



(image: truth-out.org)

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Individual workshop hours: Monday/Wednesday 12:30 to 2

About Your Professor

Dr. Gutsche has been a journalist since 1996, having written for *The Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, the *Wisconsin State Journal*, and other regional and local publications. His scholarship surrounds cultural and social meanings of news, particularly in terms of how news media demarcate space and characterize place. He is the author and editor of four books, more than a dozen journal articles, and is an affiliated faculty member with Florida International University's Sea Level Solutions Center and the university's African and African Diaspora Studies Program. Gutsche was also a Research Scholar at the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri in 2015-2016.

Course Overview

Digital Theories is an interdisciplinary and international approach to applying critical/cultural theory to digital media and communities. Because the world of digital communication is constantly in flux, this class is designed to keep pace with the rapidly shifting digital media landscape. At the same time, however, this course approaches communication as a cultural function of power-making used to maintain dominant social and cultural positions within society. Therefore, this course relies on canonical readings in mass communication, scholarship focused on emerging technologies, and

DIG 4800

Digital Theories:

Moving Toward a Sense of Media Control

School of Communication + Journalism
Florida International University

Fall 2016
M/W 4:00 to 5:15
Hubert Library 170 (Mondays)
Mobile Virtual Reality Lab, AC2 167 (Weds)
(Updated August 15, 2016)

cutting-edge material, likely to be supplied by current journal articles that can be updated as the course develops.

This course is part of a larger major to prepare students for future careers as communicators in digital environments with content that is relevant for multiple professional academic and institutional settings. From graduate preparatory education to large firms and small businesses, social media start-ups to traditional media outlets seeking to leverage new digital strategies, as well as non-profit managers and community organizers, approaching media production, messages, and its audience through a critical lens helps us to identify issues of power within media and examine avenues for resistance.

Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of concepts and theories of mass communication as they are influenced and remade by the digital era, the hallmarks of which are increased audience autonomy, segmentation and specialization, interactivity, media convergence and conglomeration, and democratization. Specifically, students should be able to identify and apply the following concepts to digital news, advertising, and social products: *hegemony, agency, social control, technological determinism, culture, and ideology*, as well as others listed throughout the course material.

Specific Mission

A recent talk given by Knight Foundation officers and digital content creators of Human Rights Watch in Miami highlighted the fact that very soon, 50 percent of all content at *The New York Times* will be digital and visual in nature, with much of that work being created with virtual reality and 3D components. This class is designed to prepare students for heightened technical skills in digital storytelling, to enhance the technological production of digital work, and to improve innovations in digital storytelling that students will be able to express in trade and professional publications, as well as in faculty-led, refereed articles. Questions for both practice and scholarship that students will explore include:

- To what degree does VR/3D target messages at specific audiences while still keeping objectivity of the reporting?
- To what degree can VR/3D enter the voice of the storyteller into the reporting as a means of engagement?
- How can journalists and strategic communicators use VR/3D to include graphics and text as data points, perhaps including questions and user comments?
- To what degree does the interjection of self in to VR/3D storytelling guide people to particular messages?
- What ethical and legal challenges exist in the use of the platforms to report and deliver information?

This course, therefore, will create a VR product that introduces users to the interactive and daily experiences of sea level rise, a story that has since been difficult to tell given the “hidden” nature of rising seas in South Florida. From this experience, students will be able to learn about and discuss issues of:

- New technologies in the advancement of digital storytelling through virtual reality
- The creation of journalistic narratives and the cultural meanings assigned to them
- Multifaceted approaches to user testing and interpretation of audience reception
- Challenges of public journalism in a digital age

This class is an experiment and is designed around using virtual reality technologies to create public journalism and digital storytelling related to changing communities and environments. Slight changes in dates and tasks will occur.

Students should make themselves aware of the experience of using virtual reality and consider sitting down when viewing virtual reality or otherwise understand potential health effects of using this technology: vrs.org.uk/virtual-reality/human-factors-and-user-studies.html. Please discuss with your instructor if you have concerns.

Project Partners

- FIU School of Communication + Journalism (SCJ)
- FIU SCJ Mobile Virtual Reality Lab
- FIU Sea Level Solutions Center: slsc.fiu.edu/solutions-center
- FIU SCJ Media Innovation Incubator Lab
- eyesontherise.org

Course Learning Outcomes

1. To express a wide and deep understanding of possible influence of media on society.
2. To interpret media representations in terms of historical, cultural, and critical means of explanation.
3. To conduct media critique through a conceptual lens.
4. To express the role and function of media in characterizing social issues, geographies, and people through a lens of power and technological determinism.
5. To produce public media representations to reify or resist dominant ideological interpretations of daily explanations.

