The University of Western Ontario

SOCIOLOGY 3301G - 001
The Internet and Society
Winter 2024

Instructor: Dr. Lyn Hoang (lhoang3@uwo.ca)

Teaching Assistant: TBD

This is a DRAFT only. Please see the course site for the final version.

Course Description: This course will investigate various internet platforms and the social implications these have for our understanding of social phenomena, such as friendship, work, and privacy. The aim is to not only have a good understanding of Internet theories, but also of the methodological challenges inherent in studies of the sociodigital**.**

Prerequisite(s): Registration in third year or above.

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Anti-requisite(s): None

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

1. Contextualize the role of the Internet on society and its impacts.
2. Examine different theoretical approaches for understanding the effects of the Internet on society.
3. Assess methodological challenges inherent to studies of the socio-digital.
4. Apply key concepts, ideas, and theoretical approaches to the study of the Internet and social life.

Course Material:

*   ***Required Text(s):*** "Digital Media and Society" by Simon Lindgren (1st or 2nd edition). SAGE Publications LTD.
    *   Print and digital text available through Campus Bookstore at Western.
        https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2022B&courses%5B0%5D=001_UW/SOC3301G
    *   Another resource for digital text: https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/digital-media-and-society-simon-lindgren-v9781529787078

Draft Copy

- **Additional**: Weekly readings and video/audio materials will be posted on OWL in the corresponding "Lessons" tab

Note: Students are expected to do the weekly readings as these will be the basis for class discussions, assignments, and evaluations. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to engage with any additional/suggested material as these will help to contextualize class discussions and provide further examples.

Communication:

- **How to contact me**: The best way to reach me is through email: lhoang3@uwo.ca. Emails will be monitored daily; students will typically receive a response in 24 – 72 hours. Please note: Messages to me sent via OWL "messages" tool or discussion forum may not receive timely responses.
- **Before contacting me:** Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site on a regular basis for announcements pertaining to the course or other updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the course. Make sure to check announcements or syllabus before emailing me a question.

Technical Support:

- If you are experiencing problems with OWL, please contact the WTS Help Desk at (519) 661-3800. For hours and additional contact information please visit www.uwo.ca/wts/helpdesk/.
- Troubleshooting and help information is available for students: https://owlhelp.uwo.ca/

Method of Evaluation:

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course. The use of ChatGPT, OpenAI or any other AI software is **NOT PERMITTED** within this course. Assignments and/or exams with suspected use of AI software will result in an automatic failure.

Evaluation Breakdown:

Description	Weight	Due Date
Lecture Attendance + Participation	20%	Weekly
Midterm	35%	March 11 2024
Paper Proposal	10%	Feb 12, 2024
Final Paper (social media content/netnography)	35%	Mar 25, 2024
	100%	

Lecture Attendance + Class participation (20% of total grade): Attendance is expected. Students may miss **one** lecture without valid medical or other documentation. If you cannot attend a class due to illness or other reasons, please inform Dr. Hoang ahead of time. For any additional missed lectures, students will need to receive accommodation from academic counselling. Students are expected to proactively participate in class discussions. Class participation will be measured through an assessment of the *quality* of your contribution in addition to your preparedness based on reading course material, raising interesting questions, applying key concepts, engaging with your peers. Class participation is **NOT** solely based on a quantitative measurement of your contributions (e.g., how much or often you talk).

Note: An alternative participation method will be available for students uncomfortable speaking publicly in class. Students MUST reach out to Dr. Hoang by the end of the second week of the term to request information and approval for this alternative method.

Midterm (35% of your final grade): There will be one written examination for this course – a midterm. The midterm will be written in class. The midterm will be multiple choice and long/short answer format. Students will have 3 hours to complete the examination.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Paper Proposal (10% of your final grade): Students will work individually to provide a proposal for their final paper content analysis/netography of their social media account. The proposal will provide a brief synopsis of the research problem, outline their research question and methodological strategy. Students will write a 2 – 3 page paper (double-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman, 1 inch margins). More instructions will be distributed on OWL.

Late assignments will be docked at 5% per day (not including weekends). Assignments will not be accepted after 5 days late.

Final Paper (35% of your final grade): Students will work individually to conduct a content analysis or netnography analysis of their social media account. Students will design a research question, engage the methodological strategy to collect their virtual qualitative data, and then apply relevant sociological concepts/theories pertaining to internet and digital society to address their research questions. Students will write a 9 – 12 page paper (double-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman, 1 inch margins). More instructions will be distributed on OWL.

A digital copy of the paper will be submitted online to Turnitin.com to check for plagiarism.

Late assignments will be docked at 5% per day (not including weekends). Assignments will not be accepted after 5 days late.

Student Absences:

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

Assessments worth less than 10% of the overall course grade:

For missed class attendance or participation, the instructor will allow **one** absence without documentation or referral to academic counselling (e.g., students *must* attend at least ten of eleven lectures). Students who miss more than one lecture must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible. Those who receive accommodation for additional missed lectures/participation will have their attendance/participation grade reweighted. Note that for assignments that are worth 10% and more, documentation (medical or otherwise) is required, it can *only* be collected by the student's Dean's Office Academic Counselling unit.

Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. Course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

Absences from Final Examinations: Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible. Academic Counselling will determine eligibility to write a Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam). You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a "Multiple Exam Situation" (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

Note: Missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above.

Academic Policies:

Please review the Department of Sociology "Important Academic Policies" document https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf for additional information regarding:

- Scholastic Offences
- Plagiarism

- Copyright
- Academic Accommodation
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health

2023-2024

Course Schedule and Materials: (DRAFT – Readings Amenable to Change)

Week	Topics	Readings and Resources
1 – Jan 8	What is digital sociology and the digital society	Chapter 1 – Digital Society Fussey, Pete, and Silke Roth, 2020, "Digitizing Sociology: Continuity and Change in the Internet Era." Sociology 54, no. 4: 659–74.
2 – Jan 15	Socio-digital theories	Chapter 3 – Beyond Optimism and Pessimism Ging, D. 2019. Alphas, betas, and incels: Theorizing the masculities of the Manosphere, *Men and Masculinities, 22*(4):638-657.
3 – Jan 22	Digital divide and inequalities online	Chapter 5 – Community and Networks Haight, M., Quan-Haase, A., Corbett, B.A. 2014. Revisiting the digital divide in Canada: the impact of demographic factors on access to the internet, level of online activity, and social networking site usage. *Information, Communication and Society, 17*(4): 503-519. Dodel, M. 2021. Chapter 27 – Socioeconomic inequalities and digital skills (pp. 548-566) in D.A. Rohlinger & S.Sobieraj (Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Digital Media Sociology*. Oxford University Press.
4 – Jan 29	Digital research methods	Chapters 13 -Researching Digital Society
5 – Feb 5	Digital culture, social media, and online interactions	Chapter 2 – Social Media Platforms Chapter 6 – Visuality and Visibility Rettie, Ruth. 2009. "Mobile phone communication: Extending Goffman to mediated interaction." Sociology 43(3): 421-438
6 - Feb 12	Digital identity, body, and emotion	Chapter 4 – Interaction and Identity Chapter 7 – Emotions and Affect Ortiz, S.M. 2021. Chapter 26 – Masculinity, everyday racism, gaming (pp.528-547) in D.A. Rohlinger & S.Sobieraj (Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Digital Media Sociology*. Oxford University Press.
7 - Feb 19		**NO CLASS – READING WEEK**
8 - Feb 26	Online Perils: cyberbullying, deviance, and crime	Marwick, A., & danah boyd. 2014. 'It's just drama': teen perspectives on conflict and aggression in a networked era. *Journal of Youth studies, 17*(9): 1187-1204. Sheanoda, V., Bussey, K., & Jones, T. (2021). Sexuality, gender and culturally diverse interpretations of cyberbullying. *New media and society,* 1-18. O'Malley, R.L., Holt, K., Holt, T.J. (2020). An exploration of the involuntary celibate (incel) subculture online. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 37*(7-8).
9 - Mar 4	Platform economy and digital labour	Woodcock, Jamie. 2020. "Technology, Labor, and the Gig Economy" (pp.178-194) in D.A. Rohlinger & S.Sobieraj (Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Digital Media Sociology*. Oxford University Press. Hoang et al., 2020. The winners and the losers of the platform economy: who participates? Bishop, S., & Duffy, B.E. 2021. Chapter 21 – The feminization of social media labor (pp. 469-489) in D.A. Rohlinger & S.Sobieraj (Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Digital Media Sociology*. Oxford University Press.

10 - Mar 11	MIDTERM	
11 - Mar 18	Digital power, exploitation, and and cancel culture	Chapter 9 – Power and Exploitation Velasco, J.C. 2020. You are cancelled: Virtual collective consciousness and the emergence of cancel culture as ideological purging. *Special conference issue.*
12 - Mar 25	Digital activism, slacktivism	Chapter 10 – Activism and Mobilization Beyer, J.L. 2021. Chapter 21: Trolls and Hacktivists: Political mobilization from online communities (pp. 417-442) in D.A. Rohlinger & S.Sobieraj (Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Digital Media Sociology*. Oxford University Press. Quan-Haase, A. & Mendes, K. 2021. Mapping #MeToo: A synthesis review of digital feminist research across social media platforms.
13 - Apr 1	Fake news and Mis(Dis)information	Dale, T. "Chapter 8 – the fundamental roles of technology in the spread of fake news". Duffy, A., Tandoc, E., & Ling, R. (2020). Too good to be true, too good not to share: the social utility of fake news. *Information, Communication & Society, 23*(13): 1965-1979. Seo et al., 2021. Vulnerable populations and misinformation: A mixed-methods approach to underserved older adults' online information assessment. *New media and society, 23*(7): 2012-2033.
14 – Apr 8	No Class	No Class
END OF TERM		

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