

MIT 2155

SOCIAL MEDIA, VIRTUAL GAMING, AND NETWORKED LIFE

Western University
Faculty of Information
& Media Studies



In July 2016, Hillary Clinton declared that “A man you can bait with a tweet is not a man we can trust with nuclear weapons” – a line that, ironically, would go on to become her most re-tweeted observation, even as she lost her campaign for US President to that same man, Donald Trump.

The goal of MIT 2155 is to examine how increasingly networked communication, recreation, and

socializing effect everything from our daily lives to the upheavals of global politics. This will be done in three units:

First, in “Critiquing Social Media,” we’ll look at some of the methodological underpinnings of social media analysis.

Next, in “The Business of Networking,” we’ll examine the issues of power and privacy raised by some of the largest players in online life, from Google, Facebook, and Twitter to online gaming.

Finally, in “Living Online,” we’ll explore the specific ways that networked life spills back into “real” life, from progressive activism and collaboration to the dark side of new social media movements like Gamergate and the Alt-right.

Instructor: Dr. Luke Arnott

Lecture: Thurs. 2:30–5:30 FNB 1220

Office hours: Thurs. 1:30–2:30 FNB 4134

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Official Course Description:

This course explores social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, virtual worlds, online games, networked communities, new media and e-learning. It examines topics including online identity, gender in cyberspace, videogame culture, Web 2.0, digital design, surveillance and privacy.

Winter 2019

Evaluation Breakdown:

Online Identity Assignment	15%
Midterm	20%
Group Presentation	20%
Pop Quizzes	10%
Course Wiki Contributions	10%
Final Exam	25%

1. Online Identity Assignment DUE: Jan. 31
Students will write a 750-1000 word evaluation of their online "footprint", assessing what parts of their lives are publicly accessible and what some of the possible implications for their online (and offline) identities.

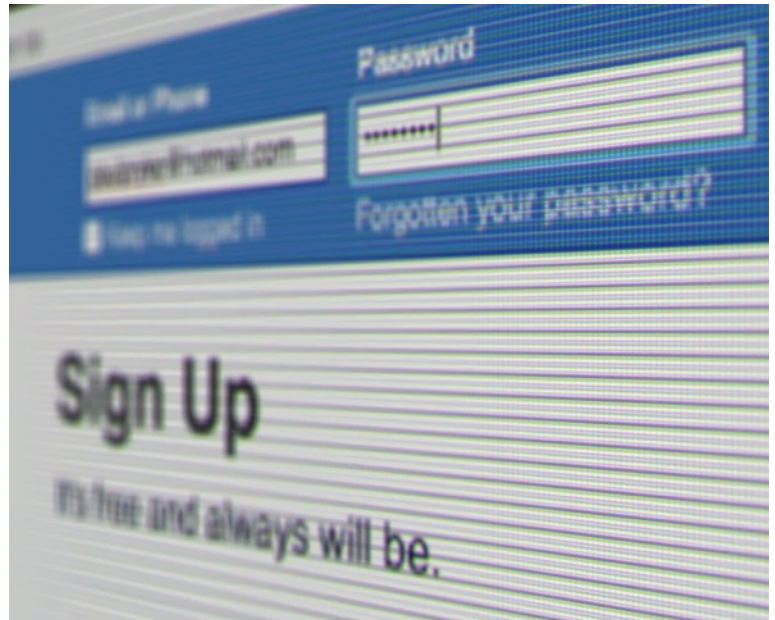
2. Midterm DATE: Feb. 14
Students will write an in-class midterm based on all course readings and lectures up to that point. The format will consist of multiple choice, short answer questions and essay questions. (Midterms missed with valid accommodation will be written Mar. 1.)

3. Group Presentation DATE: Various
At the start of the term, students will be divided into groups of four or five. Beginning the week of February 8, each group will be assigned a class in which they will report on a case study dealing with a reading or theme in the course. Presentations will run approximately 20 minutes, with 10 minutes set aside for class discussion, which will be facilitated and moderated by that week's group members.

4. Pop Quizzes DATE: Various
Throughout the semester, pop quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class. The five highest-scoring quizzes for each student will count toward the final grade.

5. Course Wiki Contributions DATE: Ongoing
Students will be encouraged to collaborate on a wiki on the course's OWL site: this can include annotations for course readings, lecture notes, or other study aids. At the end of the term, the frequency and quality of each student's contributions will be assessed.

6. Final Exam DATE: TBA
This will cover all course material and take place during the official final exam period in April. It will consist of multiple choice and essay questions.



Course Policies

Late policy: All assignments are due in class before the beginning of lecture; any handed in afterwards will be considered one day late. Late assignments will have 5% deducted from the grade for every calendar day they are overdue (this includes weekends). Late assignments must be handed in via the FIMS office, and be date-stamped. Assignments more than a week late will receive a mark of zero. There will be no exceptions without proper academic accommodation.

Email policy: Please e-mail me about any course-related questions you may have. Be advised, however, that I have other commitments and sometimes cannot respond right away. I regularly check and answer university emails on Mondays and Thursdays, so it might be 2 or 3 days before I can get back to you.

Please check your university email account regularly. Email/OWL will be the primary means of communication with the class, and over the course of the term I may send you reminders and supplementary materials electronically.

