

# Temple University

## Department of Advertising + Public Relations

---

### #Trending: Trends and The Future in Consumer Culture ADV3900-001 [Honors]

SPRING SEMESTER 2020  
DATE +TIME: TTH 11 – 1220PM  
LOCATION: Annenberg 302  
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Devon Powers

EMAIL: devon.powers@temple.edu  
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays, 1:30-4PM or by  
appointment, Annenberg 341

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

- What are trends?
- How do trends shape consumer culture?
- What is the relationship between trends and the future?
- Who does the future belong to?
- How can corporations, consumers, and citizens use trends to anticipate, shape, and democratize the future?

These questions will serve as a guide for our investigations this semester. Our class will examine the history of trends; investigate the methods and professional practices by which trends are identified, anticipated, and manufactured; and unravel the implications of a world that is dominated by trends. Students will also experiment with future forecasting techniques and will become practiced in identifying their own trends. Course materials will include a mix of journalism, criticism, business literature, popular culture, social media and ethnographic resources. By the course's end, students should 1) develop a critical vocabulary for thinking about trends and the future; 2) feel comfortable utilizing basic futures thinking; 3) understand what a "democratic future" might entail and have developed ideas on how to enact it; and 4) improve their ability to research, think, and write about future and trend-related topics.

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

This class requires two books:

- Webb, Amy. 2018. *The signals are talking: why today's fringe is tomorrow's mainstream*. Public Books
- Dragt, Els. 2017. *How to research trends*. BIS.

All other course materials will be available via Canvas as downloads or links.

## METHODS OF EVALUATION

You'll be evaluated according to the following:

1. Attendance and Participation: 15%
2. Discussion Leadership: 10%
3. Weekly Trend Journal: 10%
4. Midterm: 20%
5. Group Trend Report: 45%

**1. Attendance and participation** are of paramount importance in this class: they are the best way to demonstrate what you have been learning as well as fine-tune your ideas in dialogue with your classmates. This means regular and prompt attendance, coming to class having done the work, speaking when you have something to say, and listening respectfully when you don't.

You'll earn participation points as follows:

- Five (5) points if you are present in class on time, contributing meaningfully, and have made it clear that you've done the work. You will automatically receive 5 points on any day I have to cancel class and on any examination day, providing you show up.
- Two and a half (2.5) points if you are in class and paying attention, but not contributing to the discussion in a way that lets me know you are prepared.
- Zero (0) points if you are absent, ridiculously (15+ mins) late, disruptive, or completely checked out (sleeping, daydreaming, texting, etc). Holidays will count for zero points.

A perfect participation score in this class is 130 points, which means that 10 points of extra credit are available for simply showing up, talking, and being a good participant in class throughout the term.

Students who are absent cannot make up that day's participation. This includes absence for non-chronic illness, field trips for other classes, interviews, work, travel, appointments, etc. The exceptions to this policy are as follows:

- Religious, Sports, and DRS exemptions: Students who observe religious holidays or participate in in-season sporting obligations may be given the opportunity to make up participation points, provided I receive advance notice. Students with a DRS-registered disability or a chronic medical condition that requires attendance accommodations

should approach me within the first week of class to discuss the terms of their participation.

- *Alternative ways to earn points*: Participation may also include group work, reading quizzes, Canvas postings, in-class writing assignments, or other activities. Over the course of the term, non-class activities (for instance, a relevant lecture or film) may be offered as opportunities to earn participation points; be sure to keep abreast of any announcements to this effect.

**Students who are absent more than four times will receive a zero for participation.**

Please note that if you are late to class you may not earn credit for any activities that have commenced before you arrived.

**2. Discussion leadership** provides an opportunity for you to guide our class discussion. During designated days, a student will fill one of the following three roles; three students will participate per session.

- *The Summarizer* will be responsible for summarizing the reading, pointing out the main arguments and identifying relevant quotes. The summarizer is also tasked with keeping discussion “on track” and making sure we don’t veer too far afield.
- *The Questioner* will be responsible for developing three discussion questions about the reading. These questions can be clarifying (what do you think the author meant by X?), provoking (is the author right/wrong to assert X?), broadening (how does the author's point about X illuminate Y?), etc. The questioner is also responsible for asking questions of other students should their points need clarification or illumination.
- *The Connector* will be responsible for making connections between the current reading, previous readings, and real-world examples. Connectors should bring in documentation of one “real world” example—for instance a short video clip, a visual or audio example, a news story, a social media post, etc. At the end of class, the connector will sum up the connections heard over the course of the discussion.

Discussion leaders will begin our class discussions on designated days and are responsible for keeping conversation going if it starts to lag. Each student must satisfactorily fulfill each role once over the course of semester to earn the full points. Additional details will be provided during the first few DL sessions.

