

CMN 148: Contemporary Trends In Media
University of California, Davis/Spring, 2016

Meets: MW 2:10-4:00 pm in Kerr 293

Instructor: John Theobald/Office: Kerr 169

Office Hours/drop in: M 11:00 am - Noon; M 4:00 - 5:00 pm; W 1:00 - 2:00 pm; also by appointment

Course Assistant and Tutor: Chayanka Mohan (cmohan@ucdavis.edu): office hours to be announced

Course Description: Ongoing trends in media, emphasizing developments that are global in scope. Topics may include media and the process of globalization, winners and losers in the new media economy, transnational flows of information and their effects on security, and effects of ownership patterns on media content and culture.

Course Format: Class meetings will consist of lecture, discussion, and short video segments. There will be three examinations and occasional informal in-class presentations.

Readings: Authors include M.I.T. information systems professors Eric Brynjolfsson & Andrew McAfee, Lehigh University professor of journalism and communication Jack Lule, and Google executives Eric Schmidt & Jared Cohen. The books do not require that you have a familiarity with a particular body of communication research, but they are sophisticated descriptions of contemporary media phenomena and will require total concentration.

- E. Brynjolfsson & A. McAfee, *The Second Machine Age*, Norton, 2016
- J. Lule, *Globalization & Media*, 2nd ed. Rowman & Littlefield, 2015
- E. Schmidt & J. Cohen, *The New Digital Age*. Knopf, 2014

Part I: Globalization & Media—How We Got Here

Mar 28: Introduction

Mar 30: Lecture (Lule, Chp. 1)

Apr 04: Lecture; In-Class Discussion 1 (Lule, Chps. 2-3)

Apr 06: Lecture; In-Class Discussion 1 (Lule, Chps. 4-5)

Apr 11: Lecture; In-Class Discussion 1 (Lule, Chps. 6)

Apr 13: Lecture (Lule, Chp. 7)

Apr 18: Lecture; Q & A for Exam 1 (Lule, Chp. 8)

Apr 20: Examination 1

Part II: Globalization & Media—Economics, Politics, and Culture

Apr 25: Lecture (Schmidt & Cohen, Intro)

Apr 27: Lecture; In-Class Discussion 2 (Schmidt & Cohen, Chp. 1)

May 02: Lecture; In-Class Discussion 2 (Schmidt & Cohen, Chp. 2)

May 04: Lecture; In-Class Discussion 2 (Schmidt & Cohen, Chp. 3)

May 09: Lecture; Q & A for Exam 2 (Schmidt & Cohen, Chp. 5)

May 11: Examination 2

Part III: Challenges Of The New Digital Age

May 16: Lecture; (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chps. 1-2)

May 18: Lecture; In-Class Discussion 3 (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chps. 3-5)

May 23: Lecture; In-Class Discussion 3 (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chps. 9-10)

May 25: Lecture; In-Class Discussion 3 (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chps. 11-12)

May 30: Memorial Day Holiday

Jun 01: Q & A for Exam 3 (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chp. 15)

Sat., Jun 4 @ 10:30 am: Examination 3

Grading, Administrative Policies, Attendance, and Make Up Work

• Examinations: There will be three in-class examinations during the quarter. Each exam will constitute 1/3 of the course grade. The exams will include questions that will be based on the readings and material presented in class.

- Exams will be graded on a 90/A, 80/B, 70/C, 60/D percent scale, except for a possible (but not guaranteed) curved distribution of grades in the event of a low exam mean. A low grade distribution will be defined as any exam that falls below a 77-78% mean. The target GPA distribution for the course and for each exam is 2.6. The instructor reserves the right to apply a reverse distribution curve in the event of an exam with an usually high mean, but he rarely does so. Each exam is assigned a letter grade—a student’s course grade is the average of those three grades.

- Make-up examinations will not be permitted without exceptional circumstances--e.g., illness, institutional excuse, religious holiday, or other developments discussed with the instructor. Contact the instructor for details and specific circumstances.

- There may be two types of assistants used to help the instructor and students during the course. The following describes each of them and their roles:

Tutors: These are students who have completed the course and received a high grade, usually A or A-grades, in a previous quarter. Tutors attend lecture, hold office hours and hold pre-exam question and answer sessions. They are to be used for questions pertaining to course content.

Course Assistants (a.k.a., graduate or undergraduate Readers): These are students who have taken courses from the instructor, though not necessarily the course in which you are enrolled. They assist with instructional organization. They are to be used (in lieu of the instructor as much as possible) for administrative, record-keeping, and organizational matters pertaining to the course.

- Uses of office hours:

Instructor hours

discussion of course performance
 personal circumstances re: course
 content not related to exams
 requests for references, etc.
 academic advising
 appropriate items not listed above

Course Assistant hours

review of prior examinations
 discussion of class experience
 organizing study habits

In-class and pre-exam Q & A hours

questions from study guide
 questions from lecture/reading
 content related to exams

- Some comments on student use of technology in the classroom: There are two cases in which student use of smartphones and laptops is prohibited—during exams and during in-class discussions involving student presentations. Beyond those cases, the instructor would prefer not to be a digital police officer. You may use your computerized devices with some discretion, but try not to be off in some far away virtual land.

- If you anticipate work, athletic, personal, or other scheduling distractions, then take this course another quarter. As a guideline, if you have to miss one exam for a legitimate institutional reason, you probably can maintain your enrollment in the class. If the conflict extends to more than one exam, then you need to drop the course and re-enroll during a later quarter.

- Lecture, video supplements, and in-class presentations will be part of our class-time curriculum. If you miss class, for whatever reason, you will have to rely on others for notes about what you missed. Like you, I have many things to do and do not have time to repeat lecture material or organize re-screenings of video material. You will not find much of the video material available elsewhere, and I cannot lend it.

- Please don’t ask for special treatment—that is, attention and opportunities not available to other students. In order to preserve the integrity of the academic process, examinations are given to each student one time only. Extra credit opportunities are rarely but occasionally available but only as announced in class and only if available to all students. Please refrain from the “I have three exams today, can you reschedule mine” request. You have access to your quarter’s schedule. If you think that a clustering of exams will put too much pressure on your performance, adjust your schedule rather than asking me to set up a separate time out of my schedule for you to take your exam.

Discussion: In-Class Extra Credit

Each student will have the opportunity to earn up to 3 questions of extra credit that can be applied to any one exam. Exams consist of 50 questions, so this extra credit could raise any one exam by 6%, an increase that could be worth as much as one letter grade on the exam.

Two steps are required to earn each extra credit question. 1. Be present in class and prepared to discuss briefly your response on the day your group is assigned. 2. Submit an index card with your name printed on it and a brief response to the topic at the beginning of the class to which your group is assigned.

Discussion #1: Give an example of globalization—ideally, your response will be nonobvious (something others likely are not familiar with or might not realize is, in fact, an example of globalization).

Discussion #2: Give an example of a problem associated with globalization—how the breaking down of boundaries presents some sort of challenge for individuals, organizations, nations, or other entities.

Discussion #3: Give an example of an occupation that you believe is difficult to automate—in other words, what is a job that would have some resistance to the developments you're reading about in Part III of the course? Alternatively, you may give an example of a job that is highly vulnerable to automation.

A final comment: Students frequently approach instructors after grades are submitted and ask to have their final grades reconsidered because, for example, "I was only one point away from the higher grade." Students don't want to have these conversations, and instructors hate them. If you ever have had or even considered such a conversation, consider this extra credit option. It will give you up to three points and make these conversations unnecessary.

Study Guide For Examination 1: *Globalization & Media*

Lule, Chapter 1

- What is the claim about the Egyptian “revolution” and Facebook?
- What does the author claim about the influence of Martin Luther and how he achieved it?
- What is the book’s claim about the relationship between globalization and media?
- Know what technological determinists and social determinists are.
- What is Lule’s [brief] definition of globalization on p. 7?
- Understand the McLuhan “global village” argument and what the author believes about it.
- Who is Leslie Gelb, and what is his view of where we’re finding ourselves in the globalized world?

