

Social Media as Culture

2010-2011

Module Outline

Module Title: Social Media as Culture
Module Type: Core module
Module Value: 30 credits
Module Leaders: Dave Harte (dave.harte@bcu.ac.uk)

Module is delivered on: MA Social Media
MA Creative Industries and Cultural Policy

This is a theory module which explores the current state of academic knowledge and debates around the emergence of social media that inform an understanding of related practices conceptualised as cultural. It will provide you with a systematic understanding of the approaches to studying social media culture and its social and cultural role and character.

At the end of this module you will be able to contextualise social media within the traditions of media and cultural studies, employing established theoretical frameworks and methodologies in order to advance new insights into practice and meaning.

By participating in a research community, and through collective debate, peer review and independently work, you will aim to contribute research of originality and quality to understanding of popular music cultural and its social role.

Learning Outcomes

1. Map the current state of scholarship on the history, character and practices of social media as culture;
2. Formulate and undertake original research and analysis of the character and practices of, and issues and debates around, social media as culture;
3. Systematically synthesise scholarly theories and paradigms and independently gathered data, to produce critically evaluations of policy and practice;
4. Plan and reflect on personal development, engage in debates, and communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences

Timetable

The **Social Media as Culture module** will mostly be taught in room B210 (Baker Building) on Wednesdays 10am – 12pm.

Please note below that many external events are scheduled into the programme.

It should take 300 hours to complete the module.

Tutorial times will be arranged individually or in groups for Fridays at 3pm in Urban Coffee Co., Church street, Birmingham City Centre.

Weekly schedule

Please note that this timetable is subject to change.

Week 1

Wednesday 29th September 2010, 10.00-12.00

Introduction to module/Defining Social Media as Culture

- Reading: Reading: Alice E. Marwick and Danah Boyd: *I Tweet Honestly, I Tweet Passionately: Twitter Users, Context Collapse, and the Imagined Audience* (2010)
- Tasks: Research at least one journal article that you feel would help your understanding of the topic discussed in today's class. Be prepared to reference a case study of the use of social media as part of your discussion of the article.
- Write a blog post reflecting on the extent to which you think Birmingham has a blogging 'scene', highlighting relevant examples.

Tutor: Dave Harte

Week 2

Wednesday 6th October 2010 10.00-12.00

Culture and Technology

- Event: 1pm – 5pm: Hyperlocal Govcamp
(<http://hyperlocalgovcampwm10.eventbrite.com>)
"Innovation is taking place across public sector digital communications through means such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. This is a chance to listen, learn, exchange ideas, talk and contribute to sessions on best practice."
- Reading: Leadbetter, Charles: 'We-Think' (2008). Chapter 1, pages 1 - 26
- Task: Pull together material collected from the Hyperlocal Govcamp event. Use your blog to identify key topics that emerged from the day and reflect on your involvement.

Tutor: Dave Harte

Week 3

Wednesday 13th October 2010, 10.00-12.00

Politics and Economics of Social Media

Reading: Reading: Power of Information (2007) Cabinet Office

Task: Write a blog post reflecting on the Power of Information report and offer some thoughts on how local government might take forward some of its recommendations. How are the ideas within Power of Information being developed at a local level?

Tutor: Dave Harte

Week 4

Wednesday 20th October 2010, 10.00-12.00

Event: Beyond 2010 (ICC Birmingham) - *conference exploring the central role of digital technologies in delivering efficiencies, transparency and reform that are key to driving economic growth and delivering sustainable public services.*

Reading: Public Media 2.0: Dynamic, Engaged Publics, Center for Social Media
Gov 2.0: Towards a User Generated State? John Morison

Tutor: Dave Harte

Week 5

Wednesday 27th October 2010, 10.00-12.00

Social capital and identities in social media spaces.

Reading: Johnston, Gordon & Percy-Smith, Janie (2002) In Search of Social Capital, Policy & Politics, vol. 31: pp. 321-34.

Tutor: Jon Hickman

Week 6

Wednesday 3rd November 2010, 10.00-12.00

Case studies in how Social Media is contributing to ideas of 'Big Society'

Reading: TBC

Tutor: Dave Harte

Week 7

Wednesday 10th November 2010, 10.00-12.00

Communities of Practice & Organic Intellectuals

- Task: Blog about your reflections to date on the nature of Birmingham's 'organic' intellectuals. Who are they? What is their role in public debate?
- Reading: Atton, Chris (2002) 'Alternative Media' Sage, London pp103-132 *city will force the gaze inward, focussing our attention exclusively on our municipality.*
- Tutor: Jon Hickman

Week 8

Wednesday 17th November 2010, 10.00-12.00

Research Methods in Social Media 1 – Mediating the Olympics - a case study

- Reading: TBC
- Tutor: Jennifer Jones - <http://jennifermjones.net/>

Week 9

Wednesday 24th November 2010, 10.00-12.00

Research methods in social media 2

- Task: Read the Richard Florida reading on Creative Class, below. We won't be discussing his arguments but will be focusing on the methods by which he constructs his argument. Be prepared to discuss the detail of his methods:
- Reading: Entrepreneurship, Creativity, and Regional Development - Richard Florida (2002)
- Tutor: Dave Harte

Week 10

Wednesday 1st December 2010, 10.00-12.00

- Workshop: Working towards the final assignment
- Tutorials: Individual tutorials as required.
- Tutor: Dave Harte

Week 11

Wednesday 8th December 2010, 10.00-12.00

Workshop: Social Media Book Club

Task: Meet as a group, in a public place, to discuss a book of your choice related to Social Media.

- Choose a venue/time that enables others interested in the article to attend.
- Create a blog post to advertise the event and identify some initial key questions.

This is your event for which you are responsible.

Weeks 12 - 16

Directed study and tutorials

Assessment

All assignments to be submitted via the electronic submission system on moodle.

Assignment 1 – (30%) (deadline 26th November 2010)

Research Blog & Critical Evaluation:

A portfolio of research posts, reviews of scholarship and social media engagement produced during the module framed by a critical evaluation that explores the process, value and outcomes of social media as cultural practice and academic document.

Criteria for assessment: breadth, depth and application of secondary research; understanding and insight into material; evaluation and contextualisation; communication and management of social media/academic process.

Assignment 2 – (70%) (deadline 21st January 2011)

Research project (3500 words)

A piece of original, focused and detailed empirical work into an aspect of social media framed by one or more of the approaches introduced in the module.

Criteria for assessment: origination, focus and management of project; depth and understanding of secondary research; observations and contextualisation of empirical research; conclusions and communication of research

Indicative Reading Resources

Atton, Chris (2002) *Alternative Media*, London: Sage

Coleman, S (2010) *The media and the public : 'them' and 'us' in media discourse*, Oxford : Wiley-Blackwell, 2010

Coyer Kate Downmut Tony & Fountain Alan (2007) *The Alternative Media Handbook*, London: Routledge

Curran James & Seaton Jean (1997) *Power without responsibility: the press and broadcasting in Britain*, (5th ed.) London : Routledge

Dean, Jodi (2010) *Blog theory : feedback and capture in the circuits of drive / Jodi Dean*, Cambridge: Polity

Fisher, Eran (2010) *Media and new capitalism in the digital age : the spirit of networks*, Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2010

Fuery Keli (2009) *New Media* London: Palgrave Macmillan

Leadbeater Charles (2008) *We-think: Mass innovation, not mass production: The Power of Mass Creativity*, London: Profile Books

Loon, Joost van (2008) *Media technology : critical perspectives*, Maidenhead : McGraw-Hill/Open University Press

Nigg Heinz and Wade Graham (1980) *Community Media*, Zurich: Regenbogen Verlag

Palfrey, John (2008) *Born digital : understanding the first generation of digital natives*, New York : Basic Books

Rettberg, Jill Walker (2008) *Blogging*, Cambridge : Polity

Tremayne, M (Ed.) (2007) *Blogging, citizenship, and the future of media*, New York; London: Routledge

Shirky Clay (2008) *Here Comes Everybody*, London: Penguin

Shirky, Clay (2010) *Cognitive Surplus*, London: Penguin

Williams Raymond (1976) *Communications* 3rd ed, Harmondsworth: Penguin

Journals

New Media & Society

TV & Digital Culture