



## Introduction to Interactive Communication

Autumn 2007

Thursdays, 18:30 – 21:10, Tator Hall 114

Facebook: “Intro Interactive”

### Instructor

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### Office Hours

In Faculty Office Building 23:

Thurs, 14:00 – 15:15, 21:15 – 22:00

Virtual Office Hours (Second Life: Professor Erde):

Monday, 13:00-15:00

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This seminar is designed to provide a foundation for the MS in Interactive Communication program, introducing the theory and practice of interactive communication, and establishing the organizational and research skills demanded by the field. As a field of study and as a profession, interactive communication is only just emerging, and there is no clear fixed tradition or discipline. There is, however, a collection of ideas about what interactive communication means, and how it works. Our focus during the semester will be on engaging these ideas, providing each student with a broad idea of how to take apart social and interactive systems, how to reassemble them in more effective ways, and how to track the current state of the art in interactive technologies.

Throughout the semester, we will be touching on the meaning of interactive communication and the deeper questions of why things work the way they do. We will also be looking at how to uncover the current trends, and predict opportunities for yourself and your organization. We will not be spending as much time on the practical elements of production technique, or on structured

approaches to managing such production in an organization, as these are treated in more detail in later coursework. As a survey, we are interested in the big questions, and how to integrate a broad set of ideas into a useful group of conceptual relationships for each student.

Before class each week, participants will complete a brief set of readings and other assignments. Each participant will write a short response paper, integrating the ideas of the readings, their own experience and outside reading, and possibly reporting on a set of activities. These responses are to be presented on an individual blog. I will also offer brief lectures and tutorials during our meetings; the focus will be on discussing the readings, extracting what is useful, and deciding how this might apply to our professional work.

By the end of the semester, you should have a framework within which you are able to better understand the role of interactive technology in organizations and society. You should understand the current trends in the interactive industries, and some of the constraints under which they operate. You should possess the skills needed to find useful information, make sense of it, and present it in an organized and compelling fashion. You should also have, at some stage of development, a design philosophy: a personal understanding of what values you hold important, and how best to achieve those ends.

## Readings and Schedule

Rather than relying on a single textbook, we will be drawing on books and articles from a range of sources. The schedule below lists these readings. Please note that it is a tentative schedule, and will most likely change as the semester progresses. Changes will be announced on the Facebook page for the course. Links to each of the resources may be found on that Facebook page as well. To access protected readings, use the username “expurgated” and the password “expurgated”.

In many cases we are reading a chapter or two of a book. You may find it useful to purchase a copy of the book; used copies can often be found very inexpensively online.

## Assignments and Evaluation

There is a good chance, if you are a new graduate student, that you are accustomed to being at the head of the class without having to try very hard. Every student in this course has been at the top of their undergraduate classes or leaders in their

profession. It is my job to make you stretch, and although you may not appreciate it every Thursday, my hope is that when everything is finished, you will be happy with what you have learned during the semester.

Chances are, if you are overly concerned with your grade in the course, graduate school is not for you. On the other hand, I would be disappointed if you did not want to do well in the course. My advice for doing well is as follows:

1. *Plan your time wisely.* Some people suggest that the reason they like to hire people with graduate degrees is no more than that graduate students have demonstrated an ability to make good use of their time and are comfortable working under pressure. I expect that you will need to use about nine hours each week, in addition to the nearly three hours we spend together in class. Some weeks will require more time, some will require less. We all have other demands on our time, but you should schedule and protect this time. One of the things you will need to do is find ways of reading and making sense of material more quickly—something we will talk about in the first class.

2. *Go beyond the minimum.* At a minimum, I expect you to read and think about the readings, and present that thought in an interesting way. A tossed together response that demonstrates a superficial understanding of the topic and little original contribution is frustrating to read, since it wastes your time and mine. There are times when pro forma performance is acceptable, but I have high expectations for your capabilities, and hope you will show me your best work.