Applying Learning Objectives

Students can see in the schedule below how these objectives are applied through a written “purpose” for that course period, assignments, readings, and discussion topics.

Required Readings

1. *Media Control: News as an Institution of Power and Social Control* (Bloomsbury, 2015), Gutsche, 9781628922967
2. *Society Must be Defended* (Picador, 2003), Foucault, 0312422660
3. *Digital Proxemics: How Technology Shapes the Ways we Move* (Peter Lang, 2016), McArthur, 9781433131868
4. Other readings as assigned, made available via the professor's dropbox link, and at VR Resources on eyesontherise.org/virtualEYES

Recommended

Google Cardboard:

https://store.google.com/product/google_cardboard?utm_source=google-cardboard&utm_medium=MS&utm_campaign=Google_Cardboard

Projects/Exams**Midterm Exam 1: 20 percent**

Students will take a short answer exam at midterm related to the concepts (and definitions) and the application of those concepts to the readings and course discussions.

Midterm Exam 2: 20 percent

Students will take a short answer exam at midterm related to the concepts (and definitions) and the application of those concepts to the readings and course discussions.

Research Paper

All students will write a research paper for this class. This is not a group exercise. For this paper, you must select a topic presented in class, preferably a concept or controversy/case and the theories used to identify issues of power within your readings. The paper must be 8,000 words, including references. You must follow APA style, have at least 20 scholarly citations, and produce an original argument about how the concepts and controversies/cases interact. This should be viewed as original research, which we will be reading in class. Therefore, you must follow a structure that will be presented in lecture – including an introduction, a thesis, a problem, relevant scholarship on the topic, and then your analysis (the latter being the majority of the paper).

Paper Draft: 10 percent

The paper draft will consist of a narrative including the following elements,

1. Statement of Purpose: What the focus of this paper? What concept is it furthering? What case will be used to illustrate the paper? What methods are you proposing?

2. Research Questions: What are the two major research questions that address the problem/purpose from above?
3. Annotated Literature Review / Conceptual Framework: List at least 20 academic studies (no more than two can have been published from before 2008) that you will use to construct the conceptual section of the paper? An annotated list is one that not only lists the journal/article information, but provides three or four sentences that explains the citation's overarching arguments, methods, and contribution to your proposed paper.

Using each of the components above, altered and edited from professor and class feedback, this should be a completed first draft, not merely an extended outline, but an actual paper that provides the best work possible for further feedback that will be applied during revision.

Final Paper: 20 percent

Papers should be between 12 and 18 pages, not including references.

Group Project: 30 percent

Students will need to work successfully in groups to produce the VR assignment for the course.

Groups and Responsibilities

Research, digital music, and data visualization: oversee data collection of water samples for music project; produce research and data visualizations related to sea level rise to be verified and used with other groups

Production: facilitate relationships with publics and experts to create narratives via technology; write and produce scripts and narratives; become subject experts and source experts for narratives; assist other groups as needed

Public communication and project management: branding and communicating the effort via technological integration into affordable public options; creating and updating video and language for public consumption; coordinate efforts with faculty and community members; assist other groups as needed

Professor / team lead: provide funding and university support for lab and individual projects; oversee technological innovation and collaboration with community and university stakeholders; manage groups

Assessment

The following grade scale will be used as a guideline for determining final grades:

A	=	93-100
A-	=	90-92
B+	=	87-89
B	=	83-86
B-	=	80-82

C	=	70-79
F	=	71 or below

Attendance Policy

Traffic and rain are not appropriate explanations for lateness or absences. We live in Miami. Therefore, students are allowed two unexcused absences. Every absence after that reduces the student's final grade by half a grade. In other words, an A would become an A-. Additionally, two tardies will equal an absence; attendance is taking immediately at the beginning of class.

Students should not arrive late to class. Students late to exams will not be admitted and must wait for the professor outside of the classroom before entering. Students late or absent for quizzes or other in-class work will not be able to complete the work, unless it comports with the late work policy, below.

