

The Internet Made Real

Instructor: Mimi Onuoha

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Term: Fall 2017

Time: Tuesdays, 8am - 11:40am

Course Number: TBD [Media Studies]

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 12pm - 1pm (in Pod or room E214)

Course Description

The Internet as we know it today is the mediating point for a multitude of ways that we visually communicate with one another. It is also a massive network of networks that was initially funded by the military, built atop older forms of communication, and owes its origins to sources whose traces have been virtually erased from modern experiences of it.

How has the the net changed our ways of thinking about visual culture, media objects, and information consumption? What does it mean for such a widely-used medium to have so much of its inner workings concealed?

This two credit, seven-week course takes off from the starting place of "Media Archaeology: Signs and Representation" but uses the Internet as a window for considering current, global, physical and digital modes of communication, documentation, and exchange. By examining the less obvious aspects of this vast network that governs so much of our lives, we aim to understand how our individual experiences of this system can be situated within a vaster history and reality.

Expectations and Requirements

- Class attendance and punctuality
- Participation during class discussions and presentations
- Weekly readings and bi-weekly responses
- Final paper/project

This class is an inclusive and harassment-free space for everyone, with no tolerations of discrimination based on gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or appearance. Please feel free to let me know privately if you have an academic accommodation.

All students are allowed one absence as a maximum. It is worth stressing that because the class covers so much new material, it is very much to your advantage to not miss any classes, if possible.

Evaluation

Final evaluation will be based on class participation, the completion of all assignments, quality of work, and attendance.

For the final project/paper, I am interested in your ability to engage deeply with the content we have discussed, synthesize material that we have discussed in class, and propose interesting and original ideas and extensions of the topics.

Format

The majority of assignments for this course will be readings (good ones!) and films/videos. During class we will have a number of discussions, as well as exercises that will allow us to interface with the material in ways beyond just conversation.

There is no need to purchase a book, as all readings will be made available to you.

I can be reached via email at all times, but I am very slow to respond to emails sent over the weekend. If you are in need of a prompt response, please email during the week. I reserve 24 hours to respond, but typically will reply much sooner.

Syllabus

Week One: October 24

The Internet: History and Origins.

[Introductions to course, logistics, and each other]

Week Two: October 31

Net infrastructure and traces

Week Three: November 7

HTTP + protocols and the web

Week Four: November 14

**Plan day – no class **

Week Five: November 28

The web outside of the West

Week Six: December 5 **

Alternatives, futures, and uses

Week Seven: December 12 **

In class paper/final project presentations