3. *You are not a blank slate.* In every course I teach, students come in with a valuable set of personal and professional experiences. This is obvious in the case of someone who is late in their own career, and may have many years of media or other professional experience. While not as obvious in the case of younger students who may have recently finished an undergraduate degree, I guarantee you that you have had experience that can be brought to bear on the problems we will be discussing. The degree to which you can connect these earlier experiences to the work we do in the course will determine, to a great extent, how much you learn and how well you can apply it. Learn also from the experiences of your fellow participants. There is sometimes a tendency toward eye-rolling: from students with less experience when an old hand launches into a story about something that happened *way* back in the 1980s, or from students with more experience when younger

students presume to talk about their own experiences. Stop yourself before those eyes roll, and recognize that a willingness to share experiences is a rare and valuable thing.

From a practical perspective, you will be evaluated on three areas: class discussion, blogging, and a final group research project. Descriptions of each of these three areas follow. I will provide qualitative and quantitative feedback throughout the semester. If you ever have a question as to where you stand, I encourage you to contact me outside of class time—it is important to me that you know how you are doing in the course, and ways you might improve.

I do my best to be a fair grader, but in order to be fair, it means that I have the responsibility of making an A in my course be well earned. I also have the responsibility to you and to the program to not pass students who are not prepared for graduate work.

## Class Discussion

We will have a total of thirteen class meetings. There are readings each week in preparation for each discussion. Generally, weekly reading does not exceed 150 pages. Some weeks will require more reading than others, so you are encouraged to budget your time wisely. Each participant is expected to have thoroughly read and considered the required readings before each class. You should plan to spend some time on the Web and in the library filling in the blanks in your knowledge, and looking for ways to connect the readings to your own base of knowledge. You are also strongly encouraged to partner with others in the class in order to meet and discuss the readings outside of class time. Several times throughout the semester, I will be giving “pop quizzes” on the readings. I may also ask you to do an exercise called “signaled stopping” once or twice. Please bring the readings with you to class, either on paper or electronically.

At each meeting, a student will be called upon to introduce one of the pieces we are reading. The student should highlight what they think are the major topics addressed by a reading, along with his or her evaluation of the piece as a whole, why it may be useful or important, and how it connects to other readings of the day, and the other issues in the course. This introduction should be designed to lead to a further discussion and debate over the reading, in the hope that we can collectively come to understand the issues better. You are welcome to bring materials to class that you think may be helpful in better understanding the readings (or to post such materials to your blog).

While you will know ahead of time the readings you are expected to present, you should prepare for each meeting with the expectation that I will call on you to answer questions, regardless of whether you are primarily responsible for that week's readings. You should also come with issues you have questions about and want to discuss with the class.

Your participation in the discussions—including quizzes, presentations, and the other opportunities you have to enter the class discussion—will make up twenty-five percent (**25%**) of your total grade. You should come to class ready to participate and add to the discussion. You are judged not only on your own understanding and insight into the topics we are addressing, but by your ability to elicit similar understanding and insight among your fellow students. An ability to ask good questions, curiosity, and an exploratory spirit are in many ways more valuable than an ability to provide good answers. While missing a class meeting will not negatively affect your final grade, missing more than one meeting, or consistently arriving late, likely will. If you miss more than three meetings, you will not receive a passing grade in the course. If you attend every class, but never speak, you are likewise unlikely to pass the course.

## The Blog and Response Papers

The blog is an individual's public research journal, and your writing will be open to the rest of the class, and to the rest of the world. We will discuss the use of the blog in the first class meeting. You should plan to post at least twice each week.

One of these posts will be the response paper for the week, usually addressing the content of one or more of the readings. This must be posted by the Tuesday preceding class, but I would encourage you to post early. If you are the first person to post on a set of readings, you have little worry of repeating what has already been said by other participants, and a better chance at originality. Before you post, be sure to read what others have written; you might even post in response to them. Make good use of quotations and citations or hyperlinks to support your ideas. These should represent structured argumentative essays and include evidence in the form of citations and quotations.

