

**MI 401 DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND SOCIETY**  
**Michigan State University**

**Spring 2017**

**Mon 4:10-7:00pm (GO23 Hubbard Hall)**

Prof. Keith Hampton

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All course correspondence, including posted grades, announcements, additional readings, etc. will be posted on the D2L website for this course: <https://d2l.msu.edu/>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This upper level seminar provides an overview of recent research on the societal implications of new communication technologies (e.g., mobile phones, social media, etc.). New communication technologies are often regarded as a source of transformative change, responsible for undermining morality, destroying institutions, increasing surveillance and control, and for the decline of community. This course is based around the argument that communication technologies are inherently social networks, linking people, organizations and communities. This subject is heavily weighted towards the evaluation of empirical studies that focus on how recent technological innovations may be changing the way we interact with our environments and those around us. Students will learn to critically examine the impact of new communication technologies on society through in-depth seminars and independent research.

**PREREQUISITE**

MI 101 and completion of Tier I writing requirement

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Learn about the concept of digital communication and its social, economic, and political implications.
- Understand and be critically aware of the influence of new communication technologies on themselves, other individuals, social institutions and societies.
- Develop problem-solving and analytical skills in observing the social uses of new communication media.
- Critically review the theory, methodology, and findings of a research study published on the topic of new information and communication technologies.
- Apply appropriate theory and methods to the study of new forms of digital communication.

**ASSESSMENT**

Students are not expected to have personal experience with the technologies discussed in this course. A major component of the course will involve the development and use of a personal blog. Students will receive access to the necessary blogging software and will be provided with basic instruction on how to maintain a blog.

Final grades will be based on an evaluation of 5 blog postings (15%), 10 comments on other students' blog postings (5%), two exams (15% each), a group presentation outlining the final project (10%), a final group project (25%), a final presentation (5%), and class participation (10%).

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

4.0	90-100%
3.5	83-89%
3.0	75-82%
2.5	70-74%
2.0	67-69%
1.5	63-66%
1.0	60-62%
0.0	below 60%

### **Grading of Assignments and Presentations**

A grade equivalent to a 4.0 will be awarded to an assignment that both fills the terms of the assignment and shows evidence of out-of-the-ordinary, creative, analytical, and interesting thought. A 3.0 will be awarded if the terms of the assignment have been fulfilled thoroughly and thoughtfully, with some evidence of originality and creativity. Assignments that merely fulfill the terms of the assignment will receive a 2.0. Assignments that fail to fulfill the terms of the assignment will receive a grade equivalent to a 1.0. An assignment that does not approximate the terms of the assignment will receive a 0.0. All grades are final. Please do not ask to have your grade changed for reasons other than mathematical error. A grade of “incomplete” will not be assigned except in the most unusual, extreme (and generally emergency) circumstances.

### **Participation**

Class meetings will be in a seminar format, there will be a limited amount of lecturing, instead students and instructor will explore key concepts through a guided dialogue. Students are expected to have read all of the week’s readings in advance of the course meeting. Participation grades will be based on demonstrated familiarity and critical reflection on the readings, involvement in classroom activities and exercises, and engagement in discussions. The participation grade is assessed above and beyond your attendance, just showing up for class will not earn you any participation points. You must do the readings, or this class will be a waste of time. You can expect that the instructor will call on students at random to provide a summary of specific readings and to provide a basic comparison to prior course content.

Use of mobile phones and computing devices in class, for purposes unrelated to note taking and direct class participation, will adversely affect your participation grade. Students are expected to attend all classes. Missing more than two classes may result in an automatic zero for the class participation grade. Students are responsible for getting course notes from their classmates, the instructor will not provide you with notes, slides or exam guides. Students are never granted permission to make audio or video recordings of the class.

