**New Telecom Technologies**

**Spring 2018**

**Paper #2: One Medium – Critical Engagement**

**Grade Weight: 20% of final class grade**

**DUE: Wednesday, March 28, 2018 by the beginning of class**

**Introduction:**

Up to this point in our semester, we have engaged with a few theories that help us to think through the concepts of, and intersection between, communication technology, culture, history, invention, and innovation. These theories and perspectives include: technological determinism, the science and technology studies (STS) counter to technological determinism, where we draw the line between “traditional” and “new” media, how to understand the potentialities and effects of the newer formations (Jenkins’s convergence), and the transition between our physical world and immaterial world (postmodernism, Baudrillard, “simulacra”).

For this paper #2, I would like each of you to select one medium (e.g. telephone, recorded music, still photography, radio, television, motion pictures, magazines, newspapers, AR, VR, video games, streaming platforms, twitch). I would like you to cover three elements in this paper in regard to your chosen medium. First, a brief, broad “brush strokes” of its origin or invention, explaining to the readers which parts of the story can be credited to the technology’s utility itself (tech. determinism) and which parts of the story required the culture to change and / or accept it (STS). Second, you will explain to the reader (if a newer medium, e.g. “twitch”) how it is only possible due to convergence, or if an older medium (TV) where the historical line is between it as a traditional media and when, how, why, it transformed and took on elements of “new” media. Third, look at the elements of your chosen medium that can best be understood as attempts toward “immersion”, “simulation”, or “virtuality”. For those choosing older media, your final paper will resemble more of a spectrum from origins to today. For those choosing newer media, it will be less a spectrum and more your explaining its inherent attributes.

What I’m looking for from you include the following: accurate definitions; specifics rather than generalities; illustrating history and elements of your medium using paraphrase and synthesis directly from class readings and lectures, a Junior-level collegiately written and organized structure with proper introduction and conclusion. It helps greatly if you choose a topic you are passionate, or at least curious about. You must use two short quotes, properly cited in your section on history, and one short quote for line between traditional and new, and one short quote for last section on simulation, properly cited for each. No run-on, or long block quotes please. The majority of your paper should be your synthesis and paraphrasing of ideas.

**Format:**

I am a **stickler** for format, so this section may be a little longer than you’d expect. You must hand-in a **minimum** *eight* page, **maximum** *ten* page print-out of a word processed paper, stapled. It can be either double-sided or single-sided – your choice. Times New Roman or Calibri font, 12pt, double-spaced between lines, normal spacing between letters and words. Your first line will begin on the first line of page one. Your name, class name, paper name, and date will be placed by you in the document’s header – **NOT ON** line #1. No cover pages necessary. You must insert page numbers. You must run spell-check before printing it out. You must use APA format for in-text citations and your References list at the end of your paper (not included in ten-page count). If you use bibliographic management software, nonetheless check the formatting of the citations before turning it in (I should not see “n.d.” in the reference list if in the in-text citation you dated it as from “2008”). Remember, you might need to do a little extra digging for dates OR use an alternative, better source if you first choice does not possess date of publication data.

**Some Reminders for APA style (consult handbook or Purdue Owl Online please):**

Basic information for in-text citation: (Author Last Name, YEAR, p. #) (Smith, 2007, p. 156).

If online, and no page numbers, paragraph numbers should be used (Smith, 2007, para. 13)

If your sentence begins with author’s name (Smith writes that donkeys are…) then add year and then only cite page # at the end of sentence (Smith (1997) writes that donkeys are… (p. 7).

Consistency is the key.

Works cited pages for online work should provide author, date, title of work, title of publisher or company, and URL.

**Good:**

Madrigal, A.C. (2013, Oct.). Why it’s never been more fun to watch sports. *The atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/10/why-its-never-been-more-fun-to-watch-sports/309456/>

**Bad:**

Madrigal, A.C. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/10/why-its-never-been-more-fun-to-watch-sports/309456/>

**Suggestions for Organization:**

You do not have to follow this organization to the letter; but rather it is just a suggestion.

**Paragraph 1:** Introduce the reader to your chosen medium, set up the major perspectives and how they apply to your medium. This also helps establish for the reader your paper’s structure. (I suggest you write paragraph one last).

**Page 1**: Introduce your medium to the reader, assuming they have no knowledge of it. Set the parameters: When did it start? Who is credited with inventing it? How long did it take to adopt it? I, as a reader, should have no confusion after reading this.

**Pages 2-3:** Either continue the introduction or highlight a story from its origin that is representative of the tension between technological innovation and cultural acceptance.

**Pages 4-5:** Define when the line was between the technology being seen as traditional versus taking on newer elements OR apply convergence theory.

**Pages 6-7**: Explain to the reader what simulation, immersion, virtual are. Then explain how your medium takes on one of these elements.

**Pages 8:** Conclusion that reminds the reader what you’ve laid out and offers one new thought.

**Last Paragraph:** Proper conclusion neatly summarizing the main points you introduced throughout the paper, written in a style that the reader will recognize as a proper ending rather than just trailing off mid-thought.

**Goals:**

Your goals for this paper include displaying you’ve done your reading, can synthesize theoretical concepts, and can apply them to the medium of your choice. Your case study should demonstrate your passion / deep knowledge of it, or at least curiosity to learn more about it. You also demonstrate to the reader that you know how to write and format a paper at a U.S. collegiate level.

**Suggested Reference Material:**

John, R. R. (2010). *Network nation: Inventing American telecommunications*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Fischer, C. S. (2006). *America calling: A social history of the telephone to 1940*. Berkeley [u.a.: Univ. of California Pr.

Douglas, S. J. (2005). *Inventing American broadcasting, 1899-1922*. New York: ACLS History E-Book Project.

Edgerton, Gary. (2010). *The Columbia History of American Television*. Columbia University Press.

Keating, G. (2012). *Netflixed: The epic battle for America's eyeballs*.