

SYLLABUS

SOCI 221 SOCIOLOGY OF CYBERSPACE



Term: Winter 2016
Schedule: Wednesdays, 10:15-13:00
Classroom: H-509
Professor: Gabrielle Trépanier-Jobin
Office number: H-1125-02
Office Hours: Fridays, 13:15-16:15 pm
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OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION

This course offers a critical examination of the role of electronic communication, information technology, and the Internet on public culture and the organization of social behaviour and interaction.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1) Getting familiar with the main concepts, theories and authors of a sub-discipline that has been called “Sociology of the Internet”, “Sociology of Cyberculture”, “Cybersociology” or, more recently, “Digital Sociology”.
- 2) Engaging with research on the Internet and on digital technologies that emerged from various fields of study, but that are relevant to sociologists.
- 3) Understanding the social implications of new technologies and their impact on issues such as surveillance, privacy, intimacy, social organization, social interaction, inequalities, crime, political participation, education, social economy, war reporting, etc.
- 4) Applying sociological theories and using social science methods to study online communities, social networks, online practices and digital tools.
- 5) Participating in debates around new media and developing critical thinking skills.

ASSIGNED READINGS

The weekly readings are available on our Moodle website and should be read before the courses. You must bring copies of the assigned readings to class, either in electronic or paper form, because you might need them during class discussions and group activities.

SCHEDULE & REFERENCES

January 6 – Presentation of the syllabus

January 13 – Introduction

- Cyberculture Theorists – Bell, 2007
- Ethnography and Virtual Worlds – Boellstorff & al., 2012
- The Medium is the Message – McLuhan, 1967

January 20 – Online Socialization, Friendship & Intimacy

- Intimacy and Friendship on Facebook – Lambert, 2013
- The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life – Goffman, 1959
- My Avatar, My Self – Waggoner, 2009
- Living Digitally – Taylor, 2002
- Je suis libre moi non plus – Bonenfant & Farmer, 2012
- Pour un changement de paradigme – Bonenfant, 2011

January 27 – Participatory Culture, Intellectual Property & Media Panic

- YouTube – Burgess & Green, 2009
- Convergence Culture – Jenkins, 2006
- Spreadable Media – Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013

February 3 – E-Celebrity, E-Sports & Live-streaming

Guest Speaker: William Robinson

- Status Update – Marwick, 2013
- Empowering Exhibitionism – Koskela, 2004
- Microcelebrity and the Branded Self – Senft, 2012
- Watching Us Play – Walker, 2014
- Raising the Stakes – Taylor, 2012

February 10 – Big Data, Surveillance & Privacy

- Big Data – Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2014
- The Promise and Peril of Big Data – Bollier, 2010

- When Big Data Meets Dataveillance – Degli Esposti, 2014
- Big Data, New Epistemologies and Paradigm Shifts – Kitchin, 2014

February 17 – Collective Intelligence & the Expert Paradigm

- Collective Intelligence – Lévy, 1997
- The Authority of Wikipedia – Goodwin, 2009
- Spoiling Survivor – Jenkins, 2006
- La sensibilité épistémique face à Wikipédia – Dumais, 2012

February 24 – Mid-term break

March 2 – Digital Rebellion, Online Resistance & Cyber Left

- Digital Rebellion – Wolfson, 2013
- Tweets and the Streets – Gerbaudo, 2012
- Intifada 2.0 – Trépanier-Jobin & Bahour, forthcoming

March 9 – Digital Hacktivism, Civil Disobedience & Piracy

Guest Speaker: Molly Sauter

- Hacker, Hoaxer, Whistleblower, Spy – Coleman, 2014
- The Coming Swarm – Sauter, 2014
- WikiLeaks and the Age of Transparency – Sifry, 2011
- We Are Legion (film) – Knappenberger, 2012
- The Internet's Own Boy (film) – Knappenberger, 2014
- Citizenfour (film) – Poitras, 2014

March 16 – Serious Games & Gamification

- The Gamification Revolution – Zichermann & Linder, 2013
- Eudaimonic Design – Deterding, 2014
- Gaming the Quantified Self – Whitson, 2013
- Gamification and Governmentality – Schrape, 2014
- Persuasive Games – Bogost, 2007
- Serious Games – Michael & Chen, 2006

March 23 – Gender & Games

- Gaming at the Edge – Shaw, 2014
- Gender and Gameplay – Richard, 2013
- From Barbie to Mortal Kombat – Castell & Jenkins, 2000
- Beyond Barbie and Mortal Kombat – Kafai & al., 2008

March 30 – Cyberbullying & Online Gender-Based Harassment

- Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard – Hinduja and Patchin, 2015
- Cyberbullying – Friedman (ed), 2010
- Sexism in the Circuitry – Heron, Belford & Goker, 2014

April 6 – Artificial Intelligence & Posthumanism

- Exits to the Posthuman Future – Kroker, 2014
- The Posthuman – Braidotti, 2013

ASSIGNMENTS

Participation – 15%, individual, logbook due for April 6

A portion of your grade will be determined by your participation and engagement. This does not simply mean attending class, but also participating in class activities and uploading content on our Moodle website when required. You will be allowed (and sometimes asked) to use your phone, tablet or laptop in class, but please refrain from checking emails, Facebook, Twitter, news or playing games unless it is related to the course. Students who do not comply will lose points. Each week, you will have to write, in your logbook, a short comment or question of 70 words that engages with the assigned readings and that focuses on one key theme or argument that you find interesting or challenging. You will have to submit a paper copy of your logbook at the end of the last class. The comments or questions will be evaluated on the basis of their relevance to the assigned readings.

Mid-term paper – 45%, teams of 3-4 students, due for March 2

The teams of 3-4 students will have to submit a 12 page paper (1 inch margins, 1½ spaced, Times New Roman, size 12, proper quotations) on the Internet phenomenon or the digital technology of their choice. They will have to apply sociological theories or use social science methods to study this phenomenon in a sociological perspective. They will also have to mobilize a minimum of four reliable sources (can include the weekly readings) to backup their affirmations. They will finally have to provide supporting evidence and examples to illustrate their ideas. The teams can meet me after class or during my office hours in order to discuss the paper and get feedback. The papers will be evaluated on the basis on these criteria:

- Respect of the guidelines (deadline, number of pages, quotations, references): /4
- Quality of the writing (clarity, flow, grammar and syntax): /5
- Organization and coherence (development of ideas, logic, transitions): /12
- Quality of the argument and originality of the ideas: /12
- Pertinence and good use of the sources: /12

* You will lose 15% for each day of delay

Final examination – 40 %, individual, date to be determined

At the end of the semester, you will have 1 hour 30 minutes to answer a series of multiple-choice questions without your notes and without access to electronic devices. The questions will evaluate your understanding of the key ideas and concepts learned along the semester and will be elaborated with the Power Point presentations only.

All assignments can be submitted in either French or English.

EVALUATION SCHEME

A+	90 – 100
A	85 – 89
A-	80 – 84
B+	77 – 79
B	73 – 76
B-	70 – 72
C+	67 – 69
C	63 – 66
C-	60 – 62
D+	57 – 59
D	53 – 56
D-	50 – 52
*F or	30 – 49
FNS	
R	0 – 29
NR	The student is unknown to the instructor

PLAGIARISM

Do not copy, paraphrase or translate anything from anywhere without saying where it comes from! Use quotation marks when you reproduce material word for word.

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

In order to keep our classroom a safe space where we can learn and discuss without feeling judged or disrespected, no intimidation, harsh comments or personal insults against other students or the instructor will be tolerated.