

Spring 2025

SOC 167

Virtual Communities / Social Media

Class: Monday, Wednesday, Friday / 10-11 am / Hearst Field Annex A1

Instructor: Prof. Marina Romani (she/they)

Email: marinaromani@berkeley.edu

Office: Social Sciences Building TBD

Office hours: TBD

Sign up for office hours: marinaromani.youcanbook.me

(in person or on zoom at <https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/93933626338?pwd=Y0JPd21Fa25qc3FzOHJ6ZXdvVEZnUT09>)

Head GSI:

Timothy Ahn, timahn7@berkeley.edu

Office hours: Wednesday 12-2

Sign up for office hours: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/ogtqe/>

Office hours will be held on zoom at this link:

<https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/93933626338?pwd=Y0JPd21Fa25qc3FzOHJ6ZXdvVEZnUT09>

Graders:

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Course Description

With the advent of virtual communities and online social networks, old questions about the meaning of social behavior, connection, and belonging have taken on renewed significance. Social media platforms have transformed the ways we interact, share information, and build relationships, blurring the boundaries between the virtual and the physical. This course explores how virtual communities and social media challenge traditional notions of

community, redefine social norms and values, and influence the construction of personal identity and collective action.

Drawing upon a variety of literature from sociology, media studies, anthropology, psychology, cultural studies and more, this course delves into interdisciplinary discourse on the evolving nature of social media and virtual communities. Through hands-on engagement, case studies, and classroom discussions, students will question assumptions about online behaviors and values, and develop tools to critically assess the impact of virtual communities on diverse dimensions of life — from work and education to politics and personal relationships.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and critically engage with key sociological and interdisciplinary perspectives on virtual communities and social media.
- Understand how concepts such as community and social networks have evolved and are evolving in response to technological advancements.
- Investigate how social media and virtual communities impact various aspects of social life, including work, education, family, entertainment, dating, and political participation.
- Demonstrate the ability to connect theoretical knowledge to real-life interactions in social media and virtual communities.

Readings

All readings and course materials will be available on bCourses. Please check bCourses for the most updated version of the readings schedule.

An important note about the structure of this course

While this is a large class and I will give several lectures, in-class discussion will be an important part of the course. I welcome you all to participate by sharing with the class or during office hours any particular reflections or examples relevant to our course.

Students are expected to thoroughly and carefully read the course requirements and policies below.

Grading, Assignments, and Deadlines

ASSIGNMENT	WEIGHT	DUE DATE
Weekly Quizzes	20%	Weeks 2-7 and 9-14
Disconnect Paper	15%	Sun Feb 23 (Week 5)
Virtual Community (VC) Project <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Early Data Report- VC Final Paper	10% 25%	Sun March 9 (Week 7) Sun April 27 (Week 13)
Midterm	15%	Sun March 16 (Week 8)
Final	15%	Fri May 16 (Finals Week)

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Range
A	100% to 94%
A-	< 94% to 90%
B+	< 90% to 87%
B	< 87% to 84%
B-	< 84% to 80%
C+	< 80% to 77%
C	< 77% to 74%
C-	< 74% to 70%
D+	< 70% to 67%
D	< 67% to 64%
D-	< 64% to 61%
F	< 61% to 0%

Reading List and Semester Schedule

May be subject to changes. Please consult bCourses for the most updated version of the readings

Readings should be completed before the class in which they are assigned.

All readings are available on our bCourses site.

Week 1: What is *social* about social media?

January 22

Introduction to the course.

January 24

- Jaron Lanier. 2018. "Argument One: You are losing your free will." In *Ten Arguments for Deleting your Social Media Right Now*.
- Sydney Bradley and Amanda Perelli. 2023. "Social Media is Dead." *Business Insider*.
- Review the [Disconnect Paper guidelines](#).

Week 2: VC and SM Defined

January 27

- Howard Rheingold. 1993. "A Slice of Life in My Virtual Community." In *Global Networks. Computers and International Communication*, ed. by Linda Marie Harasim.

January 29

- Thomas Aichner et al. 2021. "Twenty-five Years of Social Media." *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*.

January 31.

- Christopher Conner. 2023. "How Sexual Racism and Other Discriminatory Behaviors are Rationalized in Online Dating Apps." *Deviant Behavior*.

Week 3: Impression management

February 3

- Erving Goffman. 1967. "On Face-Work." *Reflections*.

