any questions or concerns. I’m looking forward to a great semester!

### Course Description

Digital technology and digital media are central to contemporary global culture. A knowledge of the history, character, and values of digital culture is crucial to any rounded understanding of life in the 21st century. This course will examine some key episodes in the history of digital technology and digital media and interrogate some of the values that adhere to digital culture, particularly online. In doing so, we will learn to view the technologies of digital media critically, as historical, cultural, human constructions. We will learn to be critical consumers and producers of digital media and to question received understandings of the role of technology in our public and private lives.

### Course Objectives

**At the end of the course, students should be able to:**

1) Discuss key episodes in the history of 20th and early-21st Century digital technology

2) Analyze these episodes using theoretical frameworks provided in class

3) Think and write critically about digital technology and digital media

4) Locate contemporary digital media and technology and personal digital practice in historical and cultural context

### Course Schedule

## **Week 1**

* Monday 8/29: Introduction (course description, objectives, schedule, assignments, grading, policies, personal introductions and questions)
* Wednesday 8/31: Being Digital
  + **Before Class**: Explore Computer History Museum, [Digital Logic](http://web.archive.org/web/20211023051031/https:/www.computerhistory.org/revolution/digital-logic/12/intro) [online exhibit]
* Friday 9/2: Section Introductions

## **Week 2**

* Monday 9/5: No Class – Labor Day
* Wednesday 9/7: Theoretical Frameworks (internalism, externalism, determinism, and the Social Construction of Technology)
  + **Before Class**: Read Ronald Kline and Trevor Pinch. “Users as Agents of Technological Change: The Social Construction of the Automobile in the Rural United States.” *Technology and Culture* 37, no. 4 (1996): 763–95. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3107097>. (Available from the UConn Library. If you don’t know how to use the Library and its online databases, you can [ask a librarian](https://lib.uconn.edu/services/ask/).)
* Friday 9/9: Readings Discussion

## **Week 3**

* Monday 9/12: Visions (Swift and Borges)
  + **Before Class**: Read Jonathan Swift, [“Gulliver’s Travels,” Part III, Chapter V](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/829/829-h/829-h.htm)” and Jorge Luis Borges, “[The Garden of the Forking Paths](https://archive.org/details/TheGardenOfForkingPathsJorgeLuisBorges1941/mode/2up)”
* Wednesday 9/14: Predictions (Otlet and Bush)
  + **Before Class**: Watch Francoise Levie, “[The Man Who Wanted to Classify the World](https://www.nytimes.com/video/science/1194817103564/classifying-the-world.html).” Read Vannevar Bush, “[As We May Think](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1945/07/as-we-may-think/303881/)” and Alexis Madrigal “[The Hut Where The Internet Began](https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2013/07/the-hut-where-the-internet-began/277551/).”
* Friday 9/16: *Readings Discussion*

## **Week 4**

* Monday 9/19: The Mainframe and the Mainstream (1945-1965)
  + **Before Class**: Explore Computer History Museum, [Mainframe Computers](http://web.archive.org/web/20220105155623/https:/www.computerhistory.org/revolution/mainframe-computers/7) [online exhibit] and review Khan Academy, [The postwar era, 1945-1950 and 1950s America](https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-us-history/period-8)
* Wednesday 9/21: The PC and the Counterculture (1965-1985)
  + **Before Class**: Explore Computer History Museum, [Personal Computers](http://web.archive.org/web/20220105183907/https:/www.computerhistory.org/revolution/personal-computers/17) [online exhibit] and review Khan Academy, [The Civil Rights Movement](https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-us-history/period-8) and [1960s America](https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-us-history/period-8)
* Friday 9/23: Readings Discussion – Midterm Essay prompt released at 2:00 pm

## **Week 5**

* Monday 9/26: Tron: Background and Watch Guide
* Wednesday 9/28: No Class – Watch Tron (1982 version) at home (available to stream on Disney+ with audio description and Amazon Prime Video without audio description)
* Friday 9/30: Tron Discussion

