Comm 2525, Fall 2013   **Professor Marwick**

Final Paper Assignment : 40% of the grade

Topic & Bibliography due 11/21

Video Script due 12/2

Final Paper due 12/5

YouTube Video link due 12/16 at 9:00AM

In this paper, you will combine the theoretical studies of digital culture we have discussed with the practical research method of ethnography to write a paper about an aspect of digital culture from an ethnographic perspective. For example, you could write about one genre of YouTube videos (wedding first dance videos; haul videos; video game walk-through videos); one particular online community (a subreddit; a message board); or a type of digital practice (a meme or slang term; machinima or fansubbing). This paper should come to some sort of conclusion or argument about the practice.

By the end of finals week, you should turn in a 3-5 minute video about your ethnography that will be posted to YouTube and will include music and narration. I encourage you to work with others or share efforts. If you choose to collaborate on a video, you must both choose the same subject for your final paper, but you should NOT write the final paper together. You will write two separate final papers about your own, individual ethnographic research, and then collaborate on the video.

You will:

- Carefully read the assignment sheet
- Choose an aspect of digital culture
- Find at least 4 *scholarly* sources (articles and books) that pertain to this practice. This practice may be too new to have anything specific written about it, so find a related reading. If you want to write about a specific blog, look for readings about blogs in general. If you want to write about a type of YouTube video, look for things people have written about YouTube. Your paper topic and sources are due on 11/21.
- Spend 5-10 hours observing *and participating* in this community. If you observed YouTube haul videos, you should make a haul video yourself. If you choose a Reddit subgroup, you should post to the group.
- Take ongoing notes on your experience.
- Reflect on your notes. Make a copy of the notes and hand them in with the assignment.
- Revise your notes into a 7-10 page paper that discusses the cultural significance of this ethnographic practice in light of the scholarly sources you have found, and the theories

we have discussed throughout the semester. This paper should have a thesis statement and cite all sources. It is due the last day of class.

- Script, shoot, and edit your YouTube video. The script is due 12/2.
- Send me the link to your YouTube video by the date for the class final.

Goals for Assignment

- Conduct a digital ethnography
- Comment on and analyze ethnographic observations
- Get hands-on experience with multimedia production

Finding Scholarly Sources

- Scholar.google.com ← be careful, not all sources listed here are scholarly
- The library's Communication resources page, http://bit.ly/CMSGuide
  - Communications & Mass Media Complete is great
- The library's Databases page http://bit.ly/FordhamDB
  - Sage, JSTOR are good bets
- Good journals that cover digital media: *New Media & Society, First Monday, The Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, the International Journal of Communication,* and *the Journal of Transformative Works and Cultures.*

Tools for Creating Digital Video

- You will need a YouTube account. You do NOT have to use your real name, mention this class or Fordham in any way.
- You can record video with most smartphones and most laptops.
- The Electronic Information Center at the library has equipment, software and studios. http://www.library.fordham.edu/itservices/eic.html
- Software:
  - iMovie is $14.99 for Mac and $4.99 for iPad and iPhone http://www.apple.com/mac/imovie/
  - Windows Movie Maker is free http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-live/movie-maker#t1=overview
  - There are a lot of video editing apps for smartphones; Magisto and Cinefy are free.
- YouTube's resources: http://www.youtube.com/yt/creators/

Writing a Video Script – tips from Dr. Jo Koster

It's helpful to tackle a creative project in stages, such as

- Conceptualize your video;

- Begin researching the topic and outlining the script;
- Begin collecting your samples;
- Record the voice portion of the video
- Mix your samples into a final video.

Concept
Start by brainstorming to help give your project focus. Write out a few notes to yourself describing your overall concept. It may help to create an imagined list of questions and answers between your intended listeners and you (For example: "Q – Is Google making us stupid? A – In my video, I will have a short summary of the original argument and then bring in various users' viewpoints....") It's not too soon to start thinking about the video samples you would like to collect.

Begin researching the topic and outlining the script
Like most written documents, initial planning is essential--you'll want to do an outline, storyboard, or some kind of design plan to lay out how you will arrange material to achieve your purpose. Your written script does NOT need to be word-for-word, but rather an idea of each topic covered and how long it takes on the video. You should also include notes on any background music or noises you will incorporate in each section.

Using Video Samples
Your project can have video that you record or create, or video samples that you will manipulate or mix. If you use video from another source (e.g. someone's YouTube video; a clip from a Hollywood film), it must be credited (e.g. text must appear at the bottom of the screen citing where the video is from).

The Goldbergs (1949-1955)

This documentary identifies this clip from the opening credit of the Goldbergs (an old TV show).

Record Voice

You'll need to have a script for this portion of the project -- the amount of detail in the script is up to you. It can be an outline, or it can be a word-for-word script. Just know that it's an art to make a recording like this sound "natural."

Mix!
Now's the fun (creative!) and challenging (time!) of the project. Continue to work the script, and put your video clips together to form a whole. Note on the script which video files you've used and what audio will go along with each video clip. Use your samples and your concept to create a video that reflects your communication goals.. Have friends (or fellow classmates) listen to your samples and give you feedback. Be sure to save your work often -- and give each version a different file name, so that you can easily "revert" if you don't like a change.

Paper Grade Rubric

You will be graded on the following:

- Correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Please proofread your essay.
- Correct use of *scholarly* sources. Non-scholarly sources (newspapers, magazines, popular press books) are fine as long as you are using at least four scholarly sources.
- Strength of observation and analysis
- Use of class material and themes

Please note that papers must be stapled and handed in during class. If they are not, a half-grade will be deducted.

Video Grade Rubric

You will be graded on the following:

- Script
- Creativity
- Quality of the final product (video, music, voiceover, etc.)
- Relevance of the final product. Humor etc. is fine, but the goal is to teach whoever is watching the video something about the phenomenon you have studied.
- Whether your video link is emailed to the professor by 9AM on December 16th.