

INLS 490.151 Online Social Networks
Spring 2008

Instructor

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Meeting Place and Time

Tuesday, 12:30PM – 3:15PM, Manning Hall 304

Class Website

http://ibiblio.org/fred/inls_490/
Authentication credentials: *Username:* inls490, *Password:* inls490

Facebook Group

The class Facebook group is “INLS 490 Spring 2008”, you may either search for it or browse directly via this URL: <http://tinyurl.com/ypaspa>

Office Hours

Monday, 10AM – 12PM, Open Eye Coffee Shop, Carrboro
Tuesday, 11AM-12PM, INLS Library
Other times by appointment

Course Description

This is a course about our networked selves. Social network sites, Web 2.0 tools and the participatory turn in digital information production/consumption cycles have made the individual centric in modern social information processing and retrieval. Leveraging emergent technologies of interaction, this course will explore fundamental social/informational questions: how/why does one construct and enact a digital identity, how/why do we communicate in technologically mediated social space, what are the social impacts of this ubiquitous mediation? These information questions will act as the centerpiece of this class, and we will use online social networks to explore potential answers.

In this class, we will use online social networks as a vehicle for understanding broader cultural and informational phenomena. This emergent area of research is providing scholars from a number of disciplines fresh perspectives on classic questions, as well as generating plenty of new questions. During the semester, we'll read from a number of diverse literatures, including Communications, Cultural Studies, Sociology, Physics, Information Science and Psychology. We'll read broadly to situate the question, and then study how research in online social networks is generating new answers.

This class will explore four broad areas that contain interconnecting subfields. For the purpose of simplicity, I've termed these areas Network Dynamics, Identity, Communications and Cultural Impacts. This is also how our class will flow. In the first section of the class, we will explore the everyday dynamics of networks. With this perspective, we will see how networks influence things such as the ranking algorithms of search engines and information flow in the blogosphere. In the second section of the class, we will explore identity and place as presented in social networks. In the third section of the class, we will explore signaling and Computer Mediated Communication.

In the last section, we will look a number of applications of social networks, including social networks in the practice, personal and portable networks, and mobile networks.

Textbooks

- Barabasi, Albert-Laszlo. (2002). *Linked*. Cambridge, MA: Plume Books.
- Goffman, Erving. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Turkle, Sherry (1995). *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

All textbooks for this course are available in trade paperback.

Suggested Textbook

- Vogt, W. Paul (2005). *Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology: A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

The preceding textbook is suggested for those new to reading research.

Readings

Readings are organized by week in the syllabus, and are available online via the course website.

Format

This class will employ a mixture of lecture and seminar formats. In the first half of class, I will lead a semi-structured discussion based on the reading and contributed questions. Active participation and discussion is expected. In the second half of the class, two students will deliver topical presentations and help lead the class discussion.

Expectations

First and foremost, participation and active discussion are essential to the success of this class. To this extent, I expect you to come to every class, ready to think critically about the issues presented. Be bold, be imaginative, find ways to relate what we're studying to your life, don't be afraid to take and *defend* your opinions. The study of online social networks is an emergent field; there are few "right" or "wrong" answers. It is likely that these technologies will continue to impact your social, professional and academic life for quite some time – so come ready to explore, share and question.

In addition to active participation in class, there are a number of assignments you will be expected to complete this semester. First, you will be expected to contribute a question, observation or enhancement to our online forum each week. Second, you will be expected to produce a topical issues presentation once this semester, as well as act as a discussion facilitator on your presentation day. Third, you will be asked to complete a term project; as part of this term project you will be expected to submit a proposal, outline and bibliography. Further instructions on your assignments follow.

Finally, please note that this course is being taught at the **graduate level**. There is significant reading each week, but I hope you'll find it enjoyable and thought-provoking. Additionally, I reserve the right to amend this syllabus if I see a need to do so.