## **Week 6**

* Monday 10/3: The Internet and The Web
  + **Before Class**: Explore Computer History Museum, [Networking](http://www.computerhistory.org/revolution/networking/19) [online exhibit] and [The Web](http://www.computerhistory.org/revolution/the-web/20) [online exhibit]
* Wednesday 10/5: The Dot-Com Boom and Bust
  + **Before Class:**Listen to Internet History podcast episode, “[Chapter 8: How the Dotcom Bubble Happened](http://www.internethistorypodcast.com/2017/01/chapter-8-how-the-dotcom-bubble-happened/).”
* Friday 10/7: *No Class – Midterm Essay due at 11:59 pm*

## **Week 7**

* Monday 10/10: The Matrix: Background and Watch Guide
* Wednesday 10/12: No Class – Watch The Matrix (1999) at home (available to stream on HBOMax or Amazon Prime Video, both with audio description)
* Friday 10/14: The Matrix Discussion

## **Week 8**

* Monday 10/17: *Web 2.0 and Challenges to Big Content*
  + **Before Class**: Tim O’Reilly, “[What is Web 2.0?](http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html)”
* Wednesday 10/19: After Web 2.0
  + **Before Class**: Read Jonathan Zittrain, “[The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It](https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/4455262)” (pp. 1-35) and explore Wired Magazine “[The Web Is Dead](https://www.wired.com/2010/08/ff-webrip/)
* Friday 10/21: *Midterm Review*

## **Week 9**

* Monday 10/24: Midterm Exam
* Wednesday 10/26: Copyright: Its History and Purpose
  + **Before Class**: Read Constitution of the United States of America, [Article I, Section 8, Clause 8](https://www.law.cornell.edu/anncon/html/art1frag71_user.html#art1_sec8cl8)
* Friday 10/28: Copyright and You
  + **Before Class**: Explore American Library Association, [Copyright Tools](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/copyright-tools) and watch Adam Ruins Everything, [How Mickey Mouse Destroyed the Public Domain](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SiEXgpp37No)

## **Week 10**

* Monday 11/1: Social Media
  + **Before Class**: Explore Stanford University, [Mapping the Republic of Letters](http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/index.html)
* Wednesday 11/2: Big Data
  + **Before Class:**Read boyd and Crawford, “[Six Provocations for Big Data](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1926431)”
* Friday 11/5: Readings Discussion

## **Week 11**

* Monday 11/7: Politics
  + **Before Class:**Watch, Siva Vaidhyanathan, “[Anti-Social Media](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tD_hFadTGiU),” read Zeynep Tufekci, “[YouTube, The Great Radicalizer](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/10/opinion/sunday/youtube-politics-radical.html),” and explore Pew Internet and American Life Project “[Activism in the Social Media Age](http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/07/11/public-attitudes-toward-political-engagement-on-social-media/)“
* Wednesday 11/9: Race and Gender
  + **Before Class**: Watch Safiya Noble, “[Challenging the Algorithms of Oppression](https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=iRVZozEEWlE)“
* Friday 11/11: Readings Discussion

## **Week 12**

* Monday 11/14: The Gig Economy
  + **Before Class:**Read Nathan Heller, “[Is the Gig Economy Working?](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/05/15/is-the-gig-economy-working)“
* Wednesday 11/16: Surveillance
  + **Before Class:** Read Ryan Lizza, “[State of Deception](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/12/16/state-of-deception)” and Miriam Posner, “[The Software That Shapes Workers’ Lives](https://www.newyorker.com/science/elements/the-software-that-shapes-workers-lives).”
* Friday 11/18: Readings Discussion

