

**SI710/COMM840:
Social Media Studies: Theory & Research
Winter, 2015**

Schedule: Class meets Mondays, 4pm-7pm

Location: 1265 NQ

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Office Hours: 1:30-2:30 Mondays and Wednesdays, and by appointment

Course Description

This course will introduce graduate students to relevant theories and scholarship examining the social, psychological, and interpersonal aspects of social media use, using relevant theories in fields such as communication, social psychology, and sociology. We will be reading both classic and new research in this area. Topics include: computer-mediated communication theory; self-presentation and online identity; social capital; interpersonal relationship initiation, maintenance, and dissolution; and psychological implications of social media use. The course will be structured as a discussion-focused learning experience.

Course goals

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an overview of critical concepts for understanding the ways in which social technologies – especially but not limited to social media – reshape social interactions, and the implications of this for relationship development, self-presentation, the structure of social networks, and other important processes. The reading list covers both foundational work and state of the art scholarship in this vibrant and emerging arena of scholarship. This course will focus on relevant theoretical frameworks and tracing the history of CMC scholarship from the mid-1980s to today.

Reading

There is a fair amount of reading included in this course, which you will need to engage with in order to contribute to class discussions. That said, it's acceptable to skim periodically if you are certain a particular article is not going to be particularly useful for your research focus. But I hope will not be the case. And it will be apparent when it is.

Also, note that a fair number of "in press" articles and manuscripts are included in the syllabus. If these are draft documents, professional courtesy demands that you not share these files and that you contact the author for permission to cite or quote; they may have a more recent draft.

Unless otherwise noted, all readings are in CTools. If you can't find or are having trouble with a file, please let me know immediately so I can fix it. The two books you may wish to purchase are:

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor. (Used copies available on Amazon at low cost. May be found online as well.)

boyd, d. (2014). *It's complicated: The social lives of networked teens*. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Also here: <http://www.danah.org/books/ItsComplicated.pdf>)

Weekly Responses (20%)

Each week's readings share a focus, which will vary week to week. Throughout the semester you should upload six (6) one to two-page reaction papers to cTools. (You should do this for the weeks you find most relevant to your own research and most interesting.) In your paper, you will respond to the readings, addressing questions such as: What did you find particularly interesting, counter-intuitive, or troubling about this work? What research question(s), methods, or future research was suggested by the readings in your opinion? What alternative explanations should the author(s) have considered? How does this work speak (or ignore) other work we've discussed this semester? What concepts are particularly useful for your own project? There is not a standard structure for these papers. You should use them as a platform for working through and synthesizing your thoughts about the readings and topic area, and we may organize class discussions around the ideas you raise. I am NOT looking for a summary of the readings or for you to "prove" that you have done the reading – that is my assumption. I am looking for reactions, responses, and ideas sparked by the readings. This is an exercise designed to encourage intellectual engagement, not a strategy to confirm who has done the readings.

Although it is not required, I encourage you to find one article or chapter that extends, contradicts, complements, or offers insight into the topic and readings of that week. In your reaction paper, you could describe briefly why you chose your article and how it relates to the topic at hand.

These response papers should be posted to cTools no later than Sunday at noon and ideally earlier than that. Note that you are responsible for reading through your peers' contributions before class on Monday.

Participation: 15%

You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings and the ideas they represent in thoughtful ways. Note that, as with most communication, quality counts more than quantity. Dominating class discussions or saying something just to hit a participation metric is not the goal here; providing insights, building on others' ideas, respectfully disagreeing, and contributing to the discussion in meaningful ways is.

"Black Mirror" Short paper (15%)

Black Mirror is a British TV series that is now available on Netflix. It addresses many issues salient to social media scholars and which we will discuss in class throughout the semester. Please select an episode and write a short (2-3 page) paper drawing together themes from the episode and scholarship on the topic you choose. Group work (max group size: 3) is allowed, though group projects must reflect the substantive work of all parties and the length of the paper is expected to be longer (i.e., roughly twice as long for two-person teams). This paper can take one of three forms:

1. A short literature review that builds to a specific research question and employs a relevant theory.
2. An analysis of a particular phenomenon explored in the episode. You will pretend that you are a researcher and the episode is your dataset. Using one of the theories or analytic lenses from class or your own research, analyze the practices, outcomes, and/or processes explored in the episode.
3. Your choice! Suggest a format that would be useful to you, and get it approved by me at least a week before the paper is due.

Research paper and Presentation: 50%

More information about the research paper and presentation will be provided at a later date. I am happy to work with you to find a topic and approach that supports your long-term research goals. The final paper should be approximately 15 pages.

