DESCRIPTION
This course offers an introduction to the sociological, cultural, and historical dimensions of the Internet. This course satisfies a Core course requirement for the Certificate in Digital Arts and Culture.

RATIONALE
In a relatively short period of time, The Internet, a convergence of various technological processes, have radically altered the way in which organizations and individuals work, shop,
communicate and define leisure activity, among other things. Once such phenomenon that has arisen in recent years as a result of the proliferation of interconnected networks is Computer Mediated Technology (CMC). The rapidity of information transfer for institutional and interpersonal communications has not only reorganized language and texts themselves, in addition to reshaping concepts of human time, but provided new communities with sets of etiquette and accepted practices. These rapid and pervasive shifts have created an "Internet Culture," as new systems of symbols and meanings arise, and impress profound changes upon the cultures at large, even as governments strive to produce new laws to keep up with societies' new behaviors.

GER-HUMANITIES COURSE
GOALS and OBJECTIVES

This course will count toward the University’s general education humanities requirement. The GER distribution requirements definition states that a course must "approach its subject using humanistic means of inquiry." This course introduces students to the logical analysis of the Internet as a communication technology through a broad introduction to media studies, the history of technology, and current Internet practices. Thus, the course also meets another criterion, that of "increasing an understanding of the complexities and varieties of human events," by examining the conceptualization of media as an extension of human senses, and the change in scale that this new technology introduces into society and its organization. This also will lead to the fulfillment of another aspect of the humanities criteria, "the student's capacities for making informed and independent evaluation pertaining to the nature of knowledge, language, and representation, and concerning the formation of ethical or aesthetic concepts," as we consider whether a technological medium is itself intrinsically good or bad, or whether it is in the ways that individuals or groups may use any given medium that determine its value as a tool for communication, as well as an object of production and consumption.

As indicated above, one criterion that defines a humanities course is that it will approach its subject using humanistic means of inquiry through the evaluation of evidence, the expression of ideas, and the organization, logical analysis, and creative use of substantial bodies of knowledge. The learning goal for this course that stems from this requirement is that students will be able to evaluate evidence of proper netiquette, information quality, and/or usability principles for a particular website and express the specific merits or deficiencies of content posted on a particular website in the context of the relative criteria. The essays that the students produce will be evaluated and assigned a value by using a rubric which discusses varying degrees of success in each of the following categories: a) Content, demonstrating understanding of the specific course material, relating to the ideas and concepts of internet practices, communication, and culture; b) Quality of writing, indicating correct spelling and grammar, thoroughly explained, clearly answered, and easy to follow line of thinking; and c) Critical thinking, showing that the student has learned from the course materials and that the writing is precise and persuasive, showing interest and cultural objectivity with the issue. The scores assigned will be evaluated to determine if an acceptable percentage of the students have acquired the skill outlined in the learning goal. If areas of weakness are indicated, the course pedagogy and content will be evaluated to determine where changes can be made to improve the students’ access to the desired skill.

POLICIES:

1. Students with disabilities: If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.
2. Religious observances: Students will be permitted to make up assignments when (a) There is a scheduling conflict between the student's sincerely held religious beliefs and taking the examination or meeting the academic requirements; and (b) The student has notified the instructor, within the first three weeks of the beginning of classes of the specific days or dates on which he or she will request relief from an examination or academic requirement.

3. Incompletes: A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work.

4. Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment): The University will not tolerate discriminatory conduct. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.

5. Academic misconduct: Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm

6. Complaint procedures: Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy.

7. Grade appeal procedures: A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School.

For further information about university policies, please see the Secretary of the University’s Web site (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf)

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

Reliable access to the Internet is a must as you will complete assignments, quizzes and exams via D2L.
See list of UWM computer labs: https://www4.uwm.edu/uits/services/campus/ccls/

Internet by Lorenzo Cantoni and Stefano Tardini, 2006, Routledge.

