CMGT 530, Fall 2018
Social Dynamics of Communication Technologies
USC Annenberg School for Communication

Professor Dmitri Williams
dcwillia@usc.edu
ANN 210
Class hours: 6-8:50 Mondays
Office hours by appointment. Preceding class is easiest, but other times are possible.
Office: ANN 414K

Books
the bits are available via Creative Commons license as a free pdf at http://codev2.cc/
2) Kim, A.J. (2000) Community Building on the Web. This is out of print, but can be
Influence: Science and Practice).
networks and how they shape our lives.
6) Ph.D. students only should also buy:

Media: You are expected to read WIRED monthly. You need to buy it as it comes out, or
(my suggestion) get a 6-month subscription for $5.

Readings: Available via the Blackboard site, and noted in the weekly rundown below.
PhD students taking the course for PhD-level credit will have extra reading noted.

Assignments & Grading
Reaction papers (10%)
You will write a one-page reaction paper two times during the term. You choose
the topic and the timing, but only one in any week, i.e. not both at the very end.
Someone always asks what one page is, so it is exactly this: 12 pt Times font,
double spaced, 1” margin. No more, no less, no other font, no other spacing.

Term paper (40%)
A term paper project will consist of a 15-20 page paper analyzing an issue from
the class. Tailor it to your own interests, and to a practical real-world project if
you like. Papers must be based on some kind of empirical data—whether
statistical or qualitative. Ph.D students will be expected to write a paper that could
be submitted to a conference or a journal, and so may go up to 30 pages if needed. Submit an IRB application early if needed!

Group projects (3: 30% total).

(1) Find an online community and evaluate it using the tools you’ve learned in class. Present your community to the class. I suggest you find one that is interesting and active. 10%

(2) You will be assigned in a group to master a chapter from Cialdini and asked to both present the basics to the class as well as apply it to an online or new communication technology. 10%

(3) Propose a mobile or location-aware community. Pitch the class as if you were seeking funding. Include the problem or opportunity, explain the proposed technology/product/service/idea, briefly cover the market potential, and state the outlines of a business plan. 10%

Participation (20%).
Informed participation in class matters more than in a typical course, i.e. I will give a wide variance.

Use professional-grade English, whether writing a paper or an email.

**Academic Integrity Policy**

The School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. It endorses and acts on the school policies and procedures detailed in the SCampus section titled: "University Student Conduct Code." See especially Appendix A: "Academic Dishonesty Sanction Guidelines." The policies, procedures, and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They protect your rights, as well as those of the faculty. It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating data for a project, submitting the same paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone but yourself. If you have questions about any of these matters, confer with the instructor.

**Academic Accommodation based on Disability**

Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP’s phone number is (213) 740-0776.

