

L A K E H E A D U N I V E R S I T Y

Soci-2112-FDE 2020

friendship@facebook.com:

Social Media, the Individual, and Community

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COURSE OUTLINE

This course of study examines the nature and consequences of new forms of social media and social networking. The course undertakes a critical examination of the impact that new types of digitized communications (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Skype, text messaging, blogging, email, mobile phones, the internet, and so on) are having on social interactions, personal relationships, and the larger community. The course introduces and examines an array of analytical concepts and theories which help to deepen our understanding of how social media are shaping our everyday lives and personal connections. Topics include a brief history of the internet, the digital divide, theories of technology such as Technological Determinism and Social Constructionism, the face-to-face vs. mediated-communications debate, the role of gender and culture in digitized media, social media and community development, social media and the development and maintenance of inter-personal relationships, and others. The course of study gives special attention to Twitter and Facebook.

Readings

The following books are required reading. They are important sources of information for written assignments and video analyses. Please refer to the Course Schedule for reading dates.

Baym, Nancy. 2015. *Personal Connections in the Digital Age, 2nd Edition*. Polity Press. ISBN-13: 978-0-7456-7034-8(pb)

Murthy, Dhiraj. 2018. *Twitter: Social Communication in the Twitter Age, 2nd Edition*. Polity Press. ISBN-13: 978-1-5095-1250-8(pb)

Grading Scheme

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|--------------------|-----|
| Assignment #1..... | 20% |
| Assignment #2..... | 20% |
| Assignment #3..... | 15% |
| Assignment #4..... | 25% |
| Take-home..... | 20% |

Video Material

The course of study includes 3 videos which address various issues of relevance to the course. The videos are readily available online at no cost. You are urged to view the videos at the appropriate point in the course (see the Course Schedule for recommended viewing times). You may post comments about the videos --preferably ones which reflect key course concepts introduced and discussed in the readings-- in the Discussions area of our course site. You are encouraged to read and respond to the comments of others, always in a courteous fashion. Access to the Discussions area of our site is gained by simply clicking the Discussions link on the navigation bar at the top of the page.

Written Assignments

There are 4 written assignments and 1 take-home 'exam' scheduled throughout the course. Together these 5 grading components comprise 100% of your final course grade. The 4 written assignments are based exclusively on the required course readings. The take home exam is based on required course readings plus supplementary readings posted at the end of the course. Please see Table of Contents for descriptions of the written assignments. Please see Course Schedule for due dates.

Discussions Forum

Our course site features a Discussions forum (tab located on the navigator bar at top of page) where you can interact with classmates, discuss course concepts and issues, and seek clarification of course content. If you have an issue of a private nature, please do not use the Discussions forum but rather email me directly: brian.mcmillan@lakeheadu.ca

Please Note: Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities and/or medical conditions to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, please contact Student Accessibility Services <http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca>

- Thunder Bay - SAS -- SC0003, 343-8047 or sas@lakeheadu.ca
- Orillia - SAS - OA 1030, [705-330-4008 ext 2103](tel:705-330-4008)) or oraccess@lakeheadu.ca

COURSE SCHEDULE

- Sept. 8 - 20:** New Forms of Personal Connection (Baym, ch. 1)
What is Twitter? (Murthy, ch. 1)
Video: see Course Contents
- Sept. 21 - Oct. 4:** Making New Media Make Sense (Baym, ch. 2)
Contextualizing Twitter (Murthy, ch. 2)
- Wed. Sept. 23:** Assignment #1 Deadline: 11:59 p.m. ET

- Oct. 5 - 11:** Communication in Digital Spaces (Baym, ch. 3)
Theorizing Twitter (Murthy, ch. 3, pp. 33-45 only)
- Wed. Oct. 7:** Assignment #2 Deadline: 11:59 p.m. ET
- Oct. 12 - 16:** Fall Break
- Oct. 17 - Nov. 1:** Communities and Networks (Baym, ch. 4)
Theorizing Twitter (Murthy, ch. 3, pp. 45-54 only)
Video: see Course Contents
- Wed. Oct. 21:** Assignment #3 Deadline: 11:59 p.m. ET
- Nov. 2 - 8:** Twitter and Journalism (Murthy, ch. 4)
Twitter and Disasters (Murthy, ch. 5)
- Nov. 9 - 15:** Twitter and Activism (Murthy, ch. 6)
Twitter and Health (Murthy, ch. 7)
- Nov. 16 - 29:** New Relationships, New Selves? (Baym, ch. 5)
Digital Media in Everyday Relationships (Baym, ch. 6)
Video: see Course Contents
- Wed. Nov. 18:** Assignment #4 Deadline: 11:59 p.m. ET
- Nov. 30 - Dec. 7:** Celebrities and Branding (Murthy, ch. 8)
Conclusion: The Myth of Cyberspace (Baym, pp. 174-79)
Conclusion (Murthy, ch. 8)
- Friday Dec. 4:** Take-home Supplementary Readings Posted: 9:00 a.m. ET
- Wed. Dec. 9:** Take-home Deadline: 11:59 p.m. ET

End