



CAMS 2391:

Memetic Communication

Course Description

This course will focus on culture as communication via the smallest unit of expression, the meme. The term itself comes from Richard Dawkins in 1976 to describe some of the most basic constructions of culture within society, like stereotypes within television shows, wallpaper patterns, and even the form factors of kitchen appliances.

The structure of the course will be in the form of the analysis of memetic communication (using the more modern definition of the term) using visual communication theory, mass communication theory, and interdisciplinary approaches to attempt to deconstruct memes and understand how to effectively communicate in the often noisy arena of communication known as the Internet.

Course Objectives

Students will:

1. Analyze the historical origin and intended purpose of memes
2. Analyze the origin of the word "meme", its denotation, and how its connotation has evolved
3. Explain how memes can be an effective form of communication.
4. Give examples of how memes can convey emotion.
5. Use computational methods to create memes and storyboards.

(Thank you Holly Dyer)

This culture will fulfill the "knowledge of human thought and culture" general education requirement.

Course Readings

Limor Shifman's "Memes in Digital Culture" (ISBN: 978-0262525435), Milner, DeNardis, & Zimmer's "The World Made Meme" (ISBN: 978-0262535229) & Paul McLean's "Culture in Networks." (ISBN: 978-0745687179)

There will be other readings assigned throughout the semester via Moodle.

Course Information

Term: Spring 2019

Call Number: 33834

Time & Date: M/W/F 4 to 4:50p

Classroom: PAC 131

A cell phone with a dataplan is required for this course.

Dr. Shane Tilton
phone: 740.610.0424
email: s-tilton@onu.edu
office location: Freed PAC 137
office hours: M-F 2-3p & by app't



Tentative Class Schedule^				
Week	Begins	Topic for Monday	Wednesday	Friday
1	1/14/19	Syllabus Day	"Memes vs. Tropes." Readings on Moodle	"A Conceptual Framework" Read McLean Ch. 1
2	1/21/19	Martin Luther King Jr. Day (NO CLASS)	"Cultural Lens." Read McLean Ch. 2	"Cultural Concepts." Read McLean Ch. 3
3	1/28/19	"Meme vs. Viral" Read Shifman pg. 9-64	"Meme as genre" Readings on Moodle	Memetic Essay #1 (10%)
4	2/4/19	"Logic" Read Milner pg. 7-42	"Grammar" Read Milner pg. 43-78	"Vernacular" Read Milner pg. 79-110
5	2/11/19	"Culture through Networks" Read McLean Ch. 4	"Culture from Networks" Read McLean Ch. 5	Memetic Essay #2 (10%) - (NO CLASS)
6	2/18/19	"Antagonism." Read Milner Ch. 4	"Voice." Read Milner Ch. 5	"Conversation." Read Milner Ch. 6
7	2/25/19	"Charitable Memes." Read Deller & Tilton on Moodle	"Weaponizing Memes." Readings on Moodle	Memetic Essay #3 (10%)
7.5	3/4/19	Spring Break (NO CLASS) - Take Home Exam (10%)		
8	3/11/19	"The Paralanguage of Memes." Readings on Moodle	"Code-Switching." Reading on Moodle	"SxSW as Memetic Platform." Readings on Moodle
9	3/18/19	"Network from Culture" Read McLean Ch. 6	"Network of Culture" Read McLean Ch. 7	Memetic Essay #4 (10%)
10	3/25/19	"Network as Culture" Read McLean Ch. 8	"Meme Magick" Readings on Moodle	Easter Break (NO CLASS)
11	4/1/19	Easter Break (NO CLASS)	"Wholesome Memes" Readings on Moodle	"The Meme Economy" Readings on Moodle
12	4/8/19	Broadcast Education Association (NO CLASS)	"Memes as Marketing." Readings on Moodle	Memetic Essay #5 (10%)
13	4/15/19	Group Presentations (15%)		
14	4/22/19	"The Future of Memes." Readings on Moodle	"The Death of Memes." Readings on Moodle	Memetic Essay #6 (10%)
15	4/29/19	Computer Lab Time for Final Presentation		
Finals	5/10/19	Final Paper must be submitted no later than 2pm (10%), Final Presentation must be scheduled with me and completed no later than 3:30p (5%).		

Content Warning

The content and discussion in this course will potentially engage with emotionally challenging and sensitive content throughout the course of the class. Much of it will be intellectually challenging to engage with. I will flag especially graphic or intense content that discusses or represents adult themes and will do my best to make this classroom a space where we can engage bravely, empathetically and thoughtfully with difficult content every week.

Class Structure & Evaluation

The normal class-time structure will first quickly discuss issues from previous classes that were not resolved or topics that we need to reframe before starting the day's topic. Second, the class will use discussion questions to conduct the day's interactions. Third, there will an in-class activity to transfer the potentially abstract conversation into an effort that is more concrete. Finally, we will take time to perform a reflective analysis of the day's topic and activity.

Assignment due dates are indicated on the daily schedule. Late assignments are not accepted unless arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to the due date.

