

# COM 477: Mobile Communication



## Meeting Information

Location: Winston  
Days: Tuesday and Thursday  
Time: 10:15-11:30

Office Hours TBA and by appointment

## Instructor Information

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## Course Description

Cell phones are among the most relevant communication media today. They are communication interfaces that not only allow us to talk to other people, but also to access the internet, and find information and people in physical spaces. The number of cell phones has largely surpassed the number of PCs worldwide, and for many people in the world cell phones are not only their first phone but also their first computer and location-aware device. Mobile technologies are in the 21st century what the PC was in the 20th century: A computer that allows us to connect to the Internet and to socialize with other people.

This course explores mobile technologies' influence on communication patterns and social behavior. We will analyze the use of different mobile and locative interfaces, such as smartphones, RFID tags, GPS technologies and pads in different cultural and socio-economic contexts.

The course will engage students to address issues such as

- The history of mobile interfaces,
- Cell phones' and locative technologies' influence on our perception of location, space, and place,
- Locational privacy, location tracking, and urban sociability,
- Mobile phones, privacy, and security.
- Mobile communities, and location-based networks,
- Mobile annotation, mapping, and gaming.
- Basic concepts of cellular technologies, cellular infrastructures, and cell phone generations,

- The use of mobile phones in the developing world (case studies in Africa, Asia, and South America).

In summary, the course provides a general overview of the state of mobile communication technologies today, focusing on history, current uses and social appropriation of technology.

### **Catalog Description**

Mobile communication technologies and their influence on communication patterns and social behavior. Conceptualization of cell phones beyond mobile telephones, as Internet access points and gaming devices. History, current uses and future perspectives for the social use of mobile interfaces. The creation of new mobile communities. The influence of mobile images on communication and the creation of mobile networks. Use of mobile phones across cultures and places, such as Asia, Scandinavia, Africa, and Latin America.

### **Course Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of basic concepts of cellular technology and their functions;
- Identify and apply mobilities and mobile communication theories to critically analyze the state of mobile technologies in today’s society;
- Analyze current place-specific uses of cell phones, connecting them to mobile phone’ history and theory.
- Explain connections between cell phone usage and the social significance of pervasive and ubiquitous computing in contemporary society;
- Discuss basic concepts of cellular technology by analyzing mobile platforms and mobile social software as they relate to social uses.
- Explain how mobile, location-aware and wireless interfaces influence communication and society.

### **Course Components and Grading**

The following table shows how the final grade will be determined.

Participation	10 points
Discussion Leader	10 points
Reading Reflections	20 points
Group Project	20 points
Group Presentation	5 points
Midterm Exam	15 points
Final Exam	20 points
<b>Total for Final Grade</b>	<b>100 points</b>

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Participation and Exercises**

Student participation will be evaluated throughout the semester. Participation entails not only attending the class but coming prepared having done all the readings, having made an honest attempt at understanding each author’s argument, and bringing reading notes and questions you’d like to ask. It

also includes participating (and submitting) in-class exercises, when asked to do so. In order to get the maximum amount of points for participation, students are expected to:

- Be present and on time to class;
- Contribute to the class with your ideas, comments, and questions;
- Actively participate in the course, answering the instructor's questions and engaging in class discussions.
- Use media and technologies to engage in the class (as opposed to using them to disengage)
- Complete, present, and submit exercises, when asked to do so

The final participation grade will be given according to the following criteria:

- A+ (10) Outstanding participation. Student is well prepared, attentive, and always responds when called upon. Student helps to generate lively class discussion. Student volunteers often with pertinent and thought-provoking answers or questions. Student always arrives to class on time. Student completes, presents, and submits exercises when asked to do so.
- A (9.5) Student is prepared, attentive, and responds when called upon. Student volunteers often with pertinent answers or questions. Student almost always completes, presents, and submits exercises when asked to do so. Student is rarely (or never) late to class.
- B (8.5) Student is usually prepared, responds when called on and volunteers on occasion. Student is occasionally late. Students occasionally does not submit exercises or submits incomplete exercises.
- C (7.5) Student shows evidence of being unprepared on occasion, has trouble when called on and does not volunteer often. Student is habitually late to class. Student rarely submits exercises or consistently submits incomplete exercises.
- D (6.5) Student is unprepared, inattentive, never volunteers, and/or habitually comes to class late. Student does not
- F (0) Student exhibits a lack of concern for the class, sleeps in class, or disturbs the class (by, for example, using a laptop or phone for purposes other than taking notes in class).

