



COURSE UNIT DESCRIPTION

Course unit title	Code
Connected: life, culture and identity in the era of digital communication	

Annotation
<p>This course aims to be an introduction to the implications of networked digital platforms, connected apps and devices on diverse aspects of contemporary life, communication, and culture. Based on a communication and information studies lens, and taking into account the anticipated impact of generative artificial intelligence on major aspects of our life, culture and identity, it addresses topics such as: the role of online communities and digital platforms in political communication; the effect of networked communication on collective memory and identity; the effects of digital connectivity on romance and relationships; self-expression and creativity in platforms such as Instagram and TikTok; “quantified self” technologies for health self-monitoring; the effect of online media distribution platforms, influencers, and fandom communities; and the rise of crowdsourcing and digital participatory practices in heritage and memory work. The course is based on a combination of online lectures and in-person seminars, student teamwork, and self-directed study of readings.</p>

Lecturer(s)	Department, Faculty
Coordinating: prof. dr. Costis Dallas Other:	Faculty of Communication

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
Bachelor	Individual study

Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Hybrid	Spring	English

Requisites	
Prerequisites:	Co-requisites (if relevant):

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student’s workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	130	34	96

Purpose of the course unit: programme competences to be developed
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Identify, recognize and define</i> core concepts, mechanisms, and functions of digital connectivity and networked communication 2. <i>Describe, compare and critique</i> concepts and theories of online community, identity, and networking 3. <i>Identify the interaction, determine the causes, and analyze</i> the impact of networked communication on the following aspects of contemporary life, society and culture: political action, collective remembering, identity construction, health and wellbeing, leisure and creativity, and, relationships and intimacy 4. <i>Frame useful questions, identify resources, research, summarize and construct knowledge about</i> digitally-mediated aspects of life, culture and identity, and <i>express</i> such knowledge in oral and written form <p>Note: learning objectives are expressed using Fink’s taxonomy of significant learning, Fink, L. D. (2013). <i>Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses</i>. John Wiley & Sons.</p>

Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
Grasp essential concepts, theories, and functions of digital information and communication networks in human life, memory and identity	Lectures; required readings; student-led seminars	A1. Student-led seminar preparation and moderation
Develop capabilities for investigating some aspect of life, society and culture on digital networks, from initial idea to shaping a topic or research question, identifying relevant evidence, accounting for prior scholarship, developing a research argument, and writing up	Lectures; required readings; assignment A2 rubric	A2. Poster presentation of student research project
Develop conceptual analysis and oral communication skills to structure and conduct a critical dialogue on digital information and communication networks and their implications for life, society and culture	Student-led seminars; live poster presentation session	A1. Student-led seminar preparation and moderation; A2. Poster presentation of student research project

Course content: breakdown of the topics	Contact hours							Individual work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship/work	Contact hours, total	Individual work	Assignments
1. Infrastructure. Social media, platform logics, generative artificial intelligence.	2		2				4	10	Required: Miller et al. 2016. Recommended: Perrault & Clark 2024; van Dijck & Poell 2013
2. Networking. Social connectivity, online communities, affective publics.	2		2				4	10	Required: boyd 2010. Recommended: Papacharissi 2017; Wellman et al. 2023.
3. Leisure. Streaming platforms, fandom, digital creativity.	2		2				4	10	Required: Gauntlett 2013. Recommended: Bourdaa 2018; Anderson et al. 2021.
4. Intimacy. Online dating, relationships, sextbots.	2		2				4	10	Required: Hobbs et al. 2017. Recommended: Chambers 2017; Nyholm & Frank 2017.
5. Wellbeing. Fitness apps, social media in health communication, the “quantified self”.	2	1	2				5	18	Required: Lupton 2016. Recommended: read Baker & Walsh 2018; Chen 2021.
6. Identity. Online identities, selfies, life-logging, digital possessions.	2		2				4	10	Required: van Dijck 2013. Recommended: Cushing 2013; Hogan 2010.
7. Politics. Digital activism, connective action, (dis)information wars.	2		2				4	10	Required: Bennett & Segerberg 2012.

									Recommended: Tufekci 2017; Hoskins & Shchelin 2023.
8. Remembering. Digital memory, participatory heritage, community archiving.	2	1	2				5	18	Required: Burkey 2019. Recommended: Commane & Potton 2019; Dallas 2018; de Kosnik 2016.
Total	16	2	16	-	-	-	34	96	

Assessment strategy	Weight %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
A1. Student-led seminar preparation, moderation and participation: all students will contribute questions on class readings; selected students will organize, present, and facilitate discussion in each seminar, based on lecture content, readings, and peer questions (group assignment)	40%	Seminar session for Units 1-8 (rolling)	Using the compiled evaluation rubric, the quality of following seminar-related elements will be assessed: (a) knowledge on concepts, issues, and areas of human experience related to digital networks, (b) ability to organize and introduced effectively the topic and key information of assigned seminar(s), (c) quality and appropriateness of presentation materials used in assigned seminar(s), (d) ability to organize and moderate an engaging discussion on relevant dimensions of assigned seminar(s), and (e) active participation with comments and questions across all remaining seminars. Scoring: 5 – excellent, 4 – very good, 3 – good, 2 – weak, 1 – unsatisfactory
A2. Poster presentation of student research study: addressing one aspect, concept, or issue related to life, communication and culture on digital networks (group assignment)	60%	Week after Unit 8	Using the compiled evaluation rubric, the quality, soundness and completeness of the following elements of the poster presentation will be assessed: (a) command over relevant scientific literature, and persuasive rationale for conducting the study in the light of gaps or shortcomings in published research, (b) clarity of research question(s) (or topic, hypothesis, claim), (c) suitability and adequacy of evidence and research methods used to address the topic or research question(s), (d) presentation quality and appeal of the submitted conference poster, including appropriate use of language, tables and visualizations in the poster, and (e) clarity of oral presentation and of responses to questions on the poster. Scoring: 5 – excellent, 4 – very good, 3 – good, 2 – weak, 1 – unsatisfactory