Spelling, grammar, and style count, and entries that have flaws in these areas will receive a poor grade. I am most interested in your ideas, but a lack of clarity in terms of grammar or spelling makes your argument less compelling. It is highly recommended that you have and use a copy of Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*. Citations should be

hyperlinked or cited using APA-style citations. It is vitally important that you not only have good ideas, but that you become capable of expressing these ideas in a compelling way. As I evaluate the blogs, I will comment on the form as well as the content. My comments will generally be made as public comments, so that advice I give to one student will be of help to others.

Thirty percent (**30%**) of your final grade is based on the average grade of your nine best response papers.

An additional fifteen percent (**15%**) of the grade is based on blogging beyond the response papers, and on the "buzz" your blog attracts. With a few exceptions during the semester, there is no set requirement for how long your other entries should be or precisely what they should consist of. At least one posting during the semester must be an audio post, and at least one must be a video post. It would be helpful if the posts pointed out or discussed issues relevant to the course: things you have come across in the news media, journals, or helpful resources online, experiences in your personal or professional lives that apply to our work together, or musings on the state of the world.

The ultimate objective is to attract a readership of interested people to your blog, both of your classmates and those outside the class. While it is difficult to attract an audience when there are, by some estimates, tens of millions of blogs out there, you should consider your audience and how to craft something that will be of interest. If you want to do something special in terms of design or function for your blog, I encourage you to experiment, and would be happy to talk with you about it.

## Final Briefing

The final assignment in this course will be a group whitepaper and presentation on an emerging technology or trend in a current sector of the interactive industry. Groups will be assigned mid-semester, and the results will be presented as a brief white paper and a polished presentation. I will expect a series of milestones throughout the process. The final product (both the presentation and the document) should be completed to the highest professional standards, and should represent a thorough understanding of the current literature in the field. All elements of the final briefing make up thirty percent (**30%**) to your final grade.

## Policies

Attendance and participation at the seminars is expected. While tardiness is sometimes unavoidable, students who consistently come in late, or who miss more than one class meeting, will see this reflected in their participation grade. Students who miss more than three class meetings will not pass the class.

Past classes have fostered a culture of food and drink, and I am of the opinion (especially given the time of day the class is held) that bringing snacks to share is conducive to good discussion, and encourage the practice. Please be aware that we are in a shared room, and it is important that we keep it neat. To that end, please take a moment before you leave each day to take a look around and pick up any messes you see (yours or not).

On the first day of class, we will discuss the problem of plagiarism and proper citation. At its root, plagiarism constitutes misrepresenting the authorship of work for a course. If you make use of another's ideas, this must be cited. If you make use of words and phrases that are substantially similar to another's work, you must cite this. If you make use of phrases that are identical to another's, regardless of the length of the phrase, you must place these in quotation marks. The following resources will be of help in understanding what constitutes plagiarism:

Writing With Sources:

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources/>

Plagiarism Defined:

[http://www.turnitin.com/research\\_site/e\\_what\\_is\\_plagiarism.html](http://www.turnitin.com/research_site/e_what_is_plagiarism.html)

Plagiarism and the Art of Skillful Citation:

<http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/immuno/citevell/>

Using Sources:

<http://www.hamilton.edu/academics/resource/wc/usingsources.htm>

Please also refer to the Quinnipiac University Academic Integrity website (<http://www.quinnipiac.edu/x1046.xml>) for information about Academic Integrity and proper student behavior. Students are expected to be familiar with these university policies. Forms of dishonesty include:

- cheating or helping another to cheat on an exam
- using a paper authored by someone other than yourself
- plagiarizing another's written work (papers or outlines), in full or in part, including failure to properly cite all sources
- deliberately distorting information

- falsifying information (e.g., reason for absence)

Students found guilty of any of the above will be subject to sanctions in class, usually a failing grade for the course, and will also be reported to the Academic Integrity Board.