February 5

- Jia Tolentino. 2020. "The I in the Internet." *CCCB Lab*.
- Review the VC Project guidelines.

February 7

- Forrest Stuart. 2020. "Keepin' it Real." In *Ballad of the Bullet. Gangs, Drill Music, and the Power of Online Infamy*.

Week 4: Networks

February 10

- Nancy Baym. 2010. "New Forms of Personal Connection". In *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*. Read "Seven Key Concepts!" (pp. 6-13) and "Chapter 4: Communities and Networks."

February 12

- Zeynep Tufekci. 2010. "Who Acquired Friends Through Social Media and Why?" *Proceedings of the Fourth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*.

February 14

- Christina Cedillo. 2021. ["#CripTheVote. Disability Activism, Social Media, and the Campaign for Communal Visibility."](#) *A Journal of Community-Engaged Writing and Rhetoric*.

Week 5: Surveillance

February 17 **HOLIDAY**

February 19

- Shoshana Zuboff. 2015. "Big Other." *Journal of Information Technology*.
- Zephyr Teachout. 2022. "The Boss Will See You Now." *The New York Review of Books*.

February 21

- Oliver Haimson and Anna Hoffmann. 2016. "[Constructing and enforcing 'authentic' identity online.](#)" *First Monday. Peer-Reviewed Journal of the Internet*.

Week 6: Infrastructure

February 24

- Safiya Noble. 2018. "The Future of Information Culture." *Algorithms of Oppression. How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*.

February 26

- Nick Seaver. 2019. "Captivating Algorithms." *Journal of Material Culture*.

February 28

- Meredith Broussard. 2022. "Encoding Gender." In *"You Are Not Expected to Understand This": How 26 Lines of Code Changed the World*.
- Hibby Thach et al. 2024. "(In)visible moderation: A digital ethnography of marginalized users and content moderation on Twitch and Reddit." *new media & society*.

Week 7: Creative Labor

March 3

- Brooke Erin Duffy. 2018. "(Not) Just for the Fun of It. The Labor of Social Media Production" In *(Not) Getting Paid to Do What You Love. Gender, Social Media, and Aspirational Work*.
- Taylor Lorenz. 2021. "[Young Creators Are Burning Out and Breaking Down](#)." *The New York Times*.

March 5

- Mary Gray and Siddharth Suri. 2019. "Ghosts in the Machine." In *Ghost Work. How to Stop Silicon Valley from Building a New Global Underclass*.

March 7

- Michael Siciliano. 2021. "Creative Control?" In *The Ambivalence of Work in the Culture Industries*.

Week 8: Midterm Review

March 10

Midterm Review

March 12

Midterm Review

March 14

Take-home midterm - NO CLASS

Week 9: Attention Economy

March 17

- David Moscrop. 2023. "Cory Doctorow Explains Why Big Tech Is Making the Internet Terrible." *Jacobin*.

March 19

- Zeynep Tufekci. 2013. "Not This One": Social Movements, the Attention Economy, and Microcelebrity Networked Activism." *American Behavioral Scientist*.
- Kevin Roose. 2020. "Social Media Giants Support Racial Justice. Their Products Undermine It

March 21

- Jenna Drenten et al. 2024. "Curating a Consumption Ideology. Platformization and Gun Influencers on Instagram." *Marketing Theory*.

March 24, 26, 28: spring break

Week 10: Creator and Influencers

March 31

- Michael Siciliano. 2022. "Effort in Absence. Technologically mediated aesthetic experiences of the culture industries' routine workers." *Ethnography*.

April 2

- Nana Efua Mumford. 2021. "What Black Creators Think TikTok Needs to Do to 'Foster an Inclusive Environment.'" *The Washington Post*.

April 4

- Merve Emre. 2022. "The Illusion of the First Person." *The New York Review of Books*.

Week 11: Mental Health

April 7

- Kenta Minamitani. 2024. ["Social Media Addiction and Mental Health. Social Media Addiction and Mental Health: The Growing Concern for Youth Well-Being."](#) *Stanford Law School*.
- Dashka Slater. 2023. "The Instagram Account that Shattered a California High School." *The New York Times*.

April 9

- Cathy O'Neil. 2022. "Networked Shame." In *The Shame Machine. Who Profits in the Age of Humiliation.*

April 11

- Kaitlyn Tiffany. 2023. "No One Knows Exactly What Social Media Is Doing to Teens." *The Atlantic.*
- Kyle Chayka. 2023. "The Age of Algorithmic Anxiety." *The New Yorker.*

Week 12: Civil Society

April 14

- Christopher Bail et al. 2018. "Exposure to Opposing Views on Social Media can Increase Political Polarization." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).*

April 16

- Drew Harwell and Craig Timberg. 2021. "A QAnon revelation suggests the truth of Q's identity was right there all along." *The Washington Post.*

April 18

- Carl Chen. 2012. "The Creation and Meaning of Internet Memes in 4chan." *Habitus.*

Week 13: Public Space: Protest and Digital Gentrification

April 21

- Keith Hampton et al. 2010. "The Social Life of Wireless Urban Spaces: Internet Use, Social Networks, and the Public Realm." *Journal of Communication.*

April 23

- Zeynep Tufekci and Christopher Wilson. 2012. "Social Media and the Decision to Participate in Political Protest. Observations from Tahrir Square." *Journal of Communication.*

April 25

- Jessa Lingel. 2021. "The People and Platforms Facebook Left Behind." *The Gentrification of the Internet. How to Reclaim our Digital Freedom.*

Week 14: Where is everybody?

April 28

TBD

April 30

- Kristen Radtke. 2021. *Seek You* (selections).

May 2

Reflection on our course and on your virtual communities.

RRR Week

May 5, 7, 9 RRR Week.

I will hold extra office hours.

Finals Week

Final Exam due.

Course Requirements and Policies

Participation

Participation is crucial to the learning experience in our course. You are responsible for studying all the materials we cover during class, including on days when you are absent. I will not take attendance every day, but your participation and engagement with the materials will be evaluated by each student posting weekly responses on bCourses (see below).

Participation includes:

1. **Bringing your annotated readings to class** (electronic version is fine – that’s what I’ll be using as well).
2. **Engaging in in-class discussion, activities, and active listening.** This means taking part in small-group discussions, engaging with other students’ comments, and sharing your group’s comments and reflections with the whole class.

Readings

In this course, readings and assignments will take a substantial amount of time, and you should plan accordingly. Annotating your readings and note-taking are crucial in order to keep up with the class materials.

All reading and viewing assignments need to be completed prior to the scheduled class. All materials are available on bCourses, and you are expected to bring the assigned readings to every class (paper or electronic copy).

If you’d like to print your readings, you can print for no charge at [Open Computing Facility \(OCF\)](#) in the MLK Student Union. OCF is a volunteer-run computer lab where you can print your assignments and papers.

You can print for a fee at several UC Berkeley libraries:

<https://studenttech.berkeley.edu/campus-libraries>

<https://www.lib.berkeley.edu/visit/print-scan>

Assignments

Weekly quizzes (20%): You will complete one quiz each week on the most recent lectures. Starting Wednesdays at noon, you have 24 hours to take the quiz. Once you open the quiz you have 10 minutes to complete 3 multiple choice questions. You cannot change your answers once submitted. Quizzes will be assigned weeks 2-7 and 9-14. (No late submissions accepted for quizzes.) Quizzes are designed to encourage attendance, and I reserve the right to make them more difficult if attendance drops.

Disconnect Paper (15%): You will disconnect completely from any form of virtual community or social media for 36 consecutive hours during the first 5 weeks of class. This means no text messages, no emails, no Internet, no chat messengers, no online apps, no online games, and so on – so plan ahead! You will then write a short reflection on this experience, connecting it to an eligible reading from class.

Virtual Community (VC) Project: You will immerse yourself in a virtual community of your choosing for approximately 5 hours per week for 5 weeks. You may pick a community that you are already involved with, but your interactions must be driven by research purposes and not your own entertainment. You will deliberately engage the community to incite a response and deepen your interaction with and understanding of it. You will produce the paper in two steps: an Early Data Report and a Final Paper.

- **Early Data Report (10%):** You will assemble data to describe your virtual community and its unique social characteristics. Then you will connect this data to key concepts from the course.
- **VC Final Paper (25%):** You will make an argument that relates your experience of this virtual community to concepts from the course. You will build upon your Report to provide a well-reasoned and researched thesis that demonstrates your broader grasp of the course and its main themes.

Midterm (15%): You will complete a take-home midterm consisting of several short questions covering material from the first half of class.

Final Exam (15%): You will complete a take-home final exam consisting of three short essays that require you to synthesize course materials and apply them to original examples.

