Philosophy of Digital Media   TF: Arthur Wang
Section 03   arthur.wang@yale.edu
Wednesday 7-7:50pm   Office: Linsly-Chittenden (LC) 405
LC 105   Office Hours: Wed. 4:15-6:15pm
                                                              and by appointment

Section Goals

The purpose of section is to practice reading, writing, and discussion skills, using the course materials as the raw material. We will emphasize the art and craft of writing, especially with regards to the two assignments. Many of our readings are scholarly and technical, but many of them are also written to a nonspecialist but informed public. Both your book review and your essay will be written in an accessible way. There are many models of such a public but intellectual style in the readings in this class by writers such as Carey, Gleick, Lanchester, Lepore, Lerner, Lethem, and Wu. Please emulate them!

Schedule

Date	Reading and Assignments **(bold = section-specific)** All assignments are due at the beginning of section
1. September 13 What is the Philosophy of Media? Fire, Telegraph, Writing, Information	● Gleick, *The Information*, chapters 1-8 ● Goudsblom, "The Civilizing Process and the Domestication of Fire" ● Carey, "Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph" ● Recommended: Innis, "The Bias of Communication" ● **Dickens, "The Signal-Man"**
2. September 20 Postwar Architecture of the Digital Age: Information Theory	● Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence ● Hayles, "Prologue," *How We Became Posthuman* ● Geoghegan, "Information" (*Digital Keywords*) ● Kittler, "Code" ● **Gaboury, "A Queer History of Computing," parts 1 and 2 (3-5 recommended)** ● **Book Review** ○ **Read B. Peters, "How to Write a Book Review: the Gordin Method"**

	○ **In section, choose one of Ben Peters's example reviews to report on the following week**

3. September 27
Information, Space, Time, and Power
	● Gleick, chapter 9
	● Wiener, *Cybernetics* (1948), "Newtonian and Bergsonian Time," chapter 1, pp. 30-44
	● Winkler, "Geometry of Time" (especially sections 1-6)
	● Kittler, "Lightning and Series, Event and Thunder"
	● Nakamura, "Indigenous Circuits"
	
	● **Egan, "Black Box"**
	● **Book Review**
	    ○ **Be prepared to discuss your example book review**
	    ○ **Select a book to review (see me and/or Professor Peters if you're having trouble choosing a book)**

4. October 4 TMI, Crowds, and Publics	● Blair, "Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload, ca. 1550-1750" ● Babbage, *Ninth Bridgewater Treatise*, Chapter 9 (pp. 109-117) ● Gleick, chapters 14-15 ● Chun, "Crisis, Crisis, Crisis, or Sovereignty and Networks" ● Katz, "Rediscovering Gabriel Tarde" ● **Cheever, "The Enormous Radio"** ● **Book Review: Be prepared to present a brief (1-2 minute) summary of your book's argument**
5. October 11 Public Spheres	● Beckett, "Nine Media Trends Changing our Complex and Unstable Public Sphere" ● Halpern, "How He Used Facebook to Win" ● Katz, "Disintermediation" ● Lanchester, "You Are the Product" ● Nielsen, "Democracy" (*Digital Keywords*) ● Wu, "Attention Brokers"

	● **Steyerl, "How Not to Be Seen" (video)** ● **Book Review due**
October 18 Algorithms **October Recess, NO SECTION**	● Gillespie, "Algorithm" (*Digital Keywords*) ● Grimmelmann, "The Google Dilemma" ● Pasquinelli, "Google's Pagerank Algorithm" ● Schuppli, "Deadly algorithms"
6. October 25 Surveillance	● Sprenger, *The Politics of Micro-Decisions* ● Streeter, "Internet" (*Digital Keywords*) ● Andrejevic, "Framelessness" ● Chamayou, "Oceanic Enemy: a Brief Philosophical History of the NSA" ● Paglen, "Digital Images are looking back at you" ● **Galchen, "Usl at the Stadium"**
7. November 1 Property, Propriety, and Archives	● Coleman "Hacker" (*Digital Keywords*) ● Lethem, "The Ecstasy of Influence" ● Lepore, "The Cobweb" ● Lerner, "The Custodians" ● **Borges, "Funes the Memorious"**
8: November 8 Touch and Pictures	● Elias, "The Rise of the Fork" ● Illouz, *Why Love Hurts*, chapter 6 ● Licklider and Taylor, "The Computer as a Communication Device" ● Chouliaraki, "Symbolic Bordering" ● Frosh, "The Gestural Image" ● **Millhauser, "Miracle Polish"** ● **van Landingham, "Elegy for the Sext"** ● **Optional: submit essay abstract and bibliography for feedback**
9. November 15 Music and Planet	● Danielsen and Maaso, "Mediating Music" (2009) ● Hesmondhalgh and Meier, "the digitalization of music . . ." ● Haff, "Technology as a geological phenomenon"

	• Peters, "Cloud" (*Digital Keywords*) • Starosielski, "The Materiality of Media Heat" • Recommended: Gleick ch. 13, • **Section reading: TBD**
Thanksgiving Break	
10. November 29 Lessons from Animals and Others	• Balkin, "Information Power" • Berland, "Cat and Mouse" • Bostrom, "In Defense of Posthuman Dignity" • Lanier, "What Cephalopods can teach us about language" • Shifman "Meme" (*Digital Keywords*) • **Section reading: TBD (Games?)**
11. December 6 Ultimate Things	• Lagerkvist, "Netlore of the Infinite" • Meyer, "Mediation and Immediacy" (2011) • Peters, "Google Qual" • Turner, "Prototype" (*Digital Keywords*) • Wiener, *God and Golem, Inc*. • Asimov, "The Last Question" • **Essay Due at beginning of Section** • **Section reading: TBD**
• TBD	• Final Exam

Section Policies

Attendance and participation: The success of this course depends on regular attendance and participation. Attendance is required at both lectures and sections. Good section participation involves: consistent and thoughtful contribution to the classroom community (see **Talking Points** below for more information), an engagement with course materials and conversations, and a general responsiveness to (and respect for) peers and instructors.

> **Talking Points***:* Please come to section prepared to discuss one or two interesting, surprising, exciting, puzzling, or important moments you have identified in one of the assigned texts. During discussions, I will call on a

handful of people at random to present orally their "talking points."
Occasionally I may ask you to send your talking points to me in advance.
This is a casual exercise but a crucial one—one that will repeat every week
and that will weigh on your participation grade. Talking points will not be
required on days when you have a presentation or paper due.

Papers: All formal written assignments must be typed, proofread, and submitted at the
beginning of section on the date specified by the course calendar. Papers should be formatted
with one-inch margins, double-spacing, 11- or 12-point Times New Roman font, and page
numbers. Late papers will drop a third of a grade every day past the submission deadline.

Laptop Policy: No screens please!

Disabilities and Accommodations: If your work for this class requires special arrangements
because of a disability, please contact the Yale Resource Office on Disabilities for assistance.
Please also let me know if there are additional measures I can take to make this course more
accessible to you.