Assignment: Class Questions

By 5PM on the Monday of each week, you will be expected to pose a question, observation or enhancement to our online discussion board, located in our Facebook group. This Q, O, or E should arise from our reading, and generally be one or two paragraphs long (if you're especially inspired, feel free to go longer). Why not just a question? I'd like for the fora to be conversational, so if someone asks a question that you can build on, or draw on your personal experience to enhance, feel free.

Each week, I will start a new thread (the thread name will correspond to the upcoming week number), and I ask that you try to keep your discussions inside the thread if possible. However, feel free to contribute links, photos, videos and wall postings to our group, have fun with it.

Assignment: Topical Issues Presentation and Discussion Facilitation

You will be expected to deliver a topical issues presentation once during the semester. Drawing on our reading for the week, you will present a relevant current issue in the online social networks space. I encourage you to make your presentation not only relevant to the reading, but your interests at large. Presentations should be no more than 15 minutes in length, and you may use Powerpoint. Examples of topical presentations may be: *Presenting a new social network site, exploring a feature shift by an online social network, analysis of a technology delivered by a social network site*. Other examples may include presentations on *how social networks integrate in your area of practice, how communities of practice are utilizing social networks, or a current news issue about social networks*. I encourage you to be creative and find interesting or novel connections between your topical presentation and the class material.

On the day you deliver your topical issues presentation, you will also be expected to be a facilitator of discussion in the second half of the class. Prepare a few questions about the material to get the discussion rolling, but again feel free to be creative in your facilitation.

Assignment: Term Project, Proposal and Bibliography

The term project will be a substantive original piece of research, literature or a topical project in the area (research proposals acceptable as well). I encourage you to develop a project that is relevant to your area of interest; to this extent I am quite flexible in the types of projects I'll approve. As social networks pose interesting questions to industry, the academy and society at large, there are many opportunities for you to develop a project that is relevant to your interests.

Twice during the semester you will be asked to deliver a short description of your project idea to the class. Additionally, you will be required to turn in a project proposal and bibliography/outline. The project proposal should be a 2-page description of your project; you will be expected to present your idea, rationale and why the project is relevant to your interests.

For the bibliography/outline, you will be required to turn in two things. The first is a list of at least 8 source citations (APA or whatever style your field uses) you plan to use in your project. With the citations, include a paragraph-long original abstract of the work. Note, you should not be copying the paper's abstracts, but creating your own. Second is a detailed outline of the paper. Your outline should be an in-depth exploration of your project's roadmap; a simple bullet list is not sufficient.

As this project counts for 1/2 of the overall grade, significant effort is expected. The final project should be professional, written in academic tone and style, and should not include any typographic errors. The instructor is flexible in terms of fitting the project to the student's discipline or interests. I would suggest that you talk to me early and often about your project; if you keep me in the loop, I'm happy to provide feedback, guidance and connections. Group work (max group size: 2) is allowed, though group projects must reflect the substantive work of all parties.

Project presentations will occur on the last day of class, April 22. On this day you will be expected to deliver a 5-7 minute presentation or demonstration of your term project. Term project writeups will be due at 5PM on Tuesday, April 29.

Grading Policy

Participation and Attendance: 20%

Topical Issues Presentation: 10%

Weekly Questions, Comments or Enhancements: 10%

Term Project Proposal/Bibliography/Outline: 10%

Term Project: 50%

Statement on Academic Integrity

Students are expected to conform to the Honor Code in all academic manners. For more information about the Honor Code, please visit the following URL: <http://honor.unc.edu/honor/index.html>.

Course Schedule

1/15 - Week 1: Introductions and Course Overview

Discussion of syllabus and assignments, introductions.

Supplementary

- Wasserman, S. and Faust, K. (1994). *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications*. New York: Cambridge.
- Jones, S. ed. (1999). *Doing Internet Research: Critical Issues and Methods for Examining the Net*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. *Note: Chapters 1, 3, 4, 10, 11.*
- Vogt, W. Paul (2005). *Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology: A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

1/22 - Week 2: Surveying the Field of Online Social Networks

Exploring the research space, framing uses and motivations.