## **Week 13**— **Thanksgiving Break**

## **Week 14**

* Monday 11/28: Blockchain and Crypto
  + **Before Class:**Read Steven Johnson, “[Beyond the Bitcoin Bubble](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/16/magazine/beyond-the-bitcoin-bubble.html).”
* Wednesday 11/30: Digital Culture and Memory
  + **Before Class:**Read Jonathan Zittrain, “[The Internet Is Rotting](https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2021/06/the-internet-is-a-collective-hallucination/619320/).” Explore [The September 11 Digital Archive](http://911digitalarchive.org/) and [The Pandemic Journaling Project](https://pandemic-journaling-project.chip.uconn.edu/)
* Friday 12/2: Readings Discussion

## **Week 15**

* Monday 12/5: Final Exam Review – Take-home Exam released at 2:00 p.m.
* Wednesday 12/7: No Class – Work on Take-home Exam
* Friday 12/9: *No Class – Take-home Exam due at 11:59 p.m.*

### Assessments

## **Participation (20% of grade)**

You are all responsible for contributing to class discussions each week, and you should be prepared to join the conversation with energy, enthusiasm, and, especially, knowledge of the topic gleaned from your readings. As such, you should complete all the assigned readings and engage regularly with your classmates and instructors.

It should go without saying that **you must be present in class (both in-person at lecture and online for discussion section) to contribute to class discussions** and therefore to get full credit for this portion of your grade.

## **Midterm Essay (25% of grade)**

An **essay of at least 1000 words and no more than 1250 words**, is due in Week 6 (the prompt for the essay will be delivered to you at the end of Week 4). If, for any reason, you expect that you will miss the deadline, please contact Dr. Scheinfeldt or Lexy in advance. Under certain circumstances, we may be able to provide an extension of up to three days. Otherwise, any late work will be graded according to the late work policy outlined on the [policies page](https://dmd2010.uconn.edu/course-policies/). Papers must be written in **Microsoft Word in 12-point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins on all sides** and submitted [via email to Lexy](mailto:lexy.vecchio@uconn.edu)before 11:59 pm on Friday, October 7th. Do not send your paper as a PDF, in Apple Pages, or as a Google Doc.

Please feel free to speak with us for help with your essay assignment. We will happily read outlines and drafts and provide feedback before the deadline. But give us some time before the deadline to thoroughly read and evaluate your work.  If you require additional assistance, the [Writing Center](http://writingcenter.uconn.edu/) is a great place to look.

## **Midterm Exam (20% of grade)**

The **in-class midterm exam** for this class is scheduled for Week 9 and will consist of two short (2-4 paragraph) answer questions. It will be administered during our regularly scheduled lecture session on Monday, October 24th. Lexy will lead a midterm review in section on Friday, October 21st.

## **Final Exam (35% of course grade)**

The **take-home final exam** for this class will consist of two short (2-4 paragraph) answer questions and one long (5-10 paragraph) essay question. It will be distributed to all students on Monday, December 5th at 2:00 pm. It will be due on the last day of class, Friday, December 9th at 11:59 pm. Between the time it is distributed and the time you hand it in, you must not discuss the final exam or the course content with anyone, especially your classmates.

### Course Policies

It is your responsibility to understand and follow all course and university policies. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Scheinfeldt. He will be happy to explain.

## **Website**

This is the course website, which will be your main source for information about the course. At the top of the page you will find links to the [syllabus/schedule](https://dmd2010.uconn.edu/schedule/) (including readings for each class), course [assessments](https://dmd2010.uconn.edu/assessments/) (including how your final grade will be calculated), and course [policies](https://dmd2010.uconn.edu/course-policies/) (including the late work and grading policies). Please make sure you visit the website regularly to stay abreast of any updates. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes posted here. “I didn’t see it on the website!” is not an acceptable excuse.

## **Reading**

You are responsible for all assigned readings. In addition to the readings appearing on the midterm and final exams, you will be expected to reference assigned readings in your classroom participation, debate arguments, and review essay. All of the sources for this course are freely available on the web or from the UConn library’s databases. If you have questions about the reading assignments or if you have trouble accessing sources online, please notify your instructors before the readings are due. We will not accept excuses for incomplete readings that are delivered to us after an assignment is due. If you have trouble finding anything at all, you can always [ask a librarian](https://lib.uconn.edu/services/ask/).