**The midterm** will take place on February 25 and be a series of essay questions. Additional information TBA.

**Trend journal** is located on Canvas. It is a space where students respond to weekly prompts and to log their processes of trend/futures discovery. Each journal entry should be around 300 words. There will be 11 journals this semester; 10 are required. Trend journals are always due by the end of the week (Friday at 11:59PM). Late trend journals are not accepted.

**The group trend report** is an ongoing group project due at the end of the semester. Groups will complete the following assignments

- Proposal: 5% | Due February 20
- Presentation: 10% | Due April 29
- Final Project: 25% | Due April 29
- Reflective Essay and Peer Grading: 5% | Due May 1

## CLASS POLICIES

### ***Add/Drop***

Students may add or drop this course until January 27. The course may be withdrawn from until March 18. Students who add the class late should approach me to discuss making up missed work. Absences and participation tallies are prorated based on the date a student adds the class.

### ***Written Work***

Papers must be turned in Canvas. If for some reason Canvas will not work for you, you may submit a paper to me via email “at your own risk.” This means that if the paper does not get to me for any reason—forgotten attachment, incorrect email address, etc.—it will be counted as late.

Papers should conform to your preferred citation style (such as MLA, Chicago, or Harvard); a paper without adequate citations will be penalized and one that doesn’t include them entirely may receive a failing grade. Paper should be written in 11- or 12-point font with standard margins. Please include page numbers, and spell and grammar check your paper thoroughly before turning it in.

You are encouraged to visit the Temple Writing Center, located in the Tuttleman Learning Center, for assistance on your papers. Schedule permitting, I will also be available for discussing student paper drafts. I do not offer rewrites.

Please note that turning a paper in via electronic means still means it is due at the scheduled time, and will be marked late if it comes in after that time. Technological issues such as crashed computers, inaccessible Wifi, etc. **are not valid excuses**—get in the habit of saving regularly in multiple locations, backing up your data, and working from secure locations. Things happen, but they are often more likely to happen if you do not allow yourself ample time and the proper conditions to complete an assignment.

### ***Gadgets***

You are encouraged to bring an Internet-ready device with you to class to assist in note-taking or classroom activities when scheduled. However, because verbal participation is an important method of evaluation, it is critical for you to practice courtesy and self-control with these devices, and you are responsible for participating in class on the same terms as you would if you did not have one. Using your device for non-class purposes will result in a zero for your participation grade for that day; please note that I am paying attention even though I may not call you out on it. I reserve the right to revoke the privileges of any student who routinely abuses them. Phones should always be on vibrate in class.

### ***Late Papers and Make Ups***

Papers will be marked down one letter grade (-10 points) for every day they are overdue. A paper is counted as late if it has not arrived to me within the **first 10 minutes of class**. I rarely grant extensions but will consider them with at least 48 hours of advance notice, so plan accordingly. **A paper more than five days late will be marked as a zero.**

Make up examinations will be determined on a case by case basis. Generally speaking, examination make ups will be granted only with advance notice (one week or more), and under extreme circumstances. If you anticipate a conflict, please speak with me as soon as possible and plan accordingly. Please note that any in-class pop quizzes or other scored in-class work cannot be made up.

Finally, when it comes to late work, please show respect for yourself, your fellow classmates, and me. I can accommodate busy lives and stressful situations, but not poor planning or fabrications. If you are feeling under the gun, please come speak to me before it becomes a problem.

### ***Disability Services***

Temple University provides accommodations to students with disabilities under American Disabilities Act (ADA). If you have a condition which requires accommodations, please visit the Office of Disability Resources and Services (located at 100 Ritter Annex, 1301 Cecil B. Moore Avenue) to receive the proper documentation. You must present the instructor with your accommodation provisions before receiving accommodations; accommodations are not retroactive. It is highly recommended that you take care of this during add/drop. Students who require accommodations must be in regular contact with the instructor to discuss needs for assignments, exams, and attendance. For more information, visit <http://www.temple.edu/disability>, or contact the ODRS at 215-204-1280, [drs@temple.edu](mailto:drs@temple.edu).

### ***Plagiarism***

Temple University policy states:

“Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor, another person's ideas, another person's words, another person's assistance. Normally, all work done for courses --

papers, examinations, homework exercises, laboratory reports, oral presentations -- is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. Any assistance must be reported to the instructor. If the work has entailed consulting other resources -- journals, books, or other media -- these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. It is the instructor's responsibility to indicate the appropriate manner of citation. Everything used from other sources -- suggestions for organization of ideas, ideas themselves, or actual language -- must be cited. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism."

See <http://bulletin.temple.edu/undergraduate/about-temple-university/student-responsibilities/#academichonesty> for more information.

