

Course manual Mobile Media Studies 2015-2016, period 2

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- MA: New media and digital culture, Utrecht University
- Course code: MCMV13002
- ECTS: 7,5
- Lecturer: dr. Michiel de Lange – m.l.delange@uu.nl
- Location: Drift 23, room 212, 9:00 – 12:45 (WG1) + 13:15-17:00 (WG2). Start 11 November 2015.
- Osiris course link: <http://bit.ly/1kCKjgx>.
- Blackboard course link: <http://bit.ly/1MQhzOm>.

Please use Blackboard's discussion forum to ask questions about the course. Not only will you likely get quicker answers from other students or the instructor, the issue may also be helpful to your fellow students. E-mail the instructor only if you really feel that you need to discuss a more personal matter (or if an answer on Blackboard is delayed). Notify the instructor per e-mail of a successful group change match.

Date	Event
11 November 2015	Week 1
18 November 2015	Week 2
25 November 2015	Week 3 - hand in paper proposal
2 December 2015	Week 4 - team peer reviews
	<i>no class on 9 December</i>
16 December 2015	Week 5
	<i>no class on 23 December</i>
6 January 2016	Week 6
20 January 2016	Week 7
22 January	Individual meetings, non-compulsory, see schedule: http://bit.ly/1Mh1Bps .
29 January 2016, 17:00	Deadline final paper

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1. COURSE CONTENTS AND GOALS

1.1 Course description

In a relatively short timespan our communication patterns and computing habits have been 'mobilized'. This

has profound consequences for our sense of place, social relationships, and our sense of self. Typically, mobile media are difficult to grasp as singular entities, for they act as platforms on which various functionalities and services converge; they are material objects with symbolic and performative aspects; they are communication-, and increasingly often also information technologies; and they feature prominently in our contemporary (digital) media sphere and culture. In this course we investigate wireless media technologies from several angles, including their intersection with urban life, their role in non-western settings, tensions between mobile media discourses and everyday messiness, and their role in shaping self and identity. Students will develop an understanding of the ways mobile media technologies shape everyday life, become familiar with the main themes, concepts and approaches in the multidisciplinary field of mobile media research, and encounter intersections with adjacent fields of research in and outside of media studies.

1.2 Course aims

The aim of the course is to enhance students' theoretical understanding of the main issues at stake in mobile media studies and its dominant approaches. Students should be able to read literature in the field thoroughly and critically, recognize and frame theoretical discussions in the field and develop new ways of conceptualizing issues. Moreover, students will acquire the skills to set up and write a research paper (under guidance), with which they position themselves vis-a-vis one or more of these discussions. Particular attention is given during the course to ethnographic methods.

1.3 Course themes

The course explores mobile media as situated technologies in connection to urban life in weekly themes:

- Week 1. Mobile
- Week 2. Past
- Week 3. Places
- Week 4. Interfaces
- Week 5. Data
- Week 6. Relations
- Week 7. Cultures

2. ASSIGNMENTS

All written assignments must be posted in Blackboard's discussion forum in a single individual thread, as inline text (no attachments, except for mid term assignment and final paper, which may be posted as pdf or other). For your first assignment, please begin by starting a new thread titled with your name. Proceed by posting the other assignments as replies to yourself.

Assignments must always contain your name, student number, group number, title and references.

2.1. Team

During the first class students self-organize in teams and collaborate on various assignments:

2.1.1 Team presentation (20% of final grade)

- 1) Teams find one relevant additional text pertaining to their weekly theme, to be read by everyone before class. Distribute a link to the text on Blackboard on Monday 12:00 at the latest. The text may be academic or an industry or policy report. Incorporate this text into the presentation and motivate your choice.
- 2) Teams prepare a plenary presentation during the meetings of week 2 to week 7 (ca. 25-30 minutes) and moderate a group discussion afterwards (ca. 30 minutes). In the presentation teams connect course literature to original semi-ethnographic observations of mobile media use in everyday (urban) life, possibly

complemented with interviews or other ethnographic methods like diaries. Teams forward at least three points for subsequent discussion and moderate this.

Hints: Do not just provide summaries. Participants will have read the texts, so regard them as colleagues with similar interests who happen to want to know more about the subject from you, the experts! Contextualize texts and place them within relevant theoretical and historical fields. Zoom in on similarities and differences between them. Scrutinize arguments. Connect texts to everyday life through observations and possibly interviews. Explore correspondence and divergence between theory and practice. Use audiovisual material and educational tools as needed.

2.1.2 Peer review

Teams do peer reviews of each other's paper proposals in week 4, and post these reviews on Blackboard (in their own thread and in the threads of fellow students). Peer reviews focus on the five elements of the so-called "schijf van 5" (see 2.3). Length: 200 – 300 words per review. Deadline: **Tuesday of week 4 17:00**. This is not graded but a requirement to complete the course.

