

Soc. 24 Freshman Seminar: Families and Technology

Fall 2022, UC Berkeley

Wednesdays, 10-11am

211 Dwinelle

Instructor: Joanna Reed, Ph.D., joannareed@berkeley.edu, 419 Social Sciences Building

Office hours: Mondays 3:15-4:15, drop-in and Wednesdays 3:15-5:15, appointments.

Sign up here for both in-person and remote appointments:

<https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/bbntp>

Course description:

Technology offers new opportunities and threats to contemporary families across a broad range of social contexts. In this seminar we will explore how different forms of technology affect relationships and expectations between family members, and how they are connected to old and new forms of social inequality. We will explore a variety of different technologies used by (and on) families and examine how an increasing reliance on digital technology across a variety of social institutions creates both pressures and opportunities. We will cover topics such as assisted reproduction, robots, various topics related to the internet, ways that algorithms influence and control our lives, workplace technologies and more.

Navigating the course and finding the information you need

- **Syllabus:** You are reading this right now. This is the full plan and overview for the course. Information about course policies is also included here.
- **bCourses:** This is the name of UCB's online course management platform. There is a bCourses site for our class. If you are enrolled, you should automatically have access to it. You can find readings and other information you need here. You will also use bCourses to turn in your work and view your grades and comments.
- **Readings:** You should complete the week's reading assignment before class. All readings will be available to you through bCourses.

Evaluation

This is a one unit, Pass/No Pass course. We are learning for its own sake and for the joy of it! While we do not have the formal letter grade and evaluation procedures that are usually a part of UCB classes, we will have assigned readings and there are some requirements that you will need to fulfill to pass.

Attendance and active participation in seminar discussion

Reading Responses

Attendance and Participation

I will take attendance each week. Come to each class having completed the reading assignment for that week and be ready to discuss it. I will lead the discussion, but you need to be ready with your own comments, questions, interpretations, and critiques and be ready to listen to and respond to those of your classmates. We will work together to establish an atmosphere in class that is comfortable, respectful, and hopefully also enjoyable and interesting.

I understand that you may not be able to attend every class if you get sick or need to quarantine. Please let me know if you will be missing class and the reason. We will not be recording the classes or have any option for remote participation.

Reading Responses

The primary assignment for class is to write 5 short responses to the reading assignments over the semester. You will choose the weeks that you want to cover. These will help you prepare for class discussion and practice your writing skills. While your reflection may include a *short* summary of each reading's main points, the aim of the response paper is to critically engage with the readings; this is the part that will help you later, when you are in class! Consider some of the following in writing up your paper:

- Describe your personal reaction to the reading.
- Describe connections to other readings or topics.
- Describe how the readings contribute to our understandings of the main themes of the course: 1) how different forms of technology affect family roles, relationships and expectations; 2) how technologies are connected to social inequalities, past and present; 3) the opportunities and threats and increasing reliance on technologies brings to families.
- Can you apply the readings to current events?
- Describe what you think may be left out, or what questions a reading brings up, or another substantive critique.

Each Reading Response should be 1-2 pages, double-spaced (longer is OK) and are due the night before the class when they will be discussed-- Tuesdays at midnight.

Course schedule*

Week 1, Aug. 24

Technology and Families: Hopes and fears

Week 2, Aug. 31

Relationships with Robots

Turkle, S. (2011) *Alone Together: Why We Expect More From Technology and Less From Each Other*. New York: Basic Books. Ch. 2

Week 3, Sept. 7

Forming families

Hochschild, A. (2012) *The Outsourced Self: Intimate Life in Market Times*. Metropolitan Books. Ch. 4 & 5

Week 4, Sept. 14

Digital Divides—Remote School

MacGillis, A. (2020) “The Students Left Behind by Remote Learning”. Pro Publica/*The New Yorker*
<https://www.propublica.org/article/the-students-left-behind-by-remote-learning>

Week 5, Sept. 21

Parents and kids navigate technology use

Clark, L.S. (2013) *The Parent App: Understanding Families in the Digital Age*. New York: Oxford University Press. Ch. 6

Week 6, Sept. 28

Too much screen time

Twenge, J. (2017) *iGen: Why Today’s Super-Connected Kids Are Growing up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—And Completely Unprepared for Adulthood (and What That Means for the Rest of Us)*. New York: Atria Books. Introduction (pp. 1-16) and Ch. 4

Week 7, Oct. 5

Social Media

Freitas, D. (2017) *The Happiness Effect: How Social Media is Driving a Generation to Appear Perfect at Any Cost*. New York: Oxford University Press. Introduction and Ch. 1

Week 8, Oct. 12

Social Media

Freitas, D. (2017) *The Happiness Effect: How Social Media is Driving a Generation to Appear Perfect at Any Cost*. New York: Oxford University Press. Ch. 3 & 4

Week 9, Oct. 19

Algorithms in our personal lives

Sharabi, L. (2022) “Finding Love on a First Date: Matching Algorithms in Online Dating “. *Harvard Data Science Review*, Issue 4.1

Week 10, Oct. 26

Algorithms and inequality

Eubanks, V. (2018) *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police and Punish the Poor*. New York: Picador. Introduction, Ch. 4

Week 11, Nov. 2

Technology, work and families

Kelly, E. & Moen, P. (2020) *Overload: How Good Jobs Went Bad and What We Can Do About it*. Ch. 2 "Overload", Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Ch. 2

Week 12, Nov. 9

Technology, work and families

Schneider, D. & Harknett, K. (2019) "Consequences of Routine Work Schedule Instability for Worker Health and Well-being". *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 84, no. 1

Week 13, Nov. 16

Technology, work and families

Monroe, R. (2020) "98 Million TikTok Followers Can't Be Wrong". *The Atlantic*, Dec. 2020,
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/12/charli-damelio-tiktok-teens/616929/>

Week 14, Nov. 23 NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15, Dec. 7

No new reading

Course Policies:

Academic Accommodations: Ask for accommodations if you are a DSP student (according to your LOA). You can assume that the DSP office will send me a copy of your letter. You are always welcome to reach out to me to discuss accommodations. If something is not working well, we will try to make adjustments. Accommodations are also available for the observance of religious holidays, or due to conflicts related to student athletics. Please also reach out to me if you have another issue not "officially" covered and we can talk about it. Here is a link to more information from UCB about academic accommodations and resources:

<https://evcp.berkeley.edu/programs-resources/academic-accommodations-hub>

Incomplete Grades: Incompletes are an option of last resort for students experiencing medical or other emergencies that make it impossible for them to complete their coursework on time. To be considered for an incomplete grade, students need to speak with me about it BEFORE THE END of the semester, have completed about half of the coursework, be earning a grade of C or better, and provide documentation of the reason for the request.

Academic honesty is expected of all students. It is extremely important that everyone submits their own original work, produced specifically for this course, in order to receive credit. Suspected violations relating to this course will be reported to the office of student conduct and dealt with according to university policies. *Be aware of plagiarism.* Word for word use of even a single sentence from any author, publication or website without proper citation is plagiarism and is unethical and unacceptable. So is very closely following the structure and wording of another author's work. In addition, please be aware that you may not turn in any portion of *your own* previous work submitted for credit in another course without substantial revision. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the paper or exam in question with no opportunity to rewrite, as will any other kind of academic dishonesty. If you have questions about how to properly cite materials, or how to paraphrase appropriately, please ask! The student writing center is a good resource for questions about this. All of your assignments will be checked for plagiarism by Turnitin.

Office Hours and communicating with me:

Office Hours: There are many different reasons to come to office hours. If you are having trouble with the class, or are experiencing personal problems that are hindering your ability to do well in it, please come! I can't help you if I don't know what is going on! Please also come to drop by to say "hi" and introduce yourself, or ask questions about the class, share a personal experience, or ask me about anything you think that I could help you with. I am glad you are my student this semester, and I want you to do well. I will be glad to talk with you. Remember also that if I know you, I will be able to write you a much better letter of recommendation if you find yourself in need of one in the future.

Email: This is generally a good way to get in touch with me, but I may not be able to respond right away. Do not expect a response on weekends or outside of regular working hours. Email is best for short, logistical questions or issues. If you need to discuss something complicated and/or important, a real conversation will be a lot better.

Names and Pronouns: You have the right to be referred to by the name you prefer and with the correct gender pronouns. Because the name listed in university records may not correspond to your preferred name, please inform me of your name (and pronunciation) and your pronouns so that I can ensure you are properly recognized and respected. You can refer to me as Prof. Reed, Dr. Reed, or Joanna. My pronouns are she/her.

University Resources for Students

Your Health and Well-Being: Being a college student can be full of excitement and possibilities, but at times may feel overwhelming or be difficult in other ways. Some degree of this is to be expected and is part of discovering your own identity and the person that you are and want to be. That said, if you are experiencing distress, anxiety or another problem to the point that it is

affecting your academics, or have a pre-existing mental health issue, there are resources on campus to help. You are not alone; many others share your difficulties. Even if you don't think you need them, I encourage you to look at these websites now, so you know what is available. There is much more than counseling appointments: there are web tutorials and videos, support groups and mindfulness classes, for example. Counseling center staff have told me these groups and classes can be a great preventative resource, and are a great way to get the semester off to a good start. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), (510) 642-9494, <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling>. More general resources on mental health, services are at <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/health-topics/mental-health> .

Student Learning Center: “The primary academic support service for students at Berkeley, the SLC helps students transition to Cal; navigate the academic terrain; create networks of resources; and achieve academic, personal and professional goals.”

Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Services: To learn more about these issues, how to support survivors, or how to file a report and receive support services, start here: <http://survivorsupport.berkeley.edu>.

Please note that I am not a confidential advocate; I am a mandated reporter. You can speak to a Confidential Care Advocate.

Undocumented Students can find university resources and support at: <https://undocu.berkeley.edu/>

Economic, Food, and Housing Support: If you are in need of economic, food, or housing support, you can find help at the Basic Needs Center (<https://basicneeds.berkeley.edu/home>).

Technology resources and support for students: Please see this page for the latest information on university-provided support: <https://studenttech.berkeley.edu/home>