RUTGERS
School of Communication and Information

Mediated Communication
Doctoral Seminar
16:194:633
Spring 2020

Instructor:	Dr. Katherine Ognyanova
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Office:	SDW 302 (Simeon De Witt Building, 185 College Ave.)
Office Hours:	Wednesday 5:00pm-6:00pm and by appointment
Course Time:	Wednesday, 6:20pm-9:00pm
Course Room:	CI 337 (SC&I Building, 4 Huntington Street)
Course Website:	canvas.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 Wednesdays, 5pm-6pm. 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. 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 a couple of days of receiving your email.

Required Readings

There is no required textbook for this class. All readings will be available on the course's Canvas website (canvas.rutgers.edu). Log in using your Rutgers NetID, navigate to the course site, and browse the *Course Materials* page. The reading materials for each week of class are also listed in the *Course Outline* section of this syllabus.

If you encounter a problem with Canvas, you can contact the Rutgers Canvas help desk at help@canvas.rutgers.edu or call them at 877-361-1134. Canvas support should be available 24/7.

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 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 reflections (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 the end of the day on Monday** of each week. We will use the Canvas discussion feature to post the reading reflections. You can find that section under *Discussions* on the course site, or follow the links included in *Course Materials*.

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 post 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. Posts will only contribute to the reading reflection grade if they are published on time.

Discussion lead (100 points)

During the last four weeks of the semester, you will take the role of discussion leaders for the course. Each student will lead (or co-lead) the discussion once during that time. 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 Canvas website for this course. The due dates are as follows:

- **February 15**   Research design outline I
- **March 15**   Research design outline II
- **April 12**   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.

Research proposal (300 points)

For your final project, you will select one of your design outlines and develop it into a comprehensive 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, content analysis, 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 of 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).

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 Canvas by **May 8.** 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 out last day of class, you will present your research proposal and get one more chance to receive peer and instructor feedback before submitting a final draft. Research presentations should be 15-20 minutes long (depending on the number of students in class).

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
Reading reflections	**200** points
Discussion leader	**100** points
Research outlines	**300** points
Research proposal	**300** points
Total:	**1000** points

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

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

Grade appeals

You can appeal individual assignment grades in writing up to 7 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 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.
- If you encounter a **problem with Canvas**, you can contact the Rutgers Canvas help desk at help@canvas.rutgers.edu or call them at 877-361-1134.

- Student wellness services are available to you at Rutgers. You can contact CAPS for **mental health support** at 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 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, 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 or call 732-932-7799.

Course summary

Week	Dates	Main topic	Methods
1	January 22	Introductions, course & syllabus review	Research resources
2	January 29	Technological affordances	Digital research
3	February 5	Social relationships I (CMC theories)	Online surveys I
4	February 12	Social relationships II (Social capital)	Online surveys II
	February 15	*Research design outline I due*	
5	February 19	Social relationships III (Social networks)	Social networks
6	February 26	Algorithms and big data	Digital trace data I
7	March 4	Political participation & civic engagement	Digital trace data II
8	March 11	Collaboration and collective intelligence	Crowdsourced data
	March 15	*Research design outline II due*	
	March 18	Spring break!	
9	March 25	Mass communication and journalism	Text analysis
10	April 1	Misinformation and credibility	Online experiments I
11	April 8	Social movements and collective action	Online experiments II
	April 12	*Research design outline III due*	
12	April 15	Identity and reputation	Research ethics I
13	April 22	Information privacy	Research ethics II
14	April 29	Health and well-being	Research Q & A
15	May 6	*Presentations*	
	May 8	*Research proposal due*	

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 Canvas and announced in class/over email.

Week 1 – January 22
Introductions, course review

Methods: Research resources

Week 2 – January 29
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.

Orchard, L. J. (2019). Uses and Gratifications of Social Media: Who Uses It and Why? In A. Attrill-Smith, C. Fullwood, M. Keep, & D. J. Kuss (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cyberpsychology* (pp. 329–348). Oxford University Press.

