

Cell Phone Cultures

Winter 2016

C LIT 302A

SLN: 11841

T/Th 11:30-1:20

**Instructor:
Stephen Groening**

Whatever it is called – the cellular phone, cell-phone, mobile phone, or just plain mobile – it has become the preeminent communications device worldwide. Its uses include telephony, calendaring, mapping, instant messaging, time-telling/time-keeping, web browsing, and more. It has hailed as the new solution to economic development in so-called emerging (and neglected) markets. It has been vilified as the cause of shortened attention spans, decrease in sociability, and increase in teen-age driving accidents. Whether villain or panacea, the cell phone is seen as a necessary precondition for economic and social success in the contemporary world.

This course will explore these issues, treating the cell phone as a technological device whose cultural, social, and economic significance is a key indicator of the structures of contemporary society. After beginning with some foundational studies of the cell phone's precursors, we will examine contemporary histories and analyses of the cell phone and cell phone cultures.

Assignments include: a photo essay (using your cell phone), fieldwork on people using cell phones in public spaces, a silent texting class session, and organizing a flash mob.