Makeup/Late Work

Excused absences involve true emergencies (i.e. illness or death in the family, or otherwise according to FIU policy). In order to receive consideration for an excused absence, you must do several things:

1. It is your responsibility to get in touch with me within one business day in the event you qualify for a makeup exam or quiz in order to be considered for makeup or to have a late assignment graded. Otherwise, all missed work will receive a zero.
2. You must provide appropriate documentation. In the case of a medical emergency, you need a doctor or hospital note that says you could not attend class on that date. In the case of a death (family emergency), you need to provide something documenting the dates and your relationship to the deceased, such as an obituary or funeral program. Examples of unacceptable documentation include a note saying you were seen by a doctor or health center, airline tickets to a family event, etc. Other absences that will not count as excused include family events (wedding, family trip, etc.), conflicts with other classes or school related activities (such as grammar exams or reviews), car trouble, a work conflict or an internship obligation. Failure to provide appropriate documentation means the absence will not be excused.

Attitude

It's everything. We all have bad days, but we don't need to make our own issues known to the world. If you are having troubles that you think would make their way into the classroom, please let me know. In this class, let's support each other – and that means showing respect. In fact, if you have something going on that may put you out of commission for the class period, just tell me that (I don't need to know details). Students who fail to do this will be asked to leave during that class period. Give respect. Get it.

Discussion of Sensitive Topics and Policy Related to Student Concerns

At times, conversation in the course, and in journalism, advertising and public relations, may have offensive (or uncomfortable) tones. Covering such topics is a necessary part of the journalist's role in society and dealing with these topics is an element every communication professional will face at one time or another. Discussing these topics also is important to being a critical media user and member of society. However, this freedom to discuss issues of a sensitive nature does not allow for sexual harassment, racism and other forms of discrimination. If you have concerns about conversations in the classroom or the content shared, please discuss them with me.

If you have issues or concerns, I encourage you discuss them with me. Per Academic Affairs, "If a student has a complaint against a faculty member, the student should attempt to resolve the complaint by an informal meeting with the faculty member involved. If the student believes that he or she cannot discuss the complaint with the instructor, the student should submit a written letter of complaint specifying the details of the grievance and the actions he or she is requesting to the chair of the department within which the faculty member is located. The student should file this complaint in as timely a manner as possible, but in no case can the complaint be filed later than the limits prescribed above."

Lastly, and just to let you know, **in all facets of this course, you are responsible for your own education and knowledge-base.** I am here to help lead you in the "right direction(s)." That means, stopping by during workshop hours (or making appointments outside of those hours).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations. **Requests for academic accommodations need to be made to me during the first week of class. Accommodations made mid-semester are not retro-active.**

Course Schedule and Assignment Dates

Week 1: Introduction

Purpose: Learning Outcome 1

8/22

Course introduction

8/24:

Article: *Locating Whiteness in journalism pedagogy*, Alemán

Article: *Leaning in: A student's guide to engaging constructively with social justice content*, DiAngelo and Sensoy

Week 2: Digitization of Space

Purpose: Learning Outcomes 1, 2

8/29

McArthur, Preface through Chapter 4

Article: *The new order of news and social media enterprises: Visualisations, linked data, and new methods and practices in journalism*

8/31

Workshop

Begin data collection

Learn how to use VR mount and software

Learn how to use underwater mount

VR: *360 Narratives Facebook group (public)*

VR: *Virtual reality, 360 video and the future of immersive journalism*

VR: *Video vs. flat video: A case study*

VR: *Covering Miami's rising seas: Sensors, public data and politics*

VR: *How to make 360 video (VR): Basic workflow explained*

Week 3: The Digital-Human Experience

Purpose: Learning Outcomes 4, 5

9/5

NO CLASS

Article: *Locating Sensitivity*

Article: *Covering global warming in dubious times: Environmental reporters in the new media ecosystem*

Article: *Reciprocal (and reductionist?) newswork: An examination of youth involvement in creating local participatory environmental news*

9/7

Workshop

Due: IRB (part of group work assignment)

Complete research and data collection

Complete learning software

Complete learning mounts (above and underwater)

Capture video for testing equipment/software

VR: *Knight Foundation report addresses opportunities and challenges in virtual reality journalism*

VR: *Virtual reality society (basics)*

VR: *Virtual reality pioneer Nonny de la Peña charts the future of VR journalism*

Week 4: Expressing Identities

Purpose: Learning Outcomes 4, 5

9/12

McArthur, Chapter 5 through Chapter 7

Article: *International protest events and the hierarchy of credibility: Media frames defining the police and protestors as social problems*

Article: *News place-making: Applying “mental mapping” to explore the journalistic interpretive community*

9/14

Workshop

Test all video (above and underwater)

Test all software

Confirm all data, research by experts

Create script for production

Create initial visualizations

VR: *Journalism: How one university used virtual worlds to tell true stories*

VR: *Let's break tradition: Virtual reality in public relations*

VR: *Immersive journalism: Immersive journalism virtual reality for the first-person experience of news*

