

ANT 291: Social Networks and Social Media
Fall 2017, MWF 9:30-10:20am, Chambers 1027

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Office Hours: M, W, F 10:30 – 11:30 am
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This course introduces students to the theories and research methodologies of social network analysis (SNA) and the anthropological study of social media. SNA is the study of patterns of connections between things (people, ideas, etc.), an analytical method that is especially suited to understanding social media and the impact of information technology on society. Because of advancements in information and communication technology, everyday social life is shaped by social media, the internet, and other methods of virtually connecting. Throughout the semester, students will learn how to analyze social networks using R, an open-source language and environment for statistical computing. Emphasis is placed on developing the critical and methodological skills needed for doing fieldwork virtually, but no previous computer programming is expected or required.

Because of the significant amount of time and skill necessary in cyber-research, projects will be done within groups. While individuals within a group may specialize in a particular aspect of the project, I will expect everyone to have a strong working knowledge of all the various aspects of research, analysis and online dissemination. Students will be expected to participate in the Davidson Domains project.

Learning Goals and Assessments

1. Students will understand how social network analysis reveals the structure within which society and culture work.
Your weekly column and the final project itself will give you multiple opportunities to think through issues in social network analysis and social media.
2. Students will be able to apply different theoretical perspectives from social network analysis and social media to mediated communities that they participate in or encounter. Your course project, in which you will use social network analysis to explore a particular community, will require you to use the theories and methods from this class.
3. Students will be able to use analytical technology such as R and information technology such as WordPress to create their own websites.
This will be accomplished through your submissions for this course. Lynda.com and other resources will augment your mastery of R/SNA and other software. In addition to myself, there are other campus resources (i.e., media tutors, CTL staff) that can help you with your course project.

Course Readings

All material for the course will be available electronically using your Davidson account or through open-access. While all these e-books can be purchased as print books, it is not required for you to buy print or e-books. You are, however, required to read them.

- boyd, danah 2014. *It's Complicated: the Social Lives of Networked Teens*. New Haven: Yale University Press. <https://goo.gl/SYS5g0>
- Easley, David and Jon Kleinberg 2010. *Networks, Crowds, and Markets: Reasoning about a Highly Connected World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://goo.gl/DvobdH>
- Horst, Heather A, and Daniel Miller 2012 *Digital Anthropology*. London; New York: Berg. <https://goo.gl/gm7yrq>
- Miller, Daniel et.al. 2016. *How the World Changed Social Media*. London: University College of London Press. <https://goo.gl/nKWLrs>
- Whitehead, Neil L., and Michael Wesch 2012 *Human No More: Digital Subjectivities, Unhuman Subjects, and the End of Anthropology*. University Press of Colorado. <https://goo.gl/c468fs>

Optional:

- Boellstorff, Tom 2008. *Coming of Age in Second Life: An Anthropologist Explores the Virtually Human*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Luke, Douglas A. 2015. *A User's Guide to Network Analysis in R*. New York: Springer. <https://goo.gl/IlwaV0>
- Nardi, Bonnie 2010. *My Life as a Night Elf Priest: An Anthropological Account of World of Warcraft*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Zweig, Katharina 2016. *Network Analysis Literacy: A Practical Approach to the Analysis of Networks*. Vienna: Springer Books. <https://goo.gl/8Cu1kg>

Additional articles will be available on the course moodle.

Course Requirements

The most important work in this course is to be prepared for each seminar meeting; this means having thoroughly read the material and being prepared to discuss particular points from the reading. Because this seminar also has an online component, being prepared also means having participated by writing columns for the course website. Readings are due on the day listed in the class schedule. Your engagement with the material and mastery of the online skills is vital for the success of this learning experience.

Class Participation: (15%) Students are expected to attend all classes, do the readings and computer exercises prior to class, and discuss the implications of the issues in the classroom. Your participation grade also includes (5% of your overall grade) timely submission of CATME peer evaluations.

Weekly Column: (10%) Each week, students will write a short column in WordPress (no more than 2 pages single-spaced text in a word document) that could be theoretical or methodological

commentary. It must also include some kind of media, whether a picture or video that you provide or one that you find from the web (properly linked back to the original site). It should also include links to other sites. You should feel free to write whatever you feel is relevant. They are due prior to the start of each Monday meeting. **LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Learning Tools: (25%) After setting up a domain, students will learn at least two tools – WordPress and R. This is part of the “Davidson Domains” campus project; we will talk about this in more detail in class.

Social Network Analysis Project: (50%). The course project will be conducted as part of a group and will be divided into various submissions throughout the semester. The group’s task is to conduct social network analysis with an existing organization (community, interest, or student organization) and their use of social media. You will be graded as a group, but part of individual grades will be determined from a self-examination conducted by the group (using CATME).