## **Grading scale**

All assignments for this course will be graded on a three-point scale. Outstanding work will be awarded three points. Average work will be awarded two points. Below average work will be awarded one point. Work that is incomplete will receive zero points in accordance with the late work policy below. Letter grades will be assigned at the end of the semester as a weighted average of your point totals on all course assignments according to the following scale:

[A] = 3  
[B] = 2  
[C] = 1  
[F] = 0

## **Late work policy**

Work turned in late will be assessed a penalty: one point if one day late and two points if 2-7 days late. Work more than seven days late will receive zero points. Extensions of up to three days may be granted, but only to students who contact Dr. Scheinfeldt or your teaching assistant several days in advance of a deadline—No extensions will be granted in the 48 hours before an assignment is due.

A note on technology: As much as technology makes life easier, at times it can also be difficult (computer crashes, deleted work, slow internet connection, etc.) Plan accordingly: “the computer ate my homework” or “the internet was down” are not acceptable reasons for missing a deadline or handing in incomplete work. It is in your best interest to leave extra time to ensure that technology does not get in the way of your work. See also, technical requirements and skills, below.

## **Writing Center**

Assistance with writing assignments can be accessed through the [Writing Center](https://writingcenter.uconn.edu/). The Writing Center is a welcoming space where students and tutors collaborate on writing projects. We believe all students are writers, and we invite them to bring in any type of writing—academic, civic, personal, and multimedia texts—at any stage in the composing process. Student-writers should arrive ready to engage with their own work while peer tutors ask questions, listen actively, respond to individual needs, and foster strategic revision. If you are struggling with your writing, please consider making an [online appointment](https://uconn.mywconline.com/) with the Writing Center.

## **Students with Disabilities**

The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible.  If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or<http://csd.uconn.edu/>.

## **Resources for Students Experiencing Distress**

The University of Connecticut is committed to supporting students in their mental health, their psychological and social well-being, and their connection to their academic experience and overall wellness. The university believes that academic, personal, and professional development can flourish only when each member of our community is assured equitable access to mental health services. The university aims to make access to mental health attainable while fostering a community reflecting equity and diversity and understands that good mental health may lead to personal and professional growth, greater self-awareness, increased social engagement, enhanced academic success, and campus and community involvement.

Students who feel they may benefit from speaking with a mental health professional can find support and resources through the [Student Health and Wellness-Mental Health](https://counseling.uconn.edu/) (SHaW-MH) office. Through SHaW-MH, students can make an appointment with a mental health professional and engage in confidential conversations or seek recommendations or referrals for any mental health or psychological concern.

Mental health services are included as part of the university’s student health insurance plan and also partially funded through university fees. If you do not have UConn’s student health insurance plan, most major insurance plans are also accepted. Students can visit the **Student Health and Wellness-Mental Health located in Storrs on the main campus in the Arjona Building, 4th Floor,**or contact the office at **(860) 486-4705, or**[https://studenthealth.uconn.edu/](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcounseling.uconn.edu%2F&data=02%7C01%7Csuzanne.lafleur%40uconn.edu%7C8de70653941b46a391c008d82eaa9de5%7C17f1a87e2a254eaab9df9d439034b080%7C0%7C0%7C637310657616301680&sdata=sV755zd9%2F4RCEkS3OHYwdjGjGkZRLNVdHklZLtnhHSI%3D&reserved=0) for services or questions.

## **Accommodations for Illness or Extended Absences**

Please stay home if you are feeling ill and please go home if you are in class and start to feel ill.  If illness prevents you from attending class, it is your responsibility to notify your instructor as soon as possible. You do not need to disclose the nature of your illness, however, you will need to work with your instructor to determine how you will complete coursework during your absence.

