
ATTENTION AND UBIQUITOUS MEDIA in Fall 2020 (CM3042)

Course Code	CM3042	Professor(s)	Jayson Harsin
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-307
Class Schedule	T: 18:10-19:45 in C-103 W: 12:40-14:15 in C-103	Office Hours	By appointment (please use my appointlet app to ensure that someone else is not meeting with me at your ideal time) Weds. 11h-17h (we'll find another time if that doesn't work): https://appointment-wjharsin@aup.edu
Credits	4	Email	jharsin@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2020	Office Tel. Ext.	820

Course Description

Surveillance, Big Data (-mining), Distraction, Attention, Hashtags, likes, tweets—these are the watchwords of many societies today. What power do we have over the social, political, economic and psychological dynamics that they produce or from which they emanate? Scholars as well as practitioners in the marketplace have described attention as the greatest commodity or form of symbolic capital today; that is, it can be converted into financial, political, or social capital/value. This is because in the digital age, the mass audience of the Television, print and radio media era has been fragmented or greatly segmented. No longer can advertisers expect to reach millions of people by buying TV time and space in magazines and newspapers. No longer can politicians or advocates expect to get on the mainstream news agenda (the six or eight o'clock news, etc.) to reach their constituencies or target audiences. However, all of these actors as well as ordinary individuals themselves have the means of cultural media production to address millions, when content goes “viral.” Thus, we speak of an attention economy, where a scarce resource is sought after and exchanged at high value. Knowledge of how content may circulate, what is happening when it “captures” attention, and how it can be used to predict future behavior becomes valuable (even or especially for resisting or living otherwise).

This course addresses the increasing economic, political, and cultural importance of attention in cultures of “ubiquitous computing” (always on, everywhere). In the response fragmented media market and audience context, attention is struggled over and sought like never before. The course surveys a broad set of scholarship around three major emphases: (1) cognition and emotion in the rapid-shifting environment; (2) the technological infrastructure of attention, especially algorithms and coding; (3) political economic interests underpinning what gets

attention and how is used, shared, or sold. Each topical area will be presented and analyzed in the context of overarching perennial liberal arts questions of power, control, and freedom. At each turn in the syllabus, the course asks: How can we think about power and freedom with attention today? How much control do we have and are we exercising over what we see, hear, feel, and do? How should we strategically communicate to get and maintain attention? How might ubiquitous computing be changing our evaluations of friendship, family, citizenship, and intimacy? How might we develop a more critical and empowering relationship about our habits in the wired environment we “inhabit” to achieve our own goals more efficiently and lead a happy life?

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to write and publish digitally and analyze and produce audiovisual content in order to communicate through a variety of digital media. (LO1CCD)

Students will learn about privacy, security and data preservation issues. (LO2CCD)

Students will be able to interpret, report, and synthesize data and present it in various formats visually. (LO3CCD)

General Education

Course Outline

PRELIMINARY CLASS OUTLINE (subject to slight changes): *If it is not a link here, the reading is a pdf on Blackboard*

Week	Date	Topic of discussion & quiz topics	Readings/assignments due th
1	Wed Sept 23	Key terms: Attention, Distraction, Cognition, Thinking, Freedom, the Attention Why are business leaders, psychologists, communication scholars, governm talking about it <i>now</i> ? Power: <i>Faire Croire, Faire Faire, Faire Sentir. Two Sid</i>	

		Recommend short «The Attention Economy» https://www.nngroup.com/articles/attention-economy/	
2	Tues Sept 29	Slide presentations101, recorded and Live: Attentional/Distractive challenges	1. Turn in “Syllabus Agreement” questions about policies 2. Discuss Presentation Be 3. Demonstrate of How to P Presentation, Upload it; Look at these links and be ready https://visme.co/blog/engage-audience-with-a-presentation/ https://libguides.wilmu.edu/c.php?g=1649987 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pp4&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop (have a Mac) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cm8 (PC, Windows, using OBS) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DY If time: Vanessa Hill, “Attention
2	Wed Sept 30	What have been the main issues or critiques involving the attention economy over the last ten years?	Nicholas Carr, excerpts from <i>The Shallows</i> (orig 2011, updated 20 Read sections “Hal and Me,” 42- (pdf page numbers) <i>If you aspire to an A grade, read</i>
3	Tues Oct 6	The big issues, overview part 2	<i>The Shallows 2</i> , 77-85, 87-104
3	Wed Oct. 7	What do you need to know if you want to develop content for readers? How People Read Online Part 1 Presentation : TOMI, “Celebrity Activism in the Attention Economy”	F. Manjoo “You Will Not Finish T (2013): https://slate.com/technology/2013/09/13/people-read-online-why-you-wont-finish-an-article.html and https://slate.com/technology/2013/09/13/people-read-online-why-you-wont-finish-an-article.html

