

SOCIOLOGY 167  
SPRING 2013  
TIMOTHY KING

Class Time: Wednesday 5:30 - 8:30PM  
Class Location: 2050 VALLEY LIFE SCIENCES  
Office Hours: Wednesday 4:15 - 5:15PM, 483 Barrows  
Email: tim.king.phd@gmail.com  
Final Exam: Friday May 17th; 11:30-2:30

This course provides an overview of the social dynamics and phenomena of the Internet. This course will provide students with an understanding of the fundamental cultural and social principles of the Internet, from the perspective of social sciences and with a focus upon the relationship between technology and society. This course examines the ways in which society is changing due to the introduction and wide spread use of computers and computer network communication. We will explore the subjects social and economic change due to the Internet - the Internet in developing nations, new social networks and their impact on social lives, predation and cyber-bullying, online gaming and the social dynamics of virtual worlds, culture without a nation - the culture of the Internet, censorship and control of information, publishing open to all, dating and romance online, exploiting new technology: cyber-warfare and virtual crime.

**Course Requirements:**

- 1). **Lectures:** If serious or significant reasons require a student to miss a class session, proof of reason for absence must be provided and students must notify me in advance (if possible) if they expect to miss a class session. It will be the responsibility of the student to contact me (during office hours) to collect any assignments or course materials they have missed due to absences.
- 2). **Required Readings:**  
Readings will be assigned at the end of each class session. Additional readings (articles) will also be provided.
- 3). **Exams:** A midterm exam and a final exam will constitute 70% of the course grade (35% each exam). These examinations will test student understanding of in-class materials and the homework reading assignments.
- 4). **Course Assignments:** 30% of the course grade will be from assignments, both in class and out of class assignments. Several of these assignments will be in a group format and will require posting materials on the internet.

5). **Academic Integrity:** The University's policy on academic honesty will be strictly enforced. If you are in doubt about quoting, paraphrasing, or plagiarism, consult your University Bulletin (also on-line). In other words, cheating in any form can be grounds for failing the entire course. Including material from elsewhere and presenting it as your own work is not permissible. All quoted text or graphics must be submitted with full citation. Text and graphics taken from the internet must be cited with a full URL reference.

6). **Grading and Assessment:**

Midterm Exam: 35%

Final Exam: 35%

Course Assignments: 30%

7). **Performance Quality:** Your grade on assignments and exams will be based upon your knowledge and understanding of course and reading materials, and your competence in applying these materials to your work and class discussions.

This schedule may be subject to change or revision:

#### SESSION 1 (January 23) -

- **COURSE OVERVIEW** - An overview of course materials.
- **ANONYMOUS: None of us are as cruel as all of us** - An overview of the "Anonymous" and "Chanology" movements and online organization and communications - how an informal group of hackers attacked the Church of Scientology, the Internet security firm HB Gary, Sony Music, and the Iranian Government.

#### Readings:

- Norton, Quinn "Anonymous 101: Introduction to the Lulz" *WIRED* Nov 2011 [[LINK](#)].
- Dibbell, Julian "The Assclown Offensive: How to Enrage the Church of Scientology" *WIRED* Sept 2009 [[LINK](#)].
- Zetter, Kim "Oil Companies Spring a Leak, Courtesy of Anonymous" *WIRED* July 2012 [[LINK](#)].

#### SESSION 2 (January 30) -

- **THE HISTORY OF THE INTERNET** - Data and internal messaging networks, email and usenet, the "browser wars" of the new millennium, the Web 2.0 Revolution of 2002-2005.
- **THE LANGUAGE OF THE INTERNET** - The predominance of English on the internet and its global implications. The evolution of *haxor* ("hacker") and *l33t* ("leet") - developing new English terminology and orthography. Overview of common internet cultural terms.

### SESSION 3 (February 6) -

- **SCAMMING and SCAMBAITING** - The world of "419 scams" and the social sanctions through "scam-baiting."
- **VIRTUAL CRIME** - The Internet as a new arena for criminal activity: goldfarming economies, public shaming, virtual prostitution, and hacking.

#### Readings:

- Kushner, David "The Hacker is Watching" *GQ* Jan 2012 [[LINK](#)].
- Suler, John "The Online Disinhibition Effect" *CyberPsychology and Behavior* vol.7 no.3, 2004 [[LINK](#)]. [NOTE: This is a JStor article, you need to be on a Berkeley Internet connection to view/download this article].

### SESSION 4 (February 13) -

- **SOCIAL NETWORKS** - The expansion of social networks on the Internet and the nature of social networks and the diffusion of information across social networks, and why they are perceived to be the "Holy Grail" for marketing.
- **PUBLISHING, PARTICIPATORY INFORMATION, and PARTICIPATORY NEWS** - how the Internet is changing the way we receive and report news: the participatory nature of modern news, civilian journalism, and amateur news publishing. Understanding the (almost terrifying) volume of information available on the Internet; what the Internet knows about you; how much *misinformation* exists on the Internet.

#### Readings:

- Glaser, Mark "Your Guide to Citizen Journalism" *MediaShift*, Sept 2006 [[LINK](#)].

FEBRUARY 20 - NO CLASS.

### SESSION 5 (February 27) -

- **HUMOR AND THE INTERNET** - What is "humor" and how do social sciences identify and define it?
- **DIGITAL ECONOMY and CURRENCY** - We will examine the economy of the Internet: the billion-dollar industry of "Goldfarming" in online games, to the underground economy of Bitcoins.

#### Readings:

- Wallace, Benjamin "The Rise and Fall of Bitcoin" *WIRED* Nov 2011 [[LINK](#)].

### SESSION 6 (March 6) -

- **BOTNETS, WORMS, and TROJAN HORSES: The Tools of Cyber Warfare** - The world of viruses, botnet attacks, and Internet espionage. The case study of the cyber attacks on the nation of Estonia.

## SESSION 7 (March 13) - MIDTERM EXAMINATION

### SESSION 8 (March 20) -

- **DATING and SEX on the INTERNET** - The world of pornography, predation, and sexual conduct on the Internet.

#### Readings:

- Welsh, Andrew and Jennifer Lavoie "Risky eBusiness: An Examination of Risk-Taking, Online Disclosiveness, and Cyberstalking Victimization" *CyberPsychology* 6 (1), 2012 [[LINK](#)].

- **MARCH 27 - NO CLASS** (Spring Break)

### SESSION 9 (April 3) -

- **THE DIGITAL DIVIDE** - We will examine the demographics of the National and Global Digital Divides: how access to digital communications technologies is not evenly distributed across society and the globe. We will look at the change in access over the past decade, and the social implications of such imbalances.
- **CHINESE INTERNET PROTEST** - We will examine the Chinese protests over Internet censorship.

### SESSION 10 (April 10) --

- **SOCIAL MEDIA and the ARAB SPRING** - We will examine how social media has facilitated cultural and political regime changes across the Arab world.

### SESSION 11 (April 17) --

- **THE SOCIAL WORLD OF VIDEO GAMES** - We will examine the nature of social interaction in virtual online worlds - how people behave when they can assume new identities.

### SESSION 13 (April 24) --

- **WEB 3.0** - We will examine the next steps in the Internet and Social Media: how augmented reality, geotagging, and mobile Internet materials are bringing the Internet into the physical world.

### SESSION 14 (May 1) --

- **REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM**