

COMM 397SC
Sidewalks and Screens
Fall 2021

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Department of Communication

Meetings: Tues/Thurs 2:30-3:45 pm at Hasbrouck 113

Office Hours:

Burcu Baykurt → Tues/Thurs: 1-2 pm or by appointment
Valentina Paskar → Fridays 10 am -1 pm

Contact Information:

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*I will respond to emails within 48 hours of receiving them. I will try to respond faster during the lead-up to assignment deadlines and presentations. Feel free to send a follow-up email if you do not hear back after 48 hours.

Where do you find course materials and texts?

There is no required textbook for this course. All course materials and other critical course content will be on Moodle.

What is this course about?

Sidewalks and Screens introduces you to the ways media technologies shape, and are shaped by, the built environment. Central themes will include the historical entanglement of various technologies, media industries, communicative practices and the modern city. Our approach will cover a wide historical and geographical span, thereby acquainting you with a variety of meanings and practices associated with urban life and the media. We will collectively investigate how power dynamics (including but not limited to economics, politics, labor, class, gender, race, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation) frame the mediated urban environment.

What are Our Learning Objectives?

This course offers a conceptual understanding of the relationship among media technologies, communicative practices, and the urban environment. You are expected to both read in-depth and across different time periods of urbanization, and come to class prepared to discuss the connections and divergences between the readings, themes, and class discussions.

A main theme of the course is that our experiences in the city and its mediations are not at all equal —the mediated city is a deeply unequal one, and the mediatization of the urban both reflects and helps shape contemporary struggles over inequality, power, and justice.

By the end of the class you should be able to:

- Demonstrate a historically informed understanding of the co-construction of media, communication technologies, and urban life.
- Examine how various media technologies, industries, and representations shape perceptions of urban problems and solidarities.
- Define the contribution of media technologies as material objects and infrastructures to the problems and solutions of urban inequalities.
- Assess what is theoretically at stake in making the city central to studying communication.

WHAT WILL HELP YOU TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS COURSE?

Disability Accommodation and Inclusive Learning Statement

Your success in this class is important to me. We all learn differently and bring different strengths and needs to the class. If there are aspects of the course that prevent you from learning or make you feel excluded, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

If you have a disability and require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. You will need to register with Disability Services (161 Whitmore Administration building; phone 413-545- 0892). Information on services and materials for registering are also available on their website www.umass.edu/disability.

There are also a range of resources on campus, including:

- [Writing Center](http://www.umass.edu/writingcenter) - <http://www.umass.edu/writingcenter>
- [Learning Resource Center](http://www.umass.edu/lrc) - <http://www.umass.edu/lrc>
- [Student Success](https://www.umass.edu/studentsuccess/) - <https://www.umass.edu/studentsuccess/>
- [Center for Counseling and Psychological Health \(CCPH\)](http://www.umass.edu/counseling) - <http://www.umass.edu/counseling>
- [English as a Second Language \(ESL\) Program](http://www.umass.edu/esl) - <http://www.umass.edu/esl>

What you need to know about the technology we are using

Our Moodle site is the central hub for this course. On Moodle, you will find items such as the syllabus, announcements, course materials, presentations, assignments, grades and other relevant course information. There is also an e-mail function which I will use to send updates and reminders during the semester. Please make sure to check Moodle on a regular basis.

Class discussion will take place over Slack. **Every Tuesday morning by 10 am** you will post write a short response to the readings. I will discuss the details below.

Names & Pronouns

Everyone has the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that they use for themselves. You can indicate your preferred/ chosen first name and pronouns on SPIRE, which appear on class rosters. I am committed to ensuring that I address you with your chosen name and pronouns. Please let me know what name and pronouns I should use for you if they are not on the roster. Please remember: A student's chosen name and pronouns are to be respected at all times in the classroom.

What You Need to Know about Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

We want our learning environment to be honest and fair. UMass Amherst has an Academic Honesty Policy that includes cheating and plagiarism as forms of dishonesty.