On March 9, you will turn in a short description of your paper and present the idea to the class in order to receive feedback. This should include your idea/thesis and a rationale for why this topic is important to study. Group work (max group size: 3) is allowed, though group projects must reflect the substantive work of all parties and the length of the paper is expected to be longer. I do not recommend group work for first or second year students.

Reading Schedule

The readings may be adjusted. Any adjustments will be announced via cTools.

Week 1 (Jan. 12): Overview

Prep work for day one: BEFORE YOU DO THE READINGS, write a 1-page reaction paper that describes (1) your working definition of “social media” and (2) your response to the following question: “What are the most interesting and important research questions related to social media at this time (to you)?”

Ellison, N. B. & boyd, d. (2013). Sociality through Social Network Sites. In Dutton, W. H. (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 151-172.

Kane, G. C., Alavi, M., Labianca, G., Borgatti, S. P., & Center, L. (2014). What’s different about social media networks: A framework and research agenda. *MISQ*, 38(1), 274-304.

Carr, C. T., & Hayes, R. A. (2015). [Social media: Defining, developing, and divining](http://my.ilstu.edu/~ctcarr/research/CarrHayes_2015.pdf). *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 23. doi: 10.1080/15456870.2015.972282. Online: http://my.ilstu.edu/~ctcarr/research/CarrHayes_2015.pdf

Sturken, M. & Thomas, D. (2004). Introduction: Technological visions and the rhetoric of the new. In M. Sturken & D. Thomas (Eds.), *Technological vision: The hopes and fears that shape new technologies*. Available online: http://www.temple.edu/tempresstitles/1686_reg.html. [Skim the less relevant chapter-specific sections]

Note: if you haven’t read boyd & Ellison (2007), please do so before reading Ellison & boyd, 2014.

Week 2 (Jan. 26): Affordances

Treem, J., & Leonardi, P. (2012). Social media use in organizations: Exploring the affordances of visibility, editability, persistence, and association. *Communication Yearbook*, 36, 143-189.

Resnick, P. (2000) Beyond Bowling Together: SocioTechnical Capital. Chapter 29 in “*HCI in the New Millennium*,” edited by John M. Carroll (pp. 247-272). Addison-Wesley.

Ellison, N. B. & Vitak, J. (In press). Social Network Site Affordances and their Relationship to Social Capital Processes. In Sundar, S. (Ed.) *The Handbook of Psychology of Communication Technology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell. [NOTE: Proofs, so do not quote/share]

Hutchby, I. (2001). Technologies, texts and affordances. *Sociology*, 35(2), 441-456.

Week 3 (Feb. 2): Historical perspectives on mediated interactions

Kiesler, S., Siegel, J., & McGuire, T. W. (1984). Social psychological aspects of computer-mediated communication. *American Psychologist*, 39(10), 1123.

Daft, Lengel, & Trevino (1987). Message equivocality, media selection, and manager performance: Implications for information systems. *MIS Quarterly* 11 (3), 355-366.

Hollan, J., & Stornetta, S. (1992). *Beyond being there*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on human factors in computing systems. Online: http://pdf.aminer.org/000/088/670/beyond_being_there.pdf

Sutton, R. I., & Staw, B. M. (1995). What theory is not. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40, 371-384. doi:10.2307/2393788
(<http://www.butlercommonplace.org/thoughts/images/f/f5/SuttonandStaw1995.pdf>)

Recommended: Fulk, J. Schmitz, J., & Steinfield, C. W. (1990). A social influence model of technology use. In J. Fulk & C. Steinfield (Eds.), *Organizations and communication technology* (pp. 117-140). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Week 4 (Feb. 9): SIP, Hyperpersonal, & Warranting

Walther, J. B. (1996). Computer-mediated communication: Impersonal, interpersonal, and hyperpersonal interaction. *Communication Research*, 23, 3-43. doi: 10.1177/009365096023001001

Walther, J. B., Van Der Heide, B., Hamel, L., & Shulman, H. (2009). Self-generated versus other-generated statements and impressions in computer-mediated communication: A test of warranting theory using Facebook. *Communication Research*, 36, 229-253.

