**SOCI 3360/INTS 4388–Special Topics: Big Data, Social Media & Society**

Winter Intersession – 2016-2017

Instructor: Professor David Arditi

Meets M/T/W/TH/F 8-11:45am

Room: UH 11

contact information

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Office | University Hall 423 | Email | darditi@uta.edu |
| Office Hours | By appointment | Web  Page | Course content on Blackboard |

Description

Google is omnipresent. Facebook connects friends. Twitter creates instant journalism. But how have social relations changed? Frequently, the new represents “the good,” progress and revolution, but in hindsight new media often do not change much, if anything, at all for the lives of most people. Worse yet, new media and big data often become the tools of power. The course will explore the following questions: How do people affect social media and big data? What affect do social media and big data have on society? Why is society so caught up in emerging media? What difference can people make on the development of new media technologies?

This course will look at the hype versus the reality of social media and big data. Students will critically examine the rhetoric surrounding the so-called social media revolution occurring around the world. The course will explore historical moments of media revolution in terms of the material effects on society. Finally, students will analyze the relationship between big data and democracy.

Student Learning Outcomes for Course

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

* Identify the constituent parts of social media.
* Understand how meaning is created about new media.
* Critique the way that power operates with digital media.
* Distinguish the social media from mass media.
* Examine issues of privacy on digital networks.
* Situate social media within the broader picture of global capitalism.

Textbook and Other Course Materials Requirements

Books for purchase:

Fuchs, Christian. 2013. *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Grading Policy

The following scale will be applied to both individual assignments and to the course grade as a whole:

**A= 90-100** points. An “A” reflects consistent excellence in the course, strong initiative, and the student’s commitment to his or her own learning and success.

**B=80-89** points. A “B” reflects work that is consistently above the minimum.

**C=70-79** points. A “C” reflects minimum proficiency in the main objectives of the course.

**D=60-69** points. A “D” reflects the fact that a student has not adequately engaged with the material of the class or has not given the instructor a sufficient basis for judgment because of unexcused failure to complete course work.

**F=<60** points. A failing grade will typically reflect missed assignments, academic honesty violations, and/or a lack of engagement with the course.

Grading rubrics will be made available for each assignment and will be posted in electronic form on the Blackboard page for each assignment. Students should consider the rubrics as guidelines for the expectations of the assignment and be aware that their grade will depend on fulfilling the criteria set forward in the rubric.

The student’s grade for the course will be based on the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Individual** | **Points** |
| Final Essay – the final paper will be a short research paper that focuses on your engagements with the texts from the semester. | 30 |
| Social Media Group Project – students will be split into teams. Each team will develop a plan\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. | 30 |
| In-class participation exercises, Attendance, etc. | 40 |
| **Total** | **100** |

**Late Work Policy**

* All due dates on the syllabus are firm and are defined to the minute.
* **Late work will not be accepted**

**Exceptions may be made when students present documentation of an unforeseeable, significant, and unavoidable situation that prevented their completion of the assignment on time.**

**The Instructor reserves the right to modify assignments with due notice.**

Attendance Policy

Attendance at class meetings is vital to student success and attendance at every session is the default expectation for the course. Students are expected to actively engage in class discussions to demonstrate reading and comprehension. Participation is also a vital part of the learning process. Since this is a winter term with longer classes, it is vitally important to attend class. This expectation will be backed up with in-class quizzes and assignments that will be given only in class.

* Since this course is a short winter course, attendance is mandatory. You will lose 4 points per day missed unless you have a documented illness, surgery or death in the family.
* You may have one unexcused absence.
* Each four hour class will be split-up into segments. On most days there will be allotted time in a computer lab for research on your final paper.

**COURSE CALENDAR—Winter 2016-17**

\*Note – Reading assignments should be done by the day that they are listed on the syllabus

Monday, December 19

* Introductions

Tuesday, December 20

* Marshall McLuhan – “The Medium is the Message” (Blackboard)
* Hello (hackable) Barbie <http://wpo.st/GFru0>

Wednesday December 21

* Fuchs Chapter 1 – What is a critical Introduction to Social Media?
* Fuchs Chapter 2 – What is Social Media?
* David Kushner - [The Darknet: Is the Government Destroying 'the Wild West of the Internet?'](http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-battle-for-the-dark-net-20151022)

Tuesday, January 3

* Fuchs Chapter 3 – Social Media as Participatory Culture
* Fuchs Chapter 4 – Social Media and Communication Power
* No one says ‘brb’ anymore because we never sign offline <http://wapo.st/1LjFEqA>

Wednesday, January 4

* Fuchs Chapter 5 – The Power and Political Economy of Social Media
* How Apple is trying to protect your privacy as its products get more personal <http://wapo.st/1MDaMnz>
* Snapchat wants to turn your life into a commercial <http://wapo.st/1Mj2IZc>

Thursday, January 5

* Fuchs Chapter 6 – Google: Good or Evil Search Engine?
* Alphabet, now Google’s overlord, ditches ‘Don’t be evil’ in favor of ‘do the right thing’ <http://wapo.st/1OSH6Gd>
* How to see everything you’ve ever Googled (if you’re so brave) <http://wapo.st/1Du6KGF>
* Google has a new tactic for fighting patent trolls: Buying the patents first - <http://wapo.st/1DEg3F7>

Friday, January 6

* A Critical Reflection of Big Data - <http://journals.uic.edu/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/4878/3755>

Monday, January 9

* Fuchs Chapter 7 – Facebook: A Surveillance Threat to Privacy?
* Fuchs Chapter 8 – Twitter and Democracy: A New Public Sphere?
* Facebook study says it’s mainly your fault–not theirs–that you read things you already agree with <http://wapo.st/1JSUoQJ>

Tuesday, January 10

* Fuchs Chapter 10 – Wikipedia
* Beyonce fans wrecked Beck’s Wikipedia page after the Grammys <http://wapo.st/1KLswde>

Wednesday, January 11

* Fuchs Chapter 11 - Conclusion
* Companies know where you went online. Now, they can follow you around in real life.

<http://wapo.st/1z9B6NV>

Thursday, January 12

* boyd, danah – [Viewing American class divisions through Facebook and MySpace](http://www.danah.org/papers/essays/ClassDivisions.html)
* Who’s off the Internet — and why <http://wapo.st/1PXiRY4>

Friday, January 13

**Final Exam due before 5pm via email**

“*As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course.” –David Arditi*

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Academic Integrity:** students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

Instructors may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Disability Accommodations:** UTArlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA),* and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.* All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of **a letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD).Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

**The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability).

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit*[*uta.edu/eos*](http://www.uta.edu/hr/eos/index.php)*.*

To create a safe environment, I personally extend the non-discrimination policy to include: gender-identity or expression, low-income, generation-related education opportunities, marital status, parental status and/or criminal record.

**Title IX Policy:** The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated.*For information regarding Title IX, visit* [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX) or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or [jmhood@uta.edu](file:///C:\Users\arditi\AppData\Local\Temp\jmhood@uta.edu).

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Surveys**: At the end of each term, students will be asked to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS) about the course and how it was taught. Instructions on how to access the SFS system will be sent directly to students through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback data is required by state law; student participation in the SFS program is voluntary.

**Campus Carry:** Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located as discussed in class. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.