What is plagiarism? Generally speaking, it is any attempt to take credit for work done by another person. Yet, all scholars rely on the work of others to shape their own knowledge and interpretations.

This means: In your writing, you must acknowledge the importance of other works through footnotes and/or direct textual references to influential books, articles, media texts (yes, including Internet resources!), and ideas. When you...

- use other people's sentences, words, or concepts...
- summarize or paraphrase ideas or opinions...

you need to use quotation marks and/or cite your source.

Working with a professor, tutor, or friend to clarify your ideas and organization for a paper or presentation is generally not plagiarism. Using an outline or thesis given to you by someone else without substantial modification is plagiarism.

If you have any questions about what may constitute plagiarism, please consult with me and/or our [Writing Center: Writing, Plagiarism, & Academic Honesty at UMass Amherst Writing Center](#). [Purdue Owls Online Writing Lab](#) also provides a comprehensive guide related to plagiarism.

And here is a link to the [Academic Dishonesty Guide for Students](#).

Title IX

If you have been the victim of sexual violence, gender discrimination, or sexual harassment, the university can provide you with a variety of [support resources](#) and accommodations. UMass is committed to providing these resources with minimal impact and costs to survivors on a case-by-case basis. Resources are available to survivors with or without them filing a complaint. No upfront costs are charged to any currently enrolled students for University Health Services or the Center for Counseling

and Psychological Health, and no fees exist for services in the Dean of Students Office, the Center for Women and Community, Student Legal Services, or by live-in residential staff.

Attendance & Participation

The success of the class depends on your regular attendance and reliable participation. What does it mean to “attend” and “participate”? It means showing up on time to scheduled class meetings; completing the readings, screenings, and weekly posts in advance of each class session; contributing to verbal discussions, and being prepared to engage constructively and respectfully with one another.

While I hope you’ll all be able to join us every week, **everyone gets two free absences, no questions asked.** I simply request that you please notify me of your absence in advance, if you can, so I can plan group activities accordingly. If you miss five or more classes, I’ll advise you to withdraw.

I strive to create an inclusive, accommodating classroom – one that’s responsive to students dealing with tech or connectivity issues; students with specific access needs, etc. – that should enable (and, I hope, incentivize!) all of you to attend and engage. If additional obstacles or personal challenges arise for you over the course of the semester, please feel free to bring them to my attention; we can work together to discuss alternative means of engagement.

Classroom Behavior, COVID and Public Safety

We live in complex times and the COVID-19 pandemic remains a rapidly evolving situation. UMASS Amherst has implemented reasonable health and safety protocols, based on the scientific and healthcare expertise of our community and official state and Federal guidelines. As a member of our campus community, you are expected follow campus policies and safety protocols recently announced by the Provost Office (<https://www.umass.edu/coronavirus/news/message-provost-umass-amherst-faculty-about-fall-2021>). These standards apply to anyone who is physically present on campus, on UMASS grounds, or participating in a UMASS-sponsored activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacts us all in many ways, including physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, academically, and professionally. I will work with you on challenges you may be encountering and provide support to help you succeed. However, please keep in mind that I will hold you accountable to these guidelines.

Classroom Safety Standards. Our class adheres to the following standards:

- Masks are always required on campus and in all indoor public spaces, including classrooms, hallways, elevators, restrooms, breakrooms, entries and exits to buildings, laboratories, meeting rooms, shared offices, and shared work areas.