Walther, J. B., Heide, B. V. D., Artemio Ramirez, J., Burgoon, J. K., & Peña, J. (2015). Interpersonal and Hyperpersonal Dimensions of Computer-Mediated Communication. In S. Sundar (Ed.), *The Handbook of Psychology of Communication Technology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell. [NOTE: Proofs, so do not quote/share]

Walther, J. B. (2009). Theories, boundaries, and all of the above. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14(3), 748-752. doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01466.x

Recommended:

Walther, J. B., & Parks, M. R. (2002). Cues filtered out, cues filtered in: Computer-mediated communication and relationships. In M. L. Knapp & J. A. Daly (Eds.), *Handbook of Interpersonal Communication* (3rd ed., pp. 529-563). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Week 5 (Feb. 16) Networks & Social Capital

Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78, 1360-1380.

Granovetter, M. (1986). This week's citation classic.

Lin, N. (2001). *Social capital: A theory of social structure and action*. London: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 2)

Burke, M., & Kraut, R. (2013). *Using Facebook after losing a job: Differential benefits of strong and weak ties*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 2013 conference on Computer supported cooperative work.

Recommended:

Kramer et al., (2014). Let the Weakest Link Go! Empirical Explorations on the Relative Importance of Weak and Strong Ties on Social Networking Sites. *Societies*. Online: <http://www.mdpi.com/2075-4698/4/4/785/pdf>

Burke, M., Kraut, R., & Marlow, C. (2011, May 7-12). *Social capital on Facebook: Differentiating uses and users*. Paper presented at CHI, Vancouver, BC, Canada.

Week 6 (Feb. 23) : Self Presentation

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor Books. (Introduction, Ch. 1. Ch. 3)

Hogan, B. (2010). The Presentation of Self in the Age of Social Media: Distinguishing Performances and Exhibitions Online. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 30, 377-386. doi: 10.1177/0270467610385893

Vitak, J., & Kim, J. (2014). *You can't block people offline: examining how facebook's affordances shape the disclosure process*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 17th ACM conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW).

Baym, N. et al. (2012). Communication Theory and Research in the Age of New Media: A Conversation from the *CM Café*. *Communication Monographs* 79 (2), 256-267.

Recommended: Markham, A. N. (2013). The dramaturgy of digital experience. In C. Edgley (Ed.), *The drama of social life: A dramaturgical handbook* (pp. 279–294). Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.

Week 7 (Mar. 9): Self Presentation/Deception/Privacy
One-pager on paper idea due.

Hancock, J. T. & Guillory, J. (2015). Deception with Technology. In S. Sundar (Ed.), *The Handbook of Psychology of Communication Technology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell. [NOTE: Proofs, so do not quote/share]

Litt, E., & Hargittai, E. (2014). Smile, snap, and share? A nuanced approach to privacy and online photo-sharing. *Poetics*, 42, 1-21.

Bazarova, N. N., Taft, J. G., Choi, Y. H., & Cosley, D. (2012). Managing impressions and relationships on Facebook: Self-presentational and relational concerns revealed through the analysis of language style. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 32(2), 121–141.

DeAndrea, D. C. (2014). Advancing Warranting Theory. *Communication Theory*, 24(2), 186-204. doi: 10.1111/comt.12033

Recommended:

Joinson, A. N., & Paine, C. B. (2007). Self-disclosure, privacy and the Internet. *The Oxford handbook of Internet psychology*.

Van Gelder, L. (1985, October). The strange case of the electronic lover. *Ms. Magazine*. Rpt. in C. Dunlop & R. Kling (Eds.), *Computerization and controversy: Value conflicts and social choices* (pp. 364-375). Boston: Academic Press.

Week 8 (Mar 16) – Mobile Communication. Guest Instructor: Scott Campbell

Cumiskey, K. M., & Ling, R. (2015). The Social Psychology of Mobile Communication. In S. Sundar (Ed.), *The Handbook of Psychology of Communication Technology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell. [NOTE: Proofs, so do not quote/share]

Campbell, S. W. (2013). Mobile media and communication: A new field, or just a new journal? *Mobile Media & Communication*, 1(1), 8-13.

Campbell, S. W. (2015). Mobile communication and network privatism: A literature review of the implications for diverse, weak, and new ties. *Review of Communication Research*, 3(1), 1-21.

Campbell, S. W., Ling, R., & Bayer, J. (2014). The Structural Transformation of Mobile Communication: Implications for Self and Society. In Oliver, M. B. & Raney, A., (Eds.), *Media & Social Life*. New York: Routledge.

Week 9 (Mar. 23): Identity

Gonzales, A.L. & Hancock, J.T. (2008). Identity shift in computer-mediated environments. *Media Psychology*, 11, 167-185.

Ellison, N. B., Hancock, J. T. & Toma, C. L. (2012). Profile as Promise: A Framework for Conceptualizing Veracity in Online Dating Self-Presentations. *New Media & Society*, 14 (1), 45-62.

