

MIT 2155: SOCIAL MEDIA, VIRTUAL GAMING + NETWORKED LIFE

instructor:
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Lecture:
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Western University

**Faculty of
Information and Media
Studies**

WINTER 2020

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.

SYLLABUS CONTENTS:

Evaluation Breakdown	2
Course Policies	2
Lecture Schedule	3
Course Readings	4
Fine Print and Student Resources	5
Appendices: Grading and Appeals	6

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. 29**

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. 12**

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 Feb. 14.)

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 5, 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.

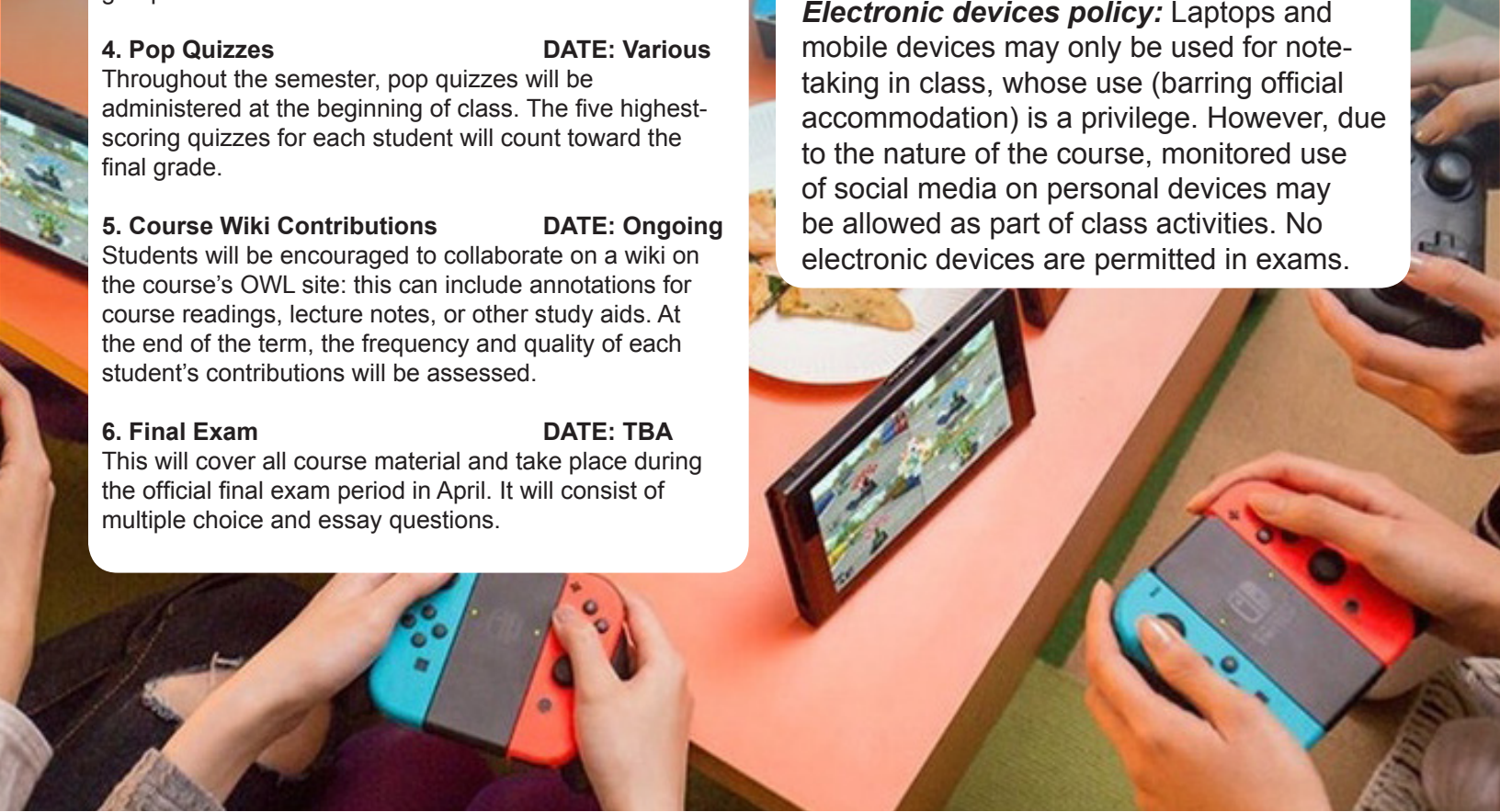
COURSE POLICIES

Late policy: All assignments are due in class before the beginning of lecture; any handed in afterward 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 during the term I may send you reminders and supplementary materials electronically.

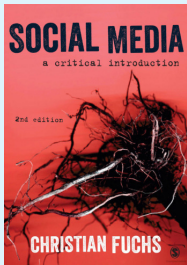
Electronic devices policy: Laptops and mobile devices may only be used for note-taking in class, whose use (barring official accommodation) is a privilege. However, due to the nature of the course, monitored use of social media on personal devices may be allowed as part of class activities. No electronic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



LECTURE SCHEDULE:

Week #1	January 8	
Introduction: What is Social Media?		
Readings: Fuchs Chapter 1; Roth et al., "Assigning Wikipedia Editing"		
Week #2	January 15	
Identity and Social Norms		
Readings: Fuchs Chapter 2; Baym, "New Relationships, New Selves"		
Week #3	January 22	
Participation and Power		
Readings: Fuchs Chapters 3-4		
Week #4	January 29	Online Identity Assignment Due
Political Economy		
Readings: Fuchs Chapter 5; Keogh, "Triple-A, Indie, Casual, and DIY"		
Week #5	February 5	1-2 in-class group presentations
Labour and Ideology		
Readings: Fuchs Chapter 6; Huntemann, "Women in Video Games"		
Week #6	February 12	
Midterm Exam		
Week #7	February 19	
Winter Reading Week: No Class		
Week #8	February 26	1-2 in-class group presentations
Surveillance and the Public Sphere		
Readings: Fuchs Chapters 7-8		
Week #9	March 4	up to 5 in-class group presentations
Group Presentation week		
Week #10	March 11	1-2 in-class group presentations
Activism and Serious Games		
Readings: Bogost, "Political Processes"; Coleman, "Shot Heard Round the World"		
Week #11	March 18	1-2 in-class group presentations
Gender and Misogyny		
Readings: Massanari, "GamerGate"; Jane, "Online Misogyny"		
Week #12	March 25	1-2 in-class group presentations
Collaboration and Crowdswork		
Readings: Fuchs Chapter 11; Marvit, "Ghosts in the Digital Machine"		
Week #13	April 1	
Conclusion and Review		

COURSE READINGS:



Course Textbook (Available at UWO Bookstore):

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

Other Readings (Available via the course 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 Fappening: How Reddit's Algorithm, Governance, and Culture Support Toxic Technocultures". *New Media & Society* 19 (3):329–46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815608807>.

Roth, Amy, Rochelle Davis, and Brian Carver. 2013. "Assigning Wikipedia Editing: Triangulation Toward Understanding University Student Engagement". *First Monday* 18 (6). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v18i6.4340>.

JPim Pimentel @Jayne

Programmatic kid | digital media chick | steak eater | former @razorfish @adaptly | silicon valley born & bred



Following

NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2020

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 Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the

semester, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- during exam periods,
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are NOT met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate, if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact the FIMS Undergraduate Student Services Office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

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 required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [Policy on Academic Consideration For Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#) and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

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

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](#).

Grading at FIMS

- 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

g

Indigenous Services:

[http://indigenous.uwo.c](http://indigenous.uwo.ca/)

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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.