Methods: Digital research

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

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Week 3 – February 5

Social relationships

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

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Week 4 – February 12

Social capital

Domahidi, E. (2018). The Associations Between Online Media Use and Users' Perceived Social
Resources: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 23(4), 181–200.

Kwon, H. (2018). The Analysis of Social Capital in Digital Environments. In B. Foucault Welles
& S. Gonzalez-Bailon (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Networked Communication*.

Gil de Zuniga, H., Barnidge, M., & Scherman, A. (2017). Social Media Social Capital, Offline
Social Capital, and Citizenship: Exploring Asymmetrical Social Capital Effects. *Political
Communication*, 34(1), 44–68.

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

Couper, M. P. (2017). New Developments in Survey Data Collection. *Annual Review of Sociology*,
43(1), 121–145.

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Deadline: February 15

Research design outline I due

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Week 5 – February 19

Social networks

Himelboim, I. (2017). Social Network Analysis (Social Media). In *International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods* (pp. 1–15). American Cancer Society.

 Dubois, E., & Gaffney, D. (2014). The Multiple Facets of Influence: Identifying Political Influentials and Opinion Leaders on Twitter. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 58(10), 1260–1277.

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.

Guilbeault, D., Becker, J., & Centola, D. (2018). Complex Contagions: A Decade in Review. In S. Lehmann & Y.-Y. Ahn (Eds.), *Complex Spreading Phenomena in Social Systems: Influence and Contagion in Real-World Social Networks* (pp. 3–25). Springer International Publishing.

Methods: Social networks

Green, H. D., & Wasserman, S. (2015). Network Analysis: A Definitional Guide to Important Concepts. *Network Analysis*, 35.

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Week 6 – February 26

Algorithms and big data

Kearns, M., & Roth, A. (2019). *The Ethical Algorithm: The Science of Socially Aware Algorithm Design*. Oxford University Press. Ch.2 Algorithmic fairness.

Ananny, M., & Crawford, K. (2018). Seeing without knowing: Limitations of the transparency ideal and its application to algorithmic accountability. *New Media & Society*, 20(3), 973–989.

Bakshy, E., Messing, S., & Adamic, L. (2015). Exposure to ideologically diverse news and opinion on Facebook. *Science*, 348(6239), 1130-1132.

Lazer, D., & Radford, J. (2017). Data ex Machina: Introduction to Big Data. *Annual Review of Sociology*.

Methods: Digital trace data I

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

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Week 7 – March 4

Civic and political engagement

Margetts, H. (2019). Rethinking Democracy with Social Media. *The Political Quarterly*, 90(S1), 107–123.

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.

Kwak, N., Lane, D. S., Weeks, B. E., Kim, D. H., Lee, S. S., & Bachleda, S. (2018). Perceptions of Social Media for Politics: Testing the Slacktivism Hypothesis. *Human Communication Research*, 44(2), 197–221.

Boulianne, S. (2018). Twenty Years of Digital Media Effects on Civic and Political Participation: *Communication Research*, 1– 20.

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.

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Week 8 – March 11

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.

Shaw, A., & Hargittai, E. (2018). The Pipeline of Online Participation Inequalities: The Case of Wikipedia Editing. Journal of Communication, 68(1), 143–168.

Majchrzak, A., Jarvenpaa, S. L., & Faraj, S. (2017). Theorizing Knowledge Collaboration in Online Communities. In L. Argote & J. M. Levine (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Group and Organizational Learning*.

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.

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Deadline: March 15

Research design outline II due

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March 18

Spring break!

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Week 9 – March 25

Mass communication and journalism

Metzger, J. M. (2017). 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.

Gil de Zuniga, H., & Diehl, T. (2019). News finds me perception and democracy: Effects on political knowledge, political interest, and voting. *New Media & Society*, 21, 1253–1271.

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.

