

CMST 3900 Speech in Digital Spaces

Spring 2018, Online



Instructor Information

Instructor

Dr. Sanela Elli Osmanovic

Email

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Office Location & Hours

Coates 136A; MWF 11:30-12:30,
MW 1:30-2:30, or by appointment

General Information

Description

CMST 3900 Speech in Digital Spaces is designed to familiarize students with the speech communication practices and concepts in digital contexts. Students will learn how to communicate more effectively by examining the challenges associated with speech in digital space and discussing best practices for overcoming those challenges. We will survey how researchers have approached this subject across the communication discipline and investigate how speech operates precariously for varying purposes, from personal and professional, to cultural and advocacy-based, through various digital technologies. Throughout the semester, students will be introduced to the fundamental concepts of digital speech, both through theory and application.

Expectations and Goals

As a General Education Humanities Course, CMST 2060 will enable students to demonstrate an understanding of historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity that supports sophisticated discourse.

As a result of this course, students should:

1. Develop an understanding of current research, theories, and principles of digital speech communication processes to provide the basis of effective future application.
2. Develop an understanding of and be able to overcome many of the obstacles to effective communication in digital spaces.
3. Improve critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills in evaluating online content and culture.
4. Understand and utilize the verbal and nonverbal elements essential for online self-presentation.
5. Analyze and discuss speeches in digital spaces, functioning as a participant-observer in order to improve skills and succeed in digital presentation management.

Course Requirements

Required Texts

Readings, videos, and other materials will be posted weekly on Moodle.

Assignments

This course occurs entirely online. Our primary course website is on Moodle. We will also make use of YouTube, and various other websites to create a dynamic and interactive course environment. Because this is an online course, it is required that you visit Moodle and check your email regularly for updates. You must have access to a consistent internet connection throughout the duration of the course. This course is organized into weekly units.

The semester will be divided in three parts: 1. theory, where for the first six weeks we will focus on reading and discussion; 2. application, where for the following six weeks we will focus on projects; and 3. final paper. Students will be graded on their work on the above as follows:

- **Reading/discussion (350 points, weeks 2-7).** To lay the foundation for project work, we will begin the semester with weekly reading (which includes watching videos and perusing other material), which we will then discuss on our Moodle class forum. The following is the breakdown of the assignments and points:
 - **Discussion topic and two responses (30 points per week).** Each week, you will review the material posted on Moodle, and start a discussion on something from the material that tickled your fancy. You will respond to two threads started by your classmates. Each (re)action carries 10 points, for a total of 30 points earned for the week.
 - **Concept definition (60 points).** Each week, I will post a list of concepts related to the material covered (e.g. memes, six degrees of separation, post-truth). You will choose one (1) concept and post an expanded definition of it, capturing its essence. Use of relevant images, graphs, and other visual enhancers is encouraged. The guidelines will be posted on Moodle. You can do this assignment any time during the six-week reading/discussion period. The final submission date can be found on Moodle and in the course calendar below. **Note: you need to choose 1 concept overall, not 1 concept per week.**
 - **Suggest your own topic (50 points).** Over the course of the reading/discussion weeks, we will cover a number of topics, but far from everything pertaining to digital communication. With this assignment, you can post a discussion on something that is close to your own heart, including the pertinent reading. This will earn you 40 points. Reading and responding to another classmate's submission will earn you remaining 10 points. You can do this assignment any time during the six-week reading/discussion period. The final submission date can be found on Moodle and in the course calendar below.
 - **Midterm (60 points).** From your concept definitions, I will create a midterm exam, consisting of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Once you start the exam, you will have one hour to complete it. The exam will be on Moodle.
- **Projects (350 points, weeks 8-14).** In the second half of the semester, we will put the theories, research, and concepts to practical use through smaller and larger projects. **Detailed guidelines and grading rubrics for each will be posted on Moodle as we approach their deadlines**, but here is the overview of the assignments and points:
 - **Create a meme (10 points).** As a starter, warm-up assignment, create an original meme, using an original photo/cartoon/graphic, and post it on Moodle.
 - **Create an online dating profile (30 points).** Based on one of the popular apps (Tinder/Grindr/Bumble, etc.), create an online dating profile. Keep in mind the tenants of self-presentation, online impression management, and privacy we covered in the first six weeks of class.
 - **Twitter/Instagram/Twitch celebrity critique (40 points).** Using a medium of your choice (video, writing...), analyze and critique a Twitter/Instagram/Twitch celebrity.

- **YouTube video celebrity critique (50 points).** Create a response video, offering an analysis and critique of a YouTube celebrity.
- **Skype job interview (100 points).** Put your best professional speaking, persuasion, and self-presentation skills forward in an interactive Skype job interview.
- **Group local activism project (120 points).** As the name suggests, this is a group project, aimed at providing you with hands-on experience of working with a virtual team, as well as dabbling in online social activism. You will choose an advocacy cause to your liking from a list I provide, and with a group of your peers who are interested in the same issue, create a full plan on raising awareness of the given issue in the area, including social media presence (at a minimum a local Twitter hashtag, an Instagram account, FB/other social media as desired; possibly a Kickstarter/GoFundMe page for the project, as well as the plan for promotion and “going viral” in the Baton Rouge area).

Note: Due dates for each project are posted in the calendar below and on Moodle, but you can submit a project at any time during the six-week project period (I am not counting the Spring Break here), as long as it is before its due date.

- **Final paper (100 points, last 2 weeks of the semester).** Several topics pertaining to our work during the semester will be available for your choosing for this project. The paper needs to be at least six (6) pages long; detailed guidelines will be available on Moodle towards the end of the semester.

Final grades will be determined based on scores earned in these assignments. All work must be done during the semester and not made up after the fact.

Course Assignment	Percentage of the Grade	Maximum Points
Weekly discussions	22.5%	180
Concept definition	7.5%	60
Suggest your own topic	6.25%	50
Midterm exam	7.5%	60
Meme project	1.25%	10
Online dating project	3.75%	30
Twitter/Instagram/Twitch critique	5%	40
YouTube critique	6.25%	50
Skype job interview	12.5%	100
Group local activism project	15%	120
Final paper	12.5%	100
Total	100%	800 points

Grading Scale

A+	97-100
A	93-96.99
A-	90-92.99
B+	87-89.99
B	83-86.99
B-	80-82.99
C+	77-79.99
C	73-76.99
C-	70-72.99
D+	67-69.99
D	63-68.99
D-	60-62.99
F	59.99 and below

Discussing Grades

Please note, in accordance with the Federal Buckley Amendment, grades will **not** be discussed through email, or over the phone. You **must** discuss a grade in person during office hours within 2 weeks of receiving the grade. After 2 weeks, discussion and changes to grades will **not** be possible. This means do **not** come at the end of the semester about a grade from the first week of class.

Virtual classroom Decorum

As the first half of this class largely consists of dialogue and group discussion, please respect the work, opinions, and the presentations of your classmates. Controversial subjects may arise. Be open-minded about topics your classmates post and considerate of their views.

Course Schedule (Tentative)

Week 1	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
01/10	Introductions, and syllabus	Read syllabus; check Moodle
Week 2	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
01/15	<i>Reading/discussion week:</i> Introduction to computer mediated communication	Articles/videos on Moodle Post a discussion topic Post two forum responses
Week 3	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
01/22	<i>Reading/discussion week:</i> Digital literacy - digital divides, information sources, privacy, echo chambers, filter bubbles)	Articles/videos on Moodle Post a discussion topic Post two forum responses
Week 4	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
01/29	<i>Reading/discussion week:</i> Social media and speech - impression management strategies	Articles/videos on Moodle Post a discussion topic Post two forum responses
Week 5	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
02/05	<i>Reading/discussion week:</i> Digital culture - memes, emojis, TL;DR, activism, slacktivism	Articles/videos on Moodle Post a discussion topic Post two forum responses
Week 6	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
02/12	<i>Reading/discussion week:</i> Conversation, persuasion and self-presentation in digital spaces	Articles/videos on Moodle Post a discussion topic Post two forum responses
Week 7	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
02/19	<i>Reading/discussion week:</i> Group work in digital spaces	Articles/videos on Moodle Post a discussion topic Post two forum responses Final date: Concept description due on Monday, February 19 Final date: Topic of your choice discussion due on February 19
Week 8	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
02/26	Midterm exam <i>Project weeks begin</i>	On Moodle, Monday, February 26 Create an original meme project due on Sunday, March 4, at 6pm.