Course Materials at UWM Bookstore:
http://uwmbookstore.aux.uwm.edu/CourseMaterials.aspx

GRADING SCALE:
Above 93% = A
Above 90% = A-
Above 87% = B+
Above 83% = B
Above 80% = B-
Above 77% = C+
Above 73% = C
Above 70% = C-
Above 67% = D+
Above 63% = D
Above 60% = D-
Below 60% = F

DISTRIBUTION OF GRADE TO 100%:

Exams (2/3) 40% (Drop Lowest- Exam 1-midterm, Exam 2, and Exam 3-optional cumulative final)
Quizzes (11/12) 6% (drop lowest quiz)
Essays and Discussions (4/5) 54%
4/5 essays (drop lowest) worth 10% each (40%)
+ essay comments worth 2.5% for two per essay (10%) {8 total, two per each (1.25%) of 4 out of 5 essays}
+ two Internet Discovery posts 2% each (4%)

An Important Note about Deadlines, Grades and Leniency
The deadlines for quizzes, exams, essays and discussions are firm, as there is ample lead time, a detailed calendar of due dates for students, and a lot of work for the Internet Culture Team to stay on top of. That is not to say that there is no leniency here. It is just that much of the leniency in this class is front loaded, that is we drop the lowest from the quizzes, the lowest from essays, discussion comments, and even from the exams.

But don't take the built in leniency to mean that you can only do 3/5 essays and discussions and still do well. In that scenario, even if you score perfectly on everything else in the course, the highest possible grade you could earn is an 87.5%. Do 2/5 essays and discussions, and perfect on everything else and the highest possible grade is a 75%. Can you see the importance of doing the required work?

Those essays and discussion comments (feedback that you give to other students) are a significant portion of the class and as such (as a category) make up 55%, and there's not a lot we can do about missed, un-posted essays (especially the later it gets in the semester). But the Exams are also significant, weighing 40%, and often taking the optional final exam is a place to ultimately and significantly improve your final grade in the course.

Questions for the exams will be taken from course materials. Exams will consist of 25-50 standardized multiple choice type questions. A makeup exam will only be given in the extreme situation of severe illness, death in the family, sincere religious observance, or military service duty. Authorized written documentation will be required as well as advance notice when applicable. There will be a review before the first and second exams. A third optional cumulative exam may be taken during finals week to replace the lower of your first
two exam scores.

**Quizzes** are designed to reinforce critical material that may be on future exams. Quizzes are made from 3 questions selected randomly from a pool, will be administered on D2L with a 3 minute limit, generally released (1-2 weeks) ahead of time and remain open until Thursday 11:59 pm. Quiz questions are recycled and selected from the same question pool that make up the Exams.

**Concerns about Quiz grades**
All of the quizzes added up make up 5% of the final grade. Each quiz is worth about .5% (half of one percent) of the final grade. You can take each quiz up to three times up until the quiz deadline to increase the average for that quiz’s overall grade. For example, attempt 1, 2/3, 66% + attempt 2, 3/3 + attempt 3, 3/3 =8/9 or 88.8%. In this way, each question in a quiz is only worth about .05% of the final grade.

However, a good deal of value can be earned by learning from mistakes on the questions in the quizzes. That is, you should take the time before and in between quiz attempts to study before starting the quiz. (Make sure to watch video, powerpoint, and read chapter).

After the deadline for each quiz, you will be able to see your quiz attempts along with the correct answer for that question.

While the questions on the quizzes are worth relatively little, the questions on exams are worth about 16 times as much as the final grade. The exams are worth 40% of the final grade, so each question in an exam may be worth .8% of the final grade. The Midterm, Second (and Optional Cumulative Final) exams are made up from the quiz questions, so the more times you attempt each quiz, the more exposure you have to questions, which increases your chances of getting to see questions before you take an exam.

It is recommended that before each Exam, in addition to reviewing the videos, powerpoints and book, that you also review your previous quiz attempts.

Over the course of the semester, you will write four (out of five) short (400-600 word) **Essays** that discuss and apply concepts from lectures and readings (topics provide below) to examples from the media and personal experiences about aspects of Internet Culture. (Essays and discussion comments on peers' essays are due before midnight on Tuesday in the specified week, see schedule below). These essays must contain a well-defined argument and need to conform to standard rules of grammar. There is no reason for spelling or other mechanical errors – please use your word processing program’s spelling and grammar check and proofread your papers carefully. Points will be deducted for these kinds of errors. In addition, for each essay assignment, you will be required to make comments (50-150 words) on **two** of your classmates' posts. All essays and comment discussions will take place on D2L. See **Comments on Essays** in section below.

The **Essays and Discussions** are meant as a way for you to learn some of the material in more depth by writing about it. Each of the Essays will be about integrating what you learn
from the textbook and course materials with your experience of some aspect of Internet Culture. Tatev, Minchul, and I will read the discussions, but we may participate only rarely – in other words, most of the time we will be lurkers. Completing the Essays and Discussions involves: 1) posting an Essay as a response to the Essay topic or question (6 points); and 2) commenting, discussion or otherwise responding two of your classmates’ Essays in the appropriate way (3 points), see Comments on Essays in section below. Essays will typically be graded after both portions have been completed, within a week of the deadline for the comments.

