COMM 400: Futures of Communication(s)
Spring 2018

Time: Monday, 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.	**Location:** MMTH, Room 235
Professor: Sam Ford **Phone: 270.535.2631** **Office Hours: By Appointment**	**Email: SamFordKY@gmail.com** **Office: over coffee, by appointment**
Professor: Ken Payne **Phone: 270.935.70523** **Office Hours: M/T 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m**	**Email: ken.payne@wku.edu** **Office: MMTH 316**

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This special topics class is designed to bring together students from the programs housed within the Western Kentucky University Department of Communication--Communication; Advertising and Public Relations; and Popular Culture Studies--to work together both to explore the futures of their fields and to bring the perspectives and skills from each of their majors together to tackle a pressing problem for our region. In addition to individual assignments, students will collaborate in teams comprised of students from across the programs within the department to think both about the changing nature of communication and this regional issue, in relation to what both might look like in the year 2040.

For the Spring 2018 course, our subject area will be the Future of Work in Kentucky. Students will explore the past of work and economic development in Kentucky, the current state of the economy, and potential visions of the future. We will analyze how people have framed the future of work in Kentucky in the past; how it's being framed presently; and visions for potential futures of the Kentucky economy, and how those could be framed. Students will apply their skills in collaborative group projects that tackle those visions of the future.

The chief outcome for this course will be a website (www.futuresofcommunication.org) that houses both students' expressions of understanding about the potential futures of the fields of communication and student work around the future of work in Kentucky, as well as a public presentation of these visions for departmental faculty and students, interested community members, and academics. Our goal is for this course to provide a space for students to better understand and have a vision for what the futures of communication(s) might look like, how individual fields (AD, PR, COMM, POP) converge in those potential futures, their role in helping achieve these visions for the future, and how they might bring this future-facing way of thinking to bear on working together to solve an important problem for the region.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:

Individual Assignments:
- **Project on Futures of Communication 2040:** Students will, over the course of the semester and in consultation with their instructors, execute an individual project aimed at articulating their vision for what their field will look like in 2040.
- **Weekly Reflection Pieces:** Students will write two reflections each week on their group's course blog aimed at analyzing readings for the week from the perspective of their discipline. One post will be about the readings from *Spreadable Media*. The other will be about the articles assigned that week. Students are also required to leave at least one comment on each of their group colleagues' reflection pieces.

Group Assignments:
- **Leading Class Discussion:** Each group will select four dates throughout the course of the semester where they will be charged with helping guide class discussion over that week's readings.
- **Future of Work in Kentucky:** Over the course of the semester, each student group will have a task each week, ultimately culminating in imagining the Future of Work in Kentucky in 2040. There will be a milestone group deliverable due in February, in March, in April, and at the end of the course, to be decided as a class/group as we dig into the topic and decide what we will be building. Tasks will include researching and making.

GRADE FOR THE COURSE:

The grade for this class will be based on a 1,000-point scale. Those 1,000 points are broken down in the following assignments:
- **Individual Project:** 120 points
- **Weekly Reflection Pieces:** 400 points. This includes 10 points for an introduction post to your group about your background and what brought you to this class. Then, over 13 weeks, 10 points each week for reflection on reading from the book, 10 points for reading of articles assigned that week, and 10 points for comments' on group members' reflections/group discussion around these posts.
- **Leading Class Discussion:** 120 points. 30 points each, for 4 class sessions
- **Future of Work in Kentucky Weekly Projects:** 360 points. 180 points total for 3 monthly check-ins on weekly milestones (mid-February; mid-March; mid-April), each worth 60 points; 180 points for final Future of Work in Kentucky project (120 points for final projects; 60 points for final presentation)

REQUIRED TEXT:

All students will be required to purchase Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green's *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture* (NYU Press, 2013). All other readings will be available online or provided as a PDF.