Required

- boyd, danah. (2008). Why Youth (Heart) Social Network Sites: The Role of Networked Publics in Teenage Social Life. In *Youth, Identity and Digital Media*. Edited by David Buckingham. MacArthur Foundation on Digital Learning. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. Pages 119-142.
- boyd, danah and Nicole Ellison. (2007). Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship. *JCMC*, 13 (1).
- Turkle, Introduction.

Recommended

- Lenhart, A. and Madden, M. (2007). Teens, Privacy & Online Social Networks. *Pew Internet and American Life Project Research Report*.
- Lenhart, A, Madden, M., Macgill, A. and Smith, A. (2007). Teens and Social Media. *Pew Internet and American Life Project Research Report*.

1/29 - Week 3: The Properties of Networks

An introduction to the science of networks.

Required

- Barabasi, Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- Shirky, C. (2003). Power Laws, Weblogs and Inequality. http://www.shirky.com/writings/powerlaw_weblog.html.

2/5 - Week 4: Network Dynamics

Exploring the dynamics and characteristics of online social networks.

Required

- Barabasi, Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.
- Golder, S., Wilkinson, D., and Huberman, B. (2006). Rhythms of social interaction: messaging within a massive online network. 3rd International Conference on Communities and Technologies (CT2007), East Lansing, MI.
- Kumar, R., Novak, J., and Tomkins, A. (2006). Structure and evolution of online social networks. In *Proceedings of KDD 2006*, pages 611–617.

2/12 - Week 5: Exploring Digital Identity

** Term Project Proposal Due*

Exploring concepts of the self using Turkle's psychoanalytic lens, as well as notions of digital/cyber-identity.

Required

- Thurlow, C., Lengel, L. and Tomic, A. (2004). Online Identity: Real or Virtual? In *Computer Mediated Communication: Social Interaction and the Internet*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Pages 95-106.
- Turkle Chapters 3, 7.

Recommended

- Bell, D. (2001). Identities in Cyberculture. In *An Introduction to Cybercultures*. London: Routledge. Pages 113-136.

Supplementary

- Aronowitz, S. (1995). Reflections on Identity. In *The Identity In Question*. Edited by John Rajchman. London: Routledge. Pages 111-127.

2/19 - Week 6: Identity, Signaling and the Art of Impression

Thinking about how/why we construct, present and experience online identity.

Required

- Goffman, Introduction, Chapter 1.
- Donath, J. (2008). Signals in Social Supernets. *JCMC*, 13 (1).
- Lampe, C., Ellison, N. and Steinfeld, C. (2006). A face(book) in the crowd: social searching vs. social browsing. *Proceedings of CSCW 2006*, Banff, Alberta, Canada.

Recommended

- Donath, J. (1999). Identity and Deception in the Virtual Community. In *Communities in Cyberspace*, edited by Peter Kollock and Marc Smith. London: Routledge. Pages 29-60.
- Donath, J and boyd, d. (2004). Public displays of connection. *BT Technology Journal*, 22(4).
- Liu, H. (2008) Social Network Profiles as Taste Performances. *JCMC*, 13(1).

Supplementary

- Willet, R. (2008) Consumer Citizens Online: Structure, Agency and Gender in Online Participation. In *Youth, Identity and Digital Media*, edited by David Buckingham. MacArthur Foundation on Digital Learning. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. Pages 49-70.

2/26 - Week 7: Identity and Communication

Expanding on the production of identity and exploring how it is communicated.

Required

- Goffman, Introduction, Chapter 7.
- Thurlow, C., Lengel, L. and Tomic, A. (2004). Describing CMC: Interpersonal Dynamics In *Computer Mediated Communication: Social Interaction and the Internet*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Pages 45-57.
- Dwyer, Cathy. (2007). Digital Relationships in the 'MySpace' Generation: Results From a Qualitative Study. 40th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS), Waikoloa, HI.