Grading Parameters:

Memetic Essay (6): 10% each, Mid-Term Exam: 10%, Final Group Presentation: 10% & Final Project: 10%

Grading Scale

90% – 100% = A (Exceptional Achievement)

80% – 89% = B (High Achievement)

70% – 79% = C (Average Achievement)

60% – 69% = D (Below Average)

0% – 59% = E (Failing)

Memetic Essay

The six essays in class will be in the form of discussing a memetic artifact using a series of focusing questions based on the previous readings. You will need to complete a two to four pages written assessment of the artifact before the start of class, which shall be submitted to me via Moodle. You will be in front of your classmates giving a short 30-second summary of the nature of the memetic artifact during the class-time. In addition, you will need to answer the focusing questions and questions from your classmates and/or Dr. Tilton.

Attendance

Your attendance is required in order to make this course work. There will be an attendance book to sign during every production meeting. The two expectations to this would be if you have medical documentation for the previous class that you missed or if you have documentation from the university stating you will be gone because you are acting as a representative of the university. **You must let Dr. Tilton know if you are going to miss a meeting BEFORE the scheduled time of the meeting. If you fail to do so, it will count as an absence.**

Academic Dishonesty

The university policy on plagiarism is covered in Appendix C of the Student Handbook, Section 1 - Academic Offenses states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about a question of plagiarism involving their work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission. When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgment of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism.

Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work, whether it be published article, chapter of a book, a paper from a friend or some file, or another source, including the Internet. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be. Plagiarism also includes using someone else's work during an oral presentation without properly citing that work in the form of an oral footnote.

Whenever you use outside sources or information, you must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how you have employed them. If the words of someone else are used, you must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Plagiarism also includes making simple changes while leaving the organization, content and phraseology intact. However, nothing in these rules shall apply to those ideas which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain.

All work submitted must be new, original work; you may not submit work you have produced for another purpose or class. Dr. Tilton has the right to address potential academic dishonesty with multiple solutions based on the severity and extent of the issues. This can range from a verbal warning, written warning in your department or college file, failing the assignment, failing the course, recommendations to face college and university sanctions, or a combination of the previous solutions.

Disability Statement and Policy on Instructional Modifications

If you submit a written Request for Academic Accommodations (Form 101, available on-line), I am happy to talk with you outside of class about making reasonable accommodations. To negotiate special arrangements (especially of deadlines) you must contact me at least two weeks before an assignment is due so that I can consult with your advisor or tutor. This is a non-negotiable class policy.

Email Policy

Please allow 24 hours for me to respond to your e-mail during the school week. On weekends, I will try to answer your e-mails, but I may not be able to do so until Monday. I ask that before you e-mail me with questions, please read your assignment information and syllabus carefully. If you have not heard from me within 24 hours, please send a follow-up e-mail or speak with me in person. Your email headers should always begin with [CAMS 2391] followed by three or five words describing the purpose of the email.

Submission of Assignments

All homework must be submitted digitally and must include your name, my name, the course, and the date. When submitting assignments on Moodle, make sure to give your work a document name to indicate what the item is. For example, you may title your evaluating information activity "Last Name Info Eval." You are responsible for keeping back-up (I recommend several) copies of all your work since electronic texts can be lost. Assignments are to be completed solely by the individual. Since technological issues can and will occur, do not wait until the last minute to work on your assignments. Schedule time to check the Moodle site at least twice a week. Late work will not be accepted in this class.

Final Advice

DON'T PANIC

THIS IS THE WAY TO HAPPINESS!

Readings:

- “Memes vs. Tropes:”

Milner, R. M. (2013). Media Lingua Franca: Fixity, Novelty, and Vernacular Creativity in Internet Memes. Retrieved from <https://spir.aoir.org/index.php/spir/article/view/806>

Highfield, T., & Leaver, T. (2016). Instagrammatics and digital methods: studying visual social media, from selfies and GIFs to memes and emoji. *Communication Research and Practice*, 2(1), 47-62.

- “Meme as genre:”

Wiggins, B. E. (2014, May 26). Memes as genre: A structurational analysis of the memescape. Retrieved September 13, 2018, from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1461444814535194>

Vogt, P., Goldman, A., & Blumburg, A. (2017, November 16). #110 The Antifa Supersoldier Spectacular by Reply All. Retrieved September 13, 2018, from <https://www.gimletmedia.com/reply-all/110-antifa-supersoldier-spectacular>

- “Charitable Memes:”

Deller, R. A., & Tilton, S. (2015). Selfies| Selfies as Charitable Meme: Charity and National Identity in the #nomakeupselfie and #thumbsupforstephen Campaigns. Retrieved September 13, 2018, from <http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/3143/1400>

- “Weaponizing Memes:” (Thank you Ben Bates)

Zannettou, S., Caulfield, T., Blackburn, J., De Cristofaro, E., Sirivianos, M., Stringhini, G., & Suarez-Tangil, G. (2018, May 31). On the Origins of Memes by Means of Fringe Web Communities. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gianluca_Stringhini/publication/325484133_On_the_Origins_of_Memes_by_Means_of_Fringe_Web_Communities/links/5b13cb60a6fdcc4611e0315b/On-the-Origins-of-Memes-by-Means-of-Fringe-Web-Communities.pdf

