

**Mediated Communication**  
**Doctoral Seminar**  
**16:194:633**  
**Spring 2018**

*Instructor:* Dr. Katherine Ognyanova  
*Email:* [katya.ognyanova@rutgers.edu](mailto:katya.ognyanova@rutgers.edu)  
*Office:* SDW 302 (Simeon De Witt Building, 185 College Ave.)  
*Office Hours:* Thursday 3:00pm-5:00pm and by appointment

*Course Time:* Tuesday, 3:10pm-5:50pm  
*Course Room:* HU 101 (Huntigton House, 184 College Ave.)  
*Course Website:* [sakai.rutgers.edu](http://sakai.rutgers.edu)  
*Course Mailing List:* [mc633-2018@sakai.rutgers.edu](mailto:mc633-2018@sakai.rutgers.edu)

### **Course Description**

This course examines how newly emerging mediated communication technologies (e.g., mobile phones and the Internet) affect social relationships and how social forces affect adoption and usage patterns of mediated technologies.

### **Learning Objectives**

At the end of the course students will be able to critically review the theory, methodology, and findings of a research study published on the topic of new information and communication technologies; describe the history of studies on new media; determine and apply appropriate theory and methodologies to the study of new forms of mediated communication.

### **Contact Information**

My office hours are held in SDW 302 (Simeon De Witt Building, 185 College Ave), on Thursdays, 3pm-5pm. If you need to, you can also contact me to schedule an in-person or online meeting at a different time. I encourage you to stop by for a chat at least once during the semester.

The most reliable way to reach me outside of office hours is over e-mail. Send any questions, ideas, or concerns related to the class to [katya.ognyanova@rutgers.edu](mailto:katya.ognyanova@rutgers.edu). Please include "SCI 633" in the e-mail subject – that ensures I can identify your message as related to this class and give it appropriate attention. I will typically respond within 3-5 days of receiving your email.

## Required Readings

All required readings will be available on the course's Sakai website ([sakai.rutgers.edu](http://sakai.rutgers.edu)). Log in using your Rutgers NetID, navigate to the course site, and browse the *Course Readings* page. The reading materials for each week of class are also listed in the *Course Outline* section of this syllabus.

## Course Attendance

You are expected to attend all classes. If you are unable to attend classes for longer than one week, you should contact a dean of students who can help verify your circumstances. University policy excuses absences due to religious observance or participation, and permits students to make up work missed for that reason. You should notify me at least two weeks in advance if you are unable to come to class or take an exam due to religious observance.

On occasion, the university may have to cancel classes due to inclement weather. To check if classes are canceled, visit [campusstatus.rutgers.edu](http://campusstatus.rutgers.edu) or call 732-932-7799.

## Course Requirements and Evaluation

### *Participation (100 points)*

In this course, we will work together to review and examine critical questions and themes related to communication and technology. Much of the class will be discussion-based, with limited lecturing from me on key points. Everyone is expected to be active in contributing to the conversations we will have in class. You should read all the required materials carefully and thoroughly, reflect critically on their strengths and weaknesses, identify their key points, and be prepared to discuss them.

### *Reading reflection (200 points)*

Each week after you complete the required readings, you should write a brief reflection discussing **two or more** of them and share it with the class. Your writing should demonstrate original thinking rather than simply provide a summary of the readings.

The assignment should be submitted by e-mail **by noon on Monday** before each Tuesday class. We will use a Sakai mailing list: send your reading reflections to [mc633-2018@sakai.rutgers.edu](mailto:mc633-2018@sakai.rutgers.edu).

Each reading reflection should be at least 250 words long. If some of your classmates have shared their reading reflections before you submit yours, I encourage you to respond to the points they have made. Your email should conclude **with at least one thoughtful question** you have that was provoked by the readings. We will discuss those questions in class.

To get the full 200 points for this assignment, you need to submit at least **10 reading reflections** (worth 20 points each) that show critical thinking about the theories and themes examined in this class. Emails will only contribute to the reading reflection grade if they are sent out by noon on Monday of the respective week (so you cannot, for instance, send all ten reading reflections in the last week of class).

### *Discussion lead (100 points)*

Once or twice during the semester (depending on the number of students in class), you will take the role of a discussion leader. When it is your turn to do that, read carefully the assigned articles and note their key points. Identify strengths and weaknesses in the thinking of the authors. Using your own judgment and the reading reflections posted by your classmates, prepare a list of questions that will drive our conversation in class. It will be your responsibility to make the discussion informative, relevant, and engaging. Note that you will only lead the discussion on the main topic of the class, and not on the methodological reading assigned for that week.