Equally important, we, your audience (the instructors and fellow students) expect the experience of reading your essay to provide us with both information and pleasure. Be aware of these three specific features in the writing: "a precise use of words, conspicuousness of ideas, and a balanced arrangement of ideas." (Banschbach, John. Aesthetics in Writing Assessment, or a Student's Essay about a Poem is Itself a Work of Art. 1995.)

**Grading of essays and discussions will be based on the following (general) criteria (ACE):**

Aesthetic: the tone, flow, or feeling that comes from your choice of words and imagery
Concept: the idea and clarity of that communication
Execution: the effort, energy and attention put into integrating and harmonizing the aesthetic and conceptual components

**More specifically, this grading criteria/checklist will be used in addition to other requirements for the Essay/Discussion assignments:**

- Description of an example (and/or links to websites or relevant information), that illustrates your understanding of the material.
- Reference to theoretical or conceptual context or term, and its definition.
- Presentation of terms mentioned in the course materials.

In the Essays, we are looking for you to use terms mentioned in the course materials, provide definitions of the terms, and illustrate your understanding of the terms by giving examples. In other words, your task is to demonstrate that you understand the concepts and terms that you are learning and that you can apply them to your experiences in navigating or creating the Internet culture.

Note that your goal is to show us that you understand the concepts rather than to present us with your opinion alone. Please make sure to use your own words in your assignment, and to clearly indicate when you are quoting directly from the text or another source, in order to avoid plagiarism.

See Essay Rubric in Content Section of D2L.

**Essay 1, Philosophies of Technology and Adoption Trends:** Describe and analyze adoption trends in your family. Provide at least one example of adopted or refused technology.

Are you a Luddite or an early adopter? How do the theories of Rogers and/or Fiddler (in chapter 1.1) fit with your adoption practices?

Or alternatively, describe your personal position as to whether you regard yourself as a technological Determinist or an Instrumentalist? That is, do you see technologies imposing (unforeseen consequences and) structures on society, or the latter, in which people develop technologies with certain purposes in mind. Use an example of a particular technology and explain why you think the way you do.
Essay 2, Netiquette: Provide an example of CMC use and describe a theory or feature that establishes whether it is (or is not) an appropriate setting for the content of that particular communication or message (i.e., SMS breakup), based on concepts found in The Features of CMC, chapter 2.2.

Essay 3, Hypertext Theories:
1. Set aside a period of time to monitor your internet usage. Determine whether you might monitor your usage for a few minutes each day for a week, or perhaps one long session. For example, 30 minutes each day during the week, Monday - Thursday, or two hours on a Saturday afternoon watching youtube videos, etc...

2. Record--take notes on what you click on and where those hyperlinks take you. That is, if the hyperlink says, It's Time to Reboot the FCC, record that (write it down) plus a short description of where the link takes you: "a newsweek.com article written by Lawrence Lessig, who warns that new technologies are at risk unless the federal agency that oversees communications can be retooled to promote economic growth and innovation."

3. Look at your notes, your list of hyperlinks clicked on, and reflect. Which one of those hypertext theories (from pages 93-96 in Internet) does your list resemble. Which one of those theories do you understand more easily or relate to.

Do you see hypertext as:

* An encyclopedia, a system of references. e.g., (Dinosaurs, see also fossils). Hypertext as technology of writing, we are learning to use electronic text as a new tool of communication, through a process of discovery of our own thought processes.

* A system of interconnected writings, a collaboration of authors and readers. A kind of a "choose your own adventure" text. More similar to a body of work, or literature, than a single work. Hypertext as diffusion of knowledge, literary studies.

* A playful and experimental practice--like making poems with magnetic poetry on your refrigerator. Unlimited Semiosis. Hypertext as semiotics, words and concepts as symbols for bigger more complex ideas.

Now you can go about dealing with the essay. As usual, give us an example, discuss and cite a relevant theory, and explain why that example is a good illustration of the theory. You could dig deeper than the book, too. If the book references an author, or a field of study, do some research. For example, find out who the "poststructuralists" are, or what is "semiotics?" (among other topics on pages 93-96) if you are interested in impressing Tatev, Minchul, and me. When you impress us, your grade will increase.

Which one of the earlier Hypertext theories do you find most practical, familiar, and relevant (see page 93 in Internet)? Do you have experiences or preferences towards one particular discipline or another? Do you prefer one theory even though you may be studying in a different discipline? Present examples, metaphors, or analogies that help make one of these theories easier to conceptualize.

