University Studies Cluster Proposal Cover Sheet
For Academic Year 2009-2010

Cluster Proposed for: Popular Culture

Title of course: Cyber Culture: The Internet and Popular Culture

Course Number: CS 345

Proposing Faculty: Len Shapiro

Cluster Coordinator: Grace Dillon

Proposal Type:

___ Cluster Course to New Cluster

X___ New Course to Cluster

___ Removal

Other clusters this course is assigned to:

Proposals are due to the University Studies office (CH 117) with 12 duplicate copies by Friday, November 9, 2007 so that they may be reviewed and forwarded to the UCC Committee for final approval.

ORIGINAL
University Studies New Cluster Course Addition

Adding a previously unapproved course to a cluster

(When addressing questions, please attach a separate sheet)

PROPOSING FACULTY (Name, signature, and department)
Leonard Shapiro
Computer Science Department

PROPOSED CLUSTER(S): Popular Culture

1. THE COURSE

A. COURSE TITLE, NUMBER, AND CATALOG DESCRIPTION
COURSE TITLE
CS345: Cyberculture: The Internet and Popular Culture

CATALOG DESCRIPTION
Study of the effect of computers and the internet on popular culture. Typical topics will include history and technologies of the web, social networks, the long tail in business and culture, the power of groups, user generated content, complex systems, virtual worlds and the power of search.

B. DEVELOPMENT Is the course based upon an existing course, or is it a new course under development?
New course under development.

C. AVAILABILITY
With what regularity has the course been—or will the course be—offered?
Will be offered approximately 2 times per year.

D. PREREQUISITES
List any course prerequisites beyond the cluster Sophomore Inquiry course.

2. COURSE OUTLINE. Provide a detailed outline of the proposed course, also including its preliminary reading list, and the name(s) of instructor(s) committed to teaching the course.
See attached syllabus

3. GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS.

A. COURSE CONTENT & SUITABILITY FOR CLUSTER
Discuss the course content in relationship to the thematic focus of the cluster.
Popular culture today is hugely different than it was a decade ago. This is largely due to developments in computer science, in particular the World Wide Web and our understanding of
complex systems. Our cultural activities – including shopping, entertainment, communication, learning - are now often delivered via the web. Many cultural activities not delivered over the web – indie music, netflix DVDs - exist only because of the web. The web itself is only one of the complex systems that form a part of our culture. In this course we will survey the principles underlying these cultural phenomena so that we can better understand why these new practices have transformed popular culture.

B. UNST GOALS Indicate what materials and assignments will address those University Studies goals appropriate to the course content and cluster theme (the goals are Inquiry and Critical Thinking, Communication, Diversity of Human Experience, and Ethical Issues & Social Responsibility).

Critical Thinking: In the required papers, students will critically consider the interaction between the underlying principles of the course (complex system principles, the long tail, the power of groups, etc.) and the effect of web technologies on their own lives.

Communication: The internet has introduced a wide variety of new communications media to popular culture. Students will study and, in many cases, learn, these new media and their effects on modern life.

Diversity of Human Experience: The internet has transformed human experience in many ways and these ways will be the primary subject of the course, including the effect of the web on different economic and cultural groups.

Ethical Issues & Social Responsibility: Ethical issues permeate the course, from “Who owns the content” to “Privacy”. Social Responsibility is an important issue in topics such as The Power of Groups.

C. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT Discuss the teaching strategies employed in the course and how they articulate with the student-centered, active-learning strategies characteristic of University Studies courses.

The classroom environment for this course will be a revolutionary development in student-centered active-learning teaching. Students and the teacher will be avatars in a virtual classroom. Students will log in from any convenient location, so the class will have all the advantages of distance learning, but will avoid distance learning’s greatest disadvantage: students will be able to see and hear each other and the teacher (as avatars in the virtual classroom) and conduct face to face discussions and arguments. All the excitement of face-to-face teaching will be preserved, with NO use of PSU facilities.