			ple-read-online-you-might-finish-article.html
4	Tues Oct 13	Big data evidence about Reading, Viewing, listening online today Part 2 Part 2	S. Song “Sharing Fast and Slow” http://www.niemanlab.org/2013/-and-slow-the-psychological-con-en-how-we-think-and-how-we-s-social-media/ . Moran, “How People Read Online: Old Findings” (2020): https://www.nngroup.com/articles/read-online/
4	Wed Oct 14	Q: What is the speed of thought in the Attention Economy? A: [Silence: Your interlocutor already left] Presentation : Tobin M. Wolf Reader Come Home: “Letter 1 and “Letter 9” <i>Saturday: Try to digital detox for entire day, or at least phone all day, computer half day. Notify Friends/family on Friday that you will be “off the grid.” Write a couple of paragraphs about it on Sunday, and post to journal on Blackboard.</i>	“The Pleasure and Pain of Speed” (2014): http://nautil.us/issue/9/tim-pleasure-and-pain-of-speed “Cuts in Movies and Their Impact on Memory”: http://scienceblogs.com/cognitiv/20/cuts-in-movies-and-their-imp
5	Tues Oct 20	Algorithms, Attention, Power Presentation: Sophie Haines: Wachter-Boettcher, <i>Technically Wrong</i> (2018)	Google “Algorithm”: what is it? Then read pp. 21-27 in Posthumanism on BB; and short interview with J. Rouvroy: https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/mic-governmentality-and-the-de
5	Wed Oct 21	Algorithms, Attention, Racism, Sexism	S. Noble, Ch. 1 <i>Algorithms of Oppression</i>
6	Tues Oct 27	Attention/Distraction and Democracy	Watch: <i>The Great Hack</i> (2019),

		Discussion on Teams Presentation: Kai “Anti-social Media” (Note: Midterm Study Guide posted on Blackboard)	(Yes, it will be on the midterm ?) Recommended: Selections from <i>Media</i> , S. Vaidhyanathan (2018)
6	Wed Oct 28	We are objects of Attention: Surveillance and Privacy Digital Presentation: Fiona, “The Big Data Divide,” Andrejevic (or Citton)	Mark Andrejevic, “We Are All La PBS Frontline: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/generation-like/mark-andrejevic-rats-online/ And WSJ article: https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB119148704694004576020083703574
7	Tues Nov 3	Midterm, on Blackboard	Good luck!
7	Wed Nov 4	Watch the film <i>The Social Dilemma</i> (2020) on Netflix (If that’s a problem, contact me) Yes, it will be on the final ? Discussion on Teams	Discussion on Teams
8	Tues Nov 10	How does attention/distraction affect our relationships: friendships, family, couples? Presentation: Max <i>Digital Media Ethics</i> (Ess, 2019)	S. Turkle, (2015) “The Flight From Conversation” http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/10/reclaiming-conversation-with-turkle/409273/ and “May I have your Attention,
	Fall break – Nov 11-13 – NO CLASS Wednesday Nov 11		
9	Tues Nov 17	Not just what gets to circulate but what gets noticed. How does “virality” work?	“Generation Like” https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/generation-like/

		Presentation: Madison Ch 4 Abidin <i>Internet Celebrity: Understanding Fame Online</i> (2019)	Recommended: Krieken, Robert Franck's 'The Economy of Attention: Capitalism and the Struggle for Control' (2019)
9	Wed Nov 18	Programmed Self-Attention of Promotional Culture (Narcissism?) <i>Slack Discussion, Online</i>	"Are We Developing Digital Narcissism?" https://medium.com/@chris.merrett/developing-digital-narcissism-2019 Benedictus, Leo. "Look at Me: The Attention Economy and the Defining Need of the Self" (2018) https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/oct/05/crimes-of-attention-stalkers-killing-longing.
10	Tues Nov 26	An Oxford U. ethicist and former Google executive's view of problems and solutions Gabriella, Presentation: Robert Hunt, "The Heart's Content: The Emotional Turn at Upworthy" (2020)	Selections from James Williams <i>Our Light</i> (2019)
10	Wed Nov 27	Williams continued What are solutions? Industry-based Regulatory (laws) (related, collective political movement) Individual	Williams, continued
11	Tues Dec 1	We know the effects of attention economy, for non-strategic users and society, but why is it designed this way and could it be designed for our purposes? As is, we have to "hack" it so that it suits our goals as much as theirs.	"Can Technology Support Mindfulness?" Tristan Harris, Alex Tew, Irene A. (2017). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ik...