Electronic devices policy: Laptops and mobile devices may only be used for note-taking in class, whose use (barring official accommodation) is a privilege. However, due to the nature of the course, monitored use of social media may be allowed as part of class activities. No electronic devices are permitted in exams.



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JPim Pimentel @Ja
Programmatic kid | c
eater | former @razo
valley born & bred



BGR  @BGR
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Lecture Schedule:

Part I: Critiquing Social Media

Week 1 January 10

Introduction: What is Social Media?

Readings: Fuchs Chapter 1

Week 2 January 17

Identity and Social Norms

Readings: Fuchs Chapter 2; Baym, "New Relationships, New Selves"

Week 3 January 24

Participation and Power

Readings: Fuchs Chapters 3-4

Part II: The Business of Networking

Week 4 January 31

Online Identity Assignment Due

Political Economy

Readings: Fuchs Chapter 5; Keogh, "Triple-A, Indie, Casual, and DIY"

Week 5 February 7

1-2 in-class group presentations

Labour and Ideology

Readings: Fuchs Chapter 6; Huntemann, "Women in Video Games"

Week 6 February 14

Midterm Exam

Week 7 Reading Week - No Class

Week 8 February 28

1-2 in-class group presentations

Surveillance and the Public Sphere

Readings: Fuchs Chapters 7-8

Week 9 March 7

Up to 5 in-class group presentations

Group Presentation week

Part III: Living Online

Week 10 March 14

1-2 in-class group presentations

Activism and Serious Games

Readings: Bogost, "Political Processes"; Coleman, "Shot Heard Round the World"

Week 11 March 21

1-2 in-class group presentations

Gender and Misogyny

Readings: Massanari, "GamerGate"; Jane, "Online Misogyny"

Week 12 March 28

1-2 in-class group presentations

Collaboration and Crowdtwork

Readings: Fuchs Chapter 11; Marvit, "Ghosts in the Digital Machine"

Week 13 April 4

Review/Conclusion

Course Textbook (Available at the Western Bookstore):

Fuchs, Christian. 2017. *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Additional Course Readings (Available via the course's OWL site):

- Baym, Nancy K. 2015. 'New Relationships, New Selves'. In *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*, 2nd ed., 99–121. Digital Media and Society Series. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Bogost, Ian. 2007. 'Political Processes'. In *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames*, 67–98. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Coleman, Gabriella. 2014. 'The Shot Heard Round the World'. In *Hacker, Hoaxer, Whistleblower, Spy: The Many Faces of Anonymous*, 113–42. London: Verso.
- Huntemann, Nina. 2013. 'Women in Video Games: The Case of Hardware Production and Promotion'. In *Gaming Globally*, edited by Nina Huntemann and Ben Aslinger, 41–57. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jane, Emma A. 2016. 'Online Misogyny and Feminist Digilantism'. *Continuum* 30 (3): 284–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2016.1166560>.
- Keogh, Brendan. 2015. 'Between Triple-A, Indie, Casual, and DIY: Sites of Tension in the Videogames Cultural Industries'. In *The Routledge Companion to the Cultural Industries*, edited by Kate Oakley and Justin O'Connor, 152–162. London; New York: Routledge.
- Marvit, Moshe Z. 2014. 'How Crowdworkers Became the Ghosts in the Digital Machine'. *The Nation*, 5 February 2014. <https://www.thenation.com/article/how-crowdworkers-became-ghosts-digital-machine/>.
- Massanari, Adrienne. 2017. '#Gamergate and The Fapping: How Reddit's Algorithm, Governance, and Culture Support Toxic Technocultures'. *New Media & Society* 19 (3):329–46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815608807>.

NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2019

Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software Turnitin under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Medical Consideration

Students seeking academic consideration on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth **10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling

office of their home Faculty and provide documentation in the form of a [Student Medical Certificate](#). It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if consideration is warranted.

For work worth **less than 10% of the final grade**, the instructor will consider requests for academic consideration on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or by appointment in office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may decide to require documentation be submitted to the appropriate Academic Counselling office.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on consideration for medical illness, see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Compassionate Accommodation

Academic accommodation (extensions, makeup tests and exams, additional assignments etc.) may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.) or emergency situations. Documentation is required.

If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Counsellor. If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire or some other exceptional crisis, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request. Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation. For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation. Students seeking additional bereavement leave should contact their Academic Counsellors with valid documentation.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

FIMS Undergraduate Grading Policy

The MIT, MPI and MTP programs now have the following class average policy:

- Normally, first year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.
- Normally, second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%.
- Normally, third year required courses (MIT 3000, 3100) are expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

Elective courses and 4th year seminars have no recommended course averages.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>

SUPPORT SERVICES – LINKS

Office of the Registrar:

www.registrar.uwo.ca

Student Development Centre:

www.sdc.uwo.ca

Psychological Services:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych

Services for Students with Disabilities:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd

Accessibility Information:

www.accessibility.uwo.ca/

Writing Support Centre:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing

Learning Skills Services:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning

Indigenous Services:

<http://indigenous.uwo.ca/>

International and Exchange Student

Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/int

Career Centre at Western:

www.success.uwo.ca/careers/

Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

Stages in the Appeals Process:

The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor. For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee. Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.

If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:

1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2. if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.

The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.

Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.