

Syllabus—*Living in a Digital World*

Tell me and I forget; teach me and I remember; involve me and I learn—Benjamin Franklin

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SOCIOLOGY 3051

Summer 2018 (Sec 90)

COURSE CONTENT

New information technologies based on digital platforms proliferate in our society. Such technologies now affect everyday life, groups, personal identity, culture, safety, and virtually all aspects of existence. From a sociological standpoint, *Cyber-worlds* are so pervasively a part of our world as to be almost invisible. Therefore, the necessity of recognizing the impacts of such technologies on us as individuals as well as the societal repercussions is of increasing importance. Emphasis in such a course of study will be placed on understanding the beginnings and development of digitalization, the internet in its many manifestations, online subcultures, gaming, privacy, information management, cyber-terrorism and bullying, business and corporate interface, identity, key individuals within the subject, relationships, criminal overtones, government interfaces, law, virtual worlds, and mass media.

COURSE OVERVIEW & PROJECTED OUTCOMES

Each student, upon completion of this course, should be *able to recognize, define, and understand core issues of SOC 3051*. Due to the broad scope of such a topic, students will be encouraged to creatively pursue areas of interest to them. Additionally, students will gain a working knowledge of the key elements of the content identified as critical to this field of learning.

EVALUATION METHODS

Most upper-level, undergraduate courses in the social sciences require students to demonstrate mastery of material through successful completion of all assignments. For *SOC 3051* three book reports with associated topic essays will be assigned: 1) *biography/personal memoir (30%)*; 2) *future world/sociological perspective (30%)*; and 3) *historical or sociological-interpersonal/research composition (40%)*. Each essay is outlined in detail in this syllabus. As 3051 is an *upper division writing credit course*, emphasis is given to different types of essays—specifically *book reports, APA-style research, science-fiction, factual writing and personal memoir*. Students are well-advised to completely familiarize themselves with the specific and detailed instructions in this syllabus, as well as any *Samples* which may be provided, along with *Norton's Field Guide to Writing* (more information on *Norton's* will follow). Additionally, students should carefully consider grading comments by the professor and implement improvements during the semester.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES OF INTEREST

Special Accommodations

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services (CDS), 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services. Please discuss any concerns with the professor as soon as possible.

Academic Misconduct

Per University of Utah regulations (Policy # 6-400). “A student who engages in academic misconduct,” as defined in Part I.B. and including, but not limited to, cheating, falsification, or plagiarism, “may be subject to academic sanctions including but not limited to a grade reduction, failing grade, probation, suspension or dismissal from the program or the University, or revocation of the student's degree or certificate. Sanctions may also include community service, a written reprimand, and/or a written statement of misconduct that can be put into an appropriate record maintained for purposes of the profession or discipline for which the student is preparing.” Please refer to the Student Code for full elaboration of student academic and behavioral misconduct policies (<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>).

Sexual Misconduct

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

ASSIGNMENTS

BOOK REPORTS & CYBER-WORLD ESSAYS

In order to better understand the many technologies and innovations that comprise today's *cyber-worlds*, students will submit several types of essays that display upper-division writing acumen, in response to reading up-to-date books of their choice/interest in the subject area. *Norton's Field Guide to Writing* will be used as a writing reference (**any** edition is acceptable with most available **used** from online sellers and NOT available at the U of U Bookstore). The essays will be due throughout the semester, as noted in the *CANVAS system*. Assignments are as follows:

1. ***Biography with Personal Memoir (minimum 2000 words)***—students will choose **one** volume from the approved **BIOGRAPHY/BUSINESS** list; after reading, they will create a two-part essay with the first half (about 1000 words) acting as a brief **book report** of that volume; the second half of the essay (about 1000 words) will be a *Personal Memoir* of their own life experiences **with digital technology** of any type. No break is needed between the two parts of the essay. The *Bio/Memoir* will count **30%** of the course grade.
2. ***Future World/Science Fiction Essay (minimum 2000 words)***—students will choose **one** volume from the approved **FUTURE WORLD/TECHNOLOGICAL** list; after reading, they will create a two-part essay with the first half (about 1000 words) acting as a brief **book report** of that volume; the second half of the essay (about 1000 words) will be a ***Science-Fiction*** story by the student on some aspect of *cyber technology* based in a future of their creation. No break is needed between the two parts of the essay. The *FutureWorld/Science Fiction* will count **30%** of the course grade.
3. ***Historical or Sociological-Interpersonal Perspective/Research Essay (minimum 2500 words)***—students will choose **one** volume from the approved **SOCIOLOGICAL/INTERPERSONAL** or **HISTORICAL** list; after reading, they will create a two-part essay with the first half (about 1250 words) acting as a brief **book report** of that volume; the second half of the essay (about 1250 words) will be a *concise research-based essay* about **cyber technology** (either in a historical, sociological or interpersonal context, the *research* section flowing out of the book topic). No break is needed between the two parts of the essay. The *Historical or Sociological/Research* will count **40%** of the course grade.

The professor will provide feedback/grading on each assignment to aid students in improving their essays over the duration of the semester. **NOTE:** assignments must be submitted on time with **total number of words recorded** at the end of the essay in order to receive full points. If for any reason students submit work late, any extenuating circumstances should be noted (illness, work, athletics, accidents) in **Canvas Comments** for consideration of mitigation of late points. All essays will adhere to the following criteria:

1. Each essay has two parts (with no break in-between): first, a book report (a factual overview of the volume chosen by the student) written in **academic voice** (avoiding first person, informal statements, contractions, sweeping generalizations, direct quotes [paraphrase instead], choppy paragraphing, poor sentence structure or plagiarizing); and second, a creative essay on the assigned topic;
2. 10-point, academic font—double spaced throughout, with total word count at conclusion of essay;
3. Grammar/English/composition skills befitting a 3000-level university course;
4. *Research essay* will be completed using *APA Style*, including a *Works Cited/References* page with a minimum of **3 academic journal** citations (no *Abstract* required);
5. All essays must meet **minimum words assigned** in order to avoid proportional markdowns (in other words, if students are assigned 2000 words and 1500 are submitted, 25 points would be deducted *before* grading commences);
6. Essays will be graded on quality of reporting about contents of books read, adherence to proper English and composition skills befitting a 3000-level university course, excellence in creativity and **ability to integrate subject matter of the course** (please see *Overview of Grading Philosophy* for additional insights).

BOOK CHOICE LIST

(Volumes **NOT** available at U of U bookstore—order **ONLINE ASAP!**)

BIOGRAPHY/BUSINESS—to be joined with *Personal Memoir*

Becoming Facebook: The 10 Challenges That Defined the Company That's Disrupting the World (2017) by Mike Hoefflinger; 256 pages; AMACOM Press; ISBN: 978-0814437964.

How to Turn Down A Billion Dollars: The Snapchat Story (2016) by Billie Gallagher; 300 pages; Random House; ISBN: 978-0753557587.

Videocracy: How YouTube is Changing the World (2018) by Kevin Allocca; 352 pages; Bloomsbury; ISBN: 978-9387146686.

American Kingpin: The Epic Hunt for the Criminal Mastermind Behind the Silk Road (2017) by Nick Bilton; 352 pages; Viking Press; ISBN: 978-1591848141.

Blood, Sweat & Pixels: The Triumphant, Turbulent Stories Behind How Video Games Are Made (2017) by Jason Schreier; Harper Paperbacks; ISBN: 978-0062651235.

The Know-It-Alls: The Rise of Silicon Valley as A Political Powerhouse & Soul Wrecking Ball (2017) by Noam Cohen; 224 pages; The New Press; ISBN: 978-1620972106.

How the Internet Became Commercial (2017) by Shane Greenstein; 488 pages; Princeton University Press; ISBN: 978-0691178394.

Alibaba: The House That Jack Ma Built (2018) by Duncan Clark; 304 pages; Ecco Publishing; ISBN: 978-0062413413.