2.2. Individual

2.2.1 Six weekly assignments (20% of final grade)

Six out of seven weeks students will post three propositions (ca. 300 words in total). The propositions must be grounded in at least two of the compulsory texts. Propositions are not questions but arguments that spur the discussion. Suggestions:

- 1) Analyze and relate the texts to one another, tease out striking parallels or differences.
- 2) Critically reflect on the argument(s), method(s) and conclusion(s) of the assigned literature. Try to expose hidden assumptions, methodological biases, flawed analysis or conclusions. Indicate where it needs additional evidence.
- 3) Provide alternatives or possible solutions to these shortcomings, e.g. by referring to other relevant research, your own observations, cases, literature, authors, theoretical schools.

In short, show that you know how to academically *analyze*, *criticize* and *create*. Depart from your own research interests and use them to develop ideas for the final paper. During class you should be ready to present and initiate the discussion based on your propositions so have them available at hand.

Depart from your own research interests and use them to develop ideas for the final paper. **Deadlines: Tuesdays WG1 at 12:00 and WG2 at 17:00.**

Exception1: in week 1 the assignment can be handed in on Friday 13 November 2015 17:00.

Exception2: in the week of your team presentation you do not need to post a written assignment.

2.2.2 Final paper (60% of final grade)

Students write a final paper of 4000-5000 words. In week 3 a **research proposal** must be handed in the day before class, via Blackboard. This proposal will receive individual written feedback from the instructor and from your peers. Required elements ("schijf van 5") of a research proposal are:

1. Phenomenon: the topic you wish to research and the case you will use (what are you researching?)
2. Question and hypothesis/argument: a well-formulated question that cannot be answered with a simple yes/no, but is not too broad either, plus the expected outcomes and/or point you want to make (which question are you asking and what are the expected outcomes?)
3. Positioning: the reasons for the research, its academic relevance and perhaps also societal relevance (why are you researching this?)
4. Theory: the perspective and concepts you use to research the topic (within what framework are you addressing this phenomenon?)
5. Method: the approach you use to gather data and increase your understanding (how are you going to conduct the research to find answers to your question?)

The order of these five elements may vary but all of these points should be included. As always include a literature overview, your name, student number, group. The **deadline** for handing in your **final paper is 29 January 2016, 17:00**. Please hand in papers via Ephorus (<https://student.ephorus.com/students>; password: m.l.delange@uu.nl) and in print in the pigeon hole on Kromme Nieuwegracht 20 in Utrecht. Students who don't live in Utrecht may also send their hardcopy version via snail mail to the instructors home address (e-mail the instructor for the address).

Developing ideas for your final paper

- 1) Explore articles in journals like *Mobile Media & Communication* (<http://mmc.sagepub.com/content>), *Wi: journal of mobile media* (<http://wi.mobilities.ca/wi/>), and applied research in mobile technology at the ACM (Association for Computing Machinery) website (<http://dl.acm.org>, e.g. using the search entry "mobile media").
- 2) Observe what you see happening around you in everyday situations. How do people use mobile devices in various settings? Can you see salient differences and patterns? Such observations when tied to more theoretical work may yield surprisingly rich and detailed material, and expose the sometimes strained relationship between pervasive myths about what media 'do' and the messiness of actual practices.
- 3) Another great source of inspiration for your final paper is investigating media representations and popular views of the mobile phone. Popular media include newspapers, television, radio, weeklies, commercials, industry research, consultancy reports (Nielsen, Gartner, etc.), NGOs (PewInternet.org, ITU, etc.), business development, pressure/lobby groups. As always, reflect critically on the use of sources!

Here's how the course scheme would look for someone in the week 2 team:

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
<i>Weekly assignments</i>	x		x	x	x	x	x	
<i>Team presentation</i>		x						
<i>Other assignments</i>			Paper proposal	Peer review				Final paper

3. CLASS MEETINGS STRUCTURE

An indication of how class meetings are structured:

- 1st part - The week team leads a 60 minute session (presentation + discussion). This is followed by group feedback.
- 2nd part - Lecture by the course instructor. Room for questions about the course and literature.
- 3rd part - Seminar to discuss research projects. We use this time to work on research projects, individually, in teams, and plenary. We shall pay specific attention to ethnographic theory, methods and writing.