Students with disabilities who wish to request reasonable accommodations should contact: John Jarvis, Coordinator of Learning Services in the Learning Center, Tator Hall Room 119 at (203) 582-5390 or at [john.jarvis@quinnipiac.edu](mailto:john.jarvis@quinnipiac.edu). Quinnipiac University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Unless otherwise noted in an assignment or in class, work turned in after a deadline, will receive a zero for the assignment.

I am always happy to chat not only about the topics of the course, but anything else you would like to talk about. If you feel overwhelmed, underwhelmed, or just whelmed, please do get in touch online or in person.

## Tentative Schedule

**Readings should be completed—and thought about—before class.** Be sure to check the web site for updates, as it is *likely* that this schedule will be adjusted as we move through the semester. Links to these readings may be found on the Facebook page.

### First Part: Theory

#### August 30 – Course Introduction and ICT overview

#### September 6 – Evolution of Interactive Communication

Read before September 6:

- Bush, V. (1945). As we may think. *Atlantic Monthly*, July.
- Engelbart, D. (1962). Augmented human intellect study, Conceptual framework (Part II, pp 8-46). SRI.
- Licklider, J.C.R. (1968). Man-Computer Symbiosis. *Science and Technology*. (pp. 1-20 in the PDF) [lick-1968.pdf]

Due Tuesday, September 4:

- Join Facebook and friend “Intro Interactive”
- Set up blog and write short self-introduction.
- Post response #1

In A. Bruns & J. Jacobs, Eds., *Uses of blogs*.  
New York: Peter Lang.

## September 13 – From Mass to Network Society

Read before September 13:

- Beniger, J. (1986). *Control Revolution*, Introduction (pp. 1-27). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Ronfeldt, D. and Arquilla, J. (2001). Networks, netwars, and the fight for the future. *FirstMonday*, 6(10).
- Anderson, C. (2004). The long tail. *Wired*, 12(10).
- Mahoney, D. (2002). How to write a better weblog. *A list apart*.
- *Optional*: Wellman, B. (2005). Community: From neighborhood to network. *Communications of the ACM*, 48(10), 53-55.

Due Tuesday, September 11:

- Find at least four blogs you like: what makes them good? Add to RSS aggregator of your choice. Post about it.
- Post response #2

## September 20 – Convergence, Mashups, & the Bricoleur

Read before September 20:

- Jenkins, H. (2006). Introduction: “Worship at the alter of convergence” (pp. 1-24). *Convergence Culture*. New York: NYU Press.
- Nelson, T. (2003). *Computer Lib* (Selection). In Waldrip-Fruin & Montfort (Eds.), *New Media Reader*, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Negroponte, N. (2003). *Soft Architecture Machines* (Selection). In Waldrip-Fruin & Montfort (Eds.), *New Media Reader*, Cambridge: MIT Press.

Due Tuesday, September 18:

- Look for different types of mash-ups: audio, video, maps, web, and review your favorite.
- Post response #3

## September 27 – Mass Collaboration

Read before September 27:

- Benkler, Y. (2006). *Wealth of Networks* (cap. 1, 7). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Tapscott, D. & Williams, A. (2006). *Wikinomics* (Intro & cap. 1). New York: Portfolio.
- *Optional*: Halavais, A. (2006). Scholarly blogging: Moving toward the visible college.

Due Tuesday, September 25:

- “Dating” post and brainstorming ideas
- Sign up for an account on a Wiki (Wikipedia, etc.) and make a change. Blog about what you did, and link to it.
- Post response #4

## Interlude

### October 4 – Coordinating Collaborative Work

Read before October 4:

- PMI (2000), *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge* (Section 1, pp. 1-27).
- Lipnack, J. & Stamps, J. (1997). Working smart: a web book for virtual teams (pp. 189-222). In *Virtual teams: reaching across space, time, and organizations with technology*. New York: Wiley.
- Goto, K. & Cotler, E. (2004). Core process overview. *Web redesign 2.0: Workflow that works* (Selection). Peachpit Press.