### **Group Work**

A significant proportion of the final grade in this course will result from work that a student starts or completes as part of a small group. Students will be allowed to form their own groups, but the instructor reserves the right to move students to different groups. In most cases students in a group will receive the same grade for group work. However, the instructor reserves the right to vary individual grades for those who do not demonstrate an equal level of participation. Each student will also submit a confidential description of their work and the work of their team members. Individual work statements will be taken into account when deciding to give any team member a higher or lower grade. The course is designed so that all group work can be started during class time. During group workshops students will have the opportunity to meet with their groups and to engage in a discussion with the instructor. While all group work can be started in class, it will not always be possible to complete group activities within the class period. Group members should exchange contact information to arrange meetings and coordinate research activities.

## Blogs

Students are responsible for submitting 5 short blog posts on subjects assigned by the instructor (400-600 words). The goal is to provide a review of key course concepts and to promote discussion between students outside of the classroom. Blog posts are intended to be less formal than a class paper (but must follow traditional guidelines for academic integrity). Students are encouraged to include pictures, videos, and links to external content. To allow time for peers and the instructor to comment, blog posts must be posted to a student's personal blog by 5:00pm the day before the class meeting. Students are welcome to make additional posts on their blog on class related subjects.

Note: Depending on current events and the interests of the class, the topics of the blogging assignments may change, do not begin an assignment more than one week prior to the due date.

*Post #1 (Jan 29 by 5:00pm):* Compare a pre-Internet technology that you have used/owned (e.g., Walkman, telephone, radio, etc.) with one of your favorite new technologies that serves a similar purpose (e.g., a website, app, device, video game, etc.). What activities or functions does the new technology provide that are similar and different to the original? What do you think the consequences are of widespread adoption, or replacement by this new technology for both individuals and larger society?

*Post #2 (Feb 12 by 5:00pm):* Over a period of a couple days, including at least one weekday and one weekend day, keep a diary that tracks your communication with your closest friends/family (including contact you receive, but do not reciprocate, such as text messages). Note the type of medium you use, the duration of contact, frequency of contact, and the purpose of the contact. How does your contact with your closest ties vary by medium? Do you use multiple or different media with different types of ties? How do different technologies compare to face-to-face in terms of what was communicated in the exchange? (Note: don't use your friends'/family's real names in your blog post).

*Post #3 (Mar 12 by 5:00pm):* Spend at least two hours observing people in a public space, such as a coffee shop or park. Compare and contrast how people using different technologies behave in the space (e.g., using books, mobile phones, laptops, music players, etc.). How are their interactions the same/different? What do you think are some of the costs/benefits of using the different technologies you observed, for the individuals, the people around them, and the space they inhabited?

*Post #4 (Mar 26 by 5:00pm):* Select a recent news story from a popular news site (a story that has not been discussed in class) that discusses the effects of social media on society or a related course theme. Provide only limited summary, analyze the story and the stories source(s) (e.g., a paper/report) and discuss whether the claims and evidence in the story are valid (remember to post a link to the story). Your response should be based on more than your personal opinion and experience with social media, it should primarily focus on a critical reflection on the position presented in the story. Provide other evidence as needed.

*Post #5 (April 23 by 5:00pm):* Locative-media, augmented reality, and related technologies are emerging communication technologies, find one example of this technology that was not discussed in class (i.e., from a press release, news report, online demo, etc.) and reflect on how this technology may impact you in your career (i.e., a specific job, or type of work), or in your family life (e.g., coordinating family, communicating with family, etc), or your community (e.g., neighborhood, democracy, etc). As part of your post you must cite and reflect on a minimum of three scholarly articles or book chapters from the course syllabus (include in text citations with author's name and year of publication). Remember to post a link to your example.

Each student is responsible for contributing 10 comments on fellow students' blogs. Comments should be a minimum of 200 words and offer a critique of that week's posting, seek clarification, compare or contrast postings, or provide additional evidence or new information (such as a link to a related article, website, etc.). Each student must contribute a minimum of 10 comments, credit will be given for a maximum of two comments per blogging assignment, students cannot receive credit for commenting on the same blog more than three times over the duration of the course. Comments must be posted by 3:30pm on the day after a blog assignment is due (i.e., 3:30pm on the day the class meets). Students are encouraged to reply to comments and discuss with their classmates.