## **Discussion Leading**

Students will work in pairs or small groups to lead class discussion once during the semester. Students will sign-up to lead discussion during the second week of classes. To serve as discussion leader, the pair or small group must create at least 3 open-ended discussion questions that *deliberately* engage their classmates (and instructor!) in discussion of the readings for the week, and at least 1 of these discussion questions should include a media artifact (videos, photo essay, multimedia article etc.) which helps their classmates to draw connections between the readings and a real-world application of the concepts presented in the readings.

### **Discussion Leaders are expected to:**

7. collectively email their questions (with their examples) to the instructor, no later than one week before they are scheduled to lead discussions;
8. review instructor feedback (if any is given) and revise questions based on the instructor feedback; AND
9. actively engage the class in conversation. This involves asking the discussion questions, *but also* responding to classmates, offering clarifications of the questions, and providing examples to illustrate the question with the purpose of driving the conversation forward.

### **Discussion Leaders will be graded as follows:**

- 100 percent: The students (a) offered engaging, open-ended questions that consider the readings and discussion topic assigned for that week, (b) sent all of the questions to the instructor no later than the week before they were scheduled to present, (c) revised the questions based on instructor feedback, if any was given, and (d) actively engaged the class in conversations
- 50 percent: The students (a) sent the questions late, but still sent them before they presented, (b) the students did not revise based on instructor feedback, or (c) the students did not actively engage the class in conversation
- 0 percent: The students (a) did not send the questions to the instructor before they presented (b) the students did not engage in discussion leading, or (c) the questions were not relevant to the readings/topic for the week or reflected very little knowledge of the readings/topic for the week

### **Reading/Media Reflections**

Four Reading/Media reflections are scheduled over the course of the semester. The Reading/Media reflections require students to demonstrate completion and understanding of the assigned reading/media as well as engagement with class lectures and discussion. The reading reflections should draw synthesis between the topics covered and the authors' positions.

### **Grading the Reflections**

- 100 percent: The student provided a clear and thoughtful summary of the main ideas covered in that section, drew connections between the texts and/or authors' positions, cited all texts assigned, and wrote between 250-500 words
- 75 percent: The student identified most of the main ideas in the texts, misunderstood some concepts, and/or provided a weak connection between the texts and/or authors' positions, but still cited all texts assigned and wrote between 250-500 words
- 50 percent: The student identified some main ideas in the texts, misunderstood most concepts, did not provide a connection between the texts and/or authors' positions, did not cite all assigned texts, and/or did not fall within the 250-500 words requirement
- 25 percent: The student overlooked the majority of the main ideas in the texts, did not provide a connection between the texts and/or authors' positions, did not cite all assigned texts, and/or did not fall within the 250-500 words requirement
- 0 percent: The student did not provide any main ideas of the texts and did not draw connection between the texts and/or authors' positions, plagiarized, submitted after the deadline, or did not submit at all

### **Guidelines for the Reading/Media Reflection**

- Each reflection must summarize the key concepts of each of the readings/media
- Each reflection must draw connections between/synthesize the readings and media. In other words,
  - Identify the similarities or differences between authors' positions
  - What "conversation" is occurring between these authors?
- Each reflection must include in-text citations of the assigned readings for each week, using APA format (a reference page is not included in the word count)
- Late work will not be accepted.

## Mobile Innovation Project (Group Project)

Groups will work together, throughout the semester, to create documentation for a mobile innovation. To complete this project, students will identify a problem which could be solved using mobile technologies. They will research the mobile technology solution and apply theoretical frames from our class readings in the design of their solution. Additional information will be given on the assignment sheet.

