

Ryerson University – Sociology

SOC 479: Communities and Social Network

Monday, 10:10AM to 1:00PM, Rogers Communications Centre RCC 203

Instructor: Prof. Paul S. Moore (psmoore@ryerson.ca)
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Office Hours: Prof. Moore: Mondays, 1:30PM to 2:30pm, or by appointment

I will normally reply to E-mail or phone messages within 48 hours. E-mail is best used as business communications. To discuss ideas and the substance of lectures, assignments, or activities, it is best to meet with me in person during office hours or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an in-depth analysis of social, spatial, and virtual communities, as they exist in modern urban environments. The course looks at the plurality and complexity of face-to-face communities and virtual spaces. These include a variety of groupings and social groupings based on common identity, social position, and roles.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Communities are communication networks. Of course, they mean much more to their members, but without forms of communication—without social networks—our lives would not be social. The course focuses especially on the role of communication technologies, historic and contemporary, to understand how our face-to-face daily lives exist within global structures. Weekly lectures begin with concepts and themes from communication and cultural studies in order to develop provocative arguments about the various ways social networks shape the work and play of “your” world and “the” world.

We will start with our personal Facebook “social networks” (Will everyone in class be on Facebook?), and look back at the history of promises of “perfect communication” through old “new” medias, in order to see the interconnectivity of a network society as both promise and threat to civic society and civilization, or at least civility. “Viral” is both a fear of contagion and the potential for instant fame; “Securities” are simultaneously units of capitalism and measures to prevent acts of terror; “Cosmopolitanism” is both global citizenship and the end of local cultures; revolutions of the Arab Spring coincide with London riots and Vancouver hooliganism.

Twice during the course, you will be tested on your understanding of concepts thus far. You will keep at-least weekly thoughts and comments about issues and ideas on a blog roll; and are invited to share and follow each others’ streams. You will return to one theme in the course and develop it into a full research essay in lieu of a final exam.

TEXTBOOK *Intersections of Media and Communications: Concepts & Critical Frameworks*. Straw, Gabriele, and Wagman, eds. (Toronto: Edmond Montgomery Publishing, 2011).

REQUIRED WORK AND GRADING STRUCTURE:

Component	Format	Value	Due Dates
In-Class Tests	Two 90 minute In-Class Quizzes on Concepts, and Analysis of Case Study	2 x 20% = 40%	Oct 17 and Nov 14
Research Essay	10-12 page written analysis of process and research	35%	Due Wed, Dec 14, strictly by 5PM
Reflective Blog	At least 10 Blog entries reflecting on weekly readings, lectures, concepts	20%	3 done by Test 1; 3 more by Test 2
Essay Proposal	An 11 th Blog Entry must be a statement of your plans for the essay	5%	8pm on Sunday, November 27

In-Class Tests (90 minutes, on October 17 and November 14).....2 x 20% = 40%
Covers basic concepts and definitions of most recent lectures, and an analysis of a case study.

Research Essay (8-10 pages; Due Wednesday, December 14, 5PM)..... 35%
Return to one of the lecture topics and expand into a full research essay, starting with the bibliographies of required readings and suggested readings.

Reflective Blog Entries as Participation in Discussion 20%

Essay Proposal as Blog Entry (Due by 8pm on Sunday, November 27) 5%
Briefly (and interactively?) summarize your argument and plans for the essay.

PRIVACY/PUBLICITY CONCERNS

Mutual respect and consideration is essential, and will be monitored, because we may all (myself included) create publicly-accessible blogs (recommended: wordpress), in order to all follow each other (and perhaps comment on each others' blogs). We will discuss risks and norms involved in this aspect of the course. Students who wish to keep only a private blog may set such security settings to private, and provide Prof. Moore with a direct link to your work. Ask about options.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As in all courses, you are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct. Read about the Code, issues around proper citation, cheating, and plagiarism, and consider your student rights and responsibilities at the following Ryerson website: www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity

ACCESS CENTRE

Students requiring assistance and accommodations for their circumstances should introduce themselves to me *immediately* to discuss a plan for the course.

Schedule of Activities, Readings, and Lectures

- Start each week with the textbook chapter (except in Week 7 the two journal articles), for concepts, vocabulary, definitions.
- The two mid-terms tests will focus especially upon that foundation, applied to a given example or news item. I will provide test review sheets listing all concepts to review.
- In lectures, I will expand upon the textbook to deliver an argument about the connections between local, face-to-face practice and global networks. I have tried to include some academic articles, magazine features, journalism, book reviews, and other items to hint upon the lecture. Consider these suggested readings.
- For your final essay, you will return to a particular week (or your own combination) and use the textbook chapters' bibliographies, my suggested readings, and your own further research to help support your essay argument.
- On Blackboard or on e-mail weekly, I may add or change links and suggested readings.