- Vaccination is required for all students, instructors, and staff of the UMass Amherst University Campus. However, our university provides religious or medical exemptions. For more information on exemptions and compliance with unvaccinated testing requirements in these cases, please visit the UMass Public Health Promotion Center at <https://www.umass.edu/studentlife/wellbeing-safety/chp>
- Vaccinated instructors can choose to go unmasked while teaching if they can maintain at least six feet of distance from where students are sitting in the classroom.
- A student who comes to class without wearing a mask will be asked to put on a mask or to leave to get one. We all make mistakes and sometimes we can unintentionally forget to put a mask on. Reminders from the instructor or TA about this rule are aimed to maintain the safety of our classroom. However, a failure to comply with such requests could result in student conduct processes.
- If you need to be tested, please visit UMass Public Health Promotion Center: <https://www.umass.edu/coronavirus/coronavirus/covid-19-testing>

Attendance Policy and COVID-19. Do not attend in-person class if you have COVID-19, if you are experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, if you need to care for an individual with COVID-19 or have other health concerns related to COVID-19. If you are unable to attend class, notify me via email, and please do so before our next class meeting or as soon as possible.

Students who miss class due to the above conditions will not be penalized. We are here to support you. As your instructor, I will trust your word. I also expect that you notify the school or your academic advisor immediately and submit medical documentation in reasonable time so you can receive proper accommodations and attention from our university.

Potential for Adjustments and Changes. Changing public health circumstances for COVID-19 may affect all of us. If the instructor falls ill during the semester, there may be temporary changes to this course, including having a backup instructor take over the course or completing work remotely for a short time. The University is also monitoring the evolving public health situation in a daily basis and may change its guidelines. We'll keep you informed of any changes through in-class announcements and communication channels regularly employed in this class.

ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENTS

1. Class Participation – Weekly – 15% of your final grade

It goes without saying, but, you are expected to show up to class and participate in whatever we are doing. This means getting in on time and staying until class is over. I

may have surprise quizzes from time to time to make sure you're paying attention. We will also engage in small group work during class every now and then. This will be an opportunity for those not comfortable speaking to the larger group to earn some participation points. Your participation is worth 15% of your grade.

2. Weekly Readings & Written Responses – Weekly – 15% of your final grade

There is no textbook for this course but each week will have required readings (academic articles and book chapters) as well as a number of supplementary materials such as press articles, blogposts, videos, etc., all of which will be available on the course Moodle site. Each week, you will be expected to: 1) complete the required readings and videos in time for classes and 2) write a short (~150-300 words) response to the readings, **by 10 am on Tuesday**.

Your response should include a quick summary of the articles and either your thoughts/reactions on the content in relation to one of the keywords for the week or questions that demonstrate that you have read the materials and are engaging with them on a critical level. We will use these questions to help direct our discussions. These responses will be worth 15% of your grade and count toward attendance.

3. Research Paper Proposal – DUE SEPT 24 – 15% of your final grade

Throughout the semester you will work on an original research project that addresses any of the themes we will cover in class. The first step of this research is a 500-word proposal that details what you plan to work on and explain how you plan to conduct research. Detailed instructions about this proposal are on Moodle.

4. Annotated Bibliography & Thesis Statement – DUE OCT 27 – 20% of your grade

After choosing a research topic and crafting a research question, you will identify the texts that help you devise a convincing answer. Detailed instructions about this assignment are posted on Moodle.

5. Final Research Paper – DUE DEC 7– 35% of your final grade

Your final essay will be 8-10 pages (not including bibliography), double spaced, Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins.

Grading Scale

Percentage Total	Grade
93-100%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+

73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+
63-66%	D
60-62%	D-
59% or below	F
Incomplete	INC

I am always happy to discuss grades. I have two requests though. First, wait 48 hours between getting your grade and contacting me. This will give you time to go over the assignment and review the comments you have received. Second, bring specific questions when you come to chat. Where exactly do your expectations diverge from the grade? What comments or questions are you having trouble wrapping your head around? This will help us start a productive discussion.

Submitting Assignments

Unless otherwise instructed, please submit all assignments via Moodle. Please include your name and the assignment title in the file name.

Late Policy

Unless prior permission has been granted, no late work is accepted. This policy is in place to ensure every student has their work returned to them in a timely fashion. Please prepare in advance so that you will not encounter technical difficulties that may prevent submission of a given assignment. If you have a conflict with the due date, assignments can always be submitted early. I may grant extensions on assignments if you provide three days' notice and can send me evidence that you are working on an idea that requires more time. Do not ask for an extension if you have not started writing yet. Late assignments will be docked a half grade (+/-) per day (i.e. after 10 days, you cannot earn a grade higher than F).

