Comm/Info 4650: Mobile Communication in Public Life
Undergraduate Seminar, Spring 2016
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:25-2:40pm
Kennedy 101

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Course Description

Mobile technology is an increasingly important tool for modern communication. This course will
take a critical exploration of the role of mobile communication in public life. Throughout the
course, we will explore the societal impact of mobile communication so that students can gain a
deeper intellectual understanding of mobile communication in public life and its impact on issues
such as social interaction, identity, privacy, sense of place, and surveillance. By the end of the
course, students should have a critical understanding of the global, social, political, and
economic impact of mobile communication.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Identify a variety of implications of mobile communication for social relations.
2. Describe economic and political effects of mobile communication globally.
3. Explain privacy and safety issues related to mobile communication.
4. Conduct primary research on mobile communication in public life.

Required Text:
MA: MIT Press.

Additional readings can be found on Blackboard in alphabetical order by first author.

Logistics:
Students who do not attend the first two classes of the semester will be dropped from the
course.

This class will be run as a seminar, which means there will be little to no lecture. Students should complete all readings in preparation for class. Students will be expected to contribute to class discussion in constructive and respectful ways. Students should bring the readings with them to class as we will often refer back to them during class.

Discussion Questions: Students will be responsible for writing one discussion question per week. The class will be divided into two groups. Group 1 will write discussion questions for
the readings due on Tuesdays and Group 2 will write discussion questions for the readings due on Thursdays. Discussion questions should be submitted by midnight the night before class. Discussion questions are a way to a) seek clarification about confusing passages in the readings; b) relate readings together; c) relate readings to current events; or d) praise/critique particular passages from the readings. You must submit 10 of 11 discussion questions.

Mini-Essays: Students will also be asked to write twelve in-class 5-minute essays throughout the semester. Each essay will be graded on a scale: check minus, check, & check plus. Essay questions will be based on the readings for that day. The lowest two grades of the essays will be dropped and not calculated into the final grade.

Mobile Diet Assignment: In order to better understand the role of mobile communication in everyday life, students are required to go on a mobile phone diet for 48 hours and then submit a written reflection on the exercise.

Primary Research Project: Throughout the semester students will work on a collective research project whereby they learn to and conduct qualitative in-depth interviews (n>5) and observation research (~10 hours) on mobile communication in public. Students will submit their observational field notes and interview transcriptions at the end of the semester. Additionally students will also submit a 7-8 page analysis of their research.

Human Subjects Training: All researchers at Cornell who conduct research with human subjects must complete Human Subjects Training. If you have not completed such the online training here at Cornell, you are required to do so before March 1. Human Subjects Training: http://www.irb.cornell.edu/training/citi. Please send your certification to lmh13@cornell when you’ve completed the training.

Grading:

Course grades will depend on critical mastery of the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical issues raised in the course as demonstrated in contributions to in-class essays (20%), discussion questions (10%), mobile diet assignment (15%), research fieldnotes (15%), research transcriptions (20%), and final research analysis paper (20%).

Students with disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability and qualify for academic accommodations, please contact me as early as possible during the semester. I am happy to provide students with the necessary accommodations as long as you let me know ahead of time.

Statement of Inclusivity and Respect:

Each student in this course is expected to contribute to an inclusive and respectful class environment. Students of all backgrounds including gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and religion are to be treated fairly and with honesty, integrity, and respect. Civil discourse, reasoned thought, sustained discussion, and constructive engagement without degrading, abusing, harassing, or silencing others is required of all students in this class.

Code of Academic Integrity:

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student’s own work. Proper APA citation should be followed for all assignments. For this
course, collaboration is allowed in the following instances: group research proposal and on the final paper.

From the Cornell "Code of Academic Integrity":

“Absolute integrity is expected of every Cornell student in all academic undertakings. Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values, and the values most essential to an academic community are grounded on the concept of honesty with respect to the intellectual efforts of oneself and others. Academic integrity is expected not only in formal coursework situations, but in all University relationships and interactions connected to the educational process... A Cornell student’s submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student’s own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student's academic position truthfully reported at all times. In addition, Cornell students have a right to expect academic integrity from each of their peers.

General responsibilities:
1. A student shall in no way misrepresent his or her work.
2. A student shall in no way fraudulently or unfairly advance his or her academic position.
3. A student shall refuse to be party to another student’s failure to maintain academic integrity.
4. A student shall not in any other manner violate the principle of academic integrity.”

The entire Code of Academic Integrity can be found online at [http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html](http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html)

Absences:
This course will be run as seminar with little to no lecture. Therefore your class preparation and attendance are crucial to the success of the class. Attendance will not be taken in class unless it seems that attendance is becoming a problem in the course. In-class essays can be made up only if the student notifies the professor prior to class that they will be missing due to illness, etc. Travel plans home for holidays and breaks, such as weddings and vacations and family reunions, are not reasonable excuses for late work or alternative arrangements. If a student has an excused absence from class on a day that he or she is submitting a discussion question, the student is still expected to submit discussion question to the professor in advance in class. If the student fails to submit a discussion question without prior approval from the professor, the student will not be allowed to submit make-up question. There will be no paper or assignment extensions in this class. Please look at assignment dates and do not remain in the class if you have conflicting responsibilities.

Re-grading Policy:
There are two general rules/guidelines to keep in mind regarding grade policies for COMM/INFO4650:
1. The professor will not discuss the grade of a paper or assignment for at least 24 hours after the graded paper has been returned to the student. This ensures that the student has enough time to read and digest the comments by the professor as well as to re-read their own work.

