Course Description
This required introduction to the Digital Cultures and Creativity program will examine the history of creative digital expression from the invention of computers in the mid-20th century through the “Web 2.0” landscape of today (and beyond). This is part one of a two-course sequence that will be completed by all DCC students during their first year. You will learn to use new media technologies, explore the cultural context in which they were first imagined, and explore examples of creative works that exploit the unique opportunities the digital medium offers. Historical and theoretical insights will be applied by actively considering issues of ethics, aesthetics, and community as they are manifest in the contemporary globalized cultures of the Web, including popular social networking sites such as YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, and Twitter; virtual worlds such as Second Life; computer games; and online reference tools such as Wikipedia. This will be coupled with a practical introduction - also to be continued in the second semester - to developing new tools and applications for platforms such as PCs or phones or tablet computers. This team-taught course is therefore aggressively interdisciplinary, coupling hands-on experimentation with a curriculum designed to focus awareness on the historical, theoretical, and cultural contexts in which digital creativity happens.

Readings will come from a number of sources, and be made available online either through the course’s ELMS site or as links to documents on the web. Videos will also be posted or linked to, and count as part of the “readings” for the course. Your iPads will also function as an integral element of the course; they will act not only as a platform for the delivery of selected course content, a reference tool for you to use during discussion sections, and an artifact or example of digital design that we will refer to throughout the year but will also be used to create content for assignments via the camera and microphone they contain.

We will also, throughout the year, use the course as a platform for practical introduction to key aspects of campus life. A discussion of the future of the concept of a library, for example, would include an introduction to the campus’s own library resources; discussions of social media, likewise, would explore the advantages and challenges of using social media to connect with your roommate, face to face friends, and faculty here in College Park.

Learning Outcomes
Students in the class will be exposed to the history and theory of electronic computers and how they are used in our society. You will understand the “digital” not as a byproduct of specific hardware or software but as a way of thinking about the world that transcends momentary technological enthusiasms. You will also gain a more rigorous understanding of what it means to be a “digital native,” a popular but
controversial phrase that has wide currency in the media and educational theory. You will explore different outlets for creativity that digital technologies enable, their origins in the analog world, as well as related issues such as copyright and rights management. You will gain a better understanding of what an algorithm is, what the basic elements of an algorithm are, how they do or don’t scale well, and why some problems might not be amenable to being made into an algorithm at all. You will begin to learn about computer-based markup languages and computer programming.

**Required (details in class)**
Campus TerpConnect login account
online accounts at: Google, Flickr, Twitter, YouTube
USB “keychain” drive
TurningPoint account for iPad (provided by Mobility Initiative)

**Assignments, Readings Journal and Portfolio**
Most weeks there will be an assignment posted. There will be specific deliverables associated with each assignment. In addition to assignment-specific deliverables, you will need to maintain an electronic annotated journal within Google Documents of all of your readings for this class as well as the activities you perform related to the class. This document should be named with your name and the word journal, such as GolubEvan-Journal and needs to be shared with egolubUMD@gmail.com and klc@umd.edu and jarah.mo@gmail.com and flake.leah@gmail.com so that it may be reviewed and/or graded periodically. Over the course of the semester, within your Flickr account and shared with the DCC-UMD group, you will need to compile an annotated portfolio of images and videos you capture and create related to class assignments and activities, also to be reviewed and/or graded periodically. Details will be provided in class. These will be individual portfolios, though you will also be commenting on the creations of your fellow students, so they are not closed.

**Team Project**
The class will be divided into project teams based on interest in one of several project options provided by the instructor or by forming, and having approved, a team-generated project proposal. The projects will involve either research into some aspect of digital technologies and their impact on cultures or creative ventures, or the prototyping of a new piece of hardware or software related to those topics. A full description and due date will be posted during the semester.
Co-curricular activities and Classroom Participation

An important element of this course is participation. There will be classroom participation in the form of things such as clicker polling, group activities, and your interaction over the course of the semester. There will also be a variety of workshops during the semester, in two of which you will be required to participate. There will also be film screenings, of which you will be required to attend two and provide your reaction to the film within the context of the course. You will also be required to attend and comment on two DCC-related talks during the semester.

Grading

Assignments, Journal, Online Portfolio (30%)
Co-curricular Activities, Classroom Participation (20%)
Team Project (20%)
Midterm Exam – Monday, Oct 24th (15%)
Final Exam – Friday, Dec 16th from 1:30pm-3:30pm, room TBD (15%)

Administrative

Assignment due dates and times will be listed in each description and may differ from one to another in terms of length of time before due date as well as whether it will be due electronically or in-person. A late project will only be accepted with a valid documented excuse for the due date. Remember that even with a valid excuse, you will still be expected to hand in your assignment, but will be given appropriate time and that you must inquire into this time rather than assume a new due date. Individual assignments need to be done individually. For some you are allowed to discuss the assignment with fellow students and share ideas, but you will need to document these interactions as part of the work you submit. The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html.

Any student eligible for and requesting reasonable academic accommodations due to a disability is requested to provide, to the instructor in office hours, a letter of accommodation from the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) within the first two weeks of the semester. It is also the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences from exams for religious observances during the first two weeks of the semester. Any regrade requests will need to be submitted in writing, within two business days of the grades being posted, and please note that regrades might lead to scores going down if we notice additional errors.