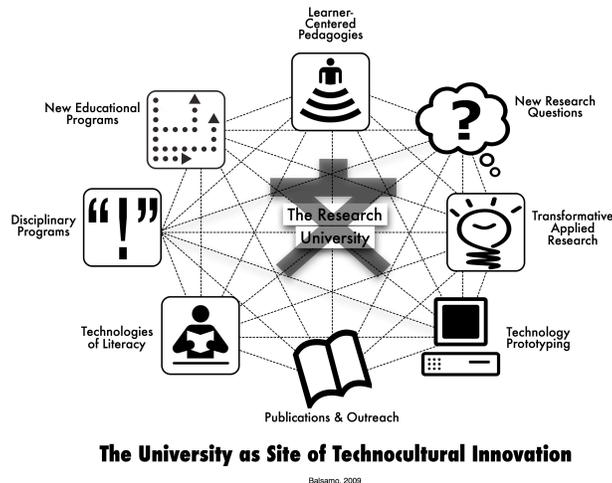


Comm 620: Communication and Interdisciplinary Studies: Technology, Innovation, and Collaboration



Anne Balsamo

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Office: Annenberg Innovation Lab

Office Hours: Thursdays 1-2 pm and by appt.

(Email for appt)

Class Location: Annenberg Innovation Lab (West Lobby)

Class Time: Thursday: 2-5:50 pm

Fall, 2011

The far-reaching aim of this course is to incubate multi-disciplinary collaborations among students trained in communication and in technological fields, among media critics and new media designers, and among emerging scholars and digital culture producers.

The course will begin with an overview presentation of major theories of technology as a context for a more in-depth discussion of an approach that I refer to as “A Reproductive Theory of Technology” that draws insights from critical cultural studies and feminist philosophies of science. This approach develops an anti-essentialist theory of technology adequate to the digital age that can serve as a conceptual and critical framework for the development of a critical and cultivated technological imagination.

Class discussions will explore the relationship between innovation and culture to explore the distinctions among innovation, invention and creativity, models of socio-cultural change, and the dynamics of techno-human agency. Course activities and

exercises are designed to investigate the nature of collaboration across domains and disciplines. We begin by asking the question: what do individuals bring to the collaboration? What makes a good collaborator? How do collaborations get set up and maintained? Here we will discuss an ethical approach to cross-disciplinary collaboration, the cultural work of “disciplines” in a digital age, the organization of emergent (new) intellectual formations, and the cultural responsibilities of scholars and designers.

Students will be taught a specific design-research method that suggests protocols for needs assessment, prototyping, social engagement, production, diffusion, and dissemination of innovation.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Be able to articulate a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between technology and culture;
- 2) Engage in the practices of hermeneutic reverse engineering as a research methodology;
- 3) Understand the development process of designing a new media form;
- 4) Produce a work of media-rich scholarship;
- 5) Develop a framework for understanding the dynamics of cross-disciplinary collaboration;
- 6) Assemble a personal kit of digital research tools;
- 7) Develop a digital research production environment for collaborative research.

Required Texts:

Designing Culture: The Technological Imagination at Work, Anne Balsamo (Duke UP, 2011)

READING PACKET: Digital copies of individual articles will be made available throughout the semester.

Academic Integrity

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's Academic Integrity code as detailed in the Campus Guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violation or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor. See section 11 of Scampus.

Students with Disabilities and Academic Accommodations

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to Professor Balsamo as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday-

Friday, 8:30-5:00. The office is in Student Union 301 and their phone number is (213) 740-0776. For additional information, see the Web page of the Disabilities Services Program in SCAMPUS.

Required Course Activities:

Online Blog participation (20%): During the semester, you will be required to post at least 10 times to a class blog. These blog posts should engage critically with the course topics or readings for that day and should demonstrate engagement with the material or topic. The posts can make connections to outside materials or events, pose questions for discussion, or comment significantly (300 words) on other people's postings. The class blog will be linked off the site: www.designingculture.net/blog

Participation & Attendance (10%): Students are expected to attend all classes and outside meetings and to arrive at class prepared and ready to participate. Absences will affect your grade. Assignments are due on time; late assignments will not be accepted.

Pecha Kucha (20%): Each student will make ONE brief individual presentation in class on an assigned topic in the form of a Pecha Kucha. This presentation will give you an opportunity to introduce your interests and critical commitments to other class participants. The requirements for the Pecha Kucha will be discussed in class.

Final Paper (20%): By the THIRD week of the course, each student will write a FINAL paper as a traditional seminar paper (approximately 10-15 pages in length). The topic will be determined through class discussion.

Collaborative Multimedia Document (30%): By the FINAL week of the course, student project teams will complete a collaborative multimedia document on an area of innovative technology research and development. The final form of this document could be 1) an animated cognitive map, 2) a graphic novel, 3) a concept video, 4) a tangible prototype of an interactive experience.

2011 COURSE SCHEDULE

August 25

Week 1: Course Introduction and Student Introductions

September 1

Week 2: *Designing Culture: A Theoretical Framework for Understanding the Relationship between Culture and Innovation*

September 8

Week 3: *Designing Culture: Take 2* (Book launch, Annenberg Innovation Lab0

September 15

Week 4: A Creative Inventory of the Intelligence in the Room

What do you Know? Where do you Stand? What do you Care about?
Pecha Kucha Presentations

September 22

Week 5: FINAL PAPERS DUE (NO CLASS)

September 29

Week 6: Hermeneutic Reverse Engineering

An in-depth interrogation of a particular technology using an interactive application called: "Learning to Love the Questions"

October 6

Week 7: Cognitive Mapping and Visualizing Spaces of Possibility

Build a hyperlinked literature review adventure where the links are questions that get addressed by other works of scholarship.

October 13

Week 8: NO CLASS

Historical investigation of an innovation narrated in the form of a graphic novel

October 20

Week 9: Making History Now: The Role of History in Cultivating the Technological Imagination

SHARE GRAPHIC NOVELS

October 27

Week 10: What Needs Doing in the World?

One Week blank book project reports

November 3

Week 11: Collaboration Across Disciplines and Differences

The role of the disciplines in a digital age; the University 2.0; DIY Education
Incubation of a “cross-disciplinary” collaborative research project and
creation of research proposal

November 10

Week 12: The Matter of the World Matters: Making Things Together

How to create a digital work environment that allows for 1) blogging of
literature reviews of a particular topic, 2) collaborative document authoring,
3) digital citation management, and 4) research asset management.

November 17

Week 13: Collaborative Knowledge Creation

Research-in-Progress Presentation to Whole Class; learning how to
critique

December 1

Week 14: The Performance of Innovation

Final presentations of Multimedia Research Proposal Documents