- Proposal (including bibliography, references): 5% (due 2 October 2017) Proposals should specify one article on SNA/Social Media that your group feels should be read by the entire class.
- CATME Peer Assessment: 5% (TBD, near end of semester)
- Data Visualization Component: 10% (due 6 November 2017)
- Final Project: 30% (first draft due 20 November, final due 7 December)

This course counts for major credit in anthropology and minor credit in digital studies. Evaluation will follow the 4.0 grade scale, where an A is a 4.0, A- is 3.7, B+ is 3.3, etc., as detailed in the college catalog.

For an explanation of how I grade and my teaching philosophies, please read the material on my website in the “Teaching Philosophy” section.

While I encourage students to work with each other outside of class, all graded, written work must be your own and verbally pledged accordingly. All work is subject to the Davidson College Honor Code as stated in the student handbook. If there are **individual accommodations for special needs**, please let me know and authorize the Dean of Students to contact me so that we can work something out.

Schedule (subject to modification)

21 August	Introduction to the Course Reading: Escobar 1994, Welcome to Cyberia
23 August	Social Network Analysis and Social Media – the Big Picture Reading: Rainie and Wellman 2012 Networked Chapter 2 https://goo.gl/JyCrLf ; danah boyd and Kate Crawford 2011, Six Provocations for Big Data
25 August	Digital Identities Reading: Horst and Miller Chapter 1; Haraway 1991, A Cyborg Manifesto; Turkel 1994, Constructions and Reconstructions of Self in Virtual Reality Assignment: Set up your Davidson Domains account
28 August	Social Network Analysis Media: Nicholas Christakis, The hidden influence of social networks, https://goo.gl/4uWkNh Reading: Easley and Kleinberg 2010, Chapters 1 and 2
30 August	Reading: Easley and Kleinberg 2010, Chapter 3
1 September	Reading: Easley and Kleinberg 2010, Chapter 4 Assignment: Install R, RStudio, and the package igraph on your personal computer.
4 September	Social Media: It's Complicated Media: Sherry Turkle, Connected, but alone? https://goo.gl/nVVdHZ Reading: boyd, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2
6 September	Reading: boyd, Chapters 3-5
8 September	Reading: boyd, Chapters 6-8 No Class: ASIANetwork Board Meeting
11 September	More on Social Media Reading: Miller et.al. 2016, Chapters 1 and 2
13 September	Reading: Miller et.al. 2016, Chapters 3 and 4
15 September	Reading: Miller et.al. 2016, Chapter 8 Gender and Chapter 9 Inequality Assignment: Finish Network Analysis and Visualization with R and igraph tutorial, https://goo.gl/FneFVd
18 September	Case Studies: Gathering Data for SNA Reading: Padgett & Ansell 1993
20 September	Reading: Healy 2013, Using Metadata to Find Paul Revere, https://goo.gl/e01mUY
22 September	Reading: Ahnert 2013, Network Analysis and Data Mining in Food Science
25 September	Reading: Grandjean 2016, Mapping the digital humanities community
27 September	Reading: Garcia et.al. 2016
29 September	Guest Lecturer: Prof. Katya Ognyanova, Rutgers University
2 October	Reading: Horst and Miller, Chapter 3 – New Media Technologies in Everyday Life Assignment: Proposal Due

4 October	Reading: Horst and Miller, Chapter 5 – Disability in the Digital Age
6 October	Reading: Horst and Miller Chapter 11 – Digital Engagement: Voice and Participation in Development
9 October	Fall Break
11 October	Reading: Coleman 2010, Ethnographic Approaches to Digital Media
13 October	Student Topics 1 Reading: TBD by student groups
16 October	Student Topics 2 Reading: TBD by student groups
18 October	Student Topics 3 Reading: TBD by student groups
20 October	Student Topics 4 Reading: TBD by student groups
23 October	Student Topics 5 Reading: TBD by student groups
25 October	Student Topics 6 Reading: TBD by student groups
27 October	Student Topics 7 Reading: TBD by student groups
30 October	Student Topics 8 Reading: TBD by student groups
1 November	Student Topics 9 Reading: TBD by student groups
3 November	Student Topics 10 Reading: TBD by student groups
6 November	Issues in SNA and Social Media Reading: Caliandro 2017 Assignment: Data Visualization due
8 November	Reading: Kenna and MacCarron 2017
10 November	Reading: Tufekci 2012, We Were Always Human (in Whitehead and Wesch, Ch 2)
13 November	In Class Work-Day – meet in classroom to finish projects
15 November	In Class Work-Day – meet in classroom to finish projects
17 November	In Class Work-Day – meet in classroom to finish projects
20 November	Reading: The Flight from Conversation, https://goo.gl/sBEI7y Media: Sherry Turkle, Reclaiming Conversation https://goo.gl/FbpbkR4 Assignment: Project Draft Due
22-24 November	Thanksgiving Break
27 November	Reading: Miller and Sinanan 2017, Visualizing Facebook Ch 2
29 November	Reading: Drazin 2013, Design Anthropology (in Horst and Miller, Ch 12)
1 December	No Class: American Anthropological Association annual meeting in Washington, DC
4 December	Last Day of Class
7 December	Assignment: Projects Due by 9:00am, electronic submission