If you submit your blog post on time, if it meets the minimum requirements for length, and it fulfills the terms of the assignment you will receive 100%. If the blog post is not submitted, submitted late, does not meet the minimum length, is not on the assigned subject matter, or otherwise does not meet the terms of the assignment, you will get a zero. The instructor will occasionally send you feedback on your blog posts to let you know how you are doing, but given the volume of posts/comments and the size of the class, do not expect feedback on all of your posts. Blogs are intended to be a peer driven and a peer evaluated exercise.

### **Final Project (May 3 by 8:00pm)**

Projects should deal with course themes and focus on a topic of interest. The topic must relate to the course content and must involve the collection of primary data (e.g., interviews, survey, observations, etc.) or the analysis of secondary data (e.g., content analysis, census data, etc.). There are a large range of possible topics, examples of possible topics/methods include:

- 1) A survey of students that explores gender differences in “internet addiction”.
- 2) An experiment that measures the consequences of not using a communication technology over a period of time.
- 3) A media diary that answers a hypothesis about the use of a specific technology and an outcome, such as frequency of physical activity.
- 4) Observations of how people use a communication technology in a public setting, such as a café or shopping mall.
- 5) A study of surveillance that involves mapping the location of video cameras located in public spaces.
- 6) A survey of students’ awareness of privacy settings in their use of social media.
- 7) A content analysis of social media posts over time or by medium related to questions about political participation, affective content, or identity.

The final project is due in the form of a short research paper. The research paper must include an introduction (1-2 pages), a literature review (3-6 pages), a methods section (2-3 pages), findings (2-5 pages), a conclusion (1-2 pages), and a bibliography. The paper must be double spaced, have 1-inch margins, written in APA style and submitted through D2L as a Word or PDF file (not in-person and not by email). Note: The final project for this course is a classroom exercise. As such, your group’s project should not require IRB review (all projects must be approved by the instructor as part of the proposal presentation before students can collect any data for the project).

### **Proposal Presentation (Mar 20, in class)**

The in-class presentation is as an opportunity for students to receive immediate feedback from the instructor and classmates on plans for their final project. The group presentation should be 10 minutes long, use PowerPoint (or something similar), and follow the format of a formal conference presentation. A copy of your presentation (on paper) must be given to the instructor at the time of your presentation. Presentations must include the following elements:

- A research question.
- A justification for why the question is of sufficient social importance and/or scientific relevance.
- A minimum of three citations and a brief review of key research in the area.
- Hypotheses (if appropriate).
- Research methods and procedure.
- Main strengths and weaknesses of your methods.
- A list of responsibilities assigned to each group member.

The group’s topic and research method/procedure must be approved by the instructor at the time of the proposal presentation before data can be collected for the final project. If a group receives a low grade for their presentation, the group will be able to improve their grade when they submit their final project; if the grade on the final project is higher, the higher grade will replace the grade for the proposal presentation.

### **Final Presentation** (April 24, in class)

Group members will give a 10 minute presentation of their findings. Presentations must include the following elements:

- Research question.
- Hypotheses (if appropriate).
- Research methods and procedure.
- Findings
- Conclusion

### **Exams**

Exam #1: Feb 20

Exam #2: Apr 17

In-class exams may include multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer questions. Exams will cover all readings and class materials, this includes assigned readings, lectures, videos, any additional readings, and all other material discussed in class. Students may bring in a 4" x 6" card with notes into the exam. Exams will not be cumulative. Any student who arrives late will not be allowed to take the exam. There is no final exam in this course.

### **Late Assignments and Missed Exams**

If you miss an exam, to be allowed to make up the exam, you must: 1) have an acceptable excuse, and 2) contact the instructor before the time of the exam. The only acceptable excuses to miss an exam or submit a late assignment are a) an illness that can be substantiated by a note from a medical professional, b) a family death documented by a death certificate. Makeup exams may differ from the original exam in format as well as content. Students should pay close attention to due dates, late assignments will not be graded.