Recommended

- Lampe, C, Ellison, N and Steinfeld, C. (2007). A Familiar Face(book): Profile Elements as Signals in an Online Social Network. Proceedings of CHI 2007. San Jose, CA, ACM Press.
- Whitty, M. and Gavin, J. (2001). Age/Sex/Location: Uncovering the Social Cues in the Development of Online Relationships. *CyberPsychology and Behavior* 4(5).

Supplementary

- de Certeau, M. (1984). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

3/4 - Week 8: Place and Interaction

Exploring ideas of place, space and interaction in online social networks.

Required

- boyd, danah. (Forthcoming). None of this is Real. In *Structures of Participation*, edited by Joe Karaganis. New York: Social Science Research Council.
- Engstrom, J. (2005). Why some social network services work and others don't – Or: the case for object-centric sociality. http://www.zengestrom.com/blog/2005/04/why_some_social.html.
- Goodings, L., Locke, A. and Brown, S. (2007). Social Networking Technology: Place and Identity in Mediated Communities. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 17:463-476.
- Valentine, G and Holloway, S. (2002). Cyberkids? Exploring Children's Identities and Social Networks in On-line and Off-line Worlds. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 92(2), 2002.

Recommended

- Kollock, P. (1999). The economies of online cooperation: gifts and public goods in cyberspace. In *Communities in Cyberspace*, edited by Peter Kollock and Marc Smith. London: Routledge. Pages 167-195.
- Barwell, G. and Bowles, K. (2000). Border Crossings: The Internet and dislocation of citizenship. In *The Cybercultures Reader*, edited by David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy. London: Routledge. Pages 702-711.

Supplementary

- Lefebvre, H. (1974, Trans. 1991). *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Massachusetts: Blackwell.
- Jacobs, J. (1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Meyrowitz, J. (1985). *No Sense of Place*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, Place and Gender*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

3/18 - Week 9: Online Social Networks, Relationships and Social Capital

* Quiz Distributed

The functions of social capital and relationship maintenance in online social networks

Required

- Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook friends: Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4).
- Resnick, P. (2001). Beyond Bowling Together: SocioTechnical Capital. In *HCI in the New Millennium*, edited by J. Carroll. New York: ACM Press.

Recommended

- Granovetter, M. (1973). The Strength of Weak Ties. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6).
- Feld, S. (1981). The Focused Organization of Social Ties. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 86(5).
- Wellman, B., Haase, A. and Witte, J. (2001). Does the Internet Increase, Decrease, or Supplement Social Capital? *American Behavioral Scientist*, 45. Pages 437-456.

Supplementary

- Mahar, C., Harker, R. and Wilkes, C. (1990). The Basic Theoretical Position. In *An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu: The Practice of Theory*. Edited by Richard Harker, Cheleen Mahar and Chris Wilkes. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). Outline of a Theory of Practice. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Putnam, R. (2000) Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of the American Community. New York: Simon and Schuster. *Note: Chapters 1, 9, 13, 22.*
- Lin, N. (2002) Social Capital. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

3/25 - Week 10: Privacy, Translucence and Online Social Networks

* Quiz Due

Examining information sharing, privacy, and social surveillance in social network sites.

Required

- Palen, L. and Dourish, P. (2003). Unpacking Privacy for a Networked World. *Proceedings of CHI 2003*.
- Zimmer, M. (2007). Privacy and Surveillance in Web 2.0: Unintended Consequences and the Rise of "Netaveillance". <http://idtrail.org/content/view/full/696/42/>
- Acquisti, A. and Gross, R. (2006). Imagined Communities: Awareness, Information Sharing, and Privacy on the Facebook. 6th Workshop on Privacy Enhancing Technologies. Cambridge.
- DiMicco, J. and Millen, D. (2007). Identity Management: Multiple Presentations of Self in Facebook. *Proceedings of GROUP 2007*.