**General USC resources are listed at the end of the syllabus**
## Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/20</td>
<td>Intro, foundations of communities, and basic communication theory. Dead German philosophers.</td>
<td>1) Tönnies, F. <em>On Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft</em> (available online at <a href="http://media.pfeiffer.edu/ridener/courses/GEMEIN.HTML">http://media.pfeiffer.edu/ridener/courses/GEMEIN.HTML</a> or, google gemeinschaft and it’ll pop up).</td>
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<td>1) What is a community?</td>
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<td>2) Types of community: differences, classifications, etc.</td>
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<td>3) The question of proximity (Imagined communities)</td>
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<td>4) Functions of communities</td>
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<td>5) Things that shape community.</td>
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<td>6) Wenger’s Communities of Practice</td>
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<td>7) Basic communication theories:</td>
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<td>● Effects theory: direct vs. resistant</td>
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<td>● Uses &amp; gratifications</td>
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<td>● Cultivation</td>
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<td>● Priming, framing, agenda-setting</td>
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<td>● Neomarxism, Gramsci, etc.</td>
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<td>1) Transportation vs. communication</td>
<td>2) Rogers, E. <em>Diffusion of Innovations</em>, Ch. 1.</td>
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<td>2) Diffusion of technologies</td>
<td>3) Glassner, 29-35.</td>
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<td>3) Utopian/Dystopian frameworks</td>
<td><em>Ph.D. students</em>: above, and read Negroponte, Ch. 1-11.</td>
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<td>4) Case studies of media and social networks:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a) Writing</td>
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<td>b) Telegraph</td>
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<td>c) Telephone (Fischer)/“Terrors of the Telephone” picture</td>
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<td>5) The Medium is the Message/The Global Village</td>
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<td>6) Bits are bits (Ch. 1)</td>
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<td>7) Delivering bits (Ch. 6)</td>
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<td>8) Internet history</td>
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<td>9) Sci Fi as metaphor</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>9/3</td>
<td>Labor Day, no class</td>
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| 9/10  | **Money, business models, analytics**                                 | 1) Litman  
       | 1) I/O model                                                        | 2) “Disruption’ is how Silicon Valley Eats Its young”  
       | 3) SaS page on analytics                                              |       |
       | 1) CMC basics                                                        | 2) Lessig, L. *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace, Version 2.0*, Ch. 1-3  
       | 3) Four puzzles and themes                                           |       |
| 9/24  | **Theories of Social Impact**                                         | 1) Putnam, R. *Bowling Alone*. Ch. 13: Technology and Mass Media  
       | 1) Social Capital: bridging and bonding                              | 2) Galston, W. Does the Internet Strengthen Community?  
       | 3) Social Capital and displacement                                    | Ph.D. students:  
       | 5) Tie strength, bridging and bonding online vs. offline             |       |
|       | 6) Third places                                                      |       |
|       | 7) Best vs. Worst thing ever: Halloween, framing, PR, dealing with the press |       |
|       | 8) The changing, empowered audience, or dupes?                       |       |
| 10/1  | **A) Connected viewing, MCNs, Second Screens**                       | 1) Christakis, N & Fowler, J. (2009) *Connected: The surprising power of our social networks and how they shape our lives*. Ch. 1-3  
<pre><code>   | Guest Speaker: David Craig                                           |       |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
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| 10/8  | **Evaluating Online Communities**                                    | **Group project #1: Evaluating a community**  
1) Purpose  
2) Activities: Places & events  
3) Trusting a site  
4) Evaluating current sites: bring examples to class  
5) Planning a good term paper  
1) Kim, pages 1-18 (purpose), 27-50 (places) & 233-242 (events)  
| 10/15 | **Persuasion**                                                       | **Group project #2: Cialdini in action**  
1) Persuasion, consistency, liking, social proof, reciprocity  
Note: Have a 1-paragraph paper idea for next class. Will you need IRB clearance?  
*Ph.D. Students*: whole book. |
| 10/22 | **Term paper workshop**                                             |  
*Preparation*: Bring your feedback and questions. We will workshop a handful of student papers, starting with their hypotheses, going to the methods, the results, and what it all means.  
*Optional*: Epic video |
| 10/29 | **Identifiers/Identity, Reputation Systems, Roles**                 |  
1) Balance theory triangle (from last class)  
2) On the Internet, no one knows you’re a dog  
3) Reputational systems/trust, eBay, MySimon & e-commerce  
1) Kim, Ch. 4, Roles  
2) Turkle, S. (1997). *Life on the Screen*. Ch. 8  
3) Resnick et al, Reputation Systems |
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<th>4)</th>
<th>Identity/deception</th>
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<td>5)</td>
<td>Kim on roles</td>
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<td>6)</td>
<td>Identity and Authentication</td>
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<td>4)</td>
<td>Optional for master’s students, required for Ph.D. students: Donath, Identity and Deception in the Virtual Community <a href="http://smg.media.mit.edu/people/Judith/Identity/IdentityDeception.html">http://smg.media.mit.edu/people/Judith/Identity/IdentityDeception.html</a> Optional for all: China’s ranking strategy, WIRED</td>
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| 11/5 | **A) Identity, continued**  
B) Play nice with the other kids: Norms and Etiquette  
1) More on Turkle, group identity via the Sneetches  
2) Identity and mediation of front and back stage  
3) Roles, norms, etiquette  
4) Deception  
5) Dating, sexuality |
|-----|-------------------|
| 1) | Kim, Ch. 6, Etiquette.  
2) Meyrowitz, J. *No Sense of Place*. Ch. 3 & 4  
3) PhD students only: Papacharissi chapter (note the Goffman/Meyrowitz connection) Optional for PhD students: Meyrowitz’s book is worth owning and reading. Seminal stuff. |

| 11/12 | **Online culture: Masses, niches, freaks, and geeks, oh my**  
- Follow-up from last class: Lessig  
- Mass vs. niche  
- Customization (letitblog flash video)  
- The Hacker ethic  
Cyberbalkanization  
**Convergence culture & DIY**  
1) Convergence culture  
2) User-generated content (Minecraft/TUG, YouTube, Machina, DIY movement, KickStarter)  
- Customization (letitblog flash video)  
- The Hacker ethic  
- Cyberbalkanization  
**Pitch demo, if time** |
|-----|-------------------|
| 1) | Leetaru, K. (2018). *Facebook’s new feed changes*  
2) The Long Tail (article version: [http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html](http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html))  
4) Optional for masters students, required for Ph.D. students: Negroponte, The Daily Me, customization (Ch. 12-14)  
2) Jenkins, H. *Convergence Culture*, Chapters 3 & 4. The rest of the book is recommended, but optional. |

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<th>11/19</th>
<th><strong>Location, mobility, mobilization, democracy</strong></th>
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<td>Group project #3 (in-class): Pitch a mobile or location-based/aware community</td>
<td>Ph.D. Students:</td>
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| 1) Local vs. global  
2) Hyperlocalism  
3) Mobilization  
2) The balance of Shirky’s book, chapters 8-11 is optional. |

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<tr>
<th>11/26</th>
<th>Managing the playground</th>
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| 1) Rituals, an extension of roles?  
2) Governance, the role of the state  
3) Conflicts/Tragedy of the commons | 1) Lessig, Ch. 6, Cyberspaces  
http://www.juliandibbell.com/articles/a-rape-in-cyberspace/  
3) Internet mea culpa article |

### Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

**Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

**Support Systems:**

**Student Counseling Services (SCS)** – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** – 1 (800) 273-8255
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

**Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)** – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

**Sexual Assault Resource Center**
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu)

**Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance** – (213) 740-5086
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu)
**Bias Assessment Response and Support**
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

**The Office of Disability Services and Programs**
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

**Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710**
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

**Diversity at USC**
Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

**USC Emergency Information**
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

**USC Department of Public Safety** – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.
Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu