

Honors 123: Communication In the Digital Age: The Internet, Information and Communication in University and Research Life

Instructor: Jeremy Hunsinger

Office hours: Monday-Wednesday 3:00-4:30pm

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(To give credit where credit is due, this course is based on Hon 106, taught by Prof. Steve Jones at UIC)

This syllabus serves as a contract between you and the instructor. Any deviations from this syllabus will be announced in class. Enrollment in this class implies agreement that you will follow the policies in this syllabus.

This course will engage you in thinking and learning about, and performing research on, the social and communicative relationships of digital communication (particularly the Internet) in university and research life. It focusses on higher education and specifically on the changes we go through as researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago. It will do so by having you participate in research teams in a study of the Internet's impact on college students, faculty and/or staff at UIC.

In this course we want to ask:

What do faculty, researchers, staff, and students do?

What relationships do they create?

How does communication participate in those relationships and actions?

How do they communicate with each other?

How do they use the internet?

This course is built on your efforts as learners and researchers. The course is principally designed to enable you to learn by performing as researchers. This requires your enthusiasm and commitment to the course, to performing professionally, and to respecting yourself and others.

Goals:

1: To learn ethnographic methods as a way to learn about and understand communication and the internet.

2: To become critical, reflexive about oneself as a researcher and writers.

3: To work in teams to produce, critique, and engage life in the academic setting.

4: To become aware of the contexts of contemporary university research and its relations to the internet.

Class format:

This is a discussion based course. We meet 3 times per week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, unless stipulated on the schedule. Each class will begin with a brief introduction of materials. I will have questions for you, and you should be prepared with some questions for me and your peers. I expect you to voice your opinions, but to keep those opinions grounded, informed, and in some relation to the class materials. This class should be contentious, and you will need to voice your opinions.

Prerequisites:

You will need familiarity with basic internet technologies. We will be using these tools for class participation. I will not be teaching these skills. I will be teaching the basics of blogging.

Please verify that you are registered in this course. Retroactive course registrations are prohibited. You may drop the course without penalty during the first ten days of the semester (through Friday of Week 2) using UIC Express. Between Week 3 and Friday of Week 9, undergraduates are entitled to a total of two optional late drops for the duration of their enrollment at UIC. Optional late drops require an appointment with an advisor.

Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access and participation in this course must be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Please contact ODS at 312/413-2183 (voice) or 312/413-0123 (TTY).

Office Hours:

Office hours exist to help you. They can be used to discuss readings, to clarify concepts, discuss your progress in the course. However, they are not a private tutorial session for missed materials. If you miss class, catch up with a classmate.

Required Texts:

Ethnographic Methods, O'Reilly
Field Ethnography, Kutsche
Science in Action, Latour
Other texts as assigned

Recommended Texts:

Laboratory Life, Latour
Re-thinking Science, Nowotny, et. al.

Assignments:

Ethnographic Exercises	40 points
Blogging Fieldnotes	10 points
Ethnographic Essay	30 points
Proposal	5 points
Rough draft	5 points
Final Draft	10 points
Presentation	10 points
Participation	10 points
total	100 points

Tentative Scale:

- A = 100-90
- B = 89-80
- C = 79-70
- D = 69-60
- F = 59-0

Grading:

Grades are wholistic. They represent the content and quality of work that is evidenced by the work that you submit. The university has writing tutors that will help you with your writing should you need it. Knowledge, as you will learn in this course, requires certain formalizations of presentation. In short, presentation matters in this course. If I find a spelling mistake in your paper, you will lose the equivalent of one letter grade on the assignment. If I find more than 10 spelling/grammar/logic mistakes in your paper, I will return it with a 0.

Ethnographic Exercises

There are four exercises each has a different goal and they map into Kutsche. These are performed as individuals Each will be worth 10 points. They should be as long as you need, or as short as you need. You will be graded on the basis of your work in relation to the specific assignment.

Blogging Fieldnotes:

In Week 9, you will start your big ethnographic project. You will post your fieldnotes, transcribed interviews, and related work to the course blog as you collect them.

Ethnographic Essay:

This is a group based essay. You will perform an ethnographic project that has at least 20 hours of participant observation with field notes and at least 10 unstructured interviews. You have a proposal for this essay in week 8. You have a rough draft due

in week 12. You have a presentation due week 13 with the final draft due the last day of class.

Participation:

Participation is real. I keep track in various ways. You should participate in class.

Academic Dishonesty

DO NOT DO IT!

I quote from <http://www.uic.edu/ucatalog/GR.shtml#qa>

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

Cheating: Either intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, people, or study aids in any academic exercise, or extending to or receiving any kind of unauthorized assistance on any examination or assignment to, or from, another person.

Fabrication: Knowing or unauthorized falsification, reproduction, lack of attribution, or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Facilitating Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.

Bribes, Favors, Threats: Bribing or attempting to bribe, promising favors to or making threats against, any person, with the intention of affecting a record of a grade, grade, or evaluation of academic performance. Any conspiracy with another person who then takes, or attempts to take, action on behalf or at the direction of the student.

Examination by Proxy: Taking or attempting to take an exam for someone else other than the student is a violation by both the student enrolled in the course and the proxy or substitute.

Grade Tampering: Any unauthorized attempt to change, actual change of, or alteration of grades, or any tampering with grades.

Nonoriginal Works: Submission or attempt to submit any written work authored, in whole or part, by someone other than the student.

Any Evidence that you have violated the academic dishonesty policy will be taken as reason to give you an F in the course or whatever else the university policy allows.

Incompletes: I do not give incompletes. I give you the grade that you earn.

SOME MORE GRIM RULES (borrowed from Prof. Deirdre McCloskey) via Prof. Steve Jones.

These are written out just so there's no misunderstanding.

I take attendance, irregularly and informally but mercilessly. If you miss six classes without permission and I detect it you will get an F in the course. Sorry, but otherwise we don't get the continuity of conversation that makes a class a real intellectual experience. Come sleep in class if necessary! But come to class! That's the best advice anyone can give you for success in college.

You can sleep in class all you want. Seriously. Be my guest. Really: I don't mind. And bring any friend, parent, child, or dog you want, anytime (so long as they are not disruptive). No problem: no need to ask. Really. They are all welcome. I think having kids and dogs in a class improves the atmosphere. No joke.

But you cannot read, talk off topic, eat, slouch insultingly [guys: listen up], pass notes, pick your nose, look bored (being bored is another matter: these rules are about externals that hurt your classmates, demoralizing them and me), dress inappropriately, do homework, chew gum, come late, leave early, or more generally act like you are in high school. The class starts at 10:00 promptly. I don't want to hear about traffic, the L, or "running late": be on time. Think of the class as a business meeting, with me as your boss. Turn off cell phones or other devices that make similar noise.

All grades are final unless I make a mistake in adding up the points: I rarely discuss grades. Rarely. Believe me, this is one of life's little unpleasantnesses: your boss will never discuss a plan to fire or promote you. If you have an appeal please make an appointment to see me.

If you cheat on tests or "plagiarize" in writings (that is, use someone else's work as your own) you will get an F in the course and I will try to have you expelled from the University. I may not succeed. But believe me I will try. I've succeeded in the past. Got it? No cheating!

I'm sorry these are so dire and grim, but someone will say I didn't say it if I don't, if you see what I mean.

Week 1 Introduction 1-14

M Class Introduction

W The university, the internet and research

Read Latour, Introduction
Kutsche, Introduction

F Literature, Action and Knowledge

Read Latour, Ch. 1
Sociological Imagination ch. 6, 10, and appendix

Week 2 Ethnography 1-21

M MLK day No classes

W Read O'reilly Ch. 1, 2 , Discussion

F Read Clifford, Pratt, and Rabinow (on Web), Discussion

Week 3 Ethics 1-28

M Read AoIR Ethics Guidelines, Discussion

Read O'reilly Ch. 3

W Read Latour Appendix 1, 2, Discussion

F Ethnographic Exercise 1 "Map"

Read Kutsche p. 13-26, Discussion

Week 4 Participation, Observation, and Language 2-4

M Read O'reilly Ch. 4, Discussion

W Read Latour, Ch. 2, 3, Discussion

F Read Kutsche p. 38 - 47, Discussion

Week 4 Ritual 2-11

M Read Kutsche p. 48 – 84, Discussion

(Other may be assigned)

W Discussion

F Ethnography Exercise 2 "Body Language", Discussion

Week 5 Doing Ethnography 2-18

M Readings as assigned

W Discussion

F Ethnography Exercise 3 (Ritual), Discussion

Week 6 Networks and Knowledge 2-25

M Read Latour 4, 5, 6, Discussion

W Callon, Law (As assigned), Discussion

F Discussion

Week 7 Interviewing 3-3

M O'Reilly Ch. 5, 6, Discussion

W Briggs "Learning How to Ask" Ch. 1, 3, 5, 6, Discussion

F Ethnography Exercise 4 (Networks)

Week 8 Big Ethnography

M Read Kutsche p. 85 – 102, Discussion

W Discussion

F Discussion, Research Proposal Due.

Week 9 The Internet and the Academy 3-10

M Readings as Assigned, Discussion

W Discussion

F Class Canceled

Week Spring Break 3-24

Week 10 Seeing and Hearing 3-31

M Read O'reilly Ch. 7, Discussion

W Read Kutsche p. 103 – 123, Discussion

F Discussion

Week 11 Reading Ethnography 4-7

M Read Geertz Thick Description, Deep Play, Discussion

W Read Kutsche p. 123 – 142, Discussion

F Discussion

Week 12 Writing Ethnography 4-14

M Read O'reilly Ch. 8, Discussion

W Read Kutsche p. 142 – 168, Discussion

F Discussion, Rough Draft of Ethnographic project due.

Week 13 Reflexivity 4-21

M Bourdieu As Assigned (Science as Science and Reflexivity), Discussion

W Read O'reilly Ch. 9 Kutsche 169 - 206, Discussion

F Discussion

Week 14 Reflecting on Ethnography and the Academy 4-28

M Presentation and discussions

W Presentation and discussions

F Presentation and discussions

Week 15 Final's Week