### **Academic Integrity**

The consequences of scholastic dishonesty are very serious. Evidence of plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation, dishonesty, academic sabotage, criminal activity, or other violations of research or professional ethics will be dealt with severely – at a minimum students will receive a grade of “F” in the course. Students are expected to fulfil the spirit of the Spartan Code of Honor. “As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do.” Student conduct that is inconsistent with the academic pledge will be addressed through existing policies, regulations, and ordinances governing academic honesty and integrity. MSU Policies, Regulations and Ordinances Regarding Academic Honesty and Integrity can be found at <https://msu.edu/unit/ombud/academic-integrity/>.

### **COMMUNICATING WITH THE INSTRUCTOR**

I’m here to help, please ask questions, share your ideas, and visit me often during office hours. However, keep in mind that when seeking advisement and support, email is no substitute for an in person meeting. Students seeking help with the content of this course should consult with me at the start of class, during office hours, or by requesting a separate appointment. Plan ahead and consult with me in advance of any due dates. Do not expect a detailed response by email to requests for advice or review of materials (some things are still best done in person!)

### **COURSE MATERIALS**

All readings, files, and grades will be available from the course website (generally in the form of a PDF or a link to content): <https://d2l.msu.edu/>.

## COURSE OUTLINE

This portion of the syllabus is subject to change as the course evolves. I may add or remove material based on the interests and pace of the class. At times, I will distribute new and timely material that appears in the news or has been recently published. It is your responsibility to learn of any changes by regularly attending class, visiting the course website, and reading your email.

### WEEK 1: Introduction and Blogging 101

Jan 9

Readings: None

**NOTE: There is no class meeting on January 16**

### WEEK 2: Harmful Effects?

Jan 23

**Readings:** Turkle, S. (2012, April 21). The Flight From Conversation. *New York Times*.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/22/opinion/sunday/the-flight-from-conversation.html>

Ablow, K. (2014, March 22). Pull the plug on naked Twitter teens. *Fox News*.  
<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/03/22/pull-plug-on-naked-twitter-teens/>

Tufft, B. (2016, March 20). Social media-obsessed teenagers are so frightened of real life some won't even answer the door. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3501414/Social-media-obsessed-teenagers-frightened-real-life-won-t-answer-door.html>

McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Brashears, M. E. (2006). Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks over Two Decades. *American Sociological Review*, 71, 353-375.

Kuss, Daria J., Antonius J. van Rooij, Gillian W. Shorter, Mark D. Griffiths, and D. van de Mheen. (2013). Internet Addiction in Adolescents: Prevalence and Risk Factors. *Computers in Human Behavior* 29:1987-1996.

### WEEK 3: Foundations: A History

Jan 30

**Readings:** Colleran on Bicycle Morals. (1899, May 16). *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

Wants the Electric Lights Put Out. (1888, Nov 25). *The New York Times*.

Putnam, R. (1995). Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America. *Political Science and Politics*, 28(4), 664-683.

Norris, Pippa. (1996). Does Television Erode Social Capital? A Reply to Putnam. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 29:474-480.

Hampton, K. N. (2016). Persistent and Pervasive Community: New Communication Technologies and the Future of Community. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 60(1), 101-124.

**Video:** Norman, Donald. (1994). Affordances. [http://youtu.be/NK1Zb\\_5VxuM](http://youtu.be/NK1Zb_5VxuM)

**Blog:** Blog post #1 due (5:00pm the day before).

## WEEK 4: Close Relationships / Intimacy

Feb 6

**Readings:** Khrais, Reema. (2012, September 25). Phone Home. *NPR*.

Hampton, K. N., Sessions, L., & Ja Her, E. (2011). Core Networks, Social Isolation, and New Media: Internet and Mobile Phone Use, Network Size, and Diversity. *Information, Communication & Society*, 14(1), 130-155.