Author	Publishing year	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication; pages	Publishing house or internet site
Required reading				
Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A.	2012	The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics	Information, Communication & Society, 15(5), 739–768	https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.670661
boyd, danah.	2010	Social network sites as networked publics: Affordances, dynamics, and implications	A networked self: Identity, community, and culture on social network sites (pp. 39–58)	Routledge
Burkey, B.	2019	Total recall: How cultural heritage communities use digital initiatives and platforms for collective remembering	Journal of Creative Communications, 14(3), 235–253	https://doi.org/10.1177/0973258619868045

Gauntlett, D.	2013	Creativity and digital innovation	Digital world: Connectivity, creativity and rights (pp. 77–90)	Routledge
Hobbs, M., Owen, S., & Gerber, L.	2017	Liquid love? Dating apps, sex, relationships and the digital transformation of intimacy	Journal of Sociology, 53(2), 271–284	https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783316662718
Lupton, D.	2016	The diverse domains of quantified selves: Self-tracking modes and dataveillance	Economy and Society, 45(1), 101–122	https://doi.org/10.1080/03085147.2016.1143726
Miller, D., Sinanan, J., Wang, X., McDonald, T., Haynes, N., Costa, E., Spyer, J., Venkatraman, S., & Nicolescu, R.	2016	Academic studies of social media	How the world changed social media (pp. 9–24)	UCL Press: https://library.ucl.ac.uk/handle/20.500.12657/32834
van Dijck, J.	2013	‘You have one identity’: Performing the self on Facebook and LinkedIn	Media, Culture & Society, 35(2), 199–215	https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443712468605
Recommended reading				
Anderson, I., Gil, S., Gibson, C., Wolf, S., Shapiro, W., Semerci, O., & Greenberg, D. M.	2021	“Just the Way You Are”: Linking Music Listening on Spotify and Personality	Social Psychological and Personality Science, 12(4), 561–572	https://doi.org/10.1177/194855062092322
Baker, S. A., & Walsh, M. J.	2018	‘Good Morning Fitfam’: Top posts, hashtags and gender display on Instagram	New Media & Society, 20(12), 4553–4570	https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818777514
Bourdaa, M.	2018	“May we meet again”: Social bonds, activities, and identities in the #clexa fandom	A companion to media fandom and fan studies (pp. 385–399)	Wiley Blackwell
Chambers, D.	2017	Networked intimacy: Algorithmic friendship and scalable sociality	European Journal of Communication, 32(1), 26–36	https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323116682792
Chen, J., & Wang, Y.	2021	Social media use for health purposes: Systematic review	Journal of Medical Internet Research, 23(5), e17917 1-16	https://www.jmir.org/2021/5/e17917/PDF
Commane, G., & Potton, R.	2019	Instagram and Auschwitz: A critical assessment of the impact social media has on Holocaust representation	Holocaust Studies, 25(1–2), 158–181	https://doi.org/10.1080/17504902.2018.1472879
Cushing, A. L.	2013	“It’s stuff that speaks to me”: Exploring the characteristics of digital possessions	Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 64(8), 1723–1734	https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.22864
Dallas, C.	2018	Heritage encounters on social network sites, and the affiliative power of objects	Culture and perspective at times of crisis: State structures, private initiative and the public character of heritage (pp. 116–131)	Oxbow Books

De Kosnik, A.	2016	Archival styles: Universal, community, and alternative digital preservation projects	Rogue archives: Digital cultural memory and media fandom (pp. 73–122)	MIT Press. http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/7845188
Hogan, B.	2010	The presentation of self in the age of social media: Distinguishing performances and exhibitions online	Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society, 30(6), 377–386	https://doi.org/10.1177/0270467610385893
Hoskins, A., & Shchelin, P.	2023	The war feed: Digital war in plain sight	American Behavioral Scientist, 67(3), 449–463	https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642221144848
Nyholm, S., & Frank, L. E.	2017	From sex robots to love robots: Is mutual love with a robot possible?	Robot sex: Social and ethical implications (pp. 219–243)	MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/10718.03.0019
Papacharissi, Z.	2016	Affective publics and structures of storytelling: Sentiment, events and mediality	Information, Communication & Society, 19(3), 307–324	http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1109697
Perrault, R., & Clark, J.	2024	Artificial Intelligence Index Report 2024	Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence	https://policycommons.net/artifacts/12089781/hai-ai-index-report-2024/12983534/
Tufekci, Z.	2017	Platforms and algorithms	Twitter and tear gas: The power and fragility of networked protest (pp. 132–163)	Yale University Press
van Dijck, J., & Poell, T.	2013	Understanding social media logic	Media and Communication, 1(1), 2–14	https://ssrn.com/abstract=2309065
Wellman, B., Quan-Haase, A., & Harper, M.-G.	2020	The networked question in the digital era: How do networked, bounded, and limited individuals connect at different stages in the life course?	Network Science, 8(3), 291–312	https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2019.28