

PSY 607: Psychology in a Networked Society (Fall 2014)

Tuesdays, 1:00 PM – 2:50 PM, Franklin 271B

Prof. Sanjay Srivastava

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Office hours: Wed 11-12 in Franklin 227, or by appointment

The massive growth of the Internet in the last 2 decades, and especially online social media more recently, has raised new questions and new opportunities for psychologists. Human behavioral data is now available on an unprecedented scale and complexity, creating opportunities for psychologists who can embrace “big data” methods and thinking. And the growth of the Internet, and especially social media, have generated new questions about how technology is changing things like attention, social interactions, attitudes and values, and even personality traits. This course will be organized around these 2 broad themes, one methodological and one topical. We will read about and discuss new methods for working with complex datasets, including network analysis, automated text analysis, data mining, etc. And we will read about research (using both “big” and “small” data methods) that investigates human psychology in a networked, digital world.

Class meetings

Class meetings will consist primarily of discussion. The night **before** each class meeting (no later than midnight), you should post to Blackboard three discussion questions based on the readings. We will use these discussion questions to guide our discussion.

Grading

Students who enroll for 3 credits will be graded based on class participation and on-time completion of assignments. If you have more than 1 unexcused absence or turn in work late or not at all, it will affect your grade.

Students who enroll for 4 credits will also be required to write a paper.

Final paper (4-credit option only)

For students enrolled for 4 credits, the final paper is due on Friday, December 5 by 5:00 PM. Your paper may be on a topic of your choosing that falls within the scope of the course, subject to my approval before you begin working. In the paper you will propose a line of research in the style of a grant application. I recommend that you meet with me before the end of October to discuss your topic. The formatting (citations, margins, spacing, etc.) should follow APA style for manuscripts. The body of the paper should be 8 to 10 pages, no longer. References, figures, etc. do not apply toward the page count.

Accessibility

If you anticipate needing any disability-related accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me as soon as possible. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center (aec.uoregon.edu).

Changes

Any aspect of this course, including topics, readings, or grading criteria, may be changed at my discretion. Changes will be announced in class or on Blackboard.

Schedule and readings

This is a brand-new topic for me (and I imagine for most of you) with a lot of different directions we could go. To get us started I have planned the first 3 weeks of the class. At our first class meeting we will discuss everyone's background and interests, and we will use that to make a plan for Weeks 4-10.

Here's the starting plan:

- Week 1: Introduction and organizational meeting (no readings)
- Week 2: Presentations on social computing systems (independent readings)
- Week 3: Networked society as a phenomenon and a method for psychology (2 assigned readings for the class)