

"Applications of New Communication Technologies"

RTF 331 P, Unique # 05980
Tu - Th, 3:30-5 p.m., CMA 3.124
Spring Semester, 1998
Edward M. Lenert, J.D., Ph.D.
Visiting Faculty, Department of Radio, TV, Film
The University of Texas at Austin

Contact information

Office: CMA 6.210
Office Hours: Tu 2:30-3:30 and 5:00-6:00 PM; Wed. 4-5 PM (and by appointment).
Office Telephone: 471-6624 or 471-4071
Email: Elenert@mail.utexas.edu

Teaching Assistant:

Patrick Burkart
Office: CMA 7.320
TA Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30 - 3:30 or by email
appointment
Office Telephone: 471-4071, ext. 37
Email: pburkart@mail.utexas.edu

Texts

Grant, A. (1996). *Communication Technology Update* (5th Ed.)

Meeker, M. (1997). *The Internet Advertising Report*.

Tapscott, D. (1996). *The Digital Economy: Promise and Peril in the Age of Networked Intelligence*.

Reading packet for RTF 331P, available at Longhorn Printing (on Guadeloupe, across the street from the Communications Bldg.)

Prerequisites

RTF 305, 3 additional lower-division RTF courses, consent of the instructor, and a passing score on the College of Communication Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation Test.¹

Additional Prerequisites

Students enrolling in RTF 331P are required to have an Email account and regular access to an up-to-date computer with a current version of a WWW browser. These services are available to UT students through the University and the College of Communication.

¹ Students who have fewer than 60 semester hours as of September 1, 1983, are required to have an overall UT grade point average of at least 2.25 and a minimum 2.0 grade point average in all College of Communication courses in order to enroll in any upper-division course in all College of Communication. This requirement does not apply to College of Communication students who have 60 hours or more before September 1, 1983, or to transfer students from outside the University of Texas at Austin who are in their first semester and have not established a UT GPA. Students who have fewer than 60 hours, are not first semester transfer students, and who have a GPA lower than 2.25 will be dropped from any upper-division course in which they enroll.

Course Summary

This course provides an introduction to the emerging communication technologies such as the Internet and World Wide Web, direct broadcast satellite, and high definition television. Equal attention will be given to technologies of mass, organizational, and interpersonal communication. Analytically, the course focuses upon these technologies in relation to their invention, commercialization, and eventual obsolescence. The course emphasizes, in addition to business and engineering approaches, a critical and cultural perspective on technology and society.

Each student will be expected to become familiar with a broad range of communication technologies in the context of their development and use in relation to the more traditional technologies of printing, broadcasting, and telecommunications. As a semester research project, each student will select a particular technology and over the course of the semester develop an in-depth understanding of that particular technology's interaction with social, economic, and legal systems.

Schedule of Assignments

The written assignments for the course consist of a midterm, comprehensive final examination, and essay and analysis assignments. The examinations will consist of a combination of objective, short answer, and essay items.

The analysis essay assignments consist of five essays and five replies that discuss important points raised by the readings and the lectures. These assignments will be posted by the student to the RTF331P on-line discussion group on the Internet. Specifically, there are two longer and three shorter assignments. The two longer assignments are to be approximately 800-1,000 words (minimum). The three shorter assignments are to be approximately 400-500 words (minimum).

As part of the on-line discussion, each student is expected to read and reply (to at least one) another student's essay in the week following the posting of the essays. These replies are expected to be approximately 200-300 words (minimum), and must be posted NLT one week following the due date for the essay assignment. More details about each of these assignments will be provided in class.

Table of Assignments

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due date</u>	<u>Points</u>
A. Midterm examination (25% of grade)	March 5	250
B. Analysis essay assignments (30% of grade)		
1. Industry analysis (longer assignment)	Feb. 5	75
2. Comparing older versus newer media	Feb 19	50
3. Understanding diffusion as conflict	March 26	50
4. Assessing twelve themes of the new economy	April 16	50
5. Real and virtual communities (longer assignment)	April 30	75
C. Replies to other student's essays (10% of grade) five replies (5x 20 pts each)	(as requested)	100
D. Final Examination (35% of grade)	May 19	350
TOTAL (100% of grade)		<u>1,000</u>

Please note the following

All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments up to 48 hours late will be subject to a -20% penalty. Assignments more than 48 hours late will be subject to a -40% penalty. *All assigned work must be completed by the end of the semester to receive a passing grade.* No provision is made for early or late examinations. No grade of "incomplete" will be awarded absent documented compelling circumstances and prior consent of the instructor.

Class attendance and participation required

Attendance and class participation are mandatory. Each student is expected to regularly attend class and actively participate in class discussions. Attendance and participation will affect your final grade in the course (after all other calculations and adjustments) according to the following schedule:

Bonus for excellent class attendance and participation

A student with no unexcused absences during the term, and who actively participates in class discussions will be awarded +30 points toward their final grade.

Penalties for unsatisfactory class attendance and participation

A student with two or three unexcused absences, will receive a -50 adjustment to their final grade. A student with four or five unexcused absences will receive a -100 adjustment to their final grade. A student with six or more unexcused absences will receive a -250 adjustment to their final grade.

Excused absences

Remember, the attendance penalties apply only in the case of *unexcused absences*. At the discretion of the instructor, a wide range of events may qualify as an excused absence. However, an absence may be considered "excused" only if (1) the instructor is contemporaneously notified by telephone or Email and (2) the student sends by Email to the instructor a 300 word summary of the lecture or presentation that was missed. Please note that it is the lecture or presentation that must be summarized and not the readings. This summary is due within one week of the absence, and will not be accepted if late. Please note that an absence is much more likely to be considered as "excused" if the instructor is notified *in advance*, either in person, by telephone or Email.

Grading and evaluation

An multiple choice/ short answer quiz will be scored on the basis of 100-93 = A; 92-87 = B; 86- 79 = C; 78-71 = D; 70 and below = F.

The essence of the assigned papers is the quality of the information and its presentation and not quantity. All written work, including any essay questions assigned for the midterm examination is graded on a subjective scale as indicated below:

In general: Written work is assigned a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F (including pluses or minuses). All written work should reflect a satisfactory standard of writing, including use of complete sentences, paragraphs and section headings. The writing should be clear and concise. If the meaning is unclear, you may lose partial credit.

Papers and other assignments must be typed and conform to the "style guide" distributed by the instructor.

A grade: The paper or answer is complete, specific, and all aspects of the question are considered. If there are two or more sides to a question or issue, facts supporting all sides are presented and analyzed. The argument or explanation is well-organized and supported by examples. For a grade of "A" to be assigned, the work must be in some way outstanding and evidence originality and depth in its elaboration.

B grade: The paper is complete, correct and well-organized. Compared to an "A grade," the paper may lack detail or be stated in generalities, but is still well supported and makes good use of facts or examples.

C grade: The question addressed by the paper is satisfactorily answered and generally correct. The argument or explanation is on target and comprehensible. Organization is generally satisfactory. Some supporting examples or material may be inapplicable or lacking in detail or originality.

D or F grade: The question addressed by the paper is only partially answered or incorrect. Organization is unsatisfactory, and supporting material is lacking in detail, poorly chosen or irrelevant to the paper.

Each paper will be assigned a numerical grade based on the scale of A = 100- 93 % as noted above. The final grade for the course will be computed by adding all of the points together, adjusting for participation and attendance, and then comparing the result to the scale of A = 100- 93, etc.

Office hours

We welcome your visits during office hours. Time has reserved by both the instructor and the TA expressly for the purpose of assisting the students in this and other classes. Please feel free to either schedule an appointment or just "drop in." We welcome your visits, even if just to stop by and say "hello."

Other assistance with your coursework

The University provides a number of excellent resources that can assist you with coursework. For example, the Undergraduate Writing Center, located in the FAC 211, telephone 471-6222, offers individualized assistance to students who want to improve writing skills. There is no charge, and you may come in on either a drop-in or appointment basis.

Other terms and conditions

1. It is a condition of your continued enrollment in this course that you conform your conduct to the usual norms and practices of university education. It is presumed, for example, that all work submitted is the **original work of the student whose name appears on it**, and was prepared originally for this course. Plagiarism and other acts of dishonesty are subject to academic penalties ranging from loss of credit for the assignment to a failing grade for the course and suspension from the University of Texas.

2. **Papers and assignments are due at the beginning of classes on the assigned due date.**

3. **All assigned work and examinations must be completed in the semester in which it is undertaken.** All assignments must be turned in by the last day of the semester in order to receive a passing grade, and a grade of incomplete will not be awarded absent documented extenuating circumstances.

4. A student **must take the midterm and final examination (if any) as scheduled.** Any exceptions to this rule must be approved in writing by the instructor prior to the examination.

5. **Class attendance is required** because it is an important part of the learning process in this class.

6. **A student must be present at the beginning of class.** A student who arrives after attendance has been taken may be given a written warning. After that warning, a student who is not present at the beginning of class will be recorded as absent for the entire period.