Burke, M., & Kraut R. (2014). Growing Closer on Facebook: Changes in Tie Strength Through Social Network Site Use. *CHI 2014*. Toronto, ON. (read summary by Burke)  
<https://www.facebook.com/notes/facebook-data-science/growing-closer-on-facebook/10152086044728859?fref=nf>

Toma, C., Hancock, J., & Ellison, N. (2008). Separating fact from fiction: An examination of deceptive self-presentation in online dating profiles. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 34: 1023-1036.

Cacioppo, John T, Stephanie Cacioppo, Gian C Gonzaga, Elizabeth L Ogburn, and Tyler J Van der Weele. (2013). Marital Satisfaction and Break-Ups Differ across on-Line and Off-Line Meeting Venues. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

## WEEK 5: Close Relationships / Intimacy II

(Note: This week's class meetings deal with controversial issues about sex and pornography. If you are likely to be offended by this topic, you should contact the instructor before the start of the class).

Feb 13

**Readings:** Morris, A. (2011, Feb 7). They Know What Boys Want. *New York Magazine*. Pp 32-37.

Facebook 'linked to rise in syphilis'. (2010). *The Telegraph*.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/facebook/7508945/Facebook-linked-to-rise-in-syphilis.html>

Simpson, M (2016, April 29). Today's porn panic is no different to the anti-masturbation movements of the 19th century. *The Telegraph*.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/thinking-man/todays-porn-panic-is-no-different-to-the-anti-masturbation-movem/>

Draper, N. R. A. (2012). Is your teen at risk? Discourses of adolescent sexting in United States television news. *Journal of Children and Media* 6(2): 221-236.

Mitchell, Kimberly J., David Finkelhor, Lisa M. Jones, and Janis Wolak. (2011). Prevalence and Characteristics of Youth Sexting: A National Study. *Pediatrics*.

Holloway, I. W., Dunlap, S., del Pino, H. E., Hermanstynne, K., Pulsipher, C., & Landovitz, R. J. (2014). Online Social Networking, Sexual Risk and Protective Behaviors: Considerations for Clinicians and Researchers. *Current Addiction Reports*, 1(3), 220-228.

**Blog:** Blog post #2 due (5:00pm the day before).

**Workshop:** Picking a research question.

## WEEK 6: Mobile Life

Feb 20

**Exam:** Exam #1.

**Readings:** Merz, T. (2013, August 27). 'Nomophobia' affects majority of UK. *The Telegraph*.  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/10267574/Nomophobia-affects-majority-of-UK.html>

Humphreys, L. (2005). Cellphones in public: social interactions in a wireless era. *New Media & Society*, 7(6), 810-833.

Ling, R, & Lai, C-H. (2016). Microcoordination 2.0: Social Coordination in the Age of Smartphones and Messaging Apps. *Journal of Communication* 66(5), 834-56.

Campbell, S. (2015). Mobile Communication and Network Privatism: A Literature Review of the Implications for Diverse, Weak, and New Ties. *Review of Communication Research* 3(1).

Hampton, K. N., Goulet, L. S., & Albanesius, G. (2015). Change in the social life of urban public spaces: The rise of mobile phones and women, and the decline of aloneness over thirty years. *Urban Studies*, 52(8), 1489-1504.

## WEEK 7: Place and Space

Feb 27

**Readings:** Hampton, K.N. & Wellman, B. (2003). Neighboring in Netville: How the Internet Supports Community and Social Capital in a Wired Suburb. *City and Community* 2(4), 277-311.

Hampton, K. N., Livio, O., & Goulet, L. S. (2010). The Social Life of Wireless Urban Spaces: Internet Use, Social Networks, and the Public Realm. *Journal of Communication*, 60(4), 701-722.

Hampton, K. N., Lee, C. J., & Her, E. J. (2011). How New Media Afford Network Diversity: Direct and Mediated Access to Social Capital Through Participation in Local Social Settings. *New Media & Society* 13(7), 1031-1049.

