Course Syllabus

STS 316

Investigating Cyberculture
Spring 2019
Professor Kurt Reymers, Ph.D.

Office Location: 205 Crawford
Office Hours: *M:* 11am-12pm
                       T, W, Th: 10am- 11am
                       or by appointment
e-mail: reymers@morrisville.edu
web: http://sociology.morrisville.edu

Course webpage: sociology.morrisville.edu/2019/spring/sts316
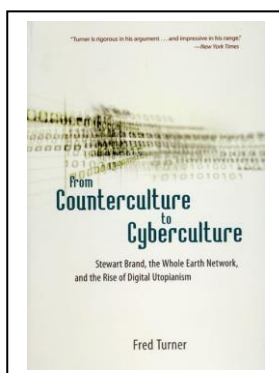
Course Description:
This course will examine the contemporary transformation in human interaction via computer technologies. Topics investigated through reading and research include: new concepts of space and time; electronic subjectivity and anonymity; new representations of gender, race and class; emergence of new forms of expression; glocalization and the trend in networked individualism and the impact of hypertext and multimedia technologies on human thinking and learning.

Students should be familiar with the use of computers and Internet browsers prior to registering for the course. This is most fundamentally a course in the *sociology of cyberspace*. Thus, a prerequisite of SOCI 101 (Introduction to Sociology) is required. The course fulfills an elective for the Science Technology and Society (STS) B.S. degree program, as well as list "C" (Social Science) general elective credit. It may fulfill other program requirements not listed here – check with your academic advisor to be sure you are taking the correct program required courses.

Course Outcomes: (1) to recognize the similarities and differences between traditional, modern and postmodern theories of society, particularly those regarding the Internet and cyberspace and their effects on culture and the individual; (2) to understand the methodological and theoretical issues involved in the sociological study of culture; (3) to engage in writing about an online setting. Outcomes will be measured using the evaluation criteria identified in the syllabus, below.

Content Warning (i.e., the small print): Since this is a class about culture and the Internet, and since the Internet is not typically censored in the United States, students should be aware that course content may involve objectionable images and/or text. It is in the pursuit of knowledge that we will examine any such content and it is expected that such content will be discussed within the context of a mature, evidential, journalistic and scientific perspective.

Texts and other requirements: (most available online and/or at the course website)

Fred Turner. 2006. From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, The Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism.

Other online resources will be made available on the course website for you to download and read/watch, including local PDF files, webpages, video, audio and other media on a regular basis. It is recommended that you print out readings and bring them to class, having annotated the material in the margins or in a separate notebook. Be sure to write notes on video/audio material as you watch/listen. Specific sources will appear weekly on the course webpage.

Course Evaluation:

- **Exams and quizzes** *will test reading comprehension: 40% of course grade.* A number of readings will be assigned from online sources, including online articles, chat logs, blogs, and discussion groups. Quizzes (10% of final grade) will be given to test comprehension of the readings. Two exams (the midterm exam and the final exam, each 15% of final grade) will measure reading comprehension and analysis.

- **Cyberculture Review and Analysis**: *30% of course grade (review/research papers)* Four 500-word response papers (1-2 pages) will review, analyze and interpret the selected readings and web reviews for most of the topics covered in the course. A review paper is due after each of the first 3 topical sections, and you must choose one of the four Topic 4 sections (a, b, c, or d) to review (7.5% of grade each).

- **Blog Reports**: *20% of course grade* Throughout the course you will be responsible for researching cyberculture topics online and producing four weblog reports, which will be peer-reviewed. More detail on the "blog reports" will be found on the course website.

- **Participation and online exercises**: *10% of the course grade (attendance and communication).* This is measured by attendance of classes (see policy below), contribution to f2f and online discussion (related to the annotations to your readings), and other internet-based methods of being cyber-social (i.e., through message boards, Internet chat, IM, Facebook, etc.) may count at the instructors' discretion.

Summary of Assignments/Exams	% of course grade
- Participation, attendance, notes	*10%*
- Pop quizzes and online exercises	*10%*
- Blog reports	*20%*
- Review & Analysis papers (four due throughout the semester)	*30%*
- Two exams (Midterm, Final)	*30%*

Dr. Reymers' Percent / Letter / Grade Point Equivalents:

93 to 100+ = **A** = 4.0	90 to 92 = **A-** = 3.67	87 to 89 = **B+** = 3.33
83 to 86 = **B** = 3.0	80 to 82 = **B-** = 2.67	77 to 79 = **C+** = 2.33
73 to 76 = **C** = 2.0	70 to 72 = **C-** = 1.67	68 to 69 = **D+** = 1.33
62 to 67 = **D** = 1.0		
61 and below = **F** = 0.0		

Note: These grading equivalents may be different for other classes. Check with each professor to see how they will calculate your grade.