The One Device: The Secret History of the iPhone (2017) by Brian Merchant; 416 pages; Little, Brown & Co; ISBN: 978-0316546164.

Wild Ride: Inside Uber's Quest for World Domination (2017) by Adam Lashinsky; 240 pages; Portfolio; ISBN: 978-0735211391.

Throwing Rocks at the Google Bus: How Growth Became the Enemy of Prosperity (2017) by Douglas Rushkoff; 304 pages; Portfolio; ISBN: 978-0143131298.

The Four: The Hidden DNA of Amazon, Apple, Facebook & Google (2017) by Scott Galloway; 320 pages; Portfolio; ISBN: 978-0735213654.

FUTURE WORLD/TECHNOLOGICAL—to be joined with *Science Fiction Essay*

The Industries of the Future (2017) by Alec Ross; 320 pages; Simon & Schuster; ISBN: 978-1476753669.

The Inevitable: Understanding the 12 Technological Forces That Will Shape Our Future (2017) by Kevin Kelly; 336 pages; Penguin Books; ISBN: 978-0143110378.

Nanoweapons: A Growing Threat to Humanity (2017) by Louis A DelMonte; 264 pages; Potomac Books; ISBN: 978-1612348964.

The Synthetic Age (2018) by Christopher J Preston; 224 pages; MIT Press; ISBN: 978-0262037610.

The Economic Singularity: Artificial Intelligence and the Death of Capitalism (2016) by Calum Chace; 320 pages; Three C's Press; ISBN: 978-0993211645.

The Technological Singularity (2015) by Murray Shanahan; 272 pages; MIT Press; ISBN: 978-0262527804.

Digital Genesis: The Future of Computing, Robots & AI (2017) by Christopher Barnatt; 258 pages; Create Space; ISBN: 1976098062.

Beyond Digital: 6 Exponential Revolutions That Will Change the World (2017) by Jaime Rodriguez-Ramos; 201 pages; Basic Books; ISBN: 978-1973445210.

SOCIOLOGICAL/INTERPERSONAL—to be joined with *Research Essay (OR HISTORICAL, not both)*

Programmed Inequality: How Britain Discarded Women Technologists and Lost Its Edge in Computing (2018) by Marie Hicks; 350 pages; MIT Press; ISBN: 978-0262535182.

Whose Global Village: Rethinking How Technology Shapes Our World (2017) by Ramesh Srinivasan; 272 words; NYU Press; ISBN: 978-1479862962.

Decoding the Social World: Data Science & the Unintentional Consequences of Communication (2017) by Sandra Gonzalez-Bailon; 256 pages; MIT Press; ISBN: 978-0262037075.

Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police & Punish the Poor (2018) by Virginia Eubanks; 272 pages; Basic Books; ISBN: 978-0465046935.

The Rise of Big Data: Policing, Surveillance, Race & the Future of Law Enforcement (2017) by Andrew J Ferguson; 272 pages; NYU Press; ISBN: 978-1479892822.

Technically Wrong: Sexist Apps, Biased Algorithms & Other Threats of Toxic Tech (2017) by Sara Wachter-Boettcher; 240 pages; WW Norton; ISBN: 978-0393634631.

Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism (2018) by Safiya Umoja Noble; 256 pages; NYU Press; ISBN: 978-1479837243.

Recoding Gender: Women's Changing Participation in Computing (2017) by Janet Abbate; 258 pages; MIT Press; ISBN: 978-0262534536.

Machine in the Ghost: Digitality & Its Consequences (2017) by Robin Boast 224 pages; Reaktion Books; ISBN: 978-1780237398.

Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology & the Business of Keeping Us Hooked (2018) by Adam Alter; 368 pages; Penguin Books; ISBN: 978-0465093656.

Alone Together: Why We Expect More of Technology and Less from Each Other (2017) by Sherry Turkle; 397 pages; Basic Books; ISBN: 978-0465046935.

Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (2017) by Max Tegmark; 384 pages; Knopf; ISBN: 978-1101946596.

The Internet of Us: Knowing More & Understanding Less in the Age of Big Data (2017) by Michael P Lynch; 256 pages; Liveright Press; ISBN: 978-1631492778.

The Happiness Effect: How Social Media is Driving a Generation to Appear Perfect at Any Cost (2017) by Donna Freitas; 368 pages; Basic Books; ISBN: 978-0190239855.

American Girls: Social Media & the Secret Lives of Teenagers (2017) by Nancy Jo Sales; 416 pages; Vintage; ISBN: 978-0804173186.

HISTORICAL—to be joined with *Research Essay* (**OR SOCIOLOGICAL/INTERPERSONAL, not both**)

Rise of the Machines: A Cybernetic History (2017) by Thomas Rid; 464 pages; WW Norton; ISBN: 978-0393354959.

The Electric Century (2018) by J B Williams; 216 pages; Springer Books; ISBN: 978-3319511542.

Dark Territory: The Secret History of Cyberwar (2017) by Fred Kaplan; 352 pages; Simon & Schuster; ISBN: 978-1476763267.

The Cybernetics Moment: Or Why We Call Our Age the Information Age (2017) by Ronald R Kline; 352 pages; Johns Hopkins University Press; ISBN: 978-1421424248.

The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress & Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies (2016) by Andrew McAfee; 336 pages; WW Norton; ISBN: 978-0393350647.

NOTE: Students may also choose a timely (since 2015, minimum 250 pages) volume in these subject areas which interests them, but they must receive permission from the professor before reading.

OVERVIEW OF GRADING PHILOSOPHY

In order to help students better understand how and why marks are distributed, an *overview of grading philosophy* is included, along with a *checklist* which delineates the individual aspects of consideration in all essays/projects, an explanation of the *grade ranges* and an *Essay Rubric* in graphic representation to better articulate course expectations.

Grading Philosophy:

- A** An *excellent* work in all or nearly all aspects of the assignment. The student exemplifies originality of ideas, superior depth of thought, and extensive grasp of topics as well as technical superiority.
- B** A competent work with a lapse here or there. Ideas are clear and properly expressed; the writing is technically solid. The assignment is effective in meeting all criteria but does not rise to sustained distinction.
- C** An adequate work, but not good. Student ideas tend to be oversimplified, reductionistic, and lack sufficient explanation or exploration. Problems may also exist with grammar, logic, or ability to express thoughts in a manner reflective of a junior level class.
- D** A minimal effort by the student—the work is marred by problems with almost all aspects of the assignment. This is not considered a competent performance.
- E** A failing mark, generally reserved for assignments which are not submitted or miss the target on virtually every criteria of the project.
- +/-** Plus or minus may be given in addition to each of the grade levels when deemed appropriate.

NOTE: please see *Essay Rubric* at end of *Syllabus* for more detailed explanation.

Grade Ranges:

A 96% and above; **A-** 90—95.99%; **B+** 85—89.99%; **B** 80—84.99%; **B-** 75—79.99%; **C+** 70—74.99%;
C 65—69.99%; **C-** 60—64.99%; **D+** 55—59.99%; **D** 50—54.99%; **D-** 45—49.99%; **E** Below 45%.

NOTE: Grading is exact and rounding does not apply for final grades.

Grading Criteria Checklist:

- _____ Lack of/improper Title/Abstract
- _____ Weak introduction
- _____ Weak conclusion
- _____ Poor organization
- _____ Failure to communicate ideas clearly
- _____ Superficial/Little creativity
- _____ Weak English skills
- _____ Poor sentence structure
- _____ Poor paragraph structure/weak Links
- _____ Anticipatory IT; Contractions; Rhetorical questions
- _____ Non-Academic Voice/Language
- _____ Excessive 1st person references
- _____ Opinion/Bias rather than facts
- _____ Errors in logic
- _____ Sweeping generalizations (No/few Qualifiers)
- _____ Poor use of italics
- _____ Direct quotes instead of paraphrasing—**NO direct quotes in any essay!**
- _____ Unnecessary Subheadings
- _____ inadequate length (meeting word minimum)
- _____ Weak proofing/inattention to detail
- _____ APA problems (citations/references page/primary sources)
- _____ Incorrect format (10 point font/double spaced lines)
- _____ Late paper submittal or failure to note total number of words