Grade distribution and due dates for the reading responses are indicated above on this syllabus. Before deciding to remain in this course, make sure you check all the deadlines and make sure you are able to meet them.

Course Policies

Public Health Guidelines

We will follow UC Berkeley's public health measures related to the coronavirus pandemic and any other circumstances. Let's take care of each other and our communities.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all lectures, which is crucial for understanding course content and performing well in the class. In class, I will cover the most important topics from the readings, as well as complement the readings with extra materials with which students will be expected to be familiar.

I will not take attendance every class meeting, but being present and actively participating in class is central to the learning process.

Class begins promptly at 10 minutes after the scheduled hour. Please be present on time as late arrivals disrupt the class.

If you miss more than five classes, please come talk to me in office hours to discuss your situation.

If you can't attend because of a religious observance, emergency, sports schedule, or health issue, please talk to me as soon as possible.

If you are feeling sick, or experiencing symptoms, please err on the side of caution and don't come to class. Given the current public health situation, I understand if, at times, we'll need to find creative ways to make sure that everybody is able to participate and meet the course requirements. For example, if you get sick, we'll discuss your situation together, and we will find appropriate ways to make up any missed classes.

Grading Philosophy

I will provide you with extensive guidelines for each assignment during the semester. The graders will grade your work with the utmost care and respect, and in the most unbiased way possible. I believe that the grade you get is the grade you earn. I also believe that your final grade in the course should reflect an accurate assessment of the entire body of work you submit for the class. If something unexpected or tragic occurs with one assignment

(e.g. you do much worse on an assignment due to personal circumstances, you were unable to turn it in on time and received a 0, etc.), I will still evaluate the rest of your coursework to see what grade you deserve for the entire course – in other words, focus on the other assignments and show you deserve an A in the course in spite of one major slip-up. You will never receive a grade *lower* than what you earned by sheer point calculation, but you may receive a grade *higher* if your work proves it (e.g. improvement during the semester, exceptional final paper, etc.).

I review every grade submitted at the end of the course and will handle things like borderline grades, rounding, etc. based on the performance of your work as a whole. I even sometimes re-read your already graded work to see if you should be bumped up from a B+ to an A- if you are on the borderline. These are done for *every student*, regardless of whether you email me or not (to ensure a fair playing field for all my students).

Late Assignments and Extensions

All deadlines are indicated in this syllabus: please put them on your calendar and make sure to turn in your work on time. It's your responsibility to carefully check to make sure that your work is uploaded correctly on bCourses.

All work submitted after the deadline will receive a 5% deduction per 24 hours.

Extensions will only be given in extreme circumstances, with prior notification and appropriate documentation (such as a doctor's note) explaining the reason why the assignment cannot be turned in on time.

We are living in very difficult times, and many of us are struggling in lots of different ways. Let's check in with each other when necessary and take care of our community. I understand that life is messy and complicated, and unexpected circumstances may arise, but please reach out to the head GSI or come to office hours as soon as possible if this is the case. I really want to support you and I want you to succeed, but in order to do that you need to keep open communication with me. Feel free to reach out!

Regrade Policy

I believe grades are a bureaucratic convenience which provide little more than perverse incentives and needless stress. And evidence overwhelmingly shows they have little impact on social mobility in terms of careers and earnings. Yet [here we are](#). I have designed

thoughtful assignments to meet the University's grading requirements while helping you get the most out of the course material. They are not meant to be arbitrary or punitive. I intend for you to learn from them and not merely to get a good grade. That said, if you are unhappy with a grade and feel it needs to be reassessed, I will give you a fair review process.

If you would like to appeal a grade, please email me a brief statement (400 words or less) including:

1. A list of the deductions you received,
2. A summary of the Reader comments justifying these deductions,
3. Why you believe these deductions to be unjust.

In my review, I will make the final determination to either increase, decrease, or make no change to your initial grade.

You must submit your appeal within one week after the grade is posted; after this the grade becomes permanent and I will not consider any further appeals.

Please have sober judgment over your own work and really consider the instructor's perspective. Regardless of how much time or effort you put into the assignment, if it simply did not meet the requirements or if you did not adequately communicate your argument, you may still have gotten a lower grade.

Citations

All written work should include in-text citations and a complete bibliography using a citation style of your choice (ASA, APA, Chicago, MLA...). Missing or incomplete citations will be penalized.