Class Policies and Procedures:

Class Participation and Attendance
Students should make every attempt to attend all classes. Missing any more than *two classes* impedes your work and may result in a lower grade. Graded work is done in the class and these grades cannot be made up outside of the classroom. Attendance is taken daily and recorded. Online attendance is evaluated through your online participation on discussion boards, blogs, and elsewhere.

Academic Behavior and Honesty
- You are attending class in a college classroom designed specifically to help you seek knowledge. It is not your living room. It is not the lunchroom. *Taking cell phone calls or messages*, *eating, sleeping, reading, playing computer games, instant messaging, etc.*, are examples of *unacceptable* classroom behavior. Any student doing these things will be asked to leave the class and *will be marked absent* for the day. Talking in class is not always bad, however - *civilized* argument, relevant questions, and note-taking are *strongly encouraged* behaviors for which you will be rewarded. While cell phone and laptop use is typically UNACCEPTABLE during class, as they are too much of a distraction to coherent thought, the use of the internet (only) to enhance the collective learning going on in this class is strongly encouraged.
- Arriving late disrupts the class, as does leaving early – anyone showing up more than *15 minutes* after the start of class, or leaving the classroom during class (with the exception of emergencies only) will not be permitted to (re)enter the classroom.
- Academic honesty promotes continued academic and occupational success. Maintenance of academic honesty and quality education is the responsibility of both faculty and students. Any written assignment (including all electronic media) submitted by a student must be original authorship. Representation of another's work as his/her own shall constitute plagiarism.
- Plagiarism means theft of intellectual property, obtained from a print or electronic medium. A person has plagiarized if s/he quotes three or more words in sequence from a source and (1) doesn't use quotation marks ("The quick brown fox…"), and (2) doesn't identify the source (what is known as "citation"). A person has also plagiarized if s/he records or cites ideas, information, or other material from a source that is not identified, or if the individual paraphrases information from a source that is not acknowledged. The penalty for plagiarism is failure on the assignment, and for repeated offenses may incur failure in the course or even expulsion from the college. *Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse for plagiarism.*

Late/Make-up Assignment Policy
My late assignment policy is very strict – late assignments will be marked "late" and the homework grade will be reduced by accordingly. *No assignment turned in more than 7 days late will receive credit.* Make-up exams will not be given, unless you make arrangements with me more than *48 hours (2 days) in advance* of the exam. If you miss an exam without making arrangements to make it up, you will receive NO CREDIT for that particular exam. You cannot make up *any* quizzes – be in class on time.

Special Learning Accommodations
Any students who have special needs for learning are asked to contact the instructor *within the first two weeks* of this semester. This will enable communication and discussion of accommodations with the campus specialists in the Office for Accessibility Services (2nd floor Library).

Topic 1: History of the Internet and Computerization in the '90s: the Popularization of Computer Communications

Week 1: Cyber-
Jan 22: Introduction to Cyberculture
Read Syllabus; Get Book

Jan 24: *The History of the Internet*
Be prepared to discuss the following readings:
Read: Turner, From Counterculture to Cyberculture, Introduction
A Brief History of the Internet (http://www.isoc.org/internet/history/brief.shtml

Week 2: -Culture
Jan 31: The Culture of the Internet
Read: Castells, *The Internet Galaxy*, Chp. 1
Castells, *The Internet Galaxy*, Chp. 2

Feb 2: *The Culture of the Internet*
Read: Turner, From Counterculture to Cyberculture, Chps 1 & 2

Topic 2: Self and Identity in Virtual Reality

Week 3: Are We Ourselves Online?
Feb 7: Self and Identity Online and Off
Read Weinberger, *Small Pieces Loosely Joined*, Chapter 1
    (available online here: Preface, Chapter 1, recommended Chapter 2)

Feb 9: Self and Identity in Virtual Reality
Read Turkle, *Alone Together, excerpts*
*Review paper 1 due (see review paper guidelines)

Week 4: Social Media
Feb 14: Self and Identity Online and Off
Read: Turkle, TBA
Watch: TedX, Allison Graham, [How social media makes us unsocial](#)
Watch: Business Insider, [How Social Media Is Rewiring Our Brains](#)
Web recommendation: Reymers, [Identity and the Internet](#)

Feb 16: Self and Identity in SL
Read *I, Avatar*, pgs 24-39 (on Virtuality, Diving In, Roles and Rules, Masks)
Read: [What Can a Second Life Teach Me about Me?: Writing Our Identity in Second Life](#)

* Blog Post 1 due

Topic 3: Virtual Community

Week 5: What are Virtual Communities?
Feb 21: Virtual Communities
Read [Rheingold (1993), *The Virtual Community*, Intro and Chapter 1](#)

Feb 23: Community in SL
Read *I, Avatar*, pgs 40 - 53 (*Fur vs. Gor, Virtual Wars, Rituals and Archetypes, The Dive, On Drinking Virtual Wine*)
* Review Paper 2 due

Week 6: Connection
Feb 28: Virtual Community – Public Spaces Online
Read [Malaby, *Making Virtual Worlds*: Introduction](#)
Read: [Mulgan, *Connexity*, Chapter 1](#)
Web recommendation: [Interview with Cyberanthropologist Tom Boellstorff](#)

Mar 2: The Deep Web – Privacy Online
Read, European Union Privacy Law, TBA
Watch Alex Winter, TEDxMidAtlantic, [The Dark Net isn't what you think](#)
Watch Jacob Appelbaum, TEDxFlanders, [The Tor Project, protecting online anonymity](#)

* Blog Post 2 due

Week 7: Midterm Exam Week
Mar 7: Review for Exam

Mar 9: *** MIDTERM EXAM

SPRING BREAK: March 11 - 15

Topic 4a: Institutions Online - Cyberpolitics and Internet Governance

Week 8: Freedom versus Security: the Politics of the Web
Mar 21: Internet Governance, Power and Privacy
Read [Declaration of Cyberspace Independence](#) and [An Open Letter From Internet Engineers to the Senate Judiciary Committee](#)
Read Information Week, [Who Is Anonymous: 10 Key Facts](#) (2012)
Read New York Times, Dec 29, 2016, [How Russia Recruited Elite Hackers for Its Cyberwar](#)
Web recommendation: [Jordan, *Cyberpower*, Chp 7](#)

Mar 23: Cyberwarfare
Read Website: [Cyberwar and Netwar: New Modes, Old Concepts, of Conflict](#), by Arquilla and Ronfeldt for RAND Corporation
Read the [Executive Summary of Review of the Unauthorized Disclosures of Former National Security Agency Contractor Edward Snowden](#), U.S. House of Representatives (Sept 15, 2016)
Watch: [Edward Snowden Interview, Katie Couric, ABC News](#) (Dec 6, 2016)
Listen to Story: [Are 'Stuxnet' Worm Attacks Cyberwarfare?](#)
* Review paper 3 due

Week 9: Cybercrime
Mar 28: Crime and Ethics Online
Read [FBI Futures Working Group Cybercrime Report](#)
Read Allmer, [The Internet & Surveillance](#)
Web recommendation: [Reymers (2011), *Chicken Killers or Bandwidth Patriots: A Case Study of Ethics in Virtual Reality*](#)

Mar 30: Combining the Virtual and the Real
Read Rosenfeld, *Rethinking Cyberwar*

* Blog Post 3 due

Topic 4b: Institutions Online - Virtual Economies

Week 10: Are YOU The Product?
Apr 2: Virtual Capital
Read [Malaby, *Making Virtual Worlds*: Chp 1, The Product](#)

Apr 4: Virtual Political Economies
Read Dibbel, *New York Times*, [The Life of a Chinese Gold Farmer](#)
* Review paper 4a due

Week 11: "Whoever Controls Technology, Controls the World" – Lex Luthor
Apr 9: Are You A Gadget?
Read Lanier, You Are Not A Gadget, Chp 1

Apr 11: Do You Own the Future?
Read Lanier, Who Owns the Future?, Chp 1
* Blog Post 4 due

Topic 4c: Institutions Online - Religion

Week 12: The Spiritual Web
Apr 16: Religiosity and Technology: Ecstatic Intersections
Read: [Erik Davis's "Techgnosis"](#), Chapter 6: "A Most Enchanting Machine"
Listen to [Electrons to Enlightenment: The NeoPagans](#)

Apr 18: Research on Online Religion
Read: [CyberFaith: How Americans Pursue Religion Online](#)
* Review paper 4b due

Topic 4d: Institutions Online - Education

Week 13: #OnlineEducation
Apr 23: Education Online
Read: [Clifford Stoll, High-Tech Heretic](#)
Read Website article: "[Technology Literacy: Four Guiding Principles for Educators and Parents](#)"

Apr 25: Education using Computers
Read Website article: "[Computers in Education: A Review of Arguments for the Use of Computers in Elementary Education](#)," Setzer (2000), in the *Southern Cross Review*, Issue 4.
* Review paper 4c due

Epilogue: The Future of Cyberculture

Week 14: The Dark Web and the Singularity
Apr 30: Cynicism
Watch: Alan Pearce, TEDxBrighton, [The Dark [Deep] Net](#)
Watch: [Digital Download: Your Brain on Technology](#)

May 2: Hope
Read "[A Short Documentary About the Future of the Web](#)" & watch video at end of article
Read "['Turning Into Gods' – Jason Silva's Documentary on the Singularity](#)" & watch BOTH videos
* Review paper 4d due

Week 15: Final Exam TBA