Lule, Chapter 2

- Note Anthony Giddens’ observations about the emergence of the term “globalization”.
- The discussion of the term “globalization” on pp. 23-26 is important . . . note what the author concludes about the concept at the bottom of p. 26.
- When did globalization begin?
- You don’t need to memorize the 6 metaphors of globalization in this chapter, but you should understand what they mean.
- What is Lule’s [lengthy] definition of globalization on p. 37?

Lule, Chapter 3

- You should have a good grasp of the summary of the debate over technology and social change, including the terms “technological determinism” and “social determinism”.
- What does the author note about the internet, the military, and the evolution of technology?
- What are the author’s five time periods that capture the study of globalization?
- What was the impact of language?
- What was the impact of script?
- What was the impact of the printing press?
- What was the impact of electronic media—note especially, the observations of Anthony Giddens?
- What has digital done—note especially the blurring point?

Lule, Chapter 4

- What does the author claim about globalization and imagination?
- What is cosmopolitanism and the author’s point about it?
- Grasp the main ideas in the section about the imaginary.
- What are the two differences that mark our era of globalization?
- Read closely the section of McLuhan, understanding who he was, what he believed, and how he was viewed—read this section carefully.
- What is Friedman’s view of globalization?
- Note the section on Lewis Mumford—what are his arguments in relation to McLuhan? Review his concluding points on p. 76.
- Who was right, in the author’s view, McLuhan or Mumford?
- What is Mumford’s (and the author’s) point about “more contact . . . more communication . . . more trade?”

Lule, Chapter 5

- What are the three ties the author describes between media and economic globalization?
- Be acquainted with the chapter’s examples of Nike and Nestle?
- What does the author note about media control (p. 93)?
- What does the author note about the issues involving media oligopoly?
- What is the oligopoly interested in?
- Have a sense of what Disney, News Corp, and Warner own/control?
- Note the McChesney point about what the media oligopoly is interested in.
- What does the author claim about the “bottom billion”?

Lule, Chapter 6

- What does the author argue about the dangers of journalism in the current era of media and political globalization?
- What is the CNN Effect and the author's view of it?
- You should have a basic idea of the author's NBC News study and the effect of metaphor on real world events.
- What does the author claim about the promise of new media (in international affairs)?
- You should be acquainted with the Malaysia example.

Lule, Chapter 7

- What are the different perspectives on the impact of cultural contacts (p. 156)?
- What are the three possible outcomes of globalization described in the chapter—perhaps the best synthesis of this point is described in the continuum on p. 160.
- Re: Cultural Difference—What did Jose Bove do, and what was its impact?
- Re: Cultural Difference—Know who Samuel Huntington was, and what his impact was?
- Re: Cultural Convergence—What does the McDonald's example reveal?
- Re: Cultural Convergence—What is McDonaldization?
- What are the main claims of Benjamin Barber's thesis?
- What do media scholars mean by cultural convergence (and note the point on cultural imperialism)?
- Re: Cultural Hybridity—What is McDonald's doing? How is it a pertinent example here?
- Re: Cultural Hybridity—Note the Cuban example.

Lule, Chapter 8

- Note the observations about microfinance (MFIs) and its impact.
- How does the author distinguish the impact of cell phones in rich countries from their impact in poor countries?
- Note the Jeffrey Sachs "transformative technology" comment.
- What does the author conclude about globalization's possibilities (see the Daniel Cohen quote at the end of the chapter)?

Study Guide For Examination 2: *The New Digital Age*

Schmidt & Cohen, Introduction

- How do the authors see the net as an experiment?
- What do the authors see happening by the year 2025?
- What is Moore's Law, and what does it tell us about the difference between the years 2013 and 2025?
- Globally, what will the most significant impact of the spread of communication technologies be?
- What is the authors' point about "acceleration to scale"?
- Are the machines taking over? [This concluding point of the introduction may be discussed in lecture in the context of "technological determinism."]

Schmidt & Cohen, Chapter 1, "Our Future Selves"

- What is the authors' thesis?—see the bottom of the first page of the chapter.
- How will change occur in the developing world (as compared to our world)?
- What is 3-D printing?
- What do the authors claim about our neurological limits?
- What are the authors' main claims about education?
- What are the book's arguments about personalization?
- How will health care and our lives change as a result of the developing digital age?
- Note the authors' vision of how our future lives will look, as expressed in the last few pages of the chapter.