Due Tuesday, October 2:

- Indicate your group and an abstract of your topic and audience.
- Post response #5

## Second Part: Industry

### October 11 – Online News

Read before October 11:

- Matheson, D. (2004). Weblogs and the epistemology of the news: some trends in online journalism. *New Media & Society*, 6(4). 443-468.
- Sunstein, C. (2004). Democracy and filtering. *Communications of the ACM*, 47(12), 57-59.
- Bruns, A. (2006) Wikinews: The next generation of alternative online news? *Scan: Journal of Media Arts and Culture*, 3(1).
- *Optional*: Rafaeli, S. and Sudweeks, F. (1997). Networked interactivity. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 2(4).
- *Optional*: Jankowski, N. & van Selm, M. (2001). Traditional news media online: an examination of added value (pp. 375-392). In K. Renckstorf, D. McQuail, & N. Jankowski,

*Television news research: Recent European approaches and findings.* Berlin: Quintessense.

Due Tuesday, October 9:

- What is the most interactive source of news? How do you get your news?
- Post response #6

### October 18 – Final Project Planning Meeting

Before Monday, October 15:

- IM or Skype chat with AH

Due Tuesday, October 16:

- Post agenda & objectives for meeting

On or about October 18:

- Meet with group and prepare research plan, responsibilities, & schedule document
- Blog it.

### October 25 – Entertainment, Online Gaming

Read before October 25:

- Huizinga, J. (1950). Nature and significance of play as a cultural phenomenon (pp. 1-27). *Homo ludens: a study of the play element in culture.* Boston: Beacon Press.
- Hinton, A. (2006). We live here: Games, third places, and the information architecture of the future. *ASIS&T Bulletin*, August/September.
- Pine, B.J., & Gilmore, J.H. (1999). *The Experience Economy.* Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press, pp. 1-26.

Due Tuesday, October 23:

- Visit second life, There, or another MUVE and write about your experience
- Post response #7

### November 1 – Word of Mouse & Viral Media

Read before November 1:

- Scoble, R. & Israel, S. (2006). *Naked Conversations.* Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 1-62, 99-114
- Thompson, C. (2006). Blogs to Riches. *New York Magazine*, February 20. 26-35.
- Mathes, A. (2004). Folksonomies: Cooperative classification and communication through shared metadata.

Due Tuesday, October 30:

- How well are the presidential campaigns doing with viral video?
- Post response #8

### November 8 – Locative & Ubiquitous Media

Read by November 8:

- Rheingold, H. (2002). Shibuya epiphany (pp. 1-28). *Smart mobs.* New York: Perseus.
- Czerwinski, M., Gage, D.W., Gemmell, J., Marshall, C., Pérez-Quinones, M., Skeels, et al (2006). Digital memories in an era of ubiquitous computing and abundant storage. *Communications of the ACM*, 49(1), 45-50.
- Gershenfeld, N. (2005). *Fab* (Selection). New York: Basic Books.
- *Optional:* Kangas, E. & Kinnunen, T. (2005). Applying user-centered design to mobile application development. *Communications of the ACM*, 48(7), 55-59.
- *Optional:* Gemmell, J., Bell, G., & Lueder, R. (2006). MyLifeBits: a personal database for everything. *Communications of the ACM*, 49(1), 89-95.

Due Tuesday, November 6:

- Correct a mistake on Wikipedia
- Get accounts on del.icio.us and tag some stuff with “07icm507”.
- Post response #9

### November 15 – Search Engines and Web Marketing

Read by November 15:

- Halavais, A. (2006). Search Engine Society: Search Engines, Search Divides, Social Search.
- *Optional:* Hearst, M., Elliott, A., English, J., Sinha, R., Swearingen, K., & Yee, K-P. (2002). Finding the flow in web site search. *Communications of the ACM*, 45(9).

Due Tuesday, November 13:

- Set up ads on your blog & buy placement on a search engine
- Post response #10

### Final Part: Whitepaper Presentations

#### November 29 & December 6 – Presentation