Essay 4, Communication and Technology: Review a website for a service, company or institution that you use regularly based on the criteria in chapter 4. Does the website serve as a good example of a useful website or does it have deficiencies that make it frustrating or cause a waste of time?
**Essay 5, Virtual Communities:** Discuss any virtual communities (facebook, youtube, message boards, etc...) that you participate in (or opt out of) and their power in sustaining the three critical issues of belonging, identity and interest (page 161 in Internet).

**Comments on Essays**
Read (at least a dozen of) your classmates' posts, then select one. Discuss how your own experience or example and theory or concept in your Essay is similar and different from the one you read. Incorporate specific concepts and information from relevant chapters. If you provide an opinion, be certain to back it up with information and concepts from the course material. Use terms, define them formally, and then illustrate them using the information about that particular example or experience. For example, you could write something like,

"Joey provides a good example of *technophilia* when he describes his parents' early adoption habits. *Technophiles* are people who believe that technological innovation is the solution to most any given problem (then describe some actions that reflect it). In contrast, my parents are *Luddites*, that is, very skeptical that cell phones will actually improve communication within our immediate family."

Make sure you discuss different terms than you did in your Essay. Also make sure that you comment on two of your classmates' Essays and on the same essay that you have chosen.

**Internet Discovery Post**
Websites, Songs, Movies, News
Is there a example on the Internet that illustrates an idea that is/was/will be discussed in course materials. Have you discovered a new Internet meme, a song, a news story, a movie or television show that references an aspect of Internet Culture? Post a link with 1-10 words (tags or description- twitter or delicious style) that contextualize this media artifact with a specific theory, approach or course material and the referring page, or how and where you found it. This assignment is like the essays, but without all of the descriptions and definitions. Just the example and the concept are needed. For extra credit, respond to at least one other Internet Discovery post, within one week of the deadline, by commenting on what you find at the site, perhaps more tags that illuminate further concepts or examples.

**Lectures** (Short weekly videos by the instructor and Powerpoint Presentations with links) will focus on relating core concepts discussed in the text book to examples of actual laws and policies, issues of access and borders, the transformation of language and texts, new technologies, the popular culture of the Internet, and representations of the Internet in news, literature, television and films. In the videos and the Powerpoint Presentation (PPTs), often the Instructor will say watch this video, look at this website, or follow this link. Sometimes I will make connections between examples or case studies and concepts. But mostly, I want you to use your own brain to make connections between examples and concepts, and think about how these various ideas and artifacts relate to one another. See [http://twitter.com/marctasman](http://twitter.com/marctasman), [http://twitter.com/DigiArtsCulture](http://twitter.com/DigiArtsCulture) for current ("mind-casting") topics relavent to Internet Culture.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Week 1**
Intro
[Quiz Intro](Quiz Intro)
Deadline Sep 8
Chapter 1- The political Economy of the Internet
1.1 Communication and technologies: a sociological perspective

Week 2

Deadline on Sep 15
1.2 Stages in the development of the technologies of the word
1.3 A four-layer taxonomy of the technologies of the word

Quiz 2

Week 3

Deadlines on Sep 20, 22
Essay 1- Philosohphy of Technology due
1.4 History of the Internet
1.5 Internet and its contexts

Quiz 3

Week 4

Deadlines on Sep 27, 29
Discussion comments for Essay 1 due
Chapter 2- Computer mediated communication (CMC): features and technologies
1.5.4-1.5.5 Internet Terrorism, Censorship, and Ethics
2.1 Mapping CMC

Quiz 4

Week 5

Deadlines on Oct 4, 6
Internet Discovery Post #1 due
2.2 The features of CMC
2.3 Technical aspects: a brief overview

Quiz 5

Week 6

Deadlines on Oct 11, 13
Essay 2- Netiquette due
Chapter 3- Hypertext
3.1 Hypertexts and hypermedia
3.2 Some insights from ancient rhetoric

Quiz 6

Week 7

Deadlines on Oct 18, 20
Discussion comments for Essay 2 due
Review for Exam 1 +
3.3 The history of hypertext
3.4 Earlier hypertext theories
Midterm Exam (1) October 20
Week 8
Deadlines on Oct 25, 27
Essay 3- Hypertext as a body of knowledge due
Chapter 4- Websites as communication
4.1 The Website Communication Model
4.2 Contents and services (and their localization)
Quiz 7

Week 9
Deadlines on Nov 1, 3
Discussion comments for Essay 3 due
4.2.3 More localization
4.3 Accessibility tools
4.4 Publishers
Quiz 8

Week 10
Deadlines on Oct 8, 10
Internet Discovery Post #2 due
Chapter 5- Conceptualizing users of the Internet: traces and search engines
5.1 Users
5.2 Relevant context/world
Quiz 9

Week 11
Deadlines on Nov 15, 17
Essay 4- Website Review due
5.3 Internet search engines
Quiz 10

Week 12
Deadline on Nov 22,
Discussion comments for Essay 4 due
Thanksgiving, November 24.