### *Research design outlines (3 x 100 points)*

During the semester, you will write three research design outlines. Each should be 3-5 pages long, excluding references. The outlines should describe the design of three research projects exploring the themes and/or the methods we will examine in class. Each outline should include: (1) a brief theoretical setup grounding your research in existing literature; (2) research questions or hypotheses; and (3) a proposed methodology. Each submission should outline a different project that you are interested in and could feasibly do.

Design outlines should be submitted through the "Assignment" section of the Sakai website for this course. The due dates are as follows:

- **February 10** Research design outline I
- **March 10** Research design outline II
- **April 7** Research design outline III

I will provide feedback on each outline you submit. At the end of the semester, you will select one of your three ideas and develop it into a detailed research proposal. To help you do that, we will dedicate one class (April 10) to a research workshop where everyone will discuss their projects and get instructor and peer feedback

### *Research proposal (300 points)*

For your final project, you will select one of your design outlines and develop it into a detailed research proposal. The project should examine one or more aspects of the topics addressed in this course. Your proposal should include an empirical data collection strategy (e.g. a survey, interviews, digital trace data collection, an experiment, etc.). The proposed methodology should be realistic, describing a project that you can feasibly complete (e.g. you should not suggest that you will complete ten thousand interviews; or analyze all the data on the Internet).

The proposal should include:

- A literature review summarizing relevant previous research in the area;
- Research questions or hypotheses. You should provide an appropriate justification of the hypotheses, or an explanation of the importance and originality of the research questions;
- A detailed description of the data collection and analysis - including recruitment or sampling strategies where appropriate, as well as the instruments that will be used to collect the data (e.g. if you are using a survey, you should attach it as an appendix; if you are using interviews or focus groups, you should include a protocol for them; if you are using digital trace data, you should describe all the tools used to collect it and how you intend

to employ those). Your methodology should also describe exactly how your collected data will be analyzed to examine your research questions or test your hypotheses.

- A bibliography containing the list of references cited in the paper.

The proposal should be 15-20 pages long and should include at least 20-25 references. The text should be double-spaced, using a 12-point font with a 1-inch margin on all sides. It should be formatted in APA style (one resource about it is the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#)). It is a good idea to use a citation manager to store and format your references (e.g. [www.zotero.com](http://www.zotero.com)).

Your writing should be clear and logically organized. The text should flow smoothly and demonstrate an excellent writing style. Be sure to carefully proofread the final draft and confirm that it is clearly written, grammatically correct, and free of spelling errors.

Papers should be submitted through the *Assignments* section of Sakai by **May 1**. Your submission should be included as a single-file attachment in PDF or Word format. Papers submitted by e-mail will not be accepted. Late papers will be accepted up to **5 days** after the deadline, but each day of delay will reduce your grade by **20 points**.

On our last day of class (April 24), you will present your research proposal in class and get one more chance to receive feedback before submitting a final draft on May 1.

### *Grade Breakdown & Scale*

A and B grades in this course are reserved for outstanding work. To get a high grade, students need to participate actively in class, be thorough and careful in assignments, and demonstrate excellent understanding of the subject, research skills, critical thinking, and originality in their work.

The grade breakdown is as follows:

Class participation	100 points
Discussion lead	100 points
Reading reflections	200 points
Research outlines	300 points
Research proposal	300 points
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

The final grade will be awarded according to the following scale:

<b>A</b>	900-1000 points
<b>B+</b>	850-899 points
<b>B</b>	800-849 points
<b>C+</b>	750-799 points
<b>C</b>	700-749 points
<b>D</b>	600-699 points
<b>F</b>	Below 600 points

### *Grade appeals*

You can appeal individual assignment grades in writing up to 5 days after the grades are announced. In order to be reviewed, your appeal has to be submitted over e-mail. Once the course grades are announced, they are final and will only be changed in case of an error in the computation of the student's score.

### **Academic Integrity**

You are required to complete your own assignments and always acknowledge the sources of contributions, materials, quotes, and ideas that you did not develop yourself. The consequences of scholastic dishonesty in this class and at Rutgers University in general are very serious. For more details, consult the [University's academic integrity policy](#). Any violation will at a minimum result in no credit earned for the assignment in question. Serious violations of academic integrity may prevent students from completing the course or their academic program. If you have questions about issues related to plagiarism or academic integrity, do not hesitate to contact me.

### **Accommodation**

This course will accommodate any student in need of assistance. Students with documented disabilities who need accommodations should contact the Rutgers Disabilities Services Office (see [disabilityservices.rutgers.edu](http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu) for details). You can also speak with a SC&I adviser by visiting the Office of Student Services in the SC&I Building, Room 214 or calling them at 848-932-7500 (dial 2 as your menu choice). Please contact me with information about the requested assistance and present your Letter of Accommodation as early in the semester as possible.