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Week 10 – April 1

Misinformation and credibility

Flynn, D. J., Nyhan, B., & Reifler, J. (2017). The Nature and Origins of Misperceptions: Understanding False and Unsupported Beliefs About Politics: Nature and Origins of Misperceptions. *Political Psychology*, 38, 127–150.

Thorson, E. (2016). Belief echoes: The persistent effects of corrected misinformation. *Political Communication*, 33(3), 460-480.

Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146–1151.

Metzger, M. J., & Flanagin, A. J. (2015). Psychological approaches to credibility assessment online. *The handbook of the psychology of communication technology*, 32, 445.

Methods: Online experiments I

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

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Week 11 – April 8

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

Valenzuela, S., Correa, T., & Gil de Zuniga, H. (2018). Ties, Likes, and Tweets: Using Strong and Weak Ties to Explain Differences in Protest Participation Across Facebook and Twitter Use. *Political Communication*, 35(1), 117–134.

Jost, J. T., Barbera, P., Bonneau, R., Langer, M., Metzger, M., Nagler, J., Sterling, J., & Tucker, J. A. (2018). How Social Media Facilitates Political Protest: Information, Motivation, and Social Networks. *Political Psychology*, 39(S1), 85–118.

Welles, B. F., & Jackson, S. J. (2019). The Battle for #Baltimore: Networked Counterpublics and the Contested Framing of Urban Unrest. *International Journal of Communication*, 13, 1699–1719.

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.

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Deadline: April 12

Research design outline III due

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Week 12 – April 15

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.

Attrill-Smith, A. (2019). The Online Self. In A. Attrill-Smith, C. Fullwood, M. Keep, & D. J. Kuss (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cyberpsychology* (pp. 16–34). Oxford University Press.

Szulc, L. (2019). Profiles, Identities, Data: Making Abundant and Anchored Selves in a Platform Society. *Communication Theory*, 29(3), 257–276.

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.

Methods: Research ethics I

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

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Week 13 – April 22

Information privacy

Acquisti, A., Brandimarte, L., & Loewenstein, G. (2015). Privacy and human behavior in the age of information. *Science*, 347(6221), 509–514.

Archer, K., Christofides, E., Nosko, A., & Wood, E. (2015). Exploring Disclosure and Privacy in a Digital Age. In L. D. Rosen, N. Cheever, & L. M. Carrier (Eds.), *The Wiley Handbook of Psychology, Technology, and Society*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Dienlin, T., & Metzger, M. J. (2016). An Extended Privacy Calculus Model for SNSs: Analyzing Self-Disclosure and Self-Withdrawal in a Representative U.S. Sample. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 21(5), 368–383.

Nissenbaum, H. (2011). A Contextual Approach to Privacy Online. *Daedalus*, 140(4), 32–48.

Methods: Research ethics II

Mislove, A., & Wilson, C. (2018). A Practitioner's Guide to Ethical Web Data Collection. In *The Oxford Handbook of Networked Communication*.

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Week 14 – April 29

Health and well-being

Paez, D., Delfino, G., Vargas-Salfate, S., Liu, J. H., Gil de Zuniga, H., Khan, S., & Garaigordobil, M. (2019). A longitudinal study of the effects of internet use on subjective well-being. *Media Psychology*, 1–35.

Coulson, N. S. (2019). Online Support Communities. In A. Attrill-Smith, C. Fullwood, M. Keep, & D. J. Kuss (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cyberpsychology* (pp. 239–260). Oxford University Press.

Sillence, E., & Briggs, P. (2019). Managing Your Health Online: Issues in the Selection, Curation, and Sharing of Digital Health Information. In A. Attrill-Smith, C. Fullwood, M. Keep, & D. J. Kuss (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cyberpsychology* (pp. 433–450). Oxford University Press.

Zhang, J., & Centola, D. (2019). Social Networks and Health: New Developments in Diffusion, Online and Offline. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 45(1), 91–109.

Methods: Research Q & A

Week 15 – May 6

Final presentations

Deadline: May 8

Research proposal due