

# COMM 4811/6811



## Media 2.0: Production & Distribution in the Internet Age

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

While traditional media outlets continue to be the main source for news and entertainment content, the internet has become a secondary, decentralized network for the distribution of a wide variety of content. Key to this explosion in creative output is that the internet allows producers to supplement and bypass (though not necessarily replace) traditional media gatekeepers. Bloggers, podcasters, filmmakers, musicians and a host of other creative artists can get their work directly to the hands of their audiences. Low cost technology means that many more people can create work that can rival the quality of traditional media. This contributes to what *Wired* magazine editor Chris Anderson has described as "the long tail" theory: selling less (in quantity) of more, diverse, products. This course will examine the long tail phenomenon and other theories behind media 2.0 and look at cases of actual media 2.0 artists. We will talk directly to people who are producing and distributing their work on the Internet and other alternative channels and explore how these new distribution forms challenge assumptions about how mass media should/does work.

### Course Objectives

In this course you will engage with theories of new media distribution and examine specific cases of Media 2.0 producers. By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- understand contemporary theories of independent media production and distribution, including long tail theory, convergence culture, and peer/open-source collaboration
- map traditional and emerging relationships between producers and consumers of media content
- identify and describe examples of independent media production, distribution and marketing strategies

Students will work toward achieving these objectives by developing and practicing the following skills:

- designing and implementing a project that embodies the spirit of Media 2.0
- profiling a producer of Media 2.0 content
- analyzing examples of peer/open source collaboration

- identifying key issues and challenges in the Media 2.0 landscape

### Assignments

The assignments in this class are designed to help you further your understanding of the course

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## FACULTY INFORMATION

material by applying what you learn to a series of projects.

### Wikipedia Article Project:

"Adopt" a Wikipedia article for 3 weeks. Check/correct citations, fix problems, monitor discussions.

Write a short paper (1100-1300 words) analyzing the process of collaborative knowledge building.

**Grad students:** Create and maintain a new Wikipedia article on a topic of your choice, or radically overhaul an existing stub article.

Write a short paper (1300-1600 words) analyzing the process of collaborative knowledge building.

Media 2.0 Artist/Project profile: Research and profile a Media 2.0 artist or project. Use the concepts from the class readings to describe, analyze, and critique the artist/project in a 2000-2500 word paper [**3000-3500 words for grad students**].

Media 2.0 Project & Presentation: Design and implement an online project that embodies the spirit of Media 2.0. Possible options include a blog, Flickr photo set, YouTube videos, podcasts, etc. In addition to putting your creative work online, you will describe the project, the intended purpose and audience in a short, in-class presentation.

In addition to these projects, each week ALL students will post blog entries responding to that week's readings. In addition, ALL

students will be required to write substantive comments on at least TWO different blog entries each week (FOUR comments for graduate students). Undergraduate blog entries should be 150-250 words in length; grad students 350-500 words).

### **Understanding Your Grades**

**A = Outstanding Achievement**  
Should be understood as truly excellent work that integrates concepts, and theories and presents them in a well-argued manner. The written work is generally error-free in spelling and grammatical errors. To earn an "A" on an assignment, you will need to be extremely proficient at explaining, applying, evaluating, and synthesizing the concepts, models, etc., covered in this class.

**B = Good Achievement**  
Should be understood as good work that demonstrates a firm grasp of concepts and class material and presents them in a solid manner. The written work has a minimal number of spelling and grammatical errors and is structured with an appropriate introduction and conclusion.

**C = Satisfactory Achievement**  
Should be understood as passable work that fulfills the re-

quirements of the assignment in a basic way. It may have some organizational flaws but generally demonstrates an understanding of the key concepts. The written work has a moderate number of spelling and grammatical errors. An assignment that meets, but does not exceed the basic requirements will receive a grade somewhere in the "C" range.

**D = Poor Achievement**  
Should be understood as not acceptable work that demonstrates competence in less than half of the required concepts, theories, etc. It may have major writing or organizational flaws that hamper the interpretation of the work.

**F = Unsatisfactory**  
Should be understood as work that does not address the criteria of the assignment and does not indicate an understanding of the course material. It may have severe problems in expression, organization and writing, and accuracy.



## General Class Policies

### Participation

This class will be conducted through a mix of lecture and class discussion. ALL students will be expected to critically assess the course readings and to come to each class prepared to analyze and discuss the assigned readings. Graduate students will be expected to take a leadership role in discussing readings, however I may cold call on any student to discuss the readings at any time. Therefore, you should read ALL assigned materials and come prepared with any questions or concerns so that they can be address them in class. Engagement in class discussion will make up a substantial portion of your participation grade.

Participate constructively and respectfully. Attacks and critiques should focus on ideas and evidence, not on personal characteristics. Treat others as you would have them treat you.

Avoid bringing up personal stories unless they relate \*directly\* to the material being discussed. Wild tangents waste everybody's time.

Because class participation and discussion are an important part of this course, it is essential that you show up to class prepared and in a timely manner (i.e., at the start of class would be the best time for this).

At the same time, it is my responsibility to come to class prepared to explain and clarify the readings and to start and end class on time. I'll keep up my end of the bargain if you keep yours.

### Attendance

Attendance at all class sessions is critical to success in this class. Lectures may include information not covered in the readings, and insights from discussions may be important for assignments. Unauthorized absences will result in point deductions to your final grade. Notifying me of an intended absence does NOT constitute an authorized absence. Authorized absences, in general, include illness, participation in official college events, personal emergencies, and religious holidays. Third party documentation is required for all authorized absences. You are responsible for all material covered in missed classes, whether or not the absence was authorized.

### Technology Use

Before entering the classroom, please turn off all cell phones, beepers, pagers, alarms, and any other bits of technology that could disrupt the class. You may not listen to personal MP3 players or similar devices during class. You are welcome to use your laptop computer to take notes in class, however you accept responsibility for limiting your use of extraneous applications that distract from the class discussions and lectures. In addition, please be aware that others in your immediate area may be distracted by your computer screen, so if you choose to use a laptop, please choose a seat near the back. I reserve the right to require you to turn off your electronic devices if I judge that they are distracting other members of the class. In addition, if the use of electronic devices is hampering your ability to interact in class it may result in a deduction to your participation grade.



### POLICY ON LATE WORK

All assignments, including all blog entries and any homework, are due at the start of class on the date specified by the instructor. Late blog entries will not be counted towards your grade.

Late papers will be penalized with a 10-point deduction for each day the paper is late, including weekends. Papers more than 7 days late will not be accepted.

As a general rule I do not grant extensions, so it is your responsibility to make sure to keep track of deadlines and turn all assignments in on time. Any exceptions to this will be granted at the sole discretion of the instructor.

### POLICY ON WRITTEN WORK

With the exception of work completed in class, all written work must be computer-generated, double-spaced, with proper margins. Please adhere to the word limits established for each assignment, as points will be deducted for papers that are egregiously under or over the limits. All papers must be accurately and completely documented using APA 5th or 6th edition style. Papers MUST be turned electronically through the eCourseware site.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT CONDUCT

I use Turnitin to evaluate the originality of your assignments submitted for class. As part of this process, you will be required to submit electronic copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. According to the U of M's Office of Legal Counsel (10/17/ 2005) by taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

According to the University of Memphis Student Handbook, your assignments must reflect your own effort. When using outside sources--those written by other individuals--you must acknowledge your sources and add your own analysis. Failure to properly cite sources constitutes plagiarism. **If you plagiarize or cheat, the minimum penalty is an F on the assignment; other penalties could include an F for the course and/or suspension.**

All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. Expectations for academic integrity and student conduct are described in detail on the website of the Office of Student Judicial and Ethical Affairs:  
<http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/dishonesty/definitions.htm>

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student who may need class or test accommodations based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to speak with me privately to discuss his or her specific needs. Students with disabilities should also contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at 100 Wilder Tower, 678-2880. SDS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

## GRADE DISPUTES & QUESTIONS

Assignments are developed to achieve a variety of academic and assessment goals and I always attempt to describe exactly what is required. However, if you have a question about the assignment—it's content, format, etc., do not hesitate to ask. I usually respond to email within 24 hours during the work week and 48 hours over the weekend.

As a general rule I will return graded assignments within two weeks. All grades will be posted on eCourseware, giving you a running total of your grade in the course. If you have additional questions about your progress you may check with me at any time throughout the semester. To do this, schedule a meeting time with me and bring specific questions.

If you would like to discuss any assignment after receiving feedback/grades, please wait 24 hours to "catch your breath" and collect your thoughts; again, be sure you bring specific questions to our discussion. I hope you will approach the grading philosophy as a challenge, not as an obstacle :-)

## Required Materials

*The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More*, Revised and Updated Edition (July, 2008), by Chris Anderson, ISBN: 1401309666.

*Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006), by Henry Jenkins, ISBN: 0814742815.

*New New Media* (2009), by Paul Levinson, ISBN: 978-0-205-67330-8 [**optional for COMM 4811; REQUIRED for COMM 6811**]

Additional readings to be posted on eCourseware. Regular and reliable access to a computer and the Internet and their University of Memphis email accounts is required. Familiarity with blogs and wikis is helpful but not required.

## Grade Breakdown UNDERGRAD:

Blog summaries/comments:	10%
Wikipedia Article Project:	25%
Media 2.0 Artist/Project Profile:	25%
Media 2.0 Project & Presentation:	30%
<u>Participation:</u>	10%
Total	100%

## Grade Breakdown GRADUATE:

Blog summaries/comments:	15%
Wikipedia Article Project:	15%
Media 2.0 Artist/Project Profile:	20%
Media 2.0 Project & Presentation:	35%
<u>Participation:</u>	15%
Total	100%

## Breakdown of Letter Grades

(in %)

**A = 94-100 A- = 90-93**

**B+ = 87-89 B = 84-86 B- = 80-83**

**C+ = 77-79 C = 74-76 C- = 70-73**

**D+ = 66-69 D = 60-65 F = 0-59**

<b>--Schedule --Subject to Change--All Times are Central Time Zone</b>		
Date	Topics	Readings to be discussed/Assignments due
T 8/28	Introduction to the course & terminology	Bring copy of syllabus to class; GRADS:Levinson ch. 1
TH 8/30	What is the long tail?	Anderson chs. 1 &2
T 9/4	Developing the tail - new producers	Anderson chs. 3-5
TH 9/6	Does the long tail work? 1K True Fans theory	Kelly 3/4/08 & 4/27/08; Scalzi 3/12/08; Coulton 3/24/09 <b>Blog entries due by 2pm, comments by Fri. 10pm</b>
T 9/11	Convergence culture	Jenkins Introduction; Shirky (2010) ch. 1
TH 9/13	Changing relationships between producers & consumers	Jenkins Chs. 1 &2 <b>Blog entries due by 2pm, comments by Fri. 10pm</b>
T 9/18	Finding content-Networks & peers Discuss Wikipedia Project	Weinberger (2007) ch. 7 [all] ; GRADS: Benkler (2006) ch. 3, Levinson ch. 4
TH 9/20	Professionals or amateurs? Discuss Media 2.0 Project	Shirky (2008) ch. 3[all]; GRADS: Pro-Am Revolution (sections 1-6), Levinson ch. 2 <b>Submit article/topic for Wikipedia Project</b> <b>Blog entries due by 2pm, comments by Fri. 10pm</b>
T 9/25	Fan culture: Consuming and producing	Jenkins ch. 4; Shirky (2010) ch. 3 excerpt
TH 9/27	Producers	Bruns (2008) chs. 1&2 [all]; GRADS: Levinson ch. 10 <b>Blog entries due by 2pm, comments by Fri. 10pm</b>
T 10/2	Filtering	Anderson ch. 7; Shirky (2008) ch. 4 [all]; GRADS: Levinson ch. 5
TH 10/4	New economics & crowdfunding	Anderson chs. 8-10; Anderson (2009) ch. 9; GRADS Coulton & Emily & David saga (2012) <b>Blog entries due by 2pm, comments by Fri. 10pm</b> <b>Submit prospectus for Media 2.0 Project by 10pm</b>
T 10/9	Individual Project Conferences	
TH 10/11	Individual Project Conferences	
<b>T 10/16</b>	<b>NO CLASS-FALL BREAK</b>	
TH 10/18	<b>NO CLASS</b> - work on Wikipedia project & Media 2.0 Project	<b>Wikipedia Project due by 10pm</b> <b>Blog entries due by 2pm (discuss Wikipedia project), comments by Fri. 10pm</b>
T 10/23	Fans, friends, & followers: Digital artists	Kirsner (2009) [preview]; Listen to Planet Money podcast episode and read Jonathan Coulton's response <b>Profile paper subject due by 10pm (post on blog)</b>
TH 10/25	Tentative Guest Speaker (TBA)	<b>Blog entries due by 2pm, comments by Fri. 10pm</b>
T 10/30	Niche culture & audience fragmentation	Anderson ch. 11; Napoli (2011) [ch. 6]; GRADS Webster & Ksiazek (2012)
TH 11/1	Convergence & democracy	Jenkins ch. 6 [all]; GRADS: Levinson ch. 3 <b>Blog entries due by 2pm, comments by Fri.10pm</b>
T 11/6	Pushing boundaries: Transmedia storytelling	Jenkins ch. 3
TH 11/8	TBA	<b>Blog entries due by 2pm, comments by Fri.10pm</b>
T 11/13	Tentative Guest Speaker (TBA)	
TH 11/15	Individual Project Conferences	<b>Profile Paper due by 10pm</b>
T 11/20	Individual Project Conferences	
<b>TH 11/22</b>	<b>NO CLASS THANKSGIVING</b>	
T 11/27	Convergence ahead: The future of television & the future of the long tail	Jenkins Conclusion; Anderson chs. 12-end <b>Blog entries due by 2pm, comments by THURSDAY 10pm</b>
TH 11/29	Project presentations	
T 12/4	Project presentations	<b>ALL Media 2.0 Projects due</b>