WEEKLY COURSE STRUCTURE:

This class meets once per week. While there will be alterations to this pattern, in general, each week, that will be spent:

Hour 1:
- Class announcements, introductory remarks, etc.
- Discussing the week's readings, incorporating perspectives from all five Department of Communication majors, in relation to the futures of communication and what it will look like in 2040

Hour 2:
- Discussing the week's readings in relation to the project of this semester--the Future of Work in Kentucky in 2040
- Engaging with a special guest, in person or virtually, about the Future of Work in Kentucky in 2040
- Class-wide discussion, workshopping, and sharing across groups in relation to Future of Work in Kentucky 2040 projects

Hour 3:
- Group working time
- Concluding discussion and articulation of next steps

COURSE POLICIES:

Students with Disabilities
In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Title IX Misconduct/Assault
Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff, and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) (https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf) and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) (https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender- based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and **MUST** report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

The Learning Center (TLC)
Should you require academic assistance with your WKU courses, The Learning Center (located in the Downing Student Union, 2141) provides free supplemental education programs for all currently enrolled WKU students. The Learning Center at Downing Student Union offers certified, one-on-one tutoring in over 200 subjects and eight academic skill areas by appointment or walk in. Online tutoring is offered to distance learners. TLC is also a quiet study area (with side rooms designated for peer-to-peer tutoring) and a computer lab to complete academic coursework. Please call TLC in the Downing Student Union at (270) 745-5065 for more information or to schedule a tutoring appointment. http://www.wku.edu/tlc/

WKU Libraries
WKU Libraries has subject specialist faculty members who work with our department's students. Students wishing to use the libraries' resources for projects for this class can make an appointment with the faculty librarian whose focuses include this program any time you are working on a project. This specialist library faculty member acts as your own personal librarian—scheduling an appointment to help you get started with the library's resources, including all the online services available to you. We also encourage you to make proper use of the Interlibrary Loan office, who will help you track down material you find reference to that isn't available, physically or digitally, from our library, by working with libraries across the country.

WKU Center for Literacy Assistance

The WKU Center for Literacy is located in Gary A. Ransdell Hall 2066. At the Center for Literacy, students can receive assistance in developing strategies to help **reading/studying to learn** and **writing for evidence and argument**. The Center for Literacy offers both individual and small group sessions throughout the semester. More information about the WKU Center for Literacy can be found on the website: http://www.wku.edu/literacycenter/.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism consists of turning in work that is not your own. That can be anything from quoting material in a paper and not crediting the original author through a footnote, to copying from a book, to pasting in the text found online. The consequences for plagiarism are simple: If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive an "F" for the course. No exceptions. In addition, a letter reporting your conduct will be sent to your college dean recommending appropriate disciplinary action, regardless of the quality of your prior work in the course. The university's policies on plagiarism and academic dishonesty are outlined in detail in the student handbook and at the following website: http://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-dishonesty.php. If you do not understand what plagiarism is, it is your responsibility to ask us for clarification.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Note: In each week's class discussion, we will make note of areas the class needs to explore further around the subject of "the Future of Work in Kentucky" and will ask everyone to compile all suggestions for additional readings by noon on Tuesday. The instructors will then share the assigned additional reading by the end of the day each Tuesday.

Monday, January 22 The Futures of Communication, and Work in Kentucky, in 2040

Monday, January 29 Why Media Spreads, Part I
- Selected Articles by Instructors
- "How to Read This Book," *Spreadable Media*, pp. ix-xv.
- Whitney Phillips, "In Defense of Memes," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/phillips/.
- William Uricchio, "The History of Spreadable Media," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/uricchio/
- Henry Jenkins, "Twitter Revolutions?" http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/jenkins/

Monday, February 5 Why Media Spreads, Part II
- Selected Articles by Instructors
- "Why Media Spreads," *Spreadable Media*, pp. 1-46.

Monday, February 12 Where Web 2.0 Went Wrong, Part I
- Selected Articles by Instructors
- Alec Austin, "The Implicit Contract," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/austin/
- John Banks, "Co-creative Expertise in Gaming Cultures," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/banks/
- Abigail De Kosnik, "Interrogating 'Free' Fan Labor," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/kosnik/
- Stacy Wood, "The Value of Customer Recommendations," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/wood/

Monday, February 19 Where Web 2.0 Went Wrong, Part II
- Selected Articles by Instructors
- "Where Web 2.0 Went Wrong," *Spreadable Media*, pp. 47-84.

