The University of Western Ontario
Faculty of Information and Media Studies

MIT 3375G – Social Networking: Theory and Practice – Winter 2022

Instructor Information
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Office Hours: By email only
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Course Information
Lectures: 1:30-4:30 FNB 2240

Prerequisites
None

Course Syllabus

With the widespread prominence of social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook, certain questions arise as to how virtual selves are constructed, how social networking actually "works" as a social venue in what is called "digital participatory culture," and the limitations inherent to this fusion of Internet technology and the public sphere. With each progressive development in information technology, new and arguably more inclusive methods of social interaction come to the fore. From "pen pal" clubs, right up to online dating sites and Peer-to-Peer networking, the focus has been on the formation of new social and service-based bonds. This course will survey the history of social networking and consider its impact, as well as its multitude of alternate uses, as a professional, social and corporate platform.

The act of social networking tells us very little about its sociological, historical and psychological contexts. This course will ask the key questions of *what is a social network? What is it made of? How is it maintained? What are the social and ethical issues involved in social networking?*

Course Materials
The course is primarily lecture-based. That being said, I will be providing articles for your interest via our forums.

Course delivery with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic

Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, the changing COVID-19 landscape may necessitate some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

*Until in-person classes resume, this course is being delivered **asynchronously**, and so lectures are viewable on OWL.*

When deemed necessary, tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide personal information (including some biometric data) and the session will be recorded. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at: https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca.

Course Itinerary (this is tentative and subject to modifications on a circumstantial basis):

L	Topics	Theme
1	Introduction; overview, customs, beliefs, hierarchy of needs	
2	Social Network Analysis (SNA): The Basics, From Nodes to Networks.	SNA, ANT, Nodocentrism
3	Pederasty / Ancient Greeks, Roman Bathing, Middle Ages, chivalry, rise of towns, taverns, expansion of commerce, booze, coffee.	Ancient Networking, Dyadic Mentorships, History of offline networks
4	Religion and secret societies, terrorism, mafia	The Dark Side of Social Networks
5	BOTS, BOTnet, MIP, influence. The Mystic Algorithm.	Social Software
6	Online communities, UGC, comment pits. Forums to Facebook	Comment Culture
7	Liking, Rating, Ranking. Microblogging (Twitter)	Interactive Environments
8	Surveillance and Selection, cyberullying, libel	Monitoring and Management, Private v. Public
9	Friend or follow: digital narcissism, addiction	Cyberpsychology
10	Social Media Literacy - Key Issues	Critical Internet Studies, Immaterial Labour, Prosumerism
11	For Profit? Goldfarming, online commerce, data-mining	Social Capital, the anti-social network
12	"Webschmerz," The Great Unplugged, social media and oil	The Future of Social Media

10% - Detox Diary **January 17**

20% Diary Report **January 31**

20% - Precis/Proposal of Final Paper (500 words excluding bibliography) **February 28**

40% - Final Research Paper **March 25**

10% - Participation Self Evaluation **March 25**

*All assignments are due digitally on OWL before 11:55 PM on the due date *Note:
Assignment details and digital syllabus will be made available electronically

Students will receive graded work worth no less than 15% at least 3 days prior to the deadline for withdrawal without academic penalty. Students can find details about this academic policy here: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/evaluation_undergrad.pdf. Please note, students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the grades they have received in their courses.

Course Policies

Course Conduct
The use of electronic devices (laptops, tablets, phones) are for class-related purposes only. Do not abuse the privilege of using laptops for non-course related activities. Phones are only permitted to take pictures of complex lecture slides. The use of phones in class for other purposes is rude, insulting, and distracting to our shared learning environment. _Students who cannot put away their phones during class time will be asked to leave. They may be asked to schedule an appointment with the Associate Dean and/or academic counselling to discuss their classroom conduct, and will need to provide a letter to the instructor acknowledging the violation, and a plan to ensure it does not recur, prior to being readmitted to the classroom environment._

Communication/Consultation
I make every effort to be as flexible as possible in accommodating student requests for consultation. During peak times (generally prior to when an assignment comes due), it may be more difficult to contact me. You may wish to "beat the rush", which means beginning your assignments earlier and coming to me with issues as they arise.

The email-only consultation model has been adopted for its many benefits, and to overcome many of the impediments of in-person consultation. As ever more students appear to be experiencing difficulty articulating their thoughts in written form (a form that is critical to the mission and meaning of academia itself), this serves as an ideal communication channel to practice those skills, whilst also affording more opportunity for all concerned to reflect on questions prior to responding as opposed to giving "off the cuff" replies as is typical in verbal communications.

My policy concerning email is that I endeavour to respond within 24 hours, and at reasonable times. That means you should not expect an immediate reply to your email delivered at 2 am or on weekends until the usual working week and daylight hours. That means 9 to 5, Monday to Friday. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, please resend. NB: If I need to get in contact with you about an urgent matter, please do make a habit of keeping sufficient space on your account so the email does not bounce.

* Emails *should not* contain questions easily answered by either the syllabus or assignment documents.

* *I will read working thesis statements or discuss research questions, but please do not ask me to read entire drafts of assignments out of fairness for my time, and those students who cannot benefit from such feedback. Taking some risk and initiative is a part of life. My full feedback is provided once the assignment is officially submitted, not before.*

Late Assignment Policy

Late assignments will receive a zero. If extenuating circumstances prevent the timely submission of an assignment or paper, documentation is required (see Academic Accommodation below). All assignments must be submitted by the due date. IMPORTANT: Please do not send or show me medical notes - I value your privacy and do not have the specific authorization to vet medical notes.

If using a self-reported absence (SRA), please use them responsibly. The intended purpose of SRAs is for reasons that may not be covered by a typical request for accommodation, but should not be used to cover one's procrastination! Remember that any assignment extension means less time to complete the next assignment, setting up a possible "time crunch." As there is a limit to how many SRAs can be requested per semester, evaluate whether the situation would best be covered by going through the traditional method of speaking with your academic counsellor instead. If you have been approved for an SRA, the assignment must be submitted no later than 48 hours from the original due date.

If you have received accommodation through the counselling office, a confirmation email is sent to both the student and professor, asking the student to get in touch immediately to discuss a new due date. Please heed that request for immediacy.

Electronic Submission

All assignments are to be submitted via our Learning Management System (OWL). No paper copies. Unless otherwise specified, please submit as a PDF.

Work Submission and Feedback

Apart from extenuating circumstances, I generally have a one or two week turnaround policy, which means I will have your work graded with feedback ready online. Pending my workload, you may receive feedback much sooner. If you submit sooner, you may also receive feedback sooner, which may be a great way of decreasing academic stress toward the end of the semester.

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_pol icies/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_und ergrad.pdf

Plagiarism
Students must write their essays and assignments, including take-home exams, 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 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 two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the
term, 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 or equivalent documentation, 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:

In the event of a Covid-19 resurgence, it is possible that different procedures may need to be put in place on short notice.

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
Mental Health Support: https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html **Accessible Education:** http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html
Accessibility Information: www.accessibility.uwo.ca/
Writing Support Centre: http://writing.uwo.ca/ **Learning Skills Services:** https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/
Academic Learning and Support for Online Learning: https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/types/academic-and-learning-support.html
Indigenous Services: https://indigenous.uwo.ca/
Western International: https://international.uwo.ca/

Career Centre:
http://careerexperience.uwo.ca/

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 ap-**

pointed 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.