Students who plagiarize will receive a zero for the assignment and may fail the entire course, depending on the severity of the offense. If you are unsure if something you are doing constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

### ***Temple's Statement on Basic Needs***

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Department Chair or the Dean of Students for support. We will help connect you to resources that are on campus to support you.

### ***Temple's Policy on Student and Faculty Rights and Responsibilities***

The University requires that the following information be included in all syllabi. "Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities Policy 03.70.02 which can be accessed through the following link:  
[http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy\\_no=03.70.02](http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02)

### **GRADING SCALE**

Below is the grading scale I use for this class. Please note that I do not accept grade appeals except in circumstances of mathematical error. Extra credit will not be given at the end of the term.

A	= 93-100%	A-	= 90-92%	B+	= 87-89%
B	= 83-86%	B-	= 80-82%	C+	= 77-79%

C	= 73-76%	C-	= 70-72%	D+	= 67-69%
D	= 63-66%	D-	= 60-62%	F	= 59% or less

### SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

*The following is a working schedule. The pace and direction of the class is subject to change dependent upon student interest, current events, and extenuating circumstances. Please check Canvas and stay atop course announcements for any changes.*

#### **WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION**

<b>January 14</b>	Introduction, Class Policies, and Goals Trendwatching, "5 Trends for 2020"
<b>January 16</b>	Karpf, "25 Years of WIRED Predictions: Why the Future Never Arrives" Game: The Thing From the Future

#### **WEEK 2 WHAT IS A TREND?**

<b>January 21</b>	Powers, Introduction to <i>On Trend</i>
<b>January 23</b>	Dragt, Ch. 2

#### **WEEK 3 POPULARITY, DIFFUSION, CONTAGIONS: HOW THINGS CATCH ON**

<b>January 28</b>	Rogers, "Diffusion of Innovations" Urban, excerpt from "The Once and Future Thing"
<b>January 30</b>	Gillespie, "#trendingistrending: When Algorithms Become Culture" Ohlheiser, "R.I.P. The First Meme of The Decade, Which Has Already Lived and Died"

#### **WEEK 4 FORECASTING AND FORESIGHT: SOME THEORIES OF PREDICTION**

**February 4** Tetlock, “An Optimistic Skeptic” and “Illusions of Knowledge” – p. 33

**February 6** Tetlock, “Illusions of Knowledge” p. 33-end, “Keeping Score”

**WEEK 5** *FORECASTING HISTORY AND PRACTICE: FASHION AND COLOR*

**February 11** Blaszczyk, “The Rise of Color Forecasting in the United States and Great Britain”

**February 13** Blaszczyk, “Sunshine Yellow”  
Lang, “Pantone's Color of the Year Is a Comforting Start to 2020. Here’s What to Know About the Choice”  
**Speaker:** Marie-Michèle Larivee

**WEEK 6** *WHOSE FUTURE? THE POLITICS OF FUTURISM*

**February 18** Rushkoff, “Survival of the Richest”  
Vanderbilt, “Why Futurism Has a Cultural Blindspot”

**February 20** Powers, “Eventful Futures”  
**Group Proposal Due**

**WEEK 7** *MIDTERMS*

**February 25** Midterm

**February 27** **Speaker:** Alex Brooks, PSFK, Temple ‘19

**WEEK 8** *SPRING BREAK*

**March 3** No Class – Spring Break

**March 5** No Class – Spring Break

**WEEK 9** *THE SIGNALS ARE TALKING*

**March 10** Webb, Chs. 1-2

**March 12** Webb, Chs. 4-5

**WEEK 10** *THE SIGNALS ARE TALKING, CONT'D*

**March 17** Webb, Chs. 7-8

**March 19** Webb, Chs. 9-10

**WEEK 11** *TRENDSPOTTING METHODS*

**March 24** Goulding, "Grounded Theory, Ethnography, and Phenomenology" pp. 294-304  
Brown, "Design Thinking"

**March 26** Dragt, Ch. 3

**WEEK 12** *TREND METHODS AND STRATEGY*

**March 31** Dragt, Ch. 4  
Holt and Cameron, "Introduction"

**April 2** Dragt, Ch. 5 (skim)  
JWT Intelligence, "Future 100 2019"

**WEEK 13** *TREND REPORTS*

**April 7** Sparks & Honey, "Precision Consumer 2030"

**April 9** **SPEAKER:** Ben Grinspan, Sparks & Honey

**WEEK 14** *CRITICAL FUTURISMS*

- April 14** Future Laboratory, "Backlash Culture"
- April 16** Goode and Godhe, "Beyond Capitalist Realism: Why We Need Critical Future Studies"  
Eveleth, "The Biggest Lie Tech People Tell Themselves — And The Rest Of Us"

**WEEK 15**

***CONCLUSION***

- April 21** Group Project – In Class Workshop
- April 23** Class Canceled
- April 29** Final Exam: Project Presentations  
**Group trend report due**