4. COURSE COMPLETION

The course is successfully completed if students meet all of these conditions:

- Students have handed in on time all required weekly analyses (20% of final grade), with a minimum grade of 5.5 (scale ranges from 1 to 10). Failure to hand in an assignment on time will result in an irreparable 1. Students who miss more than one assignment cannot complete the course.
- Students have participated in the team assignments: presentation + peer reviews (20%). Minimum: 5.5.
- Students have handed in their final paper on time (60%). Minimum: 5.5. Students have the right to repair a 4 or higher within 2 weeks after receiving the grade. Only final papers can be repaired.

- Students have attended all class meetings. If students miss class they notify the instructor in advance and compensate with an extra assignment. Students absent from more than one class cannot complete the course unless with a specific reason.

Fraud and Plagiarism

Please read the following rules concerning fraud and plagiarism carefully:

<http://www.uu.nl/en/informationfor/students/regulations/regulations/fraudandplagiarism/Pages/default.aspx>. These rules apply not only to the final paper but to every assignment.

5. WEEK BY WEEK OVERVIEW + LITERATURE

Note: Listed alphabetically. Further recommendations can be found in a separately distributed document.

Week 1. Mobile

About this week

This week provides an overview of research about mobile media, not just as communications devices but increasingly often also as computing devices. Students develop insights into basic notions and the scope of the field.

Agenda for the first meeting

As always there is a lot to do in the first class:

- Welcome + round of introduction by the participants.
- Introduction to mobile media studies by course instructor.
- Practical explanation of course (goals, methodology, assignments, literature, etc.).
- Questions from students?
- The use of Blackboard in this course.
- Formation of teams.
- Discuss team meetings: review literature, peer-review individual research projects.

Literature

Bell, Genevieve, and Paul Dourish. 2006. "Yesterday's Tomorrows: Notes on Ubiquitous Computing's Dominant Vision." *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing* no. 11 (2):133-143.

<http://link.springer.com.proxy.library.uu.nl/article/10.1007%2Fs00779-006-0071-x>

Ito, Mizuko, Daisuke Okabe, and Ken Anderson. 2009. Portable Objects in Three Global Cities: The Personalization of Urban Places. In *The Reconstruction of Space and Time: Mobile Communication Practices*, ed. Richard Ling and Scott W. Campbell. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers. 67-87. Draft version available from: www.itofisher.com/mito/portableobjects.pdf .

Jensen, Klaus Bruhn. 2013. What's mobile in mobile communication? *Mobile Media & Communication* 1 (1): 26-31. <http://mmc.sagepub.com/content/1/1/26.full.pdf+html>.

Week 2. Past

About this week

This week provides a historical and archeological overview of the (mobile) telephone and the ubiquitous computer as an object of (academic) study. It does so by tracing dominant thematic lineages. Students will develop the skills to point out parallels and differences in recurring discussions.

Literature

Pool, Ithiel de Sola. 1983. *Forecasting the Telephone: A Retrospective Technology Assessment*. Norwood, N.J.: ABLEX Publishers. Ch.2 "Effects of the Telephone on Patterns of Human Settlement", p. 41-57. Download from http://thorngren.nu/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Sola_Pool_Ithiel_1982_Retrospective_Technollog_Ch_2-3.pdf.

Note: Take a look at the table of contents of the entire report, which is very helpful to acquaint yourself with some recurring debates! Download from http://thorngren.nu/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Sola_Pool-Ch1..pdf. Glance through the Introduction (p. 1-17) to understand Pool's approach.

de Vries, Imar O. 2012. *Tantalisingly close: An archaeology of communication desires in discourses of mobile wireless media*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. Available from <http://oopen.org/search?keyword=9789089643544>. Ch.4 "Mobile Communication Dreams", p. 125-162.

Weiser, Mark. 1991. "The Computer for the Twenty-First Century." *Scientific American*: 94-100. <http://www.ubiq.com/hypertext/weiser/SciAmDraft3.html>.

Week 3. Places

About this week

Mobile media studies have been at the forefront in challenging the "anytime, anyplace" paradigm in media studies, arguing for the importance of space, place, location and context. Students develop an overview of how mobile media are understood as situated media.

Literature

Antoniadis, Panayotis, and Ileana Apostol. 2014. *The Right(s) to the Hybrid City and the Role of DIY Networking*. Vol. 10, 2014. <http://www.ci-journal.net/index.php/ciej/article/view/1092/1113>.

Hayles, N. Katherine. 2009. "RFID: Human Agency and Meaning in Information-Intensive Environments." *Theory, Culture & Society* no. 26 (2-3):47-72. <http://tcs.sagepub.com.proxy.library.uu.nl/content/26/2-3/47.full.pdf+html>.

Özkul, Didem, and Lee Humphreys. 2015. "Record and remember: Memory and meaning-making practices through mobile media." *Mobile Media & Communication* no. 3 (3):351-365. <http://mmc.sagepub.com/content/3/3/351.full.pdf+html>.