Technology

Please don't hesitate to use a laptop or tablet to take notes in class. However, checking social media or messaging friends does not constitute "participation", and I will count you absent if I find you misusing your computer during class.

Technology use excludes phones — please keep your phones away during class.

Communication and Office Hours

Feel free to come into office hours for anything! Come to introduce yourself, to talk about your academic interests, or if there are any circumstances that are making your semester harder.

Please sign up at the link at the top of the syllabus if you know in advance that you'd like to come in.

If office hours are full or you cannot make the times, you may email me to set up another time. If you have a very short question, you can try to drop by and sneak in before/after a student for a quick question (as not every student will use the entire 20 minutes they signed up for) – but be prepared to wait patiently as well.

Please expect a 48 hour turnaround for emails – this means you should not put off questions until the last minute. While I am happy to respond to specific and minor questions over email, it is more helpful to discuss substantive issues in person during office hours. Make sure to check your berkeley.edu email address for all course-related correspondence throughout the semester.

Academic Accommodations

If you need support, I am happy to help you find the right campus resource who can help, without needing to disclose private personal information to me.

The purpose of academic accommodations is to ensure that all students have a fair chance at academic success. Disability, or hardships such as basic needs insecurity, uncertain documentation and immigration status, medical and mental health concerns, pregnancy and parenting, significant familial distress, and experiencing sexual violence or harassment, can affect a student's ability to satisfy particular course requirements. Students have the right to reasonable academic accommodations, without having to disclose personal information to instructors. For more information about accommodations, scheduling conflicts related to religious creed or extracurricular activities, please see the Academic Accommodations hub website: [Berkeley Support Portal](#).

Feel free to come and talk to me any time about any issues regarding accommodations about assignments, deadlines, attendance, and anything related to our course.

Student Learning Center

The [Student Learning Center](#) offers academic support in different fields, including social sciences and writing: “The Student Learning Center supports a global community of learners as they navigate the cultural expectations and academic rigor of UC Berkeley. Through service models that honor their diverse starting points and meet them where they are, we aim to empower all students to realize their full academic potential and aspirations.”

If you would like more support with your writing, there are resources on campus to help in writing your papers.

1. Check out the Student Learning Center and their programs: [Writing | Student Learning Center](#)
2. Look on the bCourses website for our class. I will post some resources in a folder labeled “Writing Resources.” These are some rather thorough guides written specifically by and for the Sociology department.

Mental Health, Wellness, and Care

All students — regardless of background or identity — may experience a range of issues that can become barriers to learning. These issues include, but are not limited to, strained relationships, anxiety, depression, alcohol and other drug problems, difficulties with concentration, sleep, and eating, and/or lack of motivation. Such mental health concerns can diminish both academic performance and the capacity to participate in daily activities. In the event that you need mental health support, or are concerned about a friend, UC Berkeley offers many services, such as free short-term counseling at University Health Services.

[CAPS](#) is an excellent resource on campus: “UHS Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) supports the emotional, psychological, educational, social and cultural development of all UC Berkeley students through a wide range of multiculturally based counseling, psychiatric, career, consultation, training and educational services.”

If you find you are struggling, please feel free to come talk to me. I’m not a mental health professional, but I can always listen to you and direct you to the resources available on campus, and support you as best as I can. Please do not wait until you are suffering to reach out, although you can certainly do so even at that point.

Another campus website which has links to many resources is [recalibrate](#). I will add more resources for mental health and wellbeing on bCourses over the course of the semester.

Remember that seeking help is a good and courageous thing to do – both for yourself and for those who care about you.

Disabled Students' Program

If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you can work with the [Disabled Students' Program \(DSP\)](#) to request an official accommodation. DSP is the campus office responsible for authorizing disability-related academic accommodations, in cooperation with the students themselves and their instructors. You can find more information about DSP, including contact information and the application process at dsp.berkeley.edu. If you have already been approved for accommodations through DSP, please meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.

To ask for an extension or accommodation using your DSP letter, you must first be sure that your DSP letter allows for the accommodation you are requesting. If you are asking for an extension, please suggest a reasonable due date (allowed by your letter) to turn in the assignment.

Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Services

To learn more about how to support survivors, or how to file a report and receive support services, start here: <https://svsh.berkeley.edu/>. Please note that I am not a confidential advocate; I am a Responsible Employee, which means that if you tell me about sexual violence or sexual harassment that you or another student experienced, I need to share that information with the [Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination](#). There are [confidential resources](#) I can connect you with.

