



## COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title		Code
<b>"DIGITAL SELF". PROTEST CULTURE AND DISCOURSES OF ACTIVISM</b>		
Academic staff		Core academic unit(s)
<b>Coordinator:</b> prof. dr. Loreta Vaicekauskienė <b>Other(s):</b> doc. dr. Anastasija Belovodskaja, dr. Ernesta Kazakėnaitė, dr. Ringailė Trakymaitė, doc. dr. Vuk Vukotić		VU Faculty of Philology
Study cycle		Type of the course unit
Master		Optional
Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Lectures, seminars, tutorials, individual work	Spring	English
Requisites		
<b>Prerequisites: none</b>		<b>Co-requisites (if relevant): none</b>

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	138	48 (including experiential learning in and outside the class)	90

Purpose of the course unit		
<p>The course explores the sociocultural processes of linguistic and discursive changes in the mass media and its role in democratisation, drawing primarily on studies of the Nordic and the Baltic Sea region. The students will dive deeper into the character of the new digital and social media, their impact on today's public space, the development of new ways of linguistic expression, as well as the construction of social and political stances. <b>NB.</b> A more specific version of the course content and assignments is available on the VU Teams / Moodle platform.</p> <p><b>General skills:</b>  <i>Analytical, critical and creative thinking:</i> to critically evaluate, systematize and process information from various sources; to improve existing and generate new ideas.  <i>Problem-solving, social and communicative skills:</i> to identify relevant problems to be solved, to discuss alternative choices; to offer and apply problem-solving solutions; to make informed decisions, based on facts and experience; to engage in constructive teamwork; to engage in dialogue and seek mutual understanding.  <i>Academic and professional ethics:</i> understand and respect ethical requirements; to comply with the principles of responsibility and integrity.</p> <p><b>Subject-related skills:</b>            Knowledge about and application of the theories and methods of the field; ability to formulate a research question and to communicate research findings to different audiences.</p>		
Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods

<p>Students will learn and apply the main theories on media language and digital identities, connect theory with practice as well as develop creative and analytic skills to interpret different aspects of the studied phenomena.</p>	<p>Readings (about 300-400 pages), analysis of a wide range of material, if possible, online meetings with agents in the field (a hacker, an activist etc.); collaborative group projects and individual assignments, incorporating experiential approaches; peer to peer evaluation.</p>					<p>Cumulative score for portfolio assignments; self-assessment, peer-review</p>
<p>Topics</p>	<p>Lectures</p>	<p>Tutorials</p>	<p>Seminars</p>	<p>Total</p>	<p>Self-study</p>	<p>Assignments</p>
<p>1. Presentation of the course structure and assignments. <b>Basics of media theory.</b> Media and the public space. How did mass media impacted democratization of society? The public and the private in the media. The virtual public sphere. The individual in the spot light. How did global media flows impact peoples' self-identity, agency and imagination?</p>	<p>2</p>			<p>2</p>		
<p>2. <b>Digital space and digital culture:</b> the concept of digital space and culture, how it is created and where it is actually stored. What climate-related and ethical issues arise in the formation of digital space? How much data is there already? Is digital space limitless? Who owns the digital content, how privacy and copyright are protected?</p>	<p>4</p>		<p>2</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>NB. All assignments and readings will be specified on the course page on Moodle</p> <p>Discussion of assigned readings, among others, on the study communities of the students; analysis of various case studies, experiential learning and other assignments, adapting to the preferences of the student group</p>
<p>3. <b>Media development and language development.</b> Informalization of the discourse. Notions of <i>audience design</i>, <i>mediation</i> and <i>mediatization</i>. Digital-self in professional networks (e.g. LinkedIn): how can linguistic data be transformed into metadata?</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>Selective experiential tasks will include analysis, replication and reflection of various topics, e.g.:</p>
<p>4. <b>Linguistic creativity and construction of digital-self.</b> <i>Heteroglossic</i> styles of digital media. Identity expression in digital sub-cultures (gamers, fan groups, lifestyle communities etc.) and on individual profiles (influencers, bloggers, content creators). The <i>Authentic Self</i> vs. <i>Selfie Discourse</i>: What does it mean to be "authentic" in a digital world? <i>Selfie Culture</i> and Symbols of Belonging – how are linguistic and semiotic resources used for identity work?</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital-me (self-reflection)</li> <li>• Searching for signs of activism in the city and on digital platforms</li> <li>• Creation of a hashtag; meme; selfie etc.</li> <li>• Finding a way to hide your identity</li> <li>• Writing of a post using socially meaningful orthography.</li> </ul>

5. <b>Digital culture wars.</b> Radical battles on digital grounds. Nazi and language Nazi discourses. Semiotic resources and meme culture. Indexicality of orthography on social media. Hashtag activism: meanings and functions of hashtags. Body-positivity, climate change activism and other movements of culture activism; pink/white/green/etc-washing, propaganda and trolling on social media.	4	2	2	<b>8</b>	15	Selective analytic tasks will include, e.g. a case study (a digital portrait of an activist; a case of Russian propaganda); relevant TV series and sci-fi; monitoring of a digital practices; application of theoretical concepts on authentic digital materials; preparation of research methodology for analysis of chosen digital practice; presentations of readings, etc.)
6. <b>The Digital Self as a Message and Voices of the Weak</b> How do we use digital platforms to resist dominant narratives, and how can one <i>speak through silence</i> ?	4		2	<b>6</b>	15	
7. Experiential learning: formulation of tasks, discussions, reflections in groups		6	2	8	20	
<b>Total:</b>	20	12	16	<b>48</b>	<b>90</b>	
Assessment strategy	Weight %	Deadline			Assessment criteria	
<i>Course portfolio:</i> cumulative assignments (see above), Kahoot test of main concepts, peer-review. The assignments will be specified and discussed with the students at the very beginning of the course.		During the semester			Contribution quality, collaboration, and engagement with peers and topics.	

**Compulsory readings NB.** Students read selectively; at the beginning of each semester the relevant literature is listed on the course moodle page

- Kannen, Victoria; Aaron, Langille (2023) *Virtual Identities and Digital Culture*. Routledge.
- Finlayson, A., Kelly, A., Topinka, R., & Little, B. (2022). Digital culture wars: understanding the far right's online powerbase. *Soundings (London, England)*, 81(81), 43–64. <https://doi.org/10.3898/SOUN:81.03.2022>
- Arkhipova, A., Radchenko, D., Titkov, A. et al., 2018. «Rally rebuild»: Internet in protest and protest on the Internet. *Monitoring of Public Opinion: Economic and Social Changes* 1, 12–35. DOI: 10.14515/monitoring.2018.1.02 (in Russian)
- Certeau, Michel de., 1984. *The practice of everyday life (L'Invention du Quotidien, 1980)*. Translated by Steven Rendall. University of California Press  
[https://monoskop.org/images/2/2a/De\\_Certeau\\_Michel\\_The\\_Practice\\_of\\_Everyday\\_Life.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/2/2a/De_Certeau_Michel_The_Practice_of_Everyday_Life.pdf)
- Eco, Umberto, 1986. *Towards a Semiological Guerrilla Warfare (Per una guerriglia semiologica, 1967)*. Translated by Harcourt, Inc.  
[https://www.academia.edu/40442538/Umberto\\_Eco\\_Towards\\_a\\_semiological\\_guerrilla\\_warfare](https://www.academia.edu/40442538/Umberto_Eco_Towards_a_semiological_guerrilla_warfare)
- Scott, J.C., 1990. *Domination and the arts of resistance: hidden transcripts*. Yale university press.  
<https://libcom.org/article/domination-and-arts-resistance-hidden-transcripts-james-c-scott>
- Androutopoulos, J. 2013. Networked multilingualism: Some language practices on Facebook and their implications. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 19 (2), 185–205.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. [Preface chapter]
- Veum, A., & Undrum, L. V. M. (2018). The selfie as a global discourse. *Discourse & Society*, 29(1), 86–103.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26377391>

**Optional readings (selective reading)**

Arkhipova, A. & Lapshin, Y., 2023. „No Wobble“: Anonymous Anti-War Street Art In Russia, 2022-2023 (online exhibition) <https://www.nowobble.net/intro/>

Bailey, E.R., Matz, S.C., Youyou, W. et al., 2020. Authentic self-expression on social media is associated with greater subjective well-being. *Nature Communications* 11 (article number 4889) <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-18539-w>

- Davis, W., 2022. BeReal is Gen Z's new favorite social media app. Here's how it works. *National Public Radio NPR (online resource)* <https://www.npr.org/2022/04/16/1092814566/bereal-app-gen-z-download>
- Scott, J.C., 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Yale university press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1nq836>
- Bell, A. 2002. Back in style: reworking audience design. *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*. P. Eckert, J. R. Rickford (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davis, W., 2022. BeReal is Gen Z's new favorite social media app. Here's how it works. *National Public Radio NPR (online resource)* <https://www.npr.org/2022/04/16/1092814566/bereal-app-gen-z-download>
- Lee, C. 2014. Language choice and self-representation in social media: the case of university students in Hong Kong. *The language of social media*. P. Seargeant, C. Tagg (eds.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 91–112.
- Leppänen, S. 2012. Linguistic and Generic Hybridity in Web Writing. The Case of Fan Fiction [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280021285\\_Linguistic\\_and\\_generic\\_hybridity\\_in\\_web\\_writing\\_The\\_case\\_of\\_fan\\_fiction](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280021285_Linguistic_and_generic_hybridity_in_web_writing_The_case_of_fan_fiction).
- Svendsen, E., Lauridsen, P. S. (eds.). 2018. *Medieanalyse*. Samfundslitteratur.
- Thurlow, C., Mroczek, K. (eds.). 2011. *Digital Discourse. Language in the New Media (Oxford Studies in Sociolinguistics)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Van Dijck, J. 2013. 'You have one identity': Performing the self on Facebook and LinkedIn. *Media, culture & society* 35 (2), 199–215.
- Androutsopoulos, J. 2016. Theorizing media, mediation and mediatization. *Sociolinguistics: Theoretical Debates*. N. Coupland (ed.). 282–302.
- Lee, Carmen, K. M. 2011. Micro-Blogging and Status Updates on Facebook: Texts and Practices. *Digital Discourse: Language in the New Media*. C. Thurlow, K. Mroczek (eds.). Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 110–130.
- Livingstone, S., Lunt, P. 1994. *Talk on television. Audience participation and public debate*. London: Routledge.
- McLaughlin, C., Vitak, J. 2011. Norm evolution and violation on Facebook. *New media & society* 14 (2), 299–315.
- Media articles:  
<https://www.politico.eu/article/occupied-norwegian-tv-series-thats-enraged-the-kremlin-norway-russia-occupation/>  
<https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2015/oct/02/tv-drama-russian-invasion-occupied-premiere-norway>
- Movies, TV series:  
<https://predateli.navalny.com/en>  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occupied>