How to Read?

While we will not read a whole book each week, I'd highly encourage you to take a look at this guide to develop your strategies for completing readings in the most efficient and effective way possible. Paul Edwards. "How to Read a Book"

<http://pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtoread.pdf>

Electronic Devices

The use of electronic devices (phones, tablets, laptops, cameras, etc.) is permitted when the device is being used in relation to the course's work. All other uses are prohibited in the classroom and devices should be turned off before class starts. I know a lot of you will be reading and taking notes on your computers or phones, so if you need that to refer to during discussions, that is of course more than fine. If your devices appear to be

distracting you or others, I reserve the right to revoke these privileges immediately and permanently.

The Syllabus is a Living Document

This syllabus is a starting point for the course. It is subject to change as the term unfolds, in response to your feedback and my assessment of how things are going. I'll be seeking out your feedback regularly. Some adjustments are likely. These adjustments may involve altering assignments or adding, removing, or modifying readings. Any changes will be discussed in class and announced via email, so attend class and check your inbox.

Class Schedule:

Class Number and Date	Questions/themes we will explore this session:	How to prepare for this session:	Quick reminders
1. Sept 2	#1 Get to know each other	Come excited; be open-minded & curious!	
2. Sept 7	#1 Why do we study media technologies and urban life?	Read James Carey. 1988. "A Cultural Approach to Communication."	Post your weekly response on Slack by Tuesday at 10 am.
3. Sept 9	#2 How do we study media technologies and urban life?	Read Georg Simmel. 1971. "The Metropolis and Mental Life."	
	#3 How/When did the contemporary city come about?	Listen RadioLab, It's Alive? https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolab/segments/96043-its-alive	

<p>4. Sept 14</p> <p>5. Sept 16</p>	<p>#1 How did the suburbs come about?</p> <p>#2 What are the differences between the suburbs and the city?</p> <p>#3 How does television/media create and maintain those differences?</p>	<p>Read Lynn Spiegel. 1992. "Home Theater."</p> <p>Visit this virtual exhibition, "Cutting through the Suburbs." http://carriagetrade.org/cutting-through-the-suburbs</p> <p>Read Emily Walton. 2018. "Asian Americans in Small Town America."</p>	<p>Post your weekly response on Slack by Tuesday at 10 am.</p>
<p>6. Sept 21</p> <p>7. Sept 23</p>	<p>#1 Can cities survive without commercial spaces?</p> <p>#2 In what ways does advertising conflict with urban life?</p>	<p>Read Anne Cronin. "The Commercial Vernacular of Advertising: Public Space, Commercialisation and Public Address"</p> <p>Watch "This Space Available" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxQFeeNZG3Y</p> <p>Read 'Good for the Soul': Giant Murals Turn São Paulo Into Open Air Gallery https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/30/world/americas/brazil-sao-paulo-murals.html</p>	<p>Post your weekly response on Slack by Tuesday at 10 am.</p> <p>Paper Proposal due SEPT 24 by 5 pm on Moodle</p>

8.	Sept 28	#1 How do we best get to know the city? On foot, on the bus, or in our cars?	Read Michel de Certeau. 1988. "Walking in the City."	Post your weekly response on Slack by Tuesday at 10 am.
9.	Sept 30	#2 Is every urban resident able to enjoy the city by walking?	Read David Serlin. 2006. "Disabling the Flâneur." <i>Journal of Visual Culture</i> , pp. 193-208.	
10.	Oct 5	#1 What are public infrastructures?	Read Langdon Winner. 1980. "Do Artifacts Have Politics?"	Post your weekly response on Slack by Tuesday at 10 am.
11.	Oct 7	#2 How do we recognize audible infrastructures in the city?	Read Juhana Venäläinen, Sonja Pöllänen and Rajko Muršič. "The Street"	
		#3 How does sound work as a communicative medium?	Read Jochen Bonz. "Soccer Stadium as Soundscape: Sound and Subjectivity"	
12.	Oct 12	#1 How do we figure out what spaces are public and private in the city?	Read Tali Hatuka and Eran Toch. 2013. "The Emergence of Portable Private-Personal Territory: Smartphones, Social Conduct, and Public Spaces."	Post your weekly response on Slack by Tuesday at 10 am.
13.	Oct 14	#2 In what ways do our mobile phones help us control public/private spaces in the city?	Read Will Marler. 2018. "Accumulating phones: Aid and adaptation in phone access for the urban poor."	
		#3 How do existing inequalities shape the ways mobile phones spur sociality in the city?		

14.	Oct 19	#1 Who are the most visible – and invisible – in the city?	Read Simone Browne. "Torches, Torture, and Totau: Lantern Laws in New York City"	Post your weekly response on Slack by Tuesday at 10 am.
15.	Oct 21	#2 Who watches whom? To what ends?	Read Forrest Stuart. 2019. "Code of the Tweet: Urban Gang Violence in the Social Media Age."	
16.	Oct 26	#1 We will workshop your research proposals in class working in groups	Bring a draft of your annotated bibliography and thesis statement to class, ready to discuss it with your peers	Annotated Bibliography & Thesis Statement DUE OCT 27 by 5 pm on Moodle
17.	Oct 28			
18.	Nov 2	#1 What does it mean for cities to be changed by climate?	Read Liz Koslov. "Avoiding Climate Change: "Agnostic Adaptation" and the Politics of Public Silence."	Post your weekly response on Slack by Tuesday at 10 am.
19.	Nov 4	#2 How do we collectively "adapt" to climate change?	Visit "A Crisis Right Now: San Francisco and Manila Face Rising Seas." https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/02/13/climate/manila-san-francisco-sea-level-rise.html	
20.	Nov 9	#1 What does the politics of having trees or shade look like across the city? #2 Why does "shade" matter?	Read Sam Bloch "Shade" https://placesjournal.org/article/shade-an-urban-design-mandate/?cn-reloaded=1	Post your weekly response on Slack by Tuesday at 10 am.

			<p>Read Why an East Harlem Street Is 31 Degrees Hotter Than Central Park West https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/20/nyregion/climate-inequality-nyc.html?smid=tw-share</p>	
21. Nov 16	#1 What do you understand from living in a “smart” city?	<p>Read Shannon Mattern. 2017. “A City is not a Computer.”</p>	<p>Post your weekly response on Slack by Tuesday at 10 am.</p>	
22. Nov 18	#2 Can cities become a better place if they are designed around new digital technologies and big data analytics?	<p>Read “Who Wins When a City Gets Smart?” https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-11-01/will-columbus-smart-city-grant-serve-moms-in-need</p> <p>Read Mel Hogan “Big Data Ecologies” http://ephemerajournal.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/contribution/18-3hogan.pdf</p>		
23. Nov 23	#1 How has the COVID-19 outbreak changed the city so far?	<p>Read How the Coronavirus will Reshape Architecture? https://www.newyorker.com/culture/department-of-design/how-</p>		

		the-coronavirus-will-reshape-architecture	
24. Nov 30	<p>#1 What do you think the post-COVID-19 city will look like?</p> <p>#2 What kind of role do digital technologies play in this transformation?</p>	<p>Watch The New Invisible Workforce https://www.ted.com/talks/mary_1_gra_y_the_new_invisible_workforce/reading-list</p> <p>Explore The Great Empty https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/23/world/coronavirus-great-empty.html</p> <p>Bring a draft of your final paper, ready to discuss it with your peers.</p>	
25. Dec 2	#3 We workshop your final papers.		
26. Dec 7	#1 We will review the overall course.		Final paper due DEC 7 by 5 pm on Moodle