The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 3301F - 001
The Internet and Society
Fall 2024 in-person

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

Office Hours: TBD
Department of Sociology

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 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 (1st or 2nd edition). SAGE Publications LTD.
  - **NOTE:** reading list will be using chapter/page numbers corresponding to edition 2. If you purchase edition 1 – page numbers or chapter names may be different however, content will mostly be the same.
  - Digital text available through Campus Bookstore at Western. https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2022B&courses%5B0%5D=001_UW/SOC3301G

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- o Another resource for digital text: https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/digital-media-and-society-simon-lindgren-v9781529787078
- **Additional**: Weekly readings will be posted on Brightspace in the corresponding Lecture

Students are expected to do the lesson 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:

- **Before contacting me:** Students are responsible for checking the course Brightspace site (https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/login) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. Make sure to check announcements or syllabus before emailing me a question.
- **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 within 48 – 72 hours (there may be delays in response times during long weekend holidays). Messages sent via Brightspace discussion forum may not receive timely responses as they are not monitored daily.

Method of Evaluation: The evaluation methods described below are essential requirements for the course. The use of ChatGPT, OpenAI or any other AI software is **NOT PERMITTED** within this course. Any assignment, and/or exam submission with suspected use of AI software will result in an **automatic failure** and will be escalated to the Department Chair for further investigation of possible scholastic offense. **Do NOT use AI in this course, it is NOT worth it.**

Evaluation Breakdown:

Description	Weight	Due Date
Lecture Attendance + Participation	20%	Weekly
TEST	35%	Nov 11 2024 (in-class)
Paper Proposal	10%	Oct 9 2024 @ 11:59pm (72-hour grace window – Final submission Oct 12 @ 11:59pm)
Final Paper (social media content/netnography)	35%	Nov 27 2024 @ 11:59pm (72-hour grace window – Final submission Nov 30 2024 @ 11:59pm)
	100%	

Evaluation Details:

Lecture Attendance + Class participation (20% of total grade): Attendance is expected and will be taken for every class. There are eleven classes, but the first class and the test class will not be counted towards your attendance/participation grade. Thus, there are **NINE** classes where attendance/participation will be determined. Students are permitted to miss **ONE** of these nine classes without supporting documentation. For any additional missed lectures, students will receive a grade of zero for that class's attendance/participation. Please note, because not all elements of this assessment are required in the calculation of the final course grade, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for any additional missed classes. Students are also 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 classes to request information and approval for this alternative method.

Test (35% of your final grade): There will be <u>one</u> written examination for this course. The test will be written in class. The test 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.

Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course, per term as requiring supporting documentation to receive academic consideration. For this course the following assessment: Test on November 11th 2024 (in class) has been designated as requiring supporting documentation: **You will not be eligible to write a make-up for this missed test UNLESS you receive academic consideration from your home faculty academic counsellor.**

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 Brightspace.

Flexible submission window - Students are expected to submit the assignment by the deadline listed above. Should illness or extenuating circumstances arise, students are permitted to submit their assignment up to 72 hours past the deadline without academic penalty. Should students submit their assessment beyond 72 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 5% per day will be subtracted from the

assessed grade. Assignments will not be accepted after 2 days past the 72-hour submission window (e.g., 5 days from original due date). **Please note that because the submission deadline for this assessment already includes flexibility in the form of 72-hour submission window, requests for academic consideration will not be granted.**

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 Brightspace.

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

Flexible submission window - Students are expected to submit the assignment by the deadline listed. Should illness or extenuating circumstances arise, students are permitted to submit their assignment up to 72 hours past the deadline without academic penalty. Should students submit their assessment beyond 72 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 5% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade. Assignments will not be accepted after 2 days past the 72-hour submission window (e.g., 5 days from original due date). **Please note that because the submission deadline for this assessment already includes flexibility in the form of 72-hour submission window, requests for academic consideration will not be granted.**

<u>**Student Absences:**</u>

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

University policy on academic considerations are described here. This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations, and information about submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found here. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline."

Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](Policy). Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically schedule during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per

course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described elsewhere in this document. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor of this course, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

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.

Artificial Intelligence:

All assignments for this course must be completed independently, without the aid of artificial intelligence (AI). Any suspected use of AI will result in automatic zero for the assignment and the matter will be escalated to the department chair for investigation of possible scholastic offence.

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
- Course Selection
- Absence from Course Commitments
- Missed Tests and Exams
- Religious Accommodations
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health
- Gender-Based and Sexual Violence statement

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

Week	Topics	Readings and Resources
1 – Sept 9	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 – Sept 16	Socio-digital theories	Chapter 3 – Beyond Optimism and Pessimism Ging, D. 2019. Alphas, betas, and incels: Theorizing the masculinities of the Manosphere, *Men and Masculinities, 22*(4):638-657.
3 – Sept 23	Digital research methods	Chapters 13 -Researching Digital Society
4 – Sept 30		**NO CLASS – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**
5 – Oct 7	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.
6 - Oct 14		**NO CLASS – READING WEEK**
7 – Oct 21	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
8 – Oct 28	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.
9 – Nov 4	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).
10 – Nov 11		**TEST**
11 – Nov 18	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.
12 – Nov 25	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.*
13 – Dec 2	Digital activism, slacktivism + Fake news and Mis(Dis)inform ation	Chapter 10 – Activism and Mobilization Quan-Haase, A. & Mendes, K. 2021. Mapping #MeToo: A synthesis review of digital feminist research across social media platforms. 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.
END OF TERM		

2024-2025