Week 13
Deadlines on Nov 29, Dec 1
Essay 5- Virtual Communities due
6 Internet: Communities and practices
6.1 Mass media in the time of the Internet
6.2.4 Virtual communities
Quiz 11
Week 14
Deadlines on Dec 6, 8

Discussion 5 comments due
6.2.5 Virtual Communities cont.
6.3 eGovernment
6.4 eLearning
6.5 eBusiness and eCommerce

Week 15
Deadlines on Dec 13, 16

6.5 eBusiness and eCommerce
Conclusion and Review for Exam 2

Exam (2) Dec 13
Last Day of Classes, Dec 14, Study Day Dec 15
Final Exam
Exam (3- optional cumulative) D2L Friday December 16

This syllabus is subject to change

See Calendar:

Course Due Dates and Deadlines

Quizzes and Exams
Deadlines on Thursdays (except Quiz Intro and Exam 2, on Tuesday)

Quiz Intro -Tuesday, Sep 6
Quiz 1 -Sep 8
Quiz 2 -Sep 15
Quiz 3 -Sep 22
Quiz 4 -Sep 29
Quiz 5 -Oct 6
Quiz 6 -Oct 13
Exam 1 Oct 20
Quiz 7 -Oct 27
Quiz 8 -Nov 3
Quiz 9 -Nov 10
Quiz 10 -Nov 17
Quiz 11 -Dec 1
Quiz 12 -Dec 8
Exam 2 Tuesday, Dec 13
Final Optional Cumulative Exam 3- Friday, December 16

**Essays and Discussions**

**Deadlines on Tuesdays**

Essay 1- Sep 20  
Discussion comments 1 -Sep 27  
Internet Discovery Post 1 -Oct 4  
Essay 2 -Oct 11  
Discussion comments 2 -Oct 18  
Essay 3 -Oct 25  
Discussion comments 3 -Nov 1  
Internet Discovery Post 2 -Nov 8  
Essay 4 -Nov 15  
Discussion comments 4 -Nov 22  
Essay 5 -Nov 29  
Discussion comments 5 -Dec 9

**University Important Dates to Remember**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 30</td>
<td><strong>LAST DAY</strong> to withdraw from fall semester without charge or for full refund. Deadline for students registered by August 5 to pay full fees or a minimum $200.00 tuition deposit to hold classes.</td>
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<td>Aug 31 - Sept 19</td>
<td>Late Registration Period- 50.00 late registration fee in effect. See &quot;Change of Registration Deadlines&quot; for session-specific deadlines.</td>
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<td>Sept 5</td>
<td>Labor Day Holiday - University Closed</td>
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<td>Sept 6</td>
<td>First Day of Classes</td>
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<td>Sept 9</td>
<td>Undergraduate Student deadline to apply for December 2011 graduation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 19</td>
<td><strong>LAST DAY</strong> to register late, add full-term classes, change sections, change to audit without fee penalty, change from a graded basis to audit or credit/no credit status (or vice versa). Graduate student deadline to apply for December 2011 graduation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 3</td>
<td><strong>LAST DAY</strong> to drop full-term classes with partial refund or withdraw without notation of &quot;W&quot; on academic record (withdrawal fee assessed).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>Approximate date UWinteriM 2012 Schedule of Classes will be available on PAWS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 28</td>
<td><strong>LAST DAY</strong> to drop or withdraw from full-term classes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 23 - Nov 27</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Recess - No Classes (UWM offices are open only on the 23rd)</td>
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<td>Dec 14</td>
<td>Last day of classes</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 15</td>
<td>Study day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 16</td>
<td>Final Exams Begin</td>
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<td>Dec 18</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 23</td>
<td>Final Exams End</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 28</td>
<td>Deadline for posting final grades on PAWS.</td>
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For complete list of important dates see, [http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/register_course_info/important_dates.cfm?term=1100](http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/register_course_info/important_dates.cfm?term=1100)