Waller, J. M. (2017, September/October). Weaponizing Ridicule. Retrieved September 13, 2018, from https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/WALLER_Weaponizing_Ridicule.pdf

Prosser, M. B. (2006). Memetics—A Growth Industry in US Military Operations. Retrieved September 14, 2018, from <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a507172.pdf>

Thomas, T. (2015). Russias 21st century information war: Working to undermine and destabilize populations. *Defence Strategic Communications*, 1(1), 10-25. doi:10.30966/2018.riga.1.1

- ““The Paralanguage of Memes:” (Thank you Crystal Abidin)

Highfield, Tim. 2016. “Waiving (hash)flags: Some thoughts on Twitter hashtag emoji.” Medium.com. OA: <https://medium.com/dmrc-at-large/waiving-hash-flags-some-thoughts-on-twitter-hashtag-emoji-bfdcdc4ab9ad#.vczn6qfql>

Miltner, Kate M. 2014. “There’s no place for lulz on LOLCats: The role of genre, gender, and group identity in the interpretation and enjoyment of an Internet meme.” *First Monday* 19(8). OA: <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/5391/4103>

Stark, Luke, and Kate Crawford. 2015. “The Conservatism of Emoji: Work, Affect, and Communication.” *Social Media + Society Journal* 1(2). OA: <http://sms.sagepub.com/content/1/2/2056305115604853.full>

Willard, Lesley. 2016. “Tumblr’s Gif Economy: The Promotional Function of Industrially Gifted Gifsets.” *Flowjournal.org*. OA: <http://www.flowjournal.org/2016/07/tumblrs-gif-economy/>

Readings:

- "SxSW as Memetic Platform:"

Silverman, J. (2013). Networking into the Abyss: Inside the empty bubble of SXSW Interactive. *The Baffler*, (23), 52-62.

Aepfel, T. (2015, March 20). 50 Million Users: The Making of an 'Angry Birds' Internet Meme. Retrieved September 13, 2018, from <http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2015/03/20/50-million-users-the-making-of-an-angry-birds-internet-meme>

- "Codeswitching:"

Abidin, C. (2017, May 24). Code-switching and linguistic acrobatics on the internet. Retrieved September 13, 2018, from <https://wishcrys.com/2017/01/16/code-switching-and-linguistic-acrobatics-on-the-internet/>

- "Meme Magic:" (Thank you Alice Marwick and Rebecca Lewis https://datasociety.net/pubs/oh/DataAndSociety_Syllabus-MediaManipulationAndDisinformationOnline.pdf)

Beran, Dale. "4chan: The Skeleton Key to the Rise of Trump." Medium.com, February 14, 2017. <https://medium.com/DaleBeran/4chan-the-skeleton-key-to-the-rise-of-trump-624e7cb798cb>

Phillips, Whitney, Jessica Beyer, and Gabriella Coleman. "Trolling Scholars Debunk the Idea That the Alt-Right's Shitposters Have Magic Powers." Motherboard, March 22, 2017. https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/trolling-scholars-debunk-the-idea-that-the-alt-rights-trolls-have-magic-powers

- "Wholesome Memes:"

Ferguson, S. (2017, January 12). The Future Of Memes Is Wholesome. Retrieved from <https://www.complex.com/life/2017/01/wholesome-memes>

Kelly, T. (2017, July 25). Why the internet loves wholesome memes. Retrieved from <https://www.dailydot.com/unclick/wholesome-memes>

- "Meme Economy:"

Priceonomics. (2017, July 25). Ranking the Top Investors in the "Meme Economy". Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/priceonomics/2017/07/25/ranking-the-top-investors-in-the-meme-economy/#3ea0cae65edc>

Plaugic, L. (2017, January 10). How a group of Redditors is creating a fake stock market to figure out the value of memes. Retrieved from <https://www.theverge.com/2017/1/10/14223264/meme-economy-reddit-stock-market>

- "Memes as Marketing:"

Marsden, P. (2002). Brand positioning: Meme's the word. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 20(5), 307-312. doi:10.1108/02634500210441558

Wu, Y., & Ardley, B. (2007). Brand strategy and brand evolution: Welcome to the world of the meme. *The Marketing Review*, 7(3), 301-310. doi:10.1362/146934707x230112

- "The Future and Death of Memes:"

Jackson, L. M. (2017, December 07). A Unified Theory of Meme Death. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2017/12/a-unified-theory-of-meme-death/546866/>

Alfonso III, F. (2017, February 25). Memes are dead. Retrieved from <https://www.dailydot.com/unclick/internet-memes-future-reddit/>

Veix, J. (2018, June 23). Working towards a complete theory of meme relativity. Retrieved from <https://theoutline.com/post/5035/greenwich-meme-time?zd=1&zi=x2ryqffh>