Monday, February 26 Reappraising the Residual
- Selected Articles by Instructors
- Hanna Rose Shell, "A Global History of Secondhand Clothing," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/shell/
- Ted Hovet, "YouTube and Archives in Educational Environments," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/hovet/
- Bob Rehak, "The Value of Retrogames," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/rehak/
- Robert V. Kozinets, "Retrobrands and Retromarketing," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/kozinets/
- "Reappraising the Residual," *Spreadable Media*, pp. 85-112.

Monday, March 5 The Value of Media Engagement, Part I
- Selected Articles by Instructors
- Sheila Murphy Seles, "*Chuck* Vs. Leno," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/seles/
- Grant McCracken, "'Consumers' or 'Multipliers,'" http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/mccracken/
- Eleanor Baird Stribling, "Valuing Fans," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/stribling/
- Derek Johnson, "A History of Transmedia Entertainment," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/johnson/
- Ethan Tussey, "The Online Prime Time of Workspace Media," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/tussey/
- Jason Mittell, "Forensic Fandom and the Drillable Text," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/mittell/
- Alex Leavitt, "Performing with *Glee*," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/leavitt/

Monday, March 12 NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

Monday, March 19 The Value of Media Engagement, Part II
- Selected Article by Instructors
- "The Value of Media Engagement," *Spreadable Media*, pp. 113-152.
- Readings Selected by Students

Monday, March 26 What Constitutes Meaningful Participation?, Part I
- Selected Articles by Instructors
- Sharon Marie Ross, "Television's Invitation to Participate," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/ross/
- C. Lee Harrington, "The Moral Economy of Soap Opera Fandom," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/harrington/
- Ilya Vedrashko, "How Spreadability Changes How We Think about Advertising," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/vedrashko/
- Ana Domb, "Tecnobrega's Productive Audiences," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/domb/
- Kevin Driscoll, "Soulja Boy and Dance Crazes," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/driscoll/

Monday, April 2 What Constitutes Meaningful Participation?, Part II
- Selected Articles by Instructors
- "What Constitutes Meaningful Participation?" *Spreadable Media*, pp. 153-194.

Monday, April 9 Designing for Spreadability
- Selected Articles by Instructors
- Amanda Lotz, "What Old Media Can Teach New Media," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/lotz/
- Christopher Weaver and Sam Ford, "Learning to Be a Responsible Circulator," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/weaver/
- "Designing for Spreadability," *Spreadable Media*, pp. 195-228.

Monday, April 16 Courting Supporters for Independent Media
- Selected Articles by Instructors
- Henry Jenkins, "Joss Whedon, the Browncoats, and *Dr. Horrible*," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/jenkins1/
- Nancy Baym, "The Swedish Model," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/baym
- Geoffrey Long, "(Sp)reading Digital Comics," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/long/

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- David Edery, "The Long Tail of Digital Games," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/edery/
- Jonathan Gray, "The Use Value of Authors," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/gray/
- "Courting Supporters for Independent Media," *Spreadable Media*, pp. 229-258.

Monday, April 23 Thinking Transnationally
- Selected Articles by Instructors
- Ethan Zuckerman, "From 'Weird' to Wide," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/zuckerman/
- Xiaochang Li, "Transnational Audiences and East Asian Television," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/li/
- Aswin Punathambekar, "Targeting Desis," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/punathambekar/
- Parmesh Shahani, "The Revolution Is Not Spreadable," http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/shahani/
- "Thinking Transnationally," *Spreadable Media*, pp. 259-290.

Monday, April 30 Conclusion(s) and Final Projects
- "Conclusion," *Spreadable Media*, pp. 291-305.
- "Afterword," *Spreadable Media* paperback edition, forthcoming.