Recommended

- Nussbaum, E. (2006). Say Everything. *New York Magazine*. <http://nymag.com/news/features/27341/>.
- Dretzin, R. (Producer). (2008, January 22). *Frontline: Growing Up Online* [Television Broadcast]. Alexandria: PBS. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kidsonline/>
- Stutzman, F. (2006). An Evaluation of Identity-Sharing Behavior in Social Network Communities. *iDMA Journal*, 3(1).
- Barnes, S. (2006). A privacy paradox: Social networking in the United States. *First Monday* 11(9).
- boyd, d. (2007). Social Network Sites: Public, Private, or What? *Knowledge Tree* 13, May 2007.

- Tufekci, Z. (In press). Can you see me now? Audience and Disclosure Regulation in Online Social Network Sites. *Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society*.

Supplementary

- Erickson, T. and Kellogg, W. (2000). Social translucence: an approach to designing systems that support social processes. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interactions*, 7(1).
- Allen, M., Coopman, S., Hart, J. and Walker, J. (2007). Workplace Surveillance and Managing Privacy Boundaries. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 21.
- Poster, M. (1990). *The Mode of Information: Poststructuralism and Social Context*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. *Note: Chapter 3: Foucault and Databases, Participatory Surveillance.*

4/1- Week 11: Networked Publics

* *Term Project Bibliography/Outline Due*

The intersection of social networks, personal networks and physical space.

Required

- Wellman, B. (2001). Physical Place and Cyberplace: The Rise of Personalized Networking. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 25(2).
- Castells, M. (2001). Virtual Communities or Network Society? In *The Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, Business and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Recommended

- Fischer, C. (1982). The Spatial Dimensions of Personal Relations. In *To Dwell Amongst Friends: Personal Networks in Towns and Cities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hampton, K. and Wellman, B. (2002). The Not So Global Village of Netville. In *The Internet and Everyday Life*, edited by Barry Wellman and Carolyn Haythornthwaite. MA: Blackwell.
- McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., Brashears, M. (2006). Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks over Two Decades. *American Sociological Review*, 71.

Supplementary

- Watters, E. (2003). *Urban Tribes*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Poster, M. (1996). Cyberdemocracy: Internet and the Public Sphere. In *Internet Culture*, edited by David Porter. London: Routledge.

4/8 - Week 12: Online Social Networks and the Practice

Social networks in the academy.

Required

- Charnigo, L. and Barnett-Ellis, P. (2007). Checking out Facebook.com: The Impact of a Digital Trend on Academic Libraries. *Information Technologies and Libraries*, March 2007.
- Mazer, J., Murphy, R. and Simonds, C. (2007). I'll See You on Facebook. *Communication Education* 56(1), 1-17.
- Hewitt, A. and Forte, A. (2006). Crossing Boundaries: Identity Management and Student/Faculty Relationships on the Facebook. *Proceedings of CSCW 2006*.

Recommended

- Mitrano, T. (2006). Thoughts on Facebook. Cornell University IT Policy Office. <http://www.cit.cornell.edu/policy/memos/facebook.html>.
- de Rosa, C. et. al. (2007). *Sharing, Privacy and Trust in Our Networked World*. Dublin: OCLC.

4/15 - Week 13: Ubiquitous and Mobile Social Networks

Exploring social networks at the device and grid level.

Required

- Ling, R. and Yttri, B. (2006) Control, Emancipation and Status. In *Computers, Phones and the Internet: Domesticating Information Technology*, edited by R. Kruat and M. Brynin and S. Kiesler. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Dourish, P. and Bell, G. (2007). The Infrastructure of Experience and the Experience of Infrastructure: Meaning and Structure in Everyday Encounters with Space. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 34(3).
- Turkle, S. (Forthcoming). Always-on/Always-on-you: The Tethered Self. In *Handbook of Mobile Communications and Social Change*, edited by James Katz. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Recommended

- Rheingold, H. (2002) *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution*. New York: Basic Books.
- Stald, G. (2008). Mobile Identity: Youth, Identity, and Mobile Communication Media. In *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*, edited by David Buckingham. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge: MIT Press.

4/22 - Week 14: Project Presentations

Final presentations, All projects due at 5PM on April 29.