Schmidt & Cohen, Chapter 2, "The Future of Identity, Citizenship, and Reporting"

- What will be the impact of the data revolution on citizens?
- What is two-factor authentication?
- What is the point about "hidden people"?
- What will happen to governments' ability to maneuver?
- Read closely the footnote on SEO (search-engine optimization).
- Read closely the section on data permanence at the top of p. 40.
- Note the arguments of Julian Assange on pp. 40-41.
- What is a DDoS attack?
- How will the digital changes affect mainstream news media outlets?
- On what will elites likely rely for news? . . . and how does Twitter relate to this analysis?
- How will crime, corruption, and scandal be affected in democratic countries?
- What will happen re: government officials' understanding of the Internet?
- What do the authors claim about China and the intersection of technological devices and government control?
- What do the authors mean by P2P networking, and what do they claim about P2P attacks at the bottom of p. 71?
- Ultimately, how will communication technologies affect autocratic governments?
- How will autocratic governments respond to the growth of connectivity?
- What is the claim about digital police states at the top of p. 77?
- What is the most important form of data for autocrats to collect?
- Who besides states will try to acquire biometric data?

Schmidt & Cohen, Chapter 3

- How do the authors describe the Internet?
- Note the authors' point about the power of states over the Internet.
- What do the authors note about China? How do average users notice the government's interference?
- Note the authors' example of a "Sunni Web".
- How will the World Wide Web change? (pp. 92-93) Note the follow up example of disconnection.
- What is virtual multilateralism?

- Note the comparison the authors make to cyber-security companies.
- What is virtual statehood?
- Note the Kurdish example of virtual statehood.
- What is cyber warfare (see the definition by Clarke)? In this section, note the examples of Stuxnet and Chinese attacks.
- What holds back the capability of most states to launch cyber attacks?
- What do the authors mean by Code War?
- How is globalization related to digital corporate espionage?
- On p. 117, note the points about DDoS attacks and also about the Chinese government—including the footnotes.
- The Internet was based on what (p. 119)?

Schmidt & Cohen, Chapter 5

- The authors claim what about our vulnerability to cyber terrorism?
- On p. 152 the authors make some observations about demographics. What is their claim?
- A future 9/11 might involve what, according to the authors?
- What might give terrorists an edge in the future?
- What do the authors claim about Hamas and apps?
- Note the authors' point about extremely powerful individuals on p. 163.
- What is the obfuscation point at the top of p. 165?
- What is the claim about a technical skills barrier?
- Review the circumstances and claims about the Mumbai, India attacks in 2008.
- What is the silver lining of cyber terrorism?
- What do the authors claim about the post-9/11 world on p. 173. This observation about information and governments continues on p. 174.
- The most pivotal shift in counterterrorism strategy will be what?
- Note the observations of General Stanley McChrystal?

Schmidt & Cohen, Conclusion

- Note the arguments of Kurzweil, and below them the point about the quantity of digital content being created.
- Who will be able to control the changes of the digital age?
- Two billion people have joined the digital “club.” How will the next five billion people to join have a different experience?
- In the next to last paragraph, note the claim about the trade people will be willing to make—the authors' social contract point?
- What is the basis for optimism in the authors' concluding paragraph?

Study Guide For Examination 3: *The Second Machine Age*

Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chapter 1

- What have been the most important developments in human history?
- What constitutes the Morris social development concept?
- How does Morris describe the steam revolution?
- What is the second machine age?
- What are the “three broad conclusions” the authors have reached in their research?
- There’s never been a better time to be one kind of worker, and a worse time to be another. Explain.

Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chapter 2

- Computers are “good” at what, and “lousy” at what?
- What is DARPA, and note the story about the car.
- Levy & Murnane highlighted what areas besides pattern recognition as likely to stay a human advantage?
- Note the examples of Siri’s troubles.
- Tom Mitchell of Carnegie Mellon claims we’re at the beginning of what?
- How do computers’ communication abilities compare to those of human beings?
- Note the Jeopardy example and point about pattern recognition and complex communication.
- What is Moravec’s paradox?
- What kind of robots populate today’s factories?
- Note the text’s discussion of Kiva and Boston Dynamics.
- What do the authors mean by “an inflection point”?
- What are the three key characteristics of the second machine age?

Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chapter 3

- What is Moore’s Law?
- How has Moore’s Law kept up?
- What do the authors mean by the Second Half of the Chessboard? . . . and doublings happening faster?
- What is the story about ASCII Red and the Sony PlayStation 3?
- What is SLAM and Kinect?
- Note the price changes of the commercial LIDAR systems described in the chapter.

Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chapter 4

- What is digitization?
- What are the unique properties of digital information?
- Note Shapiro & Varian’s summary of the properties of information.
- Note the issue of digital content coming freely.
- What do the authors mean by “Running Out of Metric System”?
- What is Varian’s comment about the “sexy job”, and what does the comment mean?

Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chapter 5

- What is Krugman’s point about productivity?
- What is Schumpeter’s point about innovation?
- What is Gordon’s claim about innovation?
- What are General Purpose Technologies, and what is the authors’ point about them?
- What is Gordon’s claim about the web and e-commerce [see the inset quote]?
- Note the authors’ point in the section starting “Another school of thought.”
- How do the authors answer Gordon’s question?
- How do the authors conclude the chapter?

Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chapter 9

- What do the authors observe about quantity of photographs taken . . . and herein note the comparison of Kodak and Facebook and their economic and employment aspects.
- What do the authors mean by bounty and spread?
- What happened to American household income from the late 1990s to early 2010s? And a few pages later, what happened 1983-2009 with the “bottom 80 percent”?

- Who earns most of the income from the new products and services?
- How have other big economies—e.g., Sweden, Finland, and Germany—fared re: income inequality?
- Who are the three sets of winners described by the authors?
- Understand the two-by-two matrix about work discussed in the chapter.
- Review the story about computers and chess, culminating in the Deep Blue vs. Gary Kasparov match.
- Figure 9.3 and accompanying text describe what story? Who is capturing the value of new productivity?
- What is the authors' point about replication of capital?

Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chapter 10

- What do the authors note about changes “at the very top”?
- What do the authors state about superstars vs. “second-bests”?
- How do the authors compare traditional markets (e.g., the “90 percent”) with today’s markets?
- Why are winner-take-all markets more common now [spend time here—it’s a lengthy explanation]?
- In a superstar economy, what is the shape of the distribution of income?
- Most people will be what, when income is distributed according to a power law?

Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chapter 11

- What is the paradox described at the beginning of the chapter?
- What does ‘Bounty’ mean?
- What does today’s information technology do?
- Who is losing ground in today’s economy?
- Note the numbers in Jared Bernstein’s research and the numbers of the economists on the top half of p. 170.
- Carefully read the quote by Acemoglu & Robinson on p. 172.
- What was Keynes’ view of *technological unemployment*? What is the response that has come to dominate the discipline of economics?
- Review the section on economic theory and historical evidence for technological unemployment (pp. 176-180). This is the most complicated part of the book, if you’re not an econ major. But read it carefully a couple of times. We’ll discuss it in class.
- What will androids do to society and to the labor force?
- How is globalization transforming the economy?
- Note the section on China and manufacturing employment.
- The biggest effect of automation on workers is likely to occur where?
- Note the example near the end of the chapter on call center automation.

Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chapter 12

- What do the authors say re: Levy & Murnane on pattern recognition and complex communication?
- What is *ideation* and how do the authors find it relevant? . . . how does it compare to digital labor?
- What does Kevin Kelly observe about being paid well in the future?
- Note the role of the British Empire described by Sugata Mitra in text (and viewed in class).
- Note the observation of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and college effects on the CLA.
- Observe the findings about college and the CLA in detail—middle and bottom of p. 198.
- Note the authors’ description of Khan Academy.
- What is the career advice given by Google chief economist Hal Varian?
- What do the authors note about future careers and information work?

Brynjolfsson & McAfee, Chapter 15

- What are the two amazing events our generation will likely have the good fortune to experience?
- What are the two related weaknesses of complex systems?
- What is the “technological singularity”?
- How do the authors conclude the book?