Week 9	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
03/05	<i>Project week</i>	Online dating profile due on Sunday, March 11, at 6pm.
Week 10	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
03/12	<i>Project week</i>	Twitter/Instagram/Twitch celebrity critique due on Sunday, March 18, at 6pm.
Week 11	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
03/19	<i>Project week</i>	YouTube celebrity video critique due on Friday, March 23, at 6pm.
Week 12	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
03/26	<i>Spring break</i>	
Week 13	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
04/02	<i>Project week</i>	Skype job interview project due on Sunday, April 8, at 6pm.
Week 14	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
04/09	<i>Project week</i>	Group local activism project due on Sunday, April 15, at 6pm.
Week 15	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
04/16	<i>Final paper week</i>	Check Moodle for instructions and deadlines
Week 16	Topic/Activity	Week's assignments
04/23	<i>Final paper week</i>	Check Moodle for instructions and deadlines

Additional Information and Resources

Attendance and Participation

This is an entirely online class. Your participation in readings, discussions, and later projects is required for your grade.

Plagiarism

There will be no tolerance for plagiarism. You are to assume that all assignments in this course are individual assignments unless explicit instructions are provided for a group project. Any student found to have presented material not their own (either downloaded from the internet or written by another student) will immediately be reported to the Dean of Students. The Internet has made plagiarism very easy and very tempting. Hundreds of sites offer papers, research, writing, and editing. The ease with which such material is available over the Internet does not lessen the seriousness of claiming material from the Internet as your own. See the LSU policies on plagiarism here:

<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/instruction/plagiarism2.html>.

Extra Credit

Extra credit assignments may be scheduled and can only be submitted in the allocated time period. No end-of-the-semester, last minute extra credit assignments will be given.

Missed Work

Sometimes life just happens and you are unable to turn in an assignment on time (maybe you are stressed out, overwhelmed by other assignments in other classes, got drunk the night before and slept through your alarm, etc...). I will accept late work, but with a penalty. If you can't make an assignment deadline, you can turn the assignment in for **increasingly fewer points** throughout that day, up **until 11:59pm CST**. After that point, work will be accepted within the following week for the **maximum grade of a C** (see below for extenuating circumstances). After 7 days, late work will no longer be accepted for credit. (Life happens, but not without consequences.)

Extenuating circumstances: I reserve the right to accept late work without penalty when a student has provided **proper documentation** of a university sanctioned emergency or conflict that has inhibited them from turning in an assignment on time. University sanctioned emergencies or conflicts include: family death/emergency, debilitating sickness, religious observance, serious weather conditions, varsity athletic competition, sanctioned curricular requirements with documentation, court-imposed legal obligations. For more information on university policy on student absences, see

<https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/policiesprocedures/policies-procedures/22/>.

Students with disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states: "If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations can be arranged." After you receive the accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

Do you have a major?

Business leaders and other professionals recognize the importance of developing communication skills and analysis. Alan Greenspan, for example, stated, "To succeed, you will soon learn, as I did, the importance of a solid foundation in the basics of education - literacy, both verbal and numerical, and communication skills." We hope this course contributes to your success.

To learn more about communication, you may want to major or minor in the Department of Communication Studies. The program explores how people sustain and change, experience, and make sense of the world through symbolic action. Students develop conceptual skills to analyze written, oral, and visual messages. Students gain practical experience in such areas such as public speaking, group decision-making, performance, and film. Such skills are elemental to careers in business, government, law, social services, and the arts.

A major in Communication Studies requires 36 hours including 12 hours of core classes and 12 hours at the 3000 or 4000 level. A minor requires 15 hours with one core class and 6 hours at the 3000 level or above.

More information is available at www.lsu.edu/cmst or by contacting our undergraduate advisor Mr. Kent Filbel (kfilli@lsu.edu), whose hours are posted at his office, 135 Coates Hall.