**Workshop:** Designing your study.

**NOTE:** There is no class meeting on March 6

## WEEK 8: Social Media

Mar 13

**Readings:** Marwick, Alice E. and danah boyd. (2010). I Tweet Honestly, I Tweet Passionately: Twitter Users, Context Collapse, and the Imagined Audience. *New Media & Society*.

Eslami, M., Rickman, A., Vaccaro, K., Aleyasen, A., Vuong, A., Karahalios, K., et al. (2015). "I always assumed that I wasn't really that close to [her]": Reasoning about Invisible Algorithms in News Feeds. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems.

Hampton, K. N., Lu, W., & Shin, I. (2016). Digital Media and Stress: Cost of Caring 2.0. *Information, Communication & Society* 9(9), 1267-1286.

**Blog:** Blog post #3 due (5:00pm the day before).



## WEEK 9:

Mar 20

**Presentations:** Project proposal.

## WEEK 10: Political Engagement I

Mar 27

**Readings:** Sunstein, C (2016, January 8). How Facebook Makes Us Dumber. *Bloomberg View*.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2016-01-08/how-facebook-makes-us-dumber>

Arsenault, A (2016, October 20). Partisan Twitter bots distorting U.S. presidential candidates' popularity. *CBC News*. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/twitter-bots-trump-clinton-1.3814386>

Armed man arrested after travelling to D.C. pizzeria cited in fake news story (2016, December 4). *CBC News*. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/assault-arrest-pizzeria-fake-news-1.3881268>

Bakshy, E., Messing, S., & Adamic, L. A. (2015). Exposure to ideologically diverse news and opinion on Facebook. *Science*, 348(6239), 1130-1132.

Kim, Y., Chen, H-T, & de Zúñiga, H.G. (2013). Stumbling Upon News on the Internet: Effects of Incidental News Exposure and Relative Entertainment Use on Political Engagement. *Computers in Human Behavior* 29:2607-2614.

**Blog:** Blog post #4 due (5:00pm the day before).

**Workshop:** Project data collection.

## WEEK 11: Political Engagement II

April 3

**Readings:** Gladwell, M. (2010, October 4). Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not be Tweeted. *The New Yorker*.

Hargittai, E. & Shaw, A. (2013). Digitally Savvy Citizenship: The Role of Internet Skills and Engagement in Young Adults' Political Participation around the 2008 Presidential Election. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 57:115-134.

Tufekci, Z. & Wilson, C. (2012). Social Media and the Decision to Participate in Political Protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication* 62:363-379.

Hampton, K. N., Shin, I., & Lu, W. (in press). Social media and political discussion: when online presence silences offline conversation. *Information, Communication & Society*.

## WEEK 12: Video Games / Locative Media / Augmented Reality

April 10

**Readings:** Norton, J. (2013, August 26). Former 'video game czar' weighs in on 8-year-old shooter. *The Christian Science Monitor*. <http://www.csmonitor.com/The-Culture/Family/Modern-Parenthood/2013/0826/Former-video-game-czar-weighs-in-on-8-year-old-shooter>

Willett, M (2016, July 17). 17 heartwarming stories about people playing 'Pokémon GO'. *Tech Insider*. <http://www.techinsider.io/pokemon-go-heartwarming-stories-2016-7/>

Anderson, C. A., Bushman, B. J., Donnerstein, E., Hummer, T. A., & Warburton, W. (2015). SPSSI Research Summary on Media Violence. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 15(1), 4-19.

Gordon, E. & de Souza e Silva, A. (2011). *Net Locality: Why Location Matters in a Network World*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. (Introduction & Ch 3).

**WEEK 13: Exam and Workshop**

**April 17**

**Exam:** Exam #2.

**Workshop:** Prepare presentation

**WEEK 14: Presentations**

**April 24**

**Presentations:** Final Project.

**Blog:** Blog post #5 due (5:00pm the day before).