Week 4. Interfaces

About this week

In this week we investigate a variety of ways in which mobile media interface with urban life. In today's cities our everyday lives are shaped by digital media technologies such as smart cards, surveillance cameras, quasi-intelligent systems, smartphones, social media, location-based services, wireless networks, and so on. These technologies are inextricably bound up with the city's material form, social patterns, and mental experiences. Students get to know burgeoning research in the field of smart cities.

Literature

Mattern, Shannon. 2014. Interfacing Urban Intelligence. *Places Journal*,

<https://placesjournal.org/article/interfacing-urban-intelligence>.

Richardson, Ingrid, and Rowan Wilken. 2013. "Parerga of the third screen: Mobile media, place, presence." In *Mobile Technology and Place*, edited by Rowan Wilken and Gerard Goggin, 181-197. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis. <http://uunl.ebib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=1181063>.

Verhoeff, Nanna. 2012. *Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. Ch. 4 "Urban Screens", p. 99-129. <http://www.oapen.org/download?type=document&docid=413033>.

Week 5. Data

About this week

Up to this point the predominant focus has been on mobile media as objects of study. This week we see how mobile media are used as tools for research and what new questions may arise from that. In other words, in this week we shift from ontology and phenomenology (what are mobile media? how do they shape and affect society/culture/etc.? How do they shape our experiences?) to epistemology (how do we understand the world through our mobile devices? what new forms of knowledge and knowing are possible?).

Literature

Hochman, Nadav, and Lev Manovich. 2013. Zooming into an Instagram City: Reading the Local through Social Media, 2013. *First Monday*, 18(7). <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/4711/3698>.

Kitchin, Rob. 2014. "The Real-Time City? Big Data and Smart Urbanism." *GeoJournal* no. 79:1–14. <http://eprints.maynoothuniversity.ie/5625/1/RK-Real-time-City.pdf>.

Nafus, Dawn, and Jamie Sherman. 2014. "This One Does Not Go Up To Eleven: The Quantified Self Movement as an Alternative Big Data Practice." *International Journal of Communication* no. 8:1784–1794. <http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/2170/1157>.

Week 6. Relations

About this week

This week we look at how mobile media shape relations with other people and the self. Students gain a deeper understanding of how social relations and identity are shaped by mobile media.

Literature

Birnholtz, Jeremy, Colin Fitzpatrick, Mark Handel, and Jed R. Brubaker. 2014. Identity, identification and identifiability: The language of self-presentation on a location-based mobile dating app. In *Proceedings of the 16th international conference on Human-computer interaction with mobile devices & services*. Toronto, ON, Canada: ACM. <http://dl.acm.org.proxy.library.uu.nl/citation.cfm?doid=2628363.2628406>.

Ling, Richard. 2015. "Mobile phones and digital *Gemeinschaft*: Social cohesion in the era of cars, clocks and cell phones." In *Mobility and locative media: Mobile communication in hybrid spaces*, edited by Adriana de Souza e Silva and Mimi Sheller. London; New York: Routledge.

<http://www.tandfebooks.com.proxy.library.uu.nl/isbn/9781315772226>.

Schwartz, Raz, and Germaine R Halegoua. 2015. "The spatial self: Location-based identity performance on social media." *New Media & Society* no. 17 (10):1643-1660.
<http://nms.sagepub.com/content/17/10/1643.abstract>.

Week 7. Cultures

About this week

This week we look at cultural specificities of mobile media practices in urban contexts. To what extent are mobile media absorbed into existing cultural practices, or creating new practices? What similarities and differences can we discern between cities? What tensions, conflicts and clashes arise from the rapid spread of mobile media? Can we speak of mobile media in universal singular terms or should we take into account divergent paths and development histories? How are cultural patterns and desires "mobilized" on a global ?

Literature

Hjorth, Larissa, and Heewon Kim. 2005. Being There and Being Here: Gendered Customising of Mobile 3g Practices through a Case Study on Seoul. *Convergence Journal* 11(2): 49-55.
<http://con.sagepub.com/content/11/2/49.full.pdf+html>.

Horst, Heather A., and Daniel Miller. 2006. *The Cell Phone: An Anthropology of Communication*. New York, NY: Berg. Ch.5 "Link-up", 81-101. <http://bit.ly/1vIRsu5>.

de Lange, Michiel. 2015. Playing life in the metropolis: Mobile media and identity in Jakarta. In *Playful identities: The ludification of digital media cultures*, ed. Valerie Frissen, Sybille Lammes, Michiel de Lange, Jos de Mul and Joost Raessens. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
<http://bit.ly/1vIRsu5>.