## Group Presentation

Groups will present their Mobile Innovation Project to their peers in the last week of classes. This is designed for students to demonstrate their work to communicating narrative across media platforms. However, it will also serve as an opportunity for students to receive feedback from their instructor and peers before submitting the final project for a grade. Groups will have approximately 8-10 minutes to present their projects and approximately 5 minutes to answer questions/receive feedback.

## Midterm and Final Exam

The mid-term and final exams comprise individual take-home essay questions. The purpose of the exams is for you to demonstrate that you have understood the major issues addressed in the course and that you can articulate an insightful, well-supported position on those issues.

You should answer any of the questions based on your class notes, slides, class readings, and articles presented in class. Your essay should present a clear, well-structured answer to the question, incorporating information, facts, and quotations from the course readings and from your lecture notes, research sources, and blog postings. You are required to use at least two quotes from the course readings in each answer. This is the minimal requirement, however; if you are aiming for an "A," don't settle for the minimum. All source material must be properly indicated using quotation marks (if it is a quote) and credited using proper parenthetical references according to APA style. Directions for the exams will be given during the classes indicated in the class schedule.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Course Introduction

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
January 8		Discuss syllabus, expectations  Course introductions	
January 10	de Souza e Silva, A. (2016). Introduction: What is mobile communication, and how do we talk about it? In: <i>Dialogues on Mobile Communication</i> (pp. 1-7) [STOP	Assign Discussion Leaders	

	<p><i>READING HALFWAY DOWN PAGE 7]</i></p> <p>Campbell, S. (2013). Mobile media and communication: A new field, or just a new journal. In: <i>Mobile Media and Communication</i> (pp. 8-13).</p>		
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**History**

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
January 15	<p>Abrahamson, E. J. &amp; Carneiro, L. (2016). History. In <i>Dialogues on Mobile Communication</i> (pp. 15-32).</p> <p>Ling, R. &amp; Donner, J (2009). Short history of mobile communication. In: <i>Mobile Communication: Digital Media and Society Series</i> (pp. 30-48)</p>	Class Business	
January 17		<p>Intervention #1: Group Project</p> <p>Discussion Leaders:</p>	

**Infrastructures**

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
January 22	<p>Horst, H. (2013). The infrastructures of mobile media: Towards a future research agenda. <i>Mobile Media and Communication</i> (pp. 147-152).</p>	Class business	

	Graham, S. & Marvin, S. (2001). <i>Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities, and the Urban Condition</i> (pp. 10-16)		
January 24		Discussion leaders:	

### Digital Divides & Mobile Diffusion

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
January 29	Pearce, K. & Rice, R. (2013). Digital divides from access to activities: Comparing mobile and personal computer internet users. <i>Journal of Communication</i> , pp. 721-744.  Tsetsi, E. & Rains, S. (2017). Smartphone internet access and use: Extending the divide and usage gap. <i>Mobile Media &amp; Communication</i> , pp. 239-255.		
January 31		Discussion leaders:	

### Technological Convergence

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
February 5	Humphereys, L., Von Pape, T., and Karnowski, V. (2013). Evolving mobile media: Uses and conceptualizations of		Reading reflection 1: weeks 1-4

	<p>the mobile internet. <i>Journal of Computer Mediated Communication</i>, pp. 491-507.</p> <p>Madianou, M. (2014). Smartphones as polymedia. <i>Journal of Computer Mediated Communication</i>, pp. 667-680.</p>		
February 7		<p>Intervention #2 Group Project</p> <p>Discussion leaders:</p>	

### Ubiquitous Computing

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
February 12	<p>Dourish, P. (2016). Ubiquitous computing. In: <i>Dialogues on Mobile Communication</i> (pp. 67-86).</p> <p>Galloway, A. (2004). Intimations of everyday life. Ubiquitous computing and the city. <i>Cultural Studies</i>, pp. 384-408.</p>		
February 14		<p>Discuss Midterm</p> <p>Discussion leaders:</p>	

