



**Western**  
UNIVERSITY · CANADA

The University of Western Ontario

## SOCIOLOGY 3301G - 001

The Internet and Society

Winter 2023

Tuesdays, 1:30pm-4:30pm

UC 2110

**Instructor:** Dr. Lyn Hoang ([lhoang3@uwo.ca](mailto:lhoang3@uwo.ca) ; Office: SSC 5209)

**Office Hours:** In-person: Tuesdays 12:30pm - 1:20pm OR Zoom: By appointment

**Teaching Assistant:** Billy Hollingshead ([whollin@uwo.ca](mailto:whollin@uwo.ca) Office: SSC 5434)

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**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 be 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 (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](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>
- **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](mailto: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/](http://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.

**Evaluation Breakdown:**

Description	Weight	Due Date
Lecture Attendance + Participation	20%	Weekly
Midterm	35%	March 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2023
Paper Proposal	10%	February 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2023
Final Paper (social media content/network analysis)	35%	March 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2023
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100%		

**Evaluation Details:**

**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 Professor 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).

**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.

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.

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/network analysis 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 network 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.

### **Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning:**

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

### **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. If accommodation is supported by Academic Counselling, the instructor will provide opportunities for an extension or make-up opportunity (for assignments and midterm).

**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. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty of Social Science Academic Counselling Office.

### **Important Policies**

**Academic Consideration for Missed Work:** Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation in order to receive accommodation for missed work worth 10% or more of the final grade in the course. All required documentation for absences must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty. Individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds or for other reasons.

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf). The student medical certificate is available at [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

**Religious Accommodation:** When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and the Academic Counselling office of

their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at <https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

**Accessibility Options:** Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD [http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html)), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website: [www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/examinations/accommodated\\_exams.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/examinations/accommodated_exams.html)

**Scholastic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

**A Note on Plagiarism:** Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

**Plagiarism Checking:** All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

**Mental Health:** Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western ([www.uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html)) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Please visit the Social Science Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters: [Academic Counselling - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#).

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at [https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

**Course Schedule and Materials: (DRAFT – Amenable to change)**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings and Resources</b>
1 – Jan 10, 2023	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.” <i>Sociology</i> 54, no. 4: 659–74.
2 – Jan 17, 2023	Socio-digital theories	Chapter 3 – Beyond Optimism and Pessimism Ging, D. 2019. Alphas, betas, and incels: Theorizing the masculinities of the Manosphere, <i>Men and Masculinities</i> , 22(4):638-657.
3 – Jan 24, 2023	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. <i>Information, Communication and Society</i> , 17(4): 503-519. Dodel, M. 2021. Chapter 27 – Socioeconomic inequalities and digital skills (pp. 548-566) in D.A. Rohlinger & S.Sobieraj (Eds.). <i>The Oxford Handbook of Digital Media Sociology</i> . Oxford University Press.
4 – Jan 31, 2023	Digital research methods	Chapters 13 -Researching Digital Society
5 – Feb 7, 2023	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." <i>Sociology</i> 43(3): 421-438
6 - Feb 14, 2023	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.). <i>The Oxford Handbook of Digital Media Sociology</i> . Oxford University Press.
7 - Feb 21, 2023	<b>NO CLASS – READING WEEK</b>	
8 - Feb 28, 2023	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. <i>Journal of Youth studies</i> , 17(9): 1187-1204. Sheanoda, V., Bussey, K., & Jones, T. (2021). Sexuality, gender and culturally diverse interpretations of cyberbullying. <i>New media and society</i> , 1-18. O’Malley, R.L., Holt, K., Holt, T.J. (2020). An exploration of the involuntary celibate (incel) subculture online. <i>Journal of Interpersonal Violence</i> , 37(7-8).
9 - Mar 7, 2023	<b>MIDTERM</b>	
10 - Mar 14, 2023	Digital power, exploitation, 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. <i>Special conference issue</i> .

11 - Mar 21, 2023	Platform economy and digital labour	Woodcock, Jamie. 2020. "Technology, Labor, and the Gig Economy" (pp.178-194) in D.A. Rohlinger & S.Sobieraj (Eds.). <i>The Oxford Handbook of Digital Media Sociology</i> . 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.). <i>The Oxford Handbook of Digital Media Sociology</i> . Oxford University Press.
12 - Mar 28, 2023	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.). <i>The Oxford Handbook of Digital Media Sociology</i> . Oxford University Press. Quan-Haase, A. & Mendes, K. 2021. Mapping #MeToo: A synthesis review of digital feminist research across social media platforms.
13 - Apr 4, 2023	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. <i>Information, Communication &amp; Society</i> , 23(13): 1965-1979. Seo et al., 2021. Vulnerable populations and misinformation: A mixed-methods approach to underserved older adults' online information assessment. <i>New media and society</i> , 23(7): 2012-2033.
<b>END OF TERM</b>		

**Other important dates:**

Monday January 9, 2023: Winter Term classes begin.

January 17, 2023: Last day to add a second-term half course.

February 18-26, 2023: Spring Reading Week. Family Day April 20.

March 7, 2023: Last day to drop a second-term half course without academic penalty.

Friday April 7, 2023: Good Friday. No classes.

Monday April 10, 2023: Winter Term classes end.

April 13-30, 2023: Final examination period.

No exams or tests can be scheduled in the last 3 weeks of the course: Monday March 20th - Friday April 7<sup>th</sup>.

At least 15% of final grade must be provided to students by end of day Friday March 3rd (3 days before deadline to drop a course) in 1000 and 2000 level courses only.

Department Makeup exams:

- Midterm; Friday March 10 12:00-3:00pm Location TBA
- Final: Monday May 1<sup>st</sup> 12:00-3:00pm Location TBA