Essay Rubric

Criterion	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Content and Focus	<p>Exceptionally clear, focused, interesting thesis.</p> <p>Strong, rich supporting details and examples that prove thesis.</p> <p>A meaningful conclusion explaining the importance of the research and how it can be used.</p>	<p>Clear thesis which maintains a consistent focus from beginning to end.</p> <p>Specific supporting details are present.</p> <p>A clear conclusion as to why the research is important.</p>	<p>Contains thesis but with inconsistent focus.</p> <p>Generalized supporting details that prove thesis.</p> <p>Conclusion tends to summarize research.</p>	<p>Thesis statement lacks clarity and focus.</p> <p>Inadequate or missing supporting details.</p> <p>Missing conclusion.</p>
Organization	<p>Strong introduction and conclusion.</p> <p>Consistent and coherent logical progression.</p> <p>Uses clear and skillful transitions.</p>	<p>Clear introduction and conclusion.</p> <p>Illustrates some consistency and shows some logical progression.</p> <p>Uses clear transitions.</p>	<p>Introduction and conclusion is present but not clear</p> <p>Shows some attempt of consistency and order.</p> <p>Essay shows attempt to create transitions between paragraphs.</p>	<p>Unable to clearly identify introduction and conclusion.</p> <p>Lack of consistency and order.</p> <p>Shows little or no attempt of transitions between paragraphs.</p>
Voice and paraphrasing	<p>Written in academic voice (no slang/contractions).</p> <p>Elaborate and colorful language.</p> <p>Consistently strong and varied sentence structure.</p> <p>No direct quotes (paraphrasing sound).</p>	<p>Majority written in formal language.</p> <p>Language appropriate to topic.</p> <p>Words convey intended message.</p> <p>Direct quotes support ideas.</p> <p>Majority written in own words.</p>	<p>Informal language is dominant.</p> <p>Most language is appropriate to topic.</p> <p>Able to get vague idea of message.</p> <p>Some parts of written in student's own words.</p>	<p>Paper frequently uses informal language.</p> <p>Language is not appropriate to topic.</p> <p>Message is unclear.</p> <p>Majority of essay is plagiarized.</p>
Sources/Format (For Research Essays Only) APA Style	<p>Follows APA guidelines well.</p> <p>Uses 5 or more cited academic sources.</p> <p>All documentation is APA correct.</p> <p>Works Cited page is APA correct.</p> <p>All research is documented.</p>	<p>Follows APA most of essay.</p> <p>3-4 cited sources used. Sources meet the guidelines for types of sources.</p> <p>Few errors noted in documentation</p> <p>Majority of Works Cited is APA correct.</p> <p>Most research documented.</p>	<p>Sometimes follows APA.</p> <p>Less than 3 cited sources used.</p> <p>Majority of sources done incorrectly.</p> <p>Random APA usage.</p> <p>Rarely documents sources.</p>	<p>Rarely follow APA.</p> <p>Less than 2 cited sources with little or no documentation.</p> <p>Works Cited page partial or missing.</p>
Conventions	<p>Superior editing meeting majority of aspects correctly in <i>Checklist</i>.</p> <p>Rarely makes errors in grammar or English.</p>	<p>Careful editing, meeting most <i>Checklist</i> items correctly</p> <p>Makes few errors in grammar or English.</p>	<p>Some evidence of editing, meeting some <i>Checklist</i> items.</p> <p>Extensive English and grammatical errors.</p>	<p>Poor overall editing, English and grammar skills. Meets few aspects of <i>Checklist</i> correctly.</p>