

**Soc C167 – Virtual Communities and Social Media**  
**University of California, Berkeley**  
**Wednesday, 5-8pm; 145 Dwinelle Hall**  
**Instructor: Edwin Lin, Spring 2016**

Instructor: Edwin Lin

Office Hours: 434 Barrows Hall

OH Time: Tu 8-10am; W 4-5pm

Sign-up for regular OH at <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/icwie>

Email: [edklin@gmail.com](mailto:edklin@gmail.com)

Online Office Hours: Fr 10-11am

Online OH on bCourse chat room

***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 is likely to have 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). 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 see me in office hours.

***Office Hours (OH):***

Please sign-up for office hours on my wejoinin sheet (link above). If you do not sign-up, you are welcome to come still, but just know that I might be busy with other students or have stepped out for a moment. You may visit me in office hours for any concern, big or small, course related or life related!

I will be holding additional online office hours via our class's bCourses website chat room. The purpose of these online office hours is to answer simple questions that would require only a 5-minute discussion in person (but is content-oriented and therefore may not be appropriate for email communication). For example, verifying your understanding of a midterm question, getting simple feedback on a thesis statement, or asking if a virtual community you are interacting with is a good place to start.

For more in-depth discussions, or if you simply prefer face-to-face interaction (which I always encourage), please do see me in my regular 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:***

Disconnect Paper	15%
Take Home Midterm	25%
Virtual Community Paper	25%
Final	35%

**\*\*\*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 this Class***

A+	100 – 98.5	C	77.9 – 73
A	98.4 – 93	C-	72.9 – 69.5
A-	92.9 – 89.5	D+	69.4 – 68
B+	89.4 – 88	D	67.9 – 63
B	87.9 – 83	D-	62.9 – 59.5
B-	82.9 – 79.5	F	59.4 and below
C+	79.4 – 78		

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED!** The following paper assignments will all be “handed out” and completed through the bcourses website. As a result, if you miss the deadline, you will be completely unable to submit your assignment. Please be sure to turn things in on time and before the stated due date.

**All assignments must be submitted through bCourses and no late assignments are accepted!**

- bCourses will automatically prevent submissions after the due date time. For example, if a paper is due on February 2, then at 11:59am on Feb 2 is the last minute to submit your paper. 12 midnight is technically February 3, and so bCourses will not allow you to submit the paper even if you are only 1 minute late.
- 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:***

During the first month of the semester (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 paper about this experience and the positive and/or negative effects 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 Paper:***

During this semester, you will be asked to spend at least five weeks (five hours a week) investing and interacting with a virtual community. This can certainly be a community that you are already 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. If you have any questions about what an appropriate virtual community/online space is, please talk to me in office hours. In the final paper, you will be asked to reflect on this experience and relate it to readings and topics from class. See assignment on bCourses for more detailed information about this assignment.

***Midterm:***

Your midterm exam will be a take-home exam. It will cover topics from the first six (6) weeks of class. More information to come as the semester moves along.

***Final Exam:***

Your final exam will be a take-home exam. 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, final paper, and final exam, you can always review them then.

Finally, the readings are organized in a particular way. The first 4 weeks are mostly theory-based readings that will bring up themes that we will see again and again. Then, weeks 5-8 are more specific to subfields and contexts, but still are looking at broad-based ideas that can be applied in multiple contexts. And finally weeks 9-14 look at specific commonly studied subfields and key interests and topics around social media and society.

### **Week 1- January 20**

#### Introduction

- 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).

### **Week 2- January 27**

#### Theories of Society and Technology

- Feenberg, Andrew. (1999). *Questioning Technology*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-17.
- 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.

### **Week 3- February 3**

#### 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.
- Tufekci, Z. (2010). Who Acquired Friends Through Social Media and Why? “Rich Get Richer” versus “Seek and Ye Shall Find.”

**Disconnect Paper Handed Out  
Virtual Community Paper Handed Out**

**Week 4- February 10**

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.

**Week 5- February 17**

Globalization, Culture, and Technology

- Ali, Amir Hatem. (2011). The Power of Social Media in Developing Nations: New Tools for Closing the Global Digital Divide and Beyond. *Harvard Human Rights Journal*. 24: 185-219.
- Pick, James B. and Avijit Sarkar. (2015). "Chapter 3: The Global Digital Divide," in *The Global Digital Divides: Explaining Changes*. New York: Springer, pp. 83-111.

**\*\*\*Disconnect Paper Due\*\*\***

**Week 6- February 24**

**NO CLASS – UK CONFERENCE**

**Week 7- March 2**

Social Capital and Social Networking Sites

- 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.

**Week 8- March 9**

## Mobile Life in Offline Spaces

- 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.
- Shklovski, Irina and Adriana de Souza e Silva. (2013). An Urban Encounter. *Information, Communication & Society* 16: 340-361.

**Take-Home Midterm Handed Out****Week 9- March 16**

## 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

**\*\*\*Take-Home Midterm Due\*\*\*****Week 10- March 23****NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK****Week 11- March 30**

## Family, Youth, and Children

- Kuss, Daria J., Antonius K. van Rooij, Gillian W. Shorter, Mark D. Griffiths, and D. van de Mheen. (2013). Internet Addiction in Adolescents: Prevalence and Risk Factors. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 29: 1987-1996.
- 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*.
- 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.

**Week 12- April 6**

Revolutions, Movements, and Political Influence

- 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.

**Week 13- April 13**

Esports

- 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".
- Shaw, A. (2012). Talking to gamers: Questioning identity, community, and media representation. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*.
- 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.

**Week 14- April 20**

Education

- Williams, J. and Jacobs, J. (2004). Exploring the use of blogs as learning spaces in the higher education sector. *Australasian Journal of Education*. 20(2): 232-247.
- Roehl, A., Reddy, S. L., and Shannon, G. J. (2013). The Flipped Classroom: An Opportunity to Engage Millennial Students Through Active Learning Strategies. *Journal of Family & Consumer Sciences*. 105(2): 44-49.

**\*\*\*Virtual Community Final Paper due April 20\*\*\***

**Week 15- April 27**

Final Review and Evaluations

**Take-Home Final Exam Handed Out  
Final Exam due Wednesday, May 11 submitted via bCourses!**