### **Additional Resources**

The university offers a number of resources that you can access if needed:

- If you need a consultation on **research materials** and ways to find them, you can contact the Rutgers University [subject specialist librarian for communication](#).
- The SC&I IT Services can help you with various **technological problems**. You can find them in CI 120, by phone at 848-932-5555, or by email at [help@comminfo.rutgers.edu](mailto:help@comminfo.rutgers.edu).
- If you encounter **problems with Sakai**, you can contact the help desk at [sakai@rutgers.edu](mailto:sakai@rutgers.edu) or call them at 848 445 8721 between 8am-6pm on Monday through Friday.
- Student wellness services are available to you at Rutgers. You can contact CAPS for **mental health support** at [rhscaps.rutgers.edu](http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu) or by phone at 848 932 7884.
- The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling, and advocacy for victims of **sexual and relationship violence**. You can reach VPVA at [vpva.rutgers.edu](http://vpva.rutgers.edu) and 848 932 1181.
- The Office of Disability Services can be reached for help with accommodation and facilities for **students with disabilities** at [ods.rutgers.edu](http://ods.rutgers.edu), or by phone at 848 445 6800.
- On occasion, the university may have to **cancel classes** due to inclement weather. To check if classes are canceled, visit [campusstatus.rutgers.edu](http://campusstatus.rutgers.edu) or call 732-932-7799.

## Course summary

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Main topic</b>	<b>Methods</b>
1	January 16	Introductions, course and syllabus review	Research resources
2	January 23	Technological affordances	Digital research
3	January 30	Social relationships I (CMC theories)	Online surveys I
4	February 6	Social relationships II (online interactions)	Online surveys II
	February 10	<i>Research design outline I due</i>	
5	February 13	Social relationships III (social networks)	Social networks
6	February 20	Algorithms and big data	Digital trace data I
7	February 27	Political participation & civic engagement	Digital trace data II
8	March 6	Collaboration and collective intelligence	Crowdsourced data
	March 10	<i>Research design outline II due</i>	
	March 13	Spring break!	
9	March 20	Mass communication and journalism	Text analysis
10	March 27	Misinformation and credibility	Online experiments I
11	April 3	Social movements and collective action	Online experiments II
	April 6	<i>Research design outline III due</i>	
12	April 10	<i>Research workshop</i>	
13	April 17	Identity and reputation	Research ethics
14	April 24	<i>Presentations</i>	
	May 1	<i>Research proposal due</i>	

## Course Outline

The course schedule is subject to change: materials may be added or replaced during the semester. If that happens, the changes will be reflected on Sakai and announced in class/over email.

---

### Week 1 – January 16

#### Introductions, course and syllabus review

---

### Week 2 – January 23

#### Technological affordances

Baym, N. (2015). *Personal connections in the digital age* (2nd Ed.). Malden, MA: Polity Press. Ch.2 Making new media make sense.

Ellison, N. & Vitak, J. (2015). Social Network Site Affordances and their Relationship to Social Capital Processes. In Sundar, S. (Ed.) *The Handbook of Psychology of Communication Technology* (pp. 205-227). Boston, MA: Wiley Blackwell.

Evans, S. K., Pearce, K. E., Vitak, J. and Treem, J. W. (2017), Explicating Affordances: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Affordances in Communication Research. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 22: 35–52.

#### Methods - Digital research

Hargittai, E., & Sandvig, C. (Eds.). (2015). *Digital Research Confidential: The Secrets of Studying Behavior Online*. MIT Press. Ch. 1 How to Think about Digital Research

Hampton, K. N. (2017). Studying the Digital: Directions and Challenges for Digital Methods. *Annual Review of Sociology*.

---

### Week 3 – January 30

#### Social relationships I (CMC theories)

Baym, N. (2015). *Personal connections in the digital age* (2nd Ed.). Malden, MA: Polity Press. Ch.3 Communication in digital spaces

Walther, J. B. (2011). Theories of computer-mediated communication and interpersonal relations. In M. L. Knapp & J. A. Daly (Eds.), *The handbook of interpersonal communication*, pp. 443-479. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Walther, J. B. (2015). Social Information Processing Theory (CMC). *The International Encyclopedia of Interpersonal Communication*. 1–13.

DeAndrea, D. C. (2014). Advancing Warranting Theory. *Communication Theory*, 24(2), 186-204

#### Methods - Surveys I

Salganik, M. J. (2017). *Bit by bit: social research in the digital age*. [Chapter 3 Asking Questions](#)

## Week 4 – February 6

### Social relationships II (online interactions)

- Ellison, N. B., Lampe, C., Steinfeld, C., & Vitak, J. (2011). With a Little Help from My Friends: How Social Network Sites Affect Social Capital Processes. In Z. Papacharissi (Ed.), *A networked self: Identity, community, and culture on social network sites* (pp. 124-145). New York, NY: Routledge
- Green, M. C. & Clark, J. L. (2015). Real or Ersatz? Determinants of Benefits and Costs of Online Social Interactions. In Sundar, S. (Ed.) *I Handbook of Psychology of Communication Technology* (pp. 247-269). Boston, MA: Wiley Blackwell.
- McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Brashears, M. E. (2006). Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks over Two Decades. *American Sociological Review*, 71(6), 353-375.
- Hampton, K., Sessions, L. F., & Her, E. J. (2011). Core networks, social isolation, and new media: How Internet and mobile phone use is related to network size and diversity. *Information, Communication & Society*, 14(1)

### Methods - Surveys II

- Pew Research Center (2015) *From Telephone to the Web: The Challenge of Mode of Interview Effects in Public Opinion Polls*. Washington, DC: Pew Research.

---

*Deadline: February 10*

**Research design outline I due**

---

## Week 5 – February 13

### Social relationships III (social networks)

- Ellison, N. B., & boyd, d. (2013). Sociality through social network sites. In W. H. Dutton (Ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies* (pp. 151-172). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Burke, M., & Kraut, R. E. (2016). The relationship between Facebook use and well-being depends on communication type and tie strength. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 21(4), 265-281.
- Christakis, N & Fowler, J. (2011) *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives*, Ch.8 Hyperconnected
- Easley, D., & Kleinberg, J. (2010). *Networks, Crowds, and Markets: Reasoning About a Highly Connected World*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Ch.1 Overview.

### Methods – Social networks

- Marin, A., & Wellman, B. (2011). Social Network Analysis: An Introduction. In P. Carrington & J. Scott (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Network Analysis* (pp. 11-26). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.



---

**Week 6 – February 20**  
**Algorithms and big data**

- Lazer, D., & Radford, J. (2017). Data ex Machina: Introduction to Big Data. *Annual Review of Sociology*.
- Bogost, I. (2015). [The cathedral of computation](#). *The Atlantic*.
- Crawford, K. (2016). Can an Algorithm be Agonistic? Ten Scenes from Life in Calculated Publics. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 41(1), 77-92.
- Bakshy, E., Messing, S., & Adamic, L. (2015). Exposure to ideologically diverse news and opinion on Facebook. *Science*, 348(6239), 1130-1132.

**Methods – Digital trace data I**

- Salganik, M. J. (2017). *Bit by bit: social research in the digital age*. [Chapter 2 Observing behavior](#)

---

**Week 7 – February 27**  
**Civic and political engagement**

- Wells, C., Vraga, E., Thorson, K., Edgerly, S., & Bode, L. (2015). Youth civic engagement. In Coleman, S., & Freelon, D. (Eds.). *Handbook of digital politics*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Neuman, R. W. , Bimber, B., Hindman, M. (2011). The Internet and Four Dimensions of Citizenship. In G. C. Edwards, L. R. Jacobs & R. Y. Shapiro (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Jenkins, H., & Zimmerman, A. (2016). *By any media necessary: The new youth activism*. NYU Press. Ch.1 Youth Voice, Media, and Political Engagement
- Xenos, M., Vromen, A., & Loader, B. D. (2014). The great equalizer? Patterns of social media use and youth political engagement in three advanced democracies. *Information, Communication & Society*, 17(2), 151-167.

**Methods – Digital trace data II**

- Schober, M. F., Pasek, J., Guggenheim, L., Lampe, C., & Conrad, F. G. (2016). Social media analyses for social measurement. *Public opinion quarterly*, 80(1), 180-211.

---

*Week 8 – March 6*

**Collaboration and collective intelligence**

- Shirky, C. (2008) *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations*. Ch. 5  
Personal motivation meets collaborative production.
- Benkler, Y., Shaw, A., and Hill, M. (2015), Peer Production: A Form of Collective Intelligence. In  
Malone, T. W., & Bernstein, M. S. *Handbook of collective intelligence*. MIT Press.
- Brabham, D. (2013) *Crowdsourcing*. Ch.1 Concepts, Theories, and Cases of Crowdsourcing.
- Halfaker, A., Geiger, R. S., Morgan, J. T., & Riedl, J. (2013). The Rise and Decline of an Open  
Collaboration System: How Wikipedia’s Reaction to Popularity Is Causing Its Decline.  
*American Behavioral Scientist*, 57(5), 664-688.
- Optional:** Gura, T. (2015) Amateur experts: Involving members of the public can help science  
projects, but researchers should consider what they want to achieve. *Nature* 496.

**Methods – Crowdsourced data**

- Antoun, C., Zhang, C., Conrad, F. G., & Schober, M. F. (2016). Comparisons of online  
recruitment strategies for convenience samples: Craigslist, Google AdWords,  
Facebook, and Amazon Mechanical Turk. *Field Methods*, 28(3), 231-246.

---

*Deadline: March 10*

**Research design outline II due**

---

*March 13*

**Spring break!**

---

---

Week 10 – March 20

**Mass communication and journalism**

- Metzger, J. M. (2014). Broadcasting versus Narrowcasting: Do Mass Media Exist in the Twenty-First Century? In K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Webster, J.G. (2014) *The marketplace of attention: How audiences take shape in a digital age*. MIT Press. Ch.1 The marketplace of attention.
- Mitchelstein, E., & Boczkowski, P. J. (2013). Tradition and Transformation in Online News Production and Consumption. In W. H. Dutton (Ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies* (pp. 151-172). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Knobloch-Westerwick, S., Westerwick, A., & Johnson, B. K. (2015). Selective Exposure in the Communication Technology Context. In Sundar, S. (Ed.) *The Handbook of Psychology of Communication Technology* (pp. 407-426). Boston, MA: Wiley Blackwell.

**Methods – Text analysis**

- Petchler, R., & Gonzalez-Bailon, S. (2015). Automated content analysis of online political communication. In Coleman, S., & Freelon, D. (Eds.). *Handbook of digital politics*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

---

Week 11 – March 27

**Misinformation and credibility**

- Metzger, M. J., & Flanagin, A. J. (2015). Psychological approaches to credibility assessment online. *The handbook of the psychology of communication technology*, 32, 445.
- Thorson, E. (2016). Belief echoes: The persistent effects of corrected misinformation. *Political Communication*, 33(3), 460-480.
- Partisan Selective Sharing: The Biased Diffusion of Fact-Checking Messages on Social Media. *Journal of Communication*.
- Friggeri, A., Adamic, L. A., Eckles, D., & Cheng, J. (2014, May). Rumor Cascades. In ICWSM. Shin, J., & Thorson, K. (2017).
- Optional:** Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). INFORMATION DISORDER: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making. Chapter 1: Conceptual framework

**Methods – Online experiments I**

- Salganik, M. J. (2017). *Bit by bit: social research in the digital age*. [Chapter 4 Running experiments](#)

---

*Week 12 – April 3*

**Social movements and collective action**

- Tufekci, Z. (2017). *Twitter and tear gas: The power and fragility of networked protest*. Yale University Press. Chapter 5 Technology and People
- Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2012). The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(5)
- Karpf, D. (2016). *Analytic activism: Digital listening and the new political strategy*. Oxford University Press. Ch.1 Will the Revolution Be A/B- Tested?
- Bond, R. M., Fariss, C. J., Jones, J. J., Kramer, A. D., Marlow, C., Settle, J. E., & Fowler, J. H. (2012). A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization. *Nature*, 489(7415), 295-298.

**Methods – Online experiments II**

- Radford, J., Pilny, A., Reichelmann, et al (2016). Volunteer science: An online laboratory for experiments in social psychology. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 79(4), 376-396.

---

*Deadline: March 10*

**Research design outline III due**

---

*Week 13 – April 10*

**Research workshop**

---

*Week 14 – April 17*

**Identity and reputation**

- Marwick, A. (2013) Ch. 23 Online Identity. In Hartley, J., Bruns, A., & Burgess, J. (Eds.). *A companion to new media dynamics*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Van Dijck, J. (2013). 'You have one identity': performing the self on Facebook and LinkedIn. *Media, Culture & Society*, 35(2), 199-215.
- Lampe, C. (2012) *The Reputation Society: How Online Opinions Are Reshaping the Offline World*. Ch.7 The Role of Reputation Systems in Managing Online Communities.
- Pasquale, F. (2015) *The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms That Control Money and Information*. Ch. 2 Digital Reputation in an Era of Runaway Data.

**Methods – Research ethics**

- Salganik, M. J. (2017). *Bit by bit: social research in the digital age*. [Chapter 6 Ethics](#)

---

*Week 15 - April 24*

**Final presentations**

---

*Deadline: May 1*

**Research proposal due**

---