If life circumstances are affecting your ability to focus on courses and your UConn experience, students can email the Dean of Students at dos@uconn.edu to request support.  Regional campus students should email the Student Services staff at their home campus to request support and faculty notification.

**COVID-19 Specific Information**: People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and can include:

* Fever,
* Cough,
* Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
* Chills
* Repeated shaking with chills
* Muscle pain
* Headache
* Sore throat
* New loss of taste or smell

Additional information including what to do if you test positive or you are informed through contract tracing that you were in contact with someone who tested positive, and answers to other important questions can be found here:<https://studenthealth.uconn.edu/updates-events/coronavirus/>

## **Student Responsibilities and Resources**

As a member of the University of Connecticut student community, you are held to certain standards and academic policies. In addition, there are numerous resources available to help you succeed in your academic work. Review these important [standards, policies and resources](https://onlinestudent.uconn.edu/learn--more/#POL), which include:

* The Student Code
  + Academic Integrity
  + Resources on Avoiding Cheating and Plagiarism
* Copyrighted Materials
* Credit Hours and Workload
* Netiquette and Communication
* Adding or Dropping a Course
* Academic Calendar
* Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships
* Sexual Assault Reporting Policy

## **Technical Requirements and Privacy and Accessibility Information**

The software/technical requirements for this course include:

* [~~Adobe Acrobat Reader~~](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html) ([~~Adobe Reader Accessibility Statement~~](http://www.adobe.com/accessibility/products/reader.html), [~~Adobe Reader Privacy Policy~~](http://www.adobe.com/privacy.html))
* Google Apps ([Google Apps Accessibility](https://www.google.com/accessibility/), [Google for Education Privacy Policy](https://www.google.com/edu/trust/))
* Microsoft Office (free to UConn students through [uconn.onthehub.com](https://uconn.onthehub.com/)) ([Microsoft Accessibility Statement](http://www.microsoft.com/enable/microsoft/mission.aspx), [Microsoft Privacy Statement](https://privacy.microsoft.com/en-us/privacystatement/))
* Dedicated access to high-speed internet with a minimum speed of 1.5 Mbps (4 Mbps or higher is recommended)
* Webcam
* Laptop or desktop computer with a physical keyboard (please note that this course has NOT been designed for use with mobile devices)

For information on managing your privacy at the University of Connecticut, visit the [University’s Privacy page](https://privacy.uconn.edu/).

## **Minimum Technical Skills**

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

* Use electronic mail with attachments.
* Use a web browser
* Access commonly used commercial video streaming services.
* Create and save files in commonly used word processing program formats.
* Copy and paste text, graphics or hyperlinks.
* Work within two or more browser windows simultaneously.
* Open and access PDF files.
* Operate a webcam and WebEx

In addition to these specific skills, University students are expected to demonstrate competency in Computer Technology. Explore the [~~Computer Technology Competencies~~](http://geoc.uconn.edu/computer-technology-competency/) page for more information.

## **Student Technology Training and Help**

[Technical and Academic Help](https://onlinestudent.uconn.edu/frequently-asked-questions/) provides a guide to technical and academic assistance for online and hybrid courses. Student technology training is now available in a new HuskyCT short course created by students for students. It will prepare you to use the IT systems and services that you will use throughout your time at UConn, whether learning online or on-campus.  It is available at [https://lms.uconn.edu/ultra/courses/\_80016\_1/cl/outline.](https://lms.uconn.edu/ultra/courses/_80016_1/cl/outline)

## **Evaluation of Course Experience**

Students will be given an opportunity to provide feedback on their course experience and instruction using the University’s standard procedures, which are administered by the[Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness](http://www.oire.uconn.edu/) (OIRE).

The University of Connecticut is dedicated to supporting and enhancing teaching effectiveness and student learning using a variety of methods. The Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) is just one tool used to help faculty enhance their teaching. The SET is used for both formative (self-improvement) and summative (evaluation) purposes.

Additional informal formative surveys and other feedback instruments may be administered within the course.