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](#). You may be eligible for money to buy groceries via [Calfresh](#). If you are in need of food immediately, please contact our [UC Berkeley Food Pantry](#).

Undocumented Students Support

The [Undocumented Student Program](#) is a great resource here on campus: “UC Berkeley’s Undocumented Student Program (USP) – a component of the Centers for Educational

Equity and Excellence — provides guidance and support to undocumented undergraduates at Cal. USP practices a holistic, multicultural and solution-focused approach that delivers individualized service for each student. The mental health support, academic counseling, legal support, financial aid resources and extensive campus referral network provided by USP helps students develop the unique gifts and talents they each bring to the university, while empowering a sense of belonging. The program's mission is to support the advancement of undocumented students within higher education and promote pathways for engaged scholarship.”

Technology and Internet Support

Please check the [Student Technology Services](#) page for the latest information on university-provided support.

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism

You are a member of an academic community at one of the world's leading research universities. Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor. In all of your assignments, including your homework or drafts of papers, you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution.

If you are not clear about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or examination, be sure to seek clarification from your instructor beforehand.

Finally, you should keep in mind that as a member of the campus community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors and will be evaluated on your own merits. According to each specific case, the consequences of cheating and academic dishonesty may include failing an assignment, failing a course, or a formal discipline file.

The [Code of Student Conduct](#) defines plagiarism as follows:

“A. Cheating. Cheating includes fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment, or using or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials that are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question.

B. Plagiarism. Plagiarism includes use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism also includes self-plagiarism.

C. False Information and Representation and Fabrication or Alteration of Information. Furnishing false information, failing to identify oneself honestly, fabricating or altering information and presenting it as legitimate, or providing false or misleading information to an instructor or any other University official in an academic context.

D. Theft or Damage of Intellectual Property. Sabotaging or stealing another person's work, improper access to or electronically interfering with the property of another person or the University, or obtaining or distributing a copy of an exam or assignment without the permission of the instructor.

E. Alteration of University Documents. Forgery of an instructor's signature, submitting an altered transcript of grades to or from another institution or employer, putting one's name on another individual's work, or falsely altering a previously graded exam or assignment."

The [Center for Student Conduct](#) "contributes to the holistic development of students by administering the Code of Student Conduct through equitable practices that promote education, foster a sense of accountability, and encourage community responsibility and mutual respect."

Please familiarize yourself with what plagiarism is, with [the university policies on cheating and plagiarism](#), and their consequences. I encourage you to ask me questions — in class or in office hours — if you are not sure about what constitutes plagiarism.

Chat GPT and Generative AI Software

The use of these generative AI tools for brainstorming ideas, exploring possible responses to questions or problems, and creative engagement with the materials may be useful for you as you craft responses to class assignments. While there is no substitute for working directly with your instructor and with your classmates, the potential for generative AI tools to provide feedback, assistive technology, and language assistance is clearly developing.

For the use of AI tools, please refer to the following guidelines: **the use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:**

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas

- Fine tuning your research questions
- Finding information on a specific topic or theory
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts
- Checking grammar and style.

The use of generative AI tools is NOT permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Writing a draft of a writing assignment (including weekly comments and responses)
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content).

Any assignment that is found to have used generative AI tools in unauthorized ways will be treated as plagiarism.

Please feel free to reach out to me well in advance of the due date of assignments for which you may be using generative AI tools and I will be happy to discuss what is acceptable.

Guidelines adapted from the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#), UT Austin, and the [Center for the Advancement of Teaching](#), Temple University.

Feedback

I value your feedback on our course and I aim to create a respectful, productive, and comfortable learning environment. If you'd like to share any feedback you might have about our course, feel free to come talk to me in office hours any time during the semester. Thank you!

Friendly Reminders

- **Complete and think thoughtfully about all readings prior to class.**
- **Submit your work on time.**
- **Ask questions when you do not understand.** Some of the texts we read are difficult. There will be things we each find confusing or perplexing every week. It is important that you take the initiative to work through that puzzlement. I'm happy to support you to better understand all the materials from our course!

- **Keep open communication.** If some problem is affecting your performance in the course, please get in touch with me. I am eager to help everyone do as well as possible in, and get to the most out of the course.

Remember: we are all responsible for creating a learning environment that is welcoming, inclusive, equitable, and respectful. The expectation in this class is that we all live up to this responsibility, even during vigorous debate or disagreement.