		Presentation: Matthias Martin and Dwyer, Ch. 1, <i>Sharing News Online: Commentary Cultures and Social Media News Ecologies</i> (2019)	
11	Wed Dec 2	Individual solutions/resistance: Mindfulness (Eastern Traditions and cultural hybridity in West) Self-monitoring; thinking about our goals, efficiently achieving them	“Are We Morally Obligated to M https://www.vox.com/future-perf21013234/meditation-brain-neuromoral-obligation “Using a Meditation App Every D Improve Your Memory and Atten https://www.newscientist.com/using-a-meditation-app-each-da-your-memory-and-attention/ Also: Adblock, Pomodoro, Resc
12	Tues Dec. 8	Presentation: Lorenza <i>How to Become Human</i> , N. Agar (2019), 1-16, 191-197 and Course Recap	
12	Wed Dec 9	Last class Study Final Exam Study Session: Game Show, Prizes Award	

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses. **If those attending remotely do not respond during role call at course time, they will be counted absent unless they have an excellent reason for absence at that time. Attendance may be taken again, later in the course to ensure everyone is tuned in.**

- **Special health and safety measures during the reign of COVID-19:**
- **Covid-19 temporary amendments:**

Students studying at The American University of Paris are STILL EXPECTED TO ATTEND ALL scheduled classes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will have the option of attending classes remotely when special circumstances apply. For example when students are placed under quarantine by the French authorities or by their doctor, or when students present symptoms of Covid-19 and are directed, by their doctor or the AUP Health Office, to remain home. It is still the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that their professor might have set in the course syllabus. In particular, Students attending remotely from distant Time Zones should check with their professors about the specific attendance policy for remote learners.

- Please, for everyone's safety, you must **wash your hands** well before you enter the classroom. You are required to **wear a mask** during all face-to-face classroom time or for individual meetings with me or other students. The mask must cover your nose and mouth at all times. No exceptions!

If you feel ill, DO NOT COME TO CLASS. If you are well enough, you can join us online instead. If you experience ANY symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (fever, dry cough, aches and pains, respiratory difficulty), please seek medical help immediately. Make sure to keep me

informed, and get a note from the doctor if you

Attendance at all exams is mandatory. Please don't ask for an alternate date (to catch a flight, etc.); plan accordingly.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and *especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods*.

Two unexcused absences are allowed without an impact on grade. due to the intensive class schedule (double period), Three or more Unexcused absences in the class will automatically result in the student receiving an "F" grade in the course.

Grading Policy

GRADING:

Item	Description	Percentage of final grade
MIDTERM	Multiple choice, definition, short essay/answer, open book, on Blackboard	25%
Quizzes	Goal: Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge Short comprehension quizzes – either online or in class – on assigned readings/videos (lowest grade will be dropped). On	10%

FINAL	Blackboard. Goal: Keep you on track, prepared Essay, open-book on Blackboard; Two questions that will cover 30% comprehensively the entire course. Option2: Oral “interview” with 6-10 questions from study guide. Must inform me of your choice by END OF WEEK AFTER MIDTERM. Goal: Demonstrate comprehensive learning	
Self-study	This is about using apps to self-monitor and visualize data at end of semester.	15%
	Goal1: understand and gain conscious control of your attention (which other forces aim to control). Goal2: learn data visualization. See Blackboard for detailed explanation.	
Slide presentation Digital, Recorded with Quicktime, etc 8 minutes max	Goal1: This builds digital audio-visual presentation skills. Goal2: It also expands everyone’s knowledge in the course by introducing recent academic research (article or book chapter)	10%
	Key: how clear can you be in ten minutes in establishing several (let’s say 3-5) key takeaways for an audience who has not read what you read? This exercise and skill will probably recur in your future professional life. I will send you the article several weeks in advance, depending on your presentation date. Feel free to ask for yours in advance.	
Class participation*(Remote learners, see below)	You are expected to have continuous, active, high-quality contribution to in-class discussions. (see explanation of participation grade below). Goal: demonstrate you’re preparation and add to a lively, interesting class discussion	10%

Other
