MEDIA THEORY

Code: 20401

Main Scientific Area: Communication Design

Lecturer: Jorge Manuel Lopes Brandão Pereira

Language of Instruction: Portuguese

Regime: S1

Contact Hours: 30h Total Workload: 105h

ECTS: 5,0

Objectives

The main objective of Media Theory curricular unit is to develop a capacity for critical analysis on contemporary issues related to the information society, digital culture and digital and interactive communication.

Digital technologies are today rooted in citizens' everyday life and are an unavoidable reality in design activity, they have revolutionized the universe of communication and created paradigmatic transformations at social, economic and cultural level. In order to do this, the aim is to develop strategies for the interpretation of phenomena and sociocultural transformations associated with new media and to promote collective discussion, starting from references and case studies, in order to enhance the student's thinking, critical, and argumentative abilities.

Summing up, it aims to capacitate students with knowledge about digital media history, the evolution of networked society, and the role of communication design.

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the curricular unit, students should be able to:

1. Master relevant theoretical knowledge and vocabulary in the area of media theory and digital culture.

2. To structure a critical and sustained discourse about the phenomena and socio-cultural transformations associated with new media, recognizing its specific repercussion in digital design.

3. Support communication strategies, developing the capacity for critical thinking regarding the evolution of digital culture.

4. To organize essential competences in the field and articulation on the theory of media, their interrelation and representations and in contemporary digital design.

Course Contents

Part I - Communication mediated by design

1. Introduction to Media Theory: concept, definition and relation to design

2. The design and the message

3. Semiotics and the sign. Models and their convergence.

4. Mediology

Part II - Digital culture

1. The formation of digital culture and cyberculture

2. Digitalization of communication

3. The coding technology and genesis of computer devices

4. The artistic interpretation

5. The emergence and devaluation of technology

Part III - Digital communication

1. Being digital

2. The construction of multimedia messages and remediation

3. The network society and the culture of participation

4. The new ecology of communication theories in digital design

Recommended Bibliography

- Bolter, J.D.; Grusin, R. (2002). Remediation. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.

- Castells, M. (2004). A Galáxia Internet: reflexões sobre internet, negócios e sociedade: Fundaçao Calouste Gulbenkian.

- Debray, R. (2004). Introdução à Mediologia. Lisboa: Livros Horizonte.

- Fiske, J, (2002). Introdução ao Estudo da Comunicação. Porto: Editora Asa.

- Gere, C. (2002) Digital Culture. Londres: Reaktion Books.

- Jenkins, H. (2006). Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide. New York University Press.

- Keen, A. (2007). The Cult of the Amateur. New York: Doubleday/ Currency.

- Shirky, C. (2010). Cognitive surplus: creativity and generosity in a connected age. New York: Penguin Press.

- Wardrip-Fruin, N.; Montfort, N. (ed.))2003). The New Media Reader. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.

- Leadbeater, C., Miller, P. (2004). The Pro-am Revolution: How Enthusiasts are Changing Our Society and Economy. Demos.

- Mcluhan, M., Fiore, Q., Agel, J. (1967). The Medium is the Massage (1996 ed.). Penguin Books.

- Surowiecki, J. (2005). The wisdom of crowds. New York: Anchor Books.

- Shirky, C. (2008). Here comes everybody: the power of organizing without organizations. New York: Penguin Press.

Learning and Teaching Methods

The evolution and development of digital culture has always been associated with media theory, allowing the rapid propagation of information. The second generation of the Internet, Web 2.0, opened opportunities for participation and collaboration in the production of information with previously unseen indexes. If, on the one hand, this situation seems to allow citizens to get involved in the production of something culturally innovative, on the other hand, this production may undermine the very notions of aesthetics and quality. If, on the one hand, easy access to digital tools seems to stimulate the creation, manipulation and deconstruction of digital content, on the other hand, they can become restrictive, resulting in a culture of mixing existing content. This requires an analysis of the design, digital design and visual communication of messages as a process of interaction in the digital society.

The program of the curricular unit of Media Theory begins with the understanding of the transformations observed in the design by the evolution of information technologies. Subsequently, a reading about digital culture and digital media, its history and effects is made. Next, the new communication model and participation levels in participatory media will be analyzed. Finally, the effects of the media on the new ecology of communication theories in digital design will be discussed.

Through this critical perspective on the current state of digital media, increasingly ubiquitous and social, it will be possible to better understand the transformations of associated paradigms, such as authorship, truthfulness, quality and information power. In this way, students will be better prepared to intervene in a conscious way about the digital media universe.

Assessment Methods

Learning Assessment

Media Theory curricular unit adopts a methodology of teaching composed of lectures of theoretical exposition and lectures of discussion on the different topics addressed by the program. The evaluation regime in this curricular unit is continuous assessment (according to article 206 of the IPCA Academic Regulation) and takes into account not only the development of the research work, but also the participation of the students in class.

Thus, a research paper will be developed, organized in two evaluation moments, corresponding to part 1 (P1) and part 2 (P2). The evaluation formula that will give rise to the final grade will be as follows:

P1 (45%) + P2 (45%) + AC (10%)

Exam period

This curricular unit allows assessment by Exam (according to article 4 of the RACC-ESD) and Special Period (according to article 5 of the RACC-ESD).

Grade improvement

This curricular unit allows for grade improvement (according to article 6 of the RACC-ESD).