2. Any official grade request change must be in writing (Word doc, not email or sms), explaining why the student thinks a grade change is in order. A hard copy of this request should be handed into the professor within one week of receiving the grade.

**Extra Credit Policy:**

Throughout the semester we will be reading about a variety of research on mobile communication. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the research process, students are encouraged in participate in research studies on campus. Students can gain extra credit in Comm/Info 4650 for their participation in a research study at Cornell. Course extra credit for Comm 4650 will only be given for research studies which are communication or media-related. Students can sign up to participate in a research study on SONA https://cornell-comm.sona-systems.com.

Generally, SONA points are given out based on 30-minute time intervals. One SONA point (or one 30-minute study) is equivalent to 0.5 extra credit points in Comm 4650. Students may earn up to 2 extra credit points or 4 SONA points in Comm 4650. Participation in a study can only count as extra credit for one course this semester. Students cannot have their participation in a study count towards multiple courses for extra credit.

Students can also receive extra credit for attending an academic event (i.e. colloquium, special lecture, etc.) related to a topic we are discussing in class and then write a 1-page report summarizing how the lecture relates to mobile communication. Students interested in this option need to get the professor’s approval of the event before it occurs. Each report should be turned in with 48 hours of the event and can earn a student up to 1 extra credit point. In lieu of research extra credit, students can earn up to two extra credit points through these lecture reports.

Check out http://communication.cals.cornell.edu/news-events and http://infosci.cornell.edu/colloquia for potential colloquia of interest.

Students may do any combination of research extra credit and lecture report extra credit, but may not earn more than two extra credit points in COMM/INFO 4650.
Course Schedule

Week 1, Thursday, 1/28
  Topic: Introductions and overview of course
  Assignment due: (none)

Week 2, Tuesday, 2/2
  Topic: History of the mobile phone
  Assignment due:
    Group 1 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)

Week 2, Thursday, 2/4
  Topic: History of the mobile media
  Assignment due:
    Group 2 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)

Week 3, Tuesday, 2/9
  Topic: Mobiles & Social Interaction
  Assignment due:
    Group 1 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)

Week 3 Thursday, 2/11
  Topic: Mobile & Social interaction
  Assignment due:
    Mobile Diary Assignment DUE
    Group 2 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)

Week 4, Tuesday NO CLASS FEB BREAK
Week 4, Thursday 2/18
Topic: Mobile & Youth
Assignment Due:
*Group 2 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)*

Week 5, Tuesday, 2/23
Topic: Mobile & Youth
Assignment due:
Read McEwen, R. “Longitudinal study of Mobile Phone use by College students”.
*Group 1 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)*

Week 5, Thursday, 2/25
Topic: Mobiles & Youth
Assignment due:
*Group 2 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)*

**Supplemental Reading:**

Week 6, Tuesday, 3/1
Topic: Mobiles & Public Space
Assignment due:
*Group 1 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)*
Week 6, Thursday, 3/3
Topic: Mobile and Public Space
Assignment Due:
*Group 2 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)*

Week 7, Tuesday, 3/8
Topic: Observational research
Assignment due:
*Group 1 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)*

Week 7, Thursday, 3/10
Topic: Interview research
Assignment due:
*Group 2 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)*

Week 8, Tuesday, 3/15
Topic: Locative Media
Assignment due:
*Group 1 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)*

Week 8, Thursday, 3/17
Topic: Locative Media
Assignment due:
*Group 2 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)*
Week 9, Tuesday, 3/21
Topic: Mobiles for All
Assignment due:

Group 1 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)

Supplemental Readings:

Week 9, Thursday, 3/23
Topic: Interviews and Observation Practicum
Assignment due:
Work on interviews & observations in class

SPRING BREAK – no class

Week 10, Tuesday, 4/5
Topic: Field notes and transcription practicum
Assignment due:
Work on fieldnotes and transcriptions in class.

Week 10, Thursday 4/7
Topic: Mobiles in the Developing World
Assignment due:
Read LIRNEAsia Innovation briefs:
- Helping BOP micro-entrepreneurs to do business through mobiles Innovation brief
- Knowledge and information seeking through the mobile phone for livelihood benefits
- Socioeconomic benefits of mobile phones for women at the BOP

Group 2 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)

Week 11, Tuesday, 4/12
Topic: Mobiles in the Developing World
Assignment due:

Example observational fieldnotes & transcription due
Group 1 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)
Week 11, Thursday, 4/14
Topic: Mobiles in the Developing World
Assignment due:
Group 2 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)

Week 12, Tuesday, 4/19
Topic: Mobiles & Collective action
Assignment due:
Group 1 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)

Week 12, Thursday, 4/21
Topic: Mobile & Collective action
Assignment due:
Group 2 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)

Week 13, Tuesday, 4/26
Topic: Mobiles & Surveillance
Assignment due:
Group 1 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)

Week 13, Thursday, 4/28
Topic: Mobiles & Surveillance
Assignment due:
Group 2 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)
Week 14, Tuesday, 5/3
Topic: Mobile & Sousveillance
Assignment due:
Group 1 leads discussion (questions due by midnight the night before)

Week 14, Thursday, 5/5
Topic: Analyzing qualitative data
Assignment due:
Bring your observational and transcription data with you to class.

Week 15, Tuesday, 5/10
Topic: Wrap up
Assignment due:
**Final observational fieldnotes and transcriptions due**

**Final analysis papers due May 17th, by noon in Prof. Humphreys mailbox (4th floor Mann)**