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OBTAIN CHAIR AND CLUSTER COORDINATOR SIGNATURES BEFORE SUBMITTING TO UNIVERSITY STUDIES OFFICE

DEPARTMENT
CHAIR(S) ____________________________

DATE: 10/13/08 . DATE: ____________________________
All changes to Clusters must be approved by PSU's Senate Curriculum Committee.

THE ORIGINAL + 3 COPIES OF THE PROPOSAL MUST BE RECEIVED AT UNIVERSITY STUDIES (CH 117) BY NOVEMBER 7 2008.

Proposals submitted by this due date will be reviewed for inclusions in clusters beginning in AY 2009 - 2010.

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COURSE APPROVED FOR CLUSTER INCLUSION

CHAIR, CLUSTER COORDINATORS: 

DATE: 11/20/08

CHAIR, UNST COMMITTEE: 

DATE: 12/2/08
COURSE TITLE
Cyberculture: The Internet and Popular Culture

CATALOG DESCRIPTION
Study of the effect of computers and the internet on popular culture. Typical topics will include history and technologies of the web, social networks, the long tail in business and culture, the power of groups, user generated content, complex systems, virtual worlds and the power of search.

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TOPICS (clock hours)
History of the Web (4)
Technologies of the Web (4)
The long tail in business (4)
    Amazon, ebay, netflix, adsense
The long tail in culture (4)
    social networks
    Indie music groups
    P2P music downloads
The power of groups (4)
    Reed's law
    online auctions, social networks, wikis, PageRank, open source software,
folksonomy, Blogging, rss
Who owns the content? (2)
    Content: Audio, Video, text, data, services, etc.
    Why is content valuable?
User generated content (2)
Complex Systems (4)
    The Web, del.icio.us, social networks, the brain
    Scale-free Networks
Virtual Worlds (4)
    WOW, Second Life
Privacy (2)
READINGS

WWW History:
"WWW History", http://www.livinginternet.com/w/ww.htm
Tim O'Reilly, "What is Web 2.0", http://tinyurl.com/743r5
V. Bush, "As we may think", "Atlantic Monthly", July 1945,
http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/194507/bush

The Long Tail
http://tinyurl.com/d7f7k

The Power of Groups:
H. Reingold, "Smart Mobs,", Basic Books, 2002
David P. Reed, "Weapon of Math Destruction" Context Magazine, Spring

Complex systems:
Steven Johnson, "Emergence", Scribner, 2001
Alberto Barabasi, "Linked", Plume, 2003
Li, L., Alderson, D., Tanaka, R., Doyle, J.C., Willinger, W., "Towards a
Theory of Scale-Free Graphs: Definition, Properties, and Implications", Internet
Melanie Mitchell, "Complex systems: Network thinking", Artificial

Virtual Worlds
Edward Castanova, "Exodus to the Virtual World: How Online Fun Is
Yee, Nick; Bailenson, Jeremy N.; Urbanek, Mark; Chang, Francis; Merget,
Dan, "The Unbearable Likeness of Being Digital: The Persistence of
Nonverbal Social Norms in Online Virtual Environments.",
CyberPsychology & Behavior, Feb2007, Vol. 10 Issue 1, p115-121,

ASSIGNMENTS
Students will be given a list of WWW tools (e.g. social networks, blogs,
folksonomy sites, wikis, auctions) and asked to choose three tools from three
different categories that they have not used before and write a paper on their
experiences with those tools. The paper will be descriptive, comparing their
experience with these new tools to their previous experiences, describing the
benefits of the new tools, describing the socio-cultural implications of the
existence of these new tools, and describing how the tools embody the
principles we have studied in the course.
Students will write a paper listing three tools from three different categories that they have used previously and comment on the socio-cultural implications of these tools and how the tools have affected their lives. A final exam will be given covering the concepts discussed in the course.

GRADE
Each paper will be 25% of the grade, the final exam will be 50% of the grade.