SECTION ONE: MEDIATION – INTERACTIVITY AND INTERACTION

Week One – Sept. 12: The Social Network, Your Own Social Network

Intersections (Chapter 12): Strangelove, “New Media Culture”

Ryan Singel, “[Facebook's Gone Rogue](#)”. *Wired Magazine*, 7 May 2010.

Case Study: map your Facebook social network atop your daily interaction social networks

Week Two – Sept. 19: “Mobility” and Myths of Perfect Communication

Intersections (Chapter 7): Gabriele and Moore, “Media R/Evolutions”

Richard Grusin. “Remediation,” *Configurations* 4:3. Fall 1996. 311-358

Intersections (Chapter 4): Beaty and Sullivan, “Media Forms, Interfaces, and Formats,” for definitions

Week 3 – Sept 26: Hybridity and the Human-Machine

Intersections (Chapter 10): Wershler, “Cultural Ownership, Copyright, and Intellectual Property”

Cathy Gere, “Dying and Not Dying,” review of Skloot, *The Immoral Life of Henrietta Lacks*.

Jenny Diski, “On the Beach,” review of Nippert-Eng, *Islands of Privacy*.

Donna Haraway, “Cyborgs, Dogs, and Companion Species,” On [YouTube](#)

Donna Haraway, “[A Cyborg Manifesto](#),” from *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (Routledge, 1991).

Week 4 – Oct 3: “Cosmopolitanism” and the Global City

Intersections, Chapter 6: Darroch, “Language and Media”

Benedict Anderson, from *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1983)

Kwame Anthony Appiah, from *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (Penguin, 2007)

Week 5 – Oct 17: 90 minutes in-class test on Weeks 2-4

Case Study to Introduce Section Two: Nigeria as site of E-waste and CyberCrime

NOTE: Class ends by 12:30 on Oct. 17, and office hour cancelled today after test.

SECTION TWO: INTERCONNECTIVITY AND NETWORK SOCIETY

Week 6 – Oct 24: “Viral” Diseases, “Viral” Videos

Intersections, Chapter 16: Best, “Speed, Sensation, and Stimulation”

Paul Virillio, from [The Information Bomb](#) (Verso, 2005).

Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life (1903),” from *Simmel on Culture*.

Week 7 – Oct 31: “Securities” Terrorism, Airports, Global Trading

Lee & LiPuma, “Financial Derivatives and the Rise of Circulation,” *Economy and Society* 34 (2005): 404-427.

Karin Knorr-Cetina, “Complex Global Microstructures: The New Terrorist Societies,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 22 (2005): 213-234.

Bill Saporito, “[Hack Attack](#),” *Time Magazine* 23 June 2011.

Marc Auge, from *Non-Places: Anthropology of Supermodernity* (Verso, 1995)

Week 8 – Nov 7: “Fundamentalism,” Religions, Social Movements, State Regulation

Intersections, Chapter 11: Greenberg and Gilberds, “Alternative Media”

Chris Atton, “Reshaping Social Movement Media for a New Millenium,” *Social Movement Studies*. 2, no. 1 (2003): 3-15.

Malcolm Gladwell, “[Does Egypt Need Twitter?](#)” *The New Yorker* 2 Feb 2011.

Gladwell, “[Small Change](#): Why the Revolution will not be tweeted,” *New Yorker* 4 Oct 2010.

Slavoj Zizek, “[Shoplifters of the World Unite](#),” *London Review of Books* 19 Aug 2011.

Zygmunt Bauman, “[The London Riots](#),” *Social Europe Journal* 9 August 2011.

Week 9 – Nov 14: 90 minutes in-class test on Weeks 6-9

Case Study to Introduce Section Three: Dumpster Diving and Food as a Form of Communication

SECTION THREE: CIRCULATION OF SURPLUS AND WASTE

Week 10 – Nov 21: “Second-Hand” Culture and Nostalgia

Intersections (Chapter 3): Straw, “Dimensions: Time and Space, Storage, and Transmission”

From Alexandra Palmer and Hazel Clark, eds. *Old Clothes, New Looks* (Berg, 2005).

Svetlana Boym, from *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

Week 11 – Nov 28: “Raising Consciousness” and Spectacles of Suffering

Intersections, Chapter 13: Gabriele and Lynch, “Journalism”

Clay Shirky. “Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable,” [online](#).

Luc Boltanski, from *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics* (Cambridge, 1999).

Week 12 – Friday, Dec 2: “Post-Human?” Post-Identity, Post-Gender, Post-Modern?

Intersections, Chapter 15: Boutros, “Media, Representation, and Identity”

Bronwyn Winter, from *Hijab and the Republic* (Syracuse University Press, 2008).

Bronwyn Winter, “The Hijab is a Feminist Statement,” on [YouTube](#).

Eric Anderson, from *Inclusive Masculinity* (Routledge, 2009).