Yee, N., & Bailenson, J. (2007). The Proteus Effect: The effect of transformed self-representation on behavior. *Human Communication Research*, 33, 271-290. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2958.2007.00299.x

Valkenburg, P. M., & Peter, J. (2008). Adolescents' Identity Experiments on the Internet Consequences for Social Competence and Self-Concept Unity. *Communication Research*, 35(2), 208-231.

Recommended: Dibbell, J. (1993, December 23, 1993). A Rape in Cyberspace: How an Evil Clown, a Haitian Trickster Spirit, Two Wizards, and a Cast of Dozens Turned a Database Into a Society. *The Village Voice*.

Week 10 (Mar 30): More on Identity and Identity Signals
Black Mirror assignment due.

Toma, C. L., & Hancock, J. T. (2013). Self-affirmation underlies Facebook use. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 39(3), 321-331.

Kang, R., Brown, S. & Kiesler, S. (2013), Why Do People Seek Anonymity on the Internet? Informing Policy and Design. Paper to be presented at CHI. Online:
<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~kiesler/publications/2013/why-people-seek-anonymity-internet-policy-design.pdf>

Leavitt, A. (In press). "This is a Throwaway Account": Temporary Technical Identities and Perceptions of Anonymity in a Massive Online Community. Online:
http://alexleavitt.com/papers/2015_CHI_Leavitt_ThisIsAThrowawayAccount_AnonymityReddit.pdf

Heinderyckx, F. (2014). Reclaiming the High Ground in the Age of Onlinement. *Journal of Communication* 64, 999–1014.

Recommended: Bernstein et al. (2011), 4chan and /b/: An Analysis of Anonymity and Ephemerality in a Large Online Community. Online:
<http://projects.csail.mit.edu/chanthropology/4chan.pdf>

Week 11 (April 4) Online/Offline/Proximity

Wellman, B., Quan-Haase, A., Boase, J., Chen, W., Hampton, K., Díaz, I. & Miyata, K. (2003). The social affordances of the Internet for networked individualism. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 8(3). Online:
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2003.tb00216.x/full>

Ellison, N.B., Steinfield, C. & Lampe, C. (2011). Connection strategies: Social capital implications of Facebook-enabled communication practices. *New Media & Society* 13 (6).

Olson, G. M., & Olson, J. S. (2000). Distance matters. *Human Computer Interaction*, 15,139-178. doi:10.1207/S15327051HCI1523_4

Ramirez, A., Sumner, E. M. B., Fleuriet, C., & Cole, M. (2014). When online partners meet offline: The effect of modality switching on relational communication between online daters. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. doi:10.1111/jcc4.12101

Recommended:

Ledbetter, A. M. (2015). Media multiplexity theory: Technology use and interpersonal tie strength. In D. O. Braithwaite & P. Schrodt (Eds.), *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication: Multiple perspectives* (2nd ed.; pp. 363-376). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Week 12 (April 13): Adolescents & Social Media

boyd, d. (2014). It's complicated. <http://www.danah.org/itscomplicated/> (selected chapters)

Valkenburg, P. M., & Peter, J. (2009). Social consequences of the internet for adolescents a decade of research. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*,18(1), 1-5.

Week 13 (April 20): New Directions

Treem, J. W., Dailey, S., Pierce, C., & Leonardi, P. (In Press). Bringing technological frames to work: How previous experience with social media shapes the technology's meaning in an organization. *Journal of Communication*.

Eslami et al. (In press). "I always assumed that I wasn't really that close to [her]": Reasoning about invisible algorithms in the news feed." Paper to be presented at CHI.

Ellison, N., Gray, R., Lampe, C. & Fiore, A. (2013). Social capital and resource requests on Facebook. *New Media & Society*.

For your 4th paper, read one of the following:

- Sheldon, K. M., Abad, N., & Hinsch, C. (2011). A two-process view of Facebook use and relatedness need-satisfaction: disconnection drives use, and connection rewards it. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 100(4):766-75. doi: 10.1037/a0022407.
- Johnson, B. K., & Knobloch-Westerwick, S. (2014). Glancing up or down: Mood management and selective social comparisons on social networking sites. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 41, 33-39.
- Bernstein, M. S., Bakshy, E., Burke, M., & Karrer, B. (2013). *Quantifying the invisible audience in social networks*. Paper presented at CHI.

Final exam period (April 28, 8-10am): Presentations

Final paper due. [We may find another time to meet if everyone agrees.]