Week 5: Communicating Digitization

Purpose: Learning Outcomes 3, 5

9/19

McArthur Chapter 8 and Chapter 9

Article: *Multi-local lifeworlds: Between movement and mooring*

Article: *Zombies, drugs, and Florida weirdness: “Imaginative power” and resonance in coverage of Miami’s “Causeway Cannibal”*

Due: MIDTERM 1

9/21

Workshop

Complete/confirm script for production

Prep shoots

Update visualizations to complete

VR: *A 360-degree video project from 3 grad students takes viewers into the lives of refugees in Germany*

VR: *Tripping down a virtual rabbit hole*

VR: *New publisher tools for 360 video*

Week 6: Power and Presentation

Purpose: Learning Outcomes 3, 4

9/26

Foucault, One, Two, Three

Due: Paper topic and conceptual framework

9/28

Workshop

Complete all shooting

Digitize visualizations in software

Approve script and begin voiceovers

VR: *VR Journalism (Journalism at USC Annenberg)*

VR: *A-Frame*

VR: *GURI VR*

Week 7: Interpreting Audiences via Inquiry of Power

Purpose: Learning Outcomes 1, 3

10/3

Foucault, Four, Five, Six

10/5

Workshop

Reshoot

Create voiceovers

VR: *Google News Lab and StoryUp VR present: A conversation on immersive storytelling*

VR: *TED Talk, The future of news? Virtual reality*

VR: *Lessons from AP's experiments with 360-degree video and virtual reality*

Week 8: Interpreting Audiences via Production of Culture

Purpose: Learning Outcome 4

10/10

Foucault, Seven, Eight, Nine

10/12

Workshop

Complete production

Complete voiceovers

Complete final product

Week 9: Bringing It Together

Purpose: Learning Outcomes 2, 5

10/17

Foucault, Ten, Eleven

Article: *Portrait of the online local news audience*

Due: Paper Draft

10/19

Due: MIDTERM 2

Week 10: From Power to Control

Purpose: Learning Outcome 3

10/24

Gutsche, Preface through Chapter 1

Article: *Mediatizing law and order: Applying Cottle's architecture of communicative frames to the social construction of crime and justice*

10/26

Workshop TBD

Week 11: Meditization of Control via Space

Purpose: Learning Outcome 3

10/31

Gutsche, Chapters 2 and 3

Article: *Policing paedophilia: Assembling bodies, spaces and things*

Article: *There's no place like home: Storytelling of war in Afghanistan and street crime "at home" in the Omaha World-Herald*

11/2

Workshop TBD

Week 12: Media, Conspiracy Theory and Forgetting

Purpose: Learning Outcomes 4, 5

11/7

Gutsche Chapter 4

Article: *Climate change: Adaption, mitigation, and critical infrastructures*

11/9

Workshop TBD

Week 13: Normalization of Control

Purpose: Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 5

11/14

Gutsche, Chapter 5

Article: *Mastering the mugshot*

11/16

Workshop TBD

Week 14: Watching the Watchers

Purpose: Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 5

11/21

Gutsche, Chapter 6, Conclusion

Article: *The new geography of journalism research*

Article: *News stories: An exploration of independence within post-secondary journalism*

11/23

NO CLASSES

Week 15: Post-Media America

Purpose: Learning Outcomes 2, 5

11/28

Workshop

11/30

Workshop

Finals Week: Assessment

Purpose: Learning Outcomes 1, 5

Due: Final Exam/Final Paper Due 12/5, 2:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. @ GH 170

Digital Theories, Fall 2016
Midterm and Final Paper Rubric

(20 points possible in each section; each assignment valued at 100 points)

Compliance & Presentation

Does this assignment follow the requirements?
Is the assignment correct in format?
Is the assignment presented in a clean fashion?
Are concepts from the course applied?

Research Quality & Sources

What is the academic rigor of this assignment?
Does the assignment have adequate sources?
Are concepts from the course applied correctly?

Writing Quality

Does this assignment use proper grammar & punctuation?
Is the writing strong, active, and interesting?
Are sentences concise and clear?
Does the assignment flow through proper transitions?

Argument

Are the arguments clearly stated?
Are the arguments sound and focused?
Does the evidence provided support the arguments?
Are the arguments conceptually based?

Analysis

Is the analysis analytical rather than descriptive?
Does the analysis utilize appropriate scholarship?
How well does the analysis capture the literature?
Does the analysis contribute to future research?
Are concepts from the course explicated throughout?

General Comments: