

Soc C167/Info C167 – Virtual Communities + Social Media
University of California, Berkeley
Instructor: Edwin Lin, Summer 2018

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Overview of Course Content:

With the explosion of virtual communities and social media, technology and its effect on society has become a daily reality, invading all areas and aspects of our social lives. This ranges from pop culture, sports, and entertainment to political participation, intimacy, and family. Everyone taking this course has some exposure to virtual communities and social media—even if one is unaware of the extent and depth of this exposure in their lives. As a result, this course is not about discovering new ideas and never-before-seen concepts, but rather providing some tools and perspectives to understand aspects of society that we are somewhat familiar with. Put another way, this course seeks to understand a growing aspect of our society through a different lens of understanding.

Explicitly, the goals of this course are: 1) to provide a survey of subfields in social media research, 2) to expose you to what social science research looks like in these subfields, and 3) to provide a space for you to reflect and personally interact with what virtual communities and social media means in your own life.

Email Policy:

I am usually very good about answering emails, but please leave at least 2 days for me to get to you, especially over the weekend (I may not get to you until Monday/Tuesday). Also, please keep emails to questions that are relatively easy to answer, such as questions about logistics, instructions, office hours, etc. For questions about class content or your papers, please talk to me before/after class or by appointment in office hours.

Technology Requirement:

The class does have an embedded requirement to be connected with technology—or rather I should say that it is assumed that you have access to and more or less regularly participate with technology. That said I do not want this class to privilege those who have over those who have not. Please send me an email or come talk to me if you feel that you are either not technologically proficient or will have trouble using technology and social media for the class assignments.

Grade Breakdown:

Participation and Attendance	10%
Group Presentation	10%
Virtual Community Proposal	5%
Disconnect Paper	10%
Virtual Community Paper	25%
Final	40%

Participation and Discussion:

Please come to class prepared to discuss the week's reading. I hope to get to know everyone and really want to encourage everyone to participate in our discussions. Your participation during class is crucial to learning and understanding the course material. "Participation" does not mean simply speaking out a lot. The content, quality, and depth of your participation are more important than how many times a week you speak. At the same time, showing that you are constantly engaged in our class discussions is also valuable.

For those of you who may dislike participating in large groups or spontaneous participation, there are several options that I am happy to work out with you—please send me an email or talk to me after class. One option that I would like to invite everyone to participate in is emailing me news stories, social media, YouTube videos, and other web links that you find interesting and relevant to our class—I will show these at the beginning of class as a fun way to investigate course material. Of course, this is not necessary—if you regularly participate in classroom discussions, you will do just fine on your participation grade. If you are at all concerned about participation, please see me *early* in the semester in office hours to talk about this.

*****If English is not your first language**, or you have trouble writing in English, there are resources on campus to help in writing your papers. I am happy to point you to some of them, just send me an email. Also, if you are part of the **Disabled Students' Program (DSP)** and require any special accommodations, please talk to me and/or send me an email within the next two or three weeks to discuss alternative deadlines for assignments. In order to **GUARANTEE** your DSP accommodation, I absolutely need at least 3 weeks notice before the deadline of the assignment!

Grading Scale for the Class:

A+ (98-100)	C (72-78)
A (92-98)	C- (70-72)
A- (90-92)	D+ (68-70)
B+ (88-90)	D (62-68)
B (82-88)	D- (60-62)
B- (80-82)	F (everything below 60)
C+ (78-80)	

Group Presentation:

In groups of about 6 people, you will be expected to prepare a creative and interactive group presentation on one of the week's topics. The presentation should last around 30-40 minutes, and everyone must participate in some capacity during the presentation. The week before your presentation, I will meet with the group after class to briefly talk through the lecture and readings. I invite you to be very creative with these presentations, from playing games and creating fun activities to presenting interesting examples/case studies and leading debates and discussions.

These presentations will receive a group grade and they will be graded based on 1) preparation and presentation, 2) creativity and interaction, and 3) content and meaningful insight (*do not be redundant with lecture material*). Don't worry—they will not be graded particularly hard as long as thoughtfulness, effort, and organization is shown through them.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED! The following paper assignments will all be “handed out” and completed through the bCourses website. There is a one-hour grace period where you can still submit your assignment even though it will be considered late. Late assignments, even assignments just one minute late, are penalized a full grade (e.g. an A becomes a B). If you miss this grace period, you will be unable to submit your assignment and you will be given a 0 on it. Please be sure to turn things in on time and before the stated due date/time.

*NOTE: The reason I have a strict policy on late assignments is because I am concerned about unknowingly participating in a system that privileges certain racial, cultural, socioeconomic, family background influences that may account for one student asking for an extension while others keep silent about their circumstances. In a class this large, and without GSIs, I simply must impose a strict “no late assignments” policy.

- PLEASE submit your assignments early! Do not wait for the last minute. BCourses is known to sometimes have errors in submission (I suspect due to too many students submitting at the same time), so please save us all some stress and extra work and submit things *at least an hour in advance of the due date and time*.
- **If you encounter an error in submission**, please take a screenshot of the error that includes the date and time of the error (your computer's date/time clock is good enough) and email me your assignment with the screenshot attached. In order for your assignment to be accepted, **I must receive this email before the submission due date.**

Disconnect Paper:

Sometime this week (make arrangements as necessary), for 36 hours you are to disconnect completely from any form of virtual community or social media. This means no text messages, emails, Internet, chat messengers, online spaces, online apps, online games, etc. You will write a short paper about this experience and one key positive and/or negative effect of virtual communities and social media in response to the first four weeks' readings. See assignment on bCourses for more detailed information about this assignment.

Virtual Community Proposal + Paper (2 papers):

During the course of this six-week summer session, you will be asked to spend at least two weeks investing and interacting with a virtual community. This can certainly be a community that you are already currently a part of, but the interaction must be distinct, involved, deliberate, and intentional. In other words, you must reach out to the community in a proactive and initiative-taking way as to incite a response and deepen your interaction with it. The proposal is a way for me to make sure you have something in mind that is appropriate for your paper and will guarantee some interesting results. In the final paper, you will be asked to reflect on this experience and relate it to readings and topics from class. See bCourses assignment for more detailed information about this assignment.

Final Exam:

Your final exam will be due on **Saturday, June 30th, online (submitted via bCourses)**. More information as the semester moves along.

Reading List and Semester Schedule

Tips About the Readings:

Most of the readings are provided as a particular view of a topic. They should not be read as “truth,” but rather with some skepticism and analytical criticism—consider whether or not and to what extent you are convinced by the authors’ interpretation and view.

Overall, read for understanding, overarching meanings, and the big picture. Do not worry too much about specific statistics—although they may become useful in constructing your arguments for the midterm, virtual community paper, and final exam, you can always review them then.

I realize that in the summer session, you do not have much time to do the readings. Skim aggressively—learn when to slow down and focus and when to speed up and even skip! I **do not expect you to read every word of every reading**, nor should you, as this is actually a bad reading habit to develop. Many readings will also be discussed in class and lecture, so between your aggressive and smart skimming and the in-class discussions and lectures, I believe this reading load is manageable.

Introduction Monday, 5/21

Introduction, definitions, and framing

Development, growth, and history

- Wellman, B., & Gulia, M. (1997). Net Surfers Don’t Ride Alone: Virtual Communities As Communities. *Communities and Cyberspace*, Edited by Peter Kollock and Marc Smith. New York: Routledge.
- Baym, Nancy. (2010). *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*. Cambridge, UK: Polity (pp. 1-49).

Disconnect Paper Handed Out via bCourses Virtual Community Proposal Handed Out via bCourses

Theories of Tech Wednesday, 5/23

Theories of Society and Technology

- Meyrowitz, Joshua. “Medium Theory,” in *Communication Theory Today*. 50-77.
- Law, John. 1992. “Notes on the Theory of the Actor-Network: Ordering, Strategy, and Heterogeneity,” *Systems Practice*. 5 (4): 379-393.
- Orlikowski, Wanda. 1992. “The Duality of Technology: Rethinking the Concept of Technology in Organizations,” *Organization Science*, 3 (3): 398-412.

Utopia
Monday 5/28

MEMORAL DAY – NO CLASS

Utopian Views + Social Network Analysis

- Rheingold, H. (1993). A slice of life in my virtual community. In L. M. Harasim (Ed.), *Global Networks: Computers and International Communication* (pp. 37-80). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), 1360-1380.
- Tufecki, Z. (2010). Who Acquired Friends Through Social Media and Why? “Rich Get Richer” versus “Seek and Ye Shall Find.”

*****Virtual Community Proposal Due Tuesday 5/29, before 11:59pm*****

Dystopia
Wednesday 5/30

Dystopian Views

- Kross, E., Verduyn, P., et. al. (2013). Facebook Use Predicts Declines in Subjective Well-Being in Young Adults. *PLoS ONE*. 8(8).
- Carr, N. (2008). Is Google Making Us Stupid? What the Internet is doing to our brains. *The Atlantic*. July/August, (<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/306868>)
- Przybylski, A., Murayama, K., DeHaan, C., Gladwell, V. (2013). Motivational, emotional, and behavioral correlates of fear of missing out. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 29. 1841-1848.
- Turkle, Sherry. “Introduction,” in *Alone Together*. New York: Basic Books, 2011.

*****Disconnect Paper Due Sunday 6/3, before 11:59pm *****

Globalization Monday 6/4

Globalization, Culture, and Technology

- Castells, Manuel. "The Impact of the Internet on Society: A Global Perspective," *Change: 19 Key Essays on How Internet is Changing Our Lives*. Openmind, <https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/article/the-impact-of-the-internet-on-society-a-global-perspective/?fullscreen=true>
- Takhteyev, Yuri, Anatoliy Gruzd, and Barry Wellman. "Geography of Twitter networks," *Social Networks* 34 (2012): 73-81
- Leetaru, Kalev, Shaowen Wang, Guofeng Cao, Anand Padmanabhan, & Eric Shook. "Mapping the global Twitter heartbeat: The geography of Twitter." *First Monday* [Online], 18.5 (2013): n. pag. Web. 3 Aug. 2016. (Skim for important findings)

Virtual Community Paper Handed Out via bCourses

Social Capital Wednesday 6/6

Social media, social networking sites (SNS), and social capital

- Putnam, R. (1995). Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. *Journal of Democracy*. 6(1): 65-78.
- Steinfield, C., Ellison, N. B, and Lampe, C. (2008). Social Capital, self-esteem, and use of online social network sites: a longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 29: 434-445.
- Hampton, K. N. and Wellman, B. (2003). Neighboring in Netville: How the Internet Supports Community and Social Capital in a Wired Suburb. *City and Community*. 2(4): 277-311.

Offline Spaces Monday 6/11

Mobile life in offline spaces; Wearables

- Humphreys, L. (2005). Cellphones in public: social interactions in a wireless era. *New Media & Society*, 7(6), 810-833.
- Hampton, K. N., Livio, O., and Goulet, L. S. (2010). The Social Life of Wireless Urban Spaces: Internet Use, Social Networks, and the Public Realm. *Journal of Communication*, 60(4): 701-722.
- Wasik, Bill. "Why Wearable Tech Will Be as Big as the Smartphone." *Wired.com*, December 17, 2013. <http://www.wired.com/2013/12/wearable-computers/>

Intimacy
Wednesday 6/13

Dating and Intimacy Online

- Cacioppo, John T, Stephanie Cacioppo, Gian C Gonzaga, Elizabeth L Ogburn, and Tyler J Van der Weele. (2013). Martial Satisfaction and Break-Ups Differ Across On-Line and Off-Line Meeting Venues. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.
- Ellison, N., Heino, R., and Gibbs, J. (2006). Managing Impressions Online: Self-Presentation Processes in the Online Dating Environment. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. 11: 415-441.
- Scissors, L., Roloff, M., Gergle, D. (2014) Room for Interpretation: The Role of Self-Esteem and CMC in Romantic Couple Conflict. Northwestern University

Family and Youth
Monday 6/18

Family, Youth, and Children

- Draper, N. R. A. (2012). Is your teen at risk? Discourses of adolescent sexting in United States television news. *Journal of Children and Media*. 6(2): 221-236.
- Marwick, Alice E. "To catch a predator? The MySpace moral panic," *First Monday*. 13(6) June 2008.
- Marwick, A. and Boyd, D. (2011). The drama! Teen conflict, gossip, and bullying in networked publics. *A Decade in Internet Time: Symposium on the Dynamics of the Internet and Society*.

Political Revolution
Wednesday 6/20

Political revolution, movements, and change

- Gladwell, Malcolm (2010, October 4). Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not be Tweeted. *The New Yorker*.
- Tufekci, Zeynep and Christopher Wilson. (2012). Social Media and the Decision to Participate in Political Protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication*. 62: 363-379.
- Kim, Yonghwan, Hsuan-Ting Chen, and Homero Gil de Zuniga. (2013). Stumbling Upon News on the Internet: Effects of Incidental News Exposure and Relative Entertainment Use on Political Engagement. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 29: 2607-2614.
- Hargittai, Eszter and Aaron Shaw (2013). Digitally Savvy Citizenship: The Role of Internet Skills and Engagement in Young Adults' Political Participation around the 2008 Presidential Election. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. 57: 115-134.

Final Exam handed out via bCourses

*****Virtual Community Paper Due Sunday 6/24, before 11:59pm*****

Gaming

Monday 6/25

Esports and gaming

- Anderson, C., and Dill, K. (2000). Video Games and Aggressive Thoughts, Feelings and Behavior in the Laboratory and in Life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78(4): 772-790.
- Steinkuehler & Williams (2006). Where Everybody Knows Your (Screen) Name: Online Games as “Third Places”.
- Hamilton, William A., Oliver Garretson, and Andruid Kerne. “Streaming on Twitch: fostering participatory communities of play within live mixed media,” *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, New York: ACM, 2014, pp. 1315-1324.
- Golub, A. and Lingley, K. (2008). “Just Like the Qing Empire” Internet Addiction, MMOGs, and Moral Crisis in Contemporary China. *Games and Culture*. 3(1): 59-75.

Final Exam Review + Office Hours

Wednesday 6/27

Final Review + Office Hours After Class

*****Final Exam DUE Friday 6/30, before 11:59pm, Submitted Online!!!*****