7. The instructor will assume that **each student has completed all the assigned readings that are due prior to the start of class.**

Your continued enrollment in this class indicates your agreement and acceptance of these terms.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS AND READINGS

1. Jan. 20-22 *Introduction*

Introduction and discussion of class requirements.

Reading: Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovation* (excerpts, in reader)

--- Part I ---

Understanding the fundamental of the technologies

Please note: All readings in this section are from Grant, Communication Technology Update (1996, 5th Ed.) unless otherwise marked.

2. Jan. 27-29 *Traditional broadcast mass media*

The "Umbrella Perspective," ch. 1; Television, ch. 2; Statistical update, ch. 28, Meeker, *Internet Advertising Report*, ch. 3, 9 & 13. Cable Television, ch. 4; Wireless cable, ch. 9

3. Feb 3-5 *Emerging broadcast mass media: HDTV, DBS, etc.*

Pay Television, ch. 5; Switched video services, ch. 6, Direct Broadcast Satellite, ch. 8; Satellites, ch. 22; Digital Video Compression, ch. 3, Radio Broadcasting, ch. 11; Digital audio, ch. 19

- Industry analysis due Feb. 5 (posted to RTF 331P newsgroup)

4. Feb 10-12 *Movies, video, and more*

High- Definition TV, ch. 10; Home video technology, ch. 18, Interactive multimedia, ch. 14; Interactive television, ch. 7, Virtual reality, ch. 16; Desktop video production, ch. 17

- Reply to industry analysis due Feb. 12 (posted to RTF331 newsgroup)

5. Feb 17-19 *The networked technologies: telephone, Internet, WWW and beyond, Part I*

Telephony, ch. 20; Cellular telephony, ch. 25, Broadband network technologies, ch. 21; Cable telephony, ch. 24, Office technologies, ch. 15; VSAT, ch. 23

- Old and new media assignment due Feb. 19 (posted to RTF331 newsgroup)

6. Feb 24 -26 *The networked technologies: telephone, Internet, WWW and beyond, Part II*

Computer technology, ch. 12, Internet & WWW, ch. 13, Distance learning, ch. 27; video conferencing, ch. 26

- Reply to old and new media assignment due Feb. 12 (posted to RTF331 newsgroup)

7. March 3-5 *Review and midterm examination*

[continued]

Summary and review

- Midterm examination, March 5

--- Part II ---

Understanding technologies in their social context

8. March 10-12 *A critical and cultural approach to new media*

Media and the American Mind, Czitrom ch. 1 "The Birth of Modern Communication," (pp. 1-21 only) and "The development of Radio," Czitrom, ch. 3 (excerpts in reading packet)

March 16 - 20, Spring Break!

No classes scheduled.

9. March 24-26 *The social construction of technology*

Inventing American Broadcasting, Douglas, (excerpts in reader). *When Old Technologies Were New*, Marvin, (excerpts in reader)

- Understanding diffusion as conflict assignment due March 26

10. March 31 - April 2 *Community and commerce, Part I*

Media as community, Czitrom, ch. 4, Media as commerce, Czitrom, ch. 5 (excerpts in reader)

- Understanding diffusion as conflict reply due April 2

11. April 7-9 *Community and commerce, Part II*

Hagel & Armstrong, *Net.gain: Expanding markets through virtual communities*, ch. 4 and 5 (excerpts in reader). Meeker, ch. 1,2,6,7,8, & 12.

Easter Weekend, April 10-12

--- Part III ---

Communication technologies in the New Digital Economy

12. April 14-16 The new economy

Tapscott ch. 1, The Age of Networked Intelligence, ch. 2, Twelve Themes of the New Economy; (Tapscott, ch. 3 - 6 optional reading). The information society "control revolution," Beniger (in reading packet)

- Assessing the twelve themes of the new economy due April 16**

13. April 21-23 Inter-networking

Tapscott, ch. 7, Have network, Will Travel, ch. 8, Learning in the Digital Economy, h. 9, The Media Industry.

- Reply to assessing the twelve themes of the new economy due April 23**

14. April 28-30 Transformation and the digital frontier: global implications

Tapscott , ch. 11, Privacy in the Digital Economy (ch. 10 optional)

- Real and virtual communities assignment due April 30**

15. May 5-7 Review for examination

Tapscott, ch. 12, The New Responsibilities of Business
Summary and review

- Reply to real and virtual communities due May 7**

Final Examination

- Final examination: May 19, 1998.**