### Mobilities & Hybrid space

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
February 19	<p>*Note: this week's reading is a bit heavier than normal but it is VERY important that you</p>		

	<p>complete all readings, as our discussions throughout the rest of the semester will hinge on these theories.</p> <p>Sheller, M. (2016). <i>Mobilities</i>. In: <i>Dialogues on Mobile Communication</i> (pp. 51-66).</p> <p>Cresswell, T. (2010). <i>Towards a politics of mobility</i>. In: <i>Environment and Planning D</i> (pp. 17-31). D</p> <p>de Souza e Silva, A. (2006). From cyber to hybrid: mobile technologies as interfaces of hybrid spaces. <i>Space &amp; Culture</i>, 9 (3), 261-278.</p>		
February 21		Discussion leaders:	

**Locative Media**

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
February 26	<p>Farman, J. &amp; Frith, J. (2016). Location-based media. In: <i>Dialogues on Mobile Communication</i> (pp. 139-154).</p> <p>de Souza e Silva, A. &amp; Frith, J. (2012). From voice to location. In: <i>Mobile</i></p>		Reading reflection 2: weeks 5-7

	<i>Interfaces in Public Spaces</i> (pp. 78-108).		
February 28		Discussion leaders:	

### Mobile/Location-based Gaming and Art

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
March 5	Hjorth, L. (2016). Mobile art: Rethinking intersections between art, user created content (UCC), and the quotidian. In: <i>Mobile Media &amp; Communication</i> , pp. (169-185)  de Souza e Silva, A. & Hjorth, L. (2009). Playful urban spaces: A historical approach to mobile gaming. In: <i>Simulation &amp; Gaming</i> (pp. 602-625)		Midterm due
March 7		Intervention #3 Group Project  Discussion leaders:	

### Spring Break

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
March 12 Spring Break			
March 14 Spring Break			

### Location-based Social Networks

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
March 19	Humphreys, L. (2016). Mobile social networks. In: <i>Dialogues on Mobile</i>		

	<p><i>Communication</i> (pp. 121-138).</p> <p>Urry, J. (2012). Social networks, mobile lives, and social inequalities. <i>Journal of Transport Geography</i>, pp. 24-30.</p>		
March 21		Discussion leaders:	

### Sociability and Managing Attention

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
March 26	<p>Mannell, K. (2018). A typology of mobile messaging's disconnective affordances. <i>Mobile Media &amp; Communication</i>, pp. 76-93.</p> <p>Birnholtz, J., Davison, J., and Li, A. (2017). Attending to attention: How do people attract, manage, and negotiate attention using mobile devices, pp. 256-274.</p>		
March 28		Discussion leaders:	

### Civic Engagement & Participation

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
April 2	<p>Campbell, S. and Kwak, N. (2010). Mobile communication and civic life. <i>Journal of Communication</i>, pp. 536-555.</p>		Reading reflection 3: weeks 8-11

	Martin, J. (2015). Mobile news use and participation in elections: A bridge for the democratic divide? <i>Mobile Media &amp; Communication</i> , pp. 230-249.		
April 4		Discuss Final Exam  Discussion leaders:	

**Data Collection and Surveillance**

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
April 9	Dourish, P. & Bell, G. (2011) Rethinking Privacy. In: <i>Divining a Digital Future</i> (pp. 137-160).  Andrejevic, M. (2007) Surveillance in the digital enclosure. In: <i>Communication Review</i> (pp. 295-317).		
April 11		Discussion leaders:	

**Wearables and the Dividual**

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
April 16	Lupton, D. (2016). Know thyself. In: <i>The Quantified Self</i> , pp. 1-18 (ebook PDF)  Pink, S. and Fors, V. (2017). Self-tracking and mobile media: New digital materialities.		Reading Reflection 4 due: Weeks 12-13
April 18		Discussion leaders:	

**Group Presentations**

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
April 23		Group presentations	
April 25		Group presentations	

Days	Reading Due	Classroom Activities	Assignments Due
April 30 – May 7			Final Exam, date/time TBD