

**Internet and Society**  
SOC 350 - 01  
Rhode Island College  
W, 4:00 - 6:50  
Craig-Lee 202 (Lecture Room)  
Gaige 168 (Computer Room)  
Class website: [www.internetandsociety.wikispaces.com](http://www.internetandsociety.wikispaces.com)

**Instructor Information**

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**Course Description**

There are three main goals for this course. First, we will explore the relationship between the Internet and the social phenomena that sociologists traditionally explore. These "social phenomena" include the development of communities, political participation, deviance, and the reproduction of social inequality. Second, we will explore the social implications of the Internet on a personal level. We will work directly with Internet applications and reflect upon how these application alter or modify our everyday activities. Third, we will explore how social scientists conduct research on the Internet. We will do this by reading literature on the Internet, developing a research question, gathering data from the Internet, and drawing conclusions based upon this data.

**Course Materials**

Readings

(please go to the class website to download the readings)

- Shirky, Clay. 2009. *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*. New York, NY: Penguin Press, [Chapters 1 and 2](#) (note: Chapters 1, 2, and 8 are in the file, but you will only need to read chapters 1 and 2)
- Palfrey, John and Urs Gasser. 2008. *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives*. New York, NY: Basic Books - [Chapters 1 and 2](#) (note: Chapters 1, 2, and 5 are in the file, but you will only need to read chapters 1 and 2)
- Baym, Nancy. 2010. *Personal Connections in a Digital Age*. Malden, MA: Polity - [Chapter 4](#)
- Goldsmith, Jack and Tim Wu. 2006. *Who Controls the Internet?: Illusions of a Borderless World*. New York : Oxford University Press - [Chapters 5 and 6](#)
- Witte, James C. and Susan Mannon. 2010. *The Internet and Social Inequalities*. Taylor and Francis: New York, NY. - [Chapters 1 and 2](#)
- Brenner, Susan W. 2010. *Cybercrime: Criminal Threats from Cyberspace*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger - [Chapters 3 and 7](#)

Lectures

I will give several lectures on selected topics during the semester. Tentatively, these lectures are:

- “Basic Sociological Concepts”
- “The History of the Internet”
- “Doing Research Online, Doing Online Research”
- “Sociological Questions and the Internet”
- “How does the Internet Build or Break down Community?”
- “How does the Internet Facilitate Deviance and Crime?”
- “How has the Internet affected Political Participation?”
- “What are the consequences of Unequal Internet Usage?”

Check the course schedule at the end of this document for the tentative dates of these lectures. Check the course website for the PowerPoints of these lectures.

### Internet and Computer Access

- Students will be given time during class to work in groups on their projects.
- Also, if time is needed outside of class, students can access the course webpage and all course documents at any time from the library, campus computer labs, or from home.

### Supplemental Texts

- Because students will need to do research outside of class, it is expected that they will use the Adams Library. I have preselected some books that *may* be of help to you and listed them here (<http://internetandsociety.wikispaces.com/Key+Texts>)

### Wiki

- A wiki is a website that allows users to produce their own web page (or series of webpages). Users do not need to know how to program or code a website. Users can simply log on and use the basic tools provided to design webpages.
- The beauty of wikis is that many users can work together simultaneously to produce a single product. In this course everyone will be required to develop a webpage via a wiki. The class website is found at [www.internetandsociety.wikispaces.com](http://www.internetandsociety.wikispaces.com). As the semester develops, groups of students will be given access to a blank page on the class website. Students will then work collaboratively to produce content on this website. Visit the class website for a video about wikis.

### Google Docs

- Google Docs is a web based application that allows you to create word documents, spreadsheets (like Excel) and presentations (like PowerPoint).
- Like a wiki, editing of documents can be done by many users simultaneously.
- Group work can be done in Google docs because the document is not stored on any one person's computer, but is instead stored online, in the cloud.
- In this course students will create and edit documents in Google Docs. Visit the class website for a video about Google Docs.

### **Grading Scale**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b><u>Individual</u></b>	
Exam #1	15%
Exam #2	15%
Tech Journal	15%
Participation (Individual)	10%
<b><u>Group Research Project</u></b>	
Paper	20%
Wiki Page	15%
Presentation	10%

### **Exams**

There will be two exams during the semester. These exams are designed to assess your knowledge of the readings and lectures. These exams will be a combination of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and possible some short answer. These exams will be given at the beginning of class.

These exams are to ensure that you do the readings and gain a understanding of the ideas and vocabulary needed to discuss the Internet's effects on society.

#### For Exam 1

- Shirky, Clay. 2009. *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*. New York, NY: Penguin Press – [Chapters 1 and 2](#)
- Palfrey, John and Urs Gasser. 2008. *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives*. New York, NY: Basic Books - [Chapters 1 and 2](#)
- Any lectures given during this time

#### For Exam 2

- Baym, Nancy. 2010. *Personal Connections in a Digital Age*. Malden, MA: Polity - [Chapter 4](#)
- Goldsmith, Jack and Tim Wu. 2006. *Who Controls the Internet?: Illusions of a Borderless World*. New York : Oxford University Press - [Chapters 5 and 6](#)
- Witte, James C. and Susan Mannon. 2010. *The Internet and Social Inequalities*. Taylor and Francis: New York, NY. - [Chapters 1 and 2](#)
- Brenner, Susan W. 2010. *Cybercrime: Criminal Threats from Cyberspace*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger - [Chapters 3 and 7](#)
- Any lectures given during this time

### Group Research Project

In this assignment you will (1) write a written report that you will give to me, (2) construct a webpage that shows presents the information from your report, and (3) present your work to the class. All three parts of this group research project are done in groups of four or less (this may change depending upon the size of the class). All components of the project will be stored online for other groups to see. It is expected that other groups view each other's work and use ideas from other's work.

This group research project is divided into three parts: a written report, a webpage that shows visually what you have done in your report and the oral presentation your group will give to the class.

You can find the grading rubric at the end of this document. You can read more about each component of the group project below.

#### Written Report

Groups will pick their own specific aspects of the Internet to study. However, every topic must fall under one of these general questions:

1. How does the Internet build or break down community?
2. How does the Internet facilitate deviance and crime?
3. How has the Internet affected political participation?
4. What are the consequences of unequal Internet usage?

For example, if a group decides that they would like to study the Asian American dating and socializing community "Asian Ave", they must think about how studying this community fits into one of the five major questions. Maybe the group decides they want to look at how Asians reproduce offline communities in online environments. This would mean that they are interested in social categories (question 1). Or, maybe they are interested in flaming or people misrepresenting themselves online. In this case they are interested in deviance (question 2).

You will turn in a rough draft (on 11/02) and a final draft (on 12/07).

When working through the report, consider below:

<b><i>What is the topic?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You will choose this topic.</li> <li>Early in the semester you, your group members, and I will discuss potential topics</li> </ul>
<b><i>What is the purpose?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First, you should demonstrate your knowledge of the subject matter covered in class</li> <li>Second, you should demonstrate your ability to collect basic information using the Internet</li> <li>Third, you should demonstrate your ability to draw new conclusions based upon what you have read the information you have collected</li> </ul>
<b><i>Who am I addressing this report to?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imagine that you are addressing your report to professionals in the same company who have similar knowledge of sociological concepts and technology, but do not have expertise in the specific area you have studied.</li> </ul>
<b><i>What role do I have when presenting this report?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For this report, consider yourself an entry-level professional who was hired by the company because of your knowledge of sociological concepts and basic IT terminology.</li> </ul>
<b><i>In what format should I present this information?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You should type your report in word processing software, in 12 point Times New Roman font, with no less than 1 inch margins on the side (or just use the default setting in your word processing software), and double spaced</li> <li>The paper should be around 1000 words (4 - 5 pages), charts and graphs do not count towards the word count</li> <li>The paper should be divided into subsections: introduction, review of literature, findings, conclusion (we will discuss this more later)</li> <li>For referencing, please refer to the sociology department's recommendations for papers here: <a href="http://www.ric.edu/sociology/termpaperguide.php">http://www.ric.edu/sociology/termpaperguide.php</a></li> </ul>
<b><i>What information should I use to compile this report?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First, you will collect original data from websites.</li> <li>Second, you must use the library to find at least three texts and quote from these texts. I have already listed several texts that can be found in the RIC library or through HELIN. This listing can be found on the course website.</li> </ul>

#### Webpage

- You will build a webpage as a group on the class website.
- You should think of the webpage as a visual representation of your research and report.
- After the group has decided on the question they wish to explore, you will be given access to the class website, and a blank page
- As you learn more about your topic, you will begin developing this page. Thus, this webpage will be constantly changing as the class develops. There is no wrong or right webpage.
- This is a collaboration amongst you and your group, as well as amongst you and the entire class. You will be able to look at your classmates' work, and use some of their ideas.
- Your webpage can be organized like your paper: introduction, review of literature, findings, conclusion. However, the focus should not be on paragraphs of text, but instead showing visually what you have written. For example, if you are studying online websites of Rhode Island political candidates you will definitely want screenshots of different candidate's webpages. Or, if you are doing a quantitative study of the number of cybercrimes in the last 10 years, you can put together a graph to show the increase (or decrease) in the number of cybercrimes.
- You will present this webpage to the class at the end of the semester.

### Presentation

- At the end of the semester, you will present the findings of your project (paper and webpage) to the class.
- This presentation itself should last around 15 minutes.
- The most important aspect of this presentation will be the question and answer session after you have finished presenting your work. You should be able to demonstrate your mastery of your specific topic by addressing the questions of your peers and instructor.

### **Tech Journals**

During the semester you will take notes on your various experiences with technology. These journals should be considered "living documents". You are allowed to rewrite your journal entries throughout the semester. Your entries should grow and evolve as you learn more. However, I will grade your writing for participation at several points during the semester. I will make comments directly onto your journals.

### **Participation**

There are many ways to participate in this class. In general, you can participate by:

- Attendance - I take attendance each week
- Wiki Discussion Board - You can comment on other student's work through the discussion board for their page
- In Class Discussion - You can discuss the readings in class, ask questions, and provide personal experiences

Even though I take all three of these things into account, I make a general, *overall* judgment about a student's participation. Simply showing up to class will not ensure a top score. Making numerous comments on the wiki discussion board (especially if they are meaningless) will not ensure a top score. Finally, talking a lot in class (especially if what you say is meaningless) will not ensure a top score. *Participation is an overall judgment of quality.*

### **Plagiarism**

Statement from [Rhode Island College's Sociology Page on term papers](#):

*"If, when one is writing, one uses the words or ideas of another, one must give them credit. Presenting someone else's writing or unique treatment of the subject as one's own is **plagiarism** and is considered a serious academic offense, the equivalent of theft in the world at large. Any time a student presents someone else's work as if s/he had written it, even with some slight alterations, it is plagiarism. This includes material obtained from the Internet. Writing style is almost always the giveaway. See the [section on Academic Integrity](#) in the Student Handbook for details on penalties."*

Students found plagiarizing will receive **no** credit for their work. If plagiarism occurs during a group assignment, that group will lose all credit.

### **Make Up and Late Policy**

Students will be allowed to complete make-up exams if they have a valid excuse. Medical excuses are valid, and students should bring a doctor's note if they wish to take a make-up exam. If a student is not present to assist his or her group when they present their project, they will lose those points (10%). There is no make up for journals.

## **Special Accommodations**

Rhode Island College is committed to providing accommodations for students with disabling conditions and supporting them in the academic environment. Support services are provided within a campus environment that is physically and socially accessible and that enables students to achieve their academic goals. Find out more here:

<http://www.ric.edu/disabilityservices/>

## **Course Schedule**

As with all schedules, we may modify assignments or dates as needed. See the tentative schedule beginning on page 7. You should pay close attention to the location of the classes. We will meet most days in the computer lab (Gaige 168). However, sometimes we will meet at first in CL 202, and then move to Gaige 168.

## **Maintaining Privacy Online**

The group project (the paper and the wikipage) will be available for viewing by others in this class. This is in an effort to model the power of the Internet for collaboration. In order to maintain your privacy, you are not required to write your names on any of the documents that can be viewed or downloaded by people other than me (the Instructor). This will allow you to research and comment on topics that may be sensitive without worrying about being "googled" later. For example, if a group decides to write about homosexuality online and the group decides to make comments about homosexuality, it is possible that the project could be found by people browsing the web. *In order to protect your privacy you should not attach names directly to the webpage or project paper.* I will be able to identify you by your group name. However, tech journals will need to have names, but these tech journals cannot be seen by others.

<b>Internet and Society Class Schedule</b> Craig-Lee 202 (Lecture Room) Gaige 168 (Computer Room)				
No.	Date	Topic/Activity	Room	Homework
1	8/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class Introductions</li> <li>Lecture: "Basic Sociological Concepts"</li> <li>Lab: Using Wikispaces and Google Docs</li> </ul>	CL 202/Gaige 168	Read <i>Here Comes Everybody</i> , Chs. 1 & 2
2	9/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class Discussion of <i>Here Comes Everybody</i></li> <li>Lecture: "The History of the Internet"</li> <li>Lab: Using Wikispaces and Google Docs</li> </ul>	Gaige 168	Read <i>Born Digital</i> , Chs. 1 & 2
3	9/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class Discussion of <i>Born Digital</i> Chs. 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>Lab: Using Wikispaces and Google Docs</li> </ul>	Gaige 168	Prepare for Exam Think About Group Members
4	9/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Exam #1</b></li> <li>Lecture: "Doing Research Online, Doing Online Research"</li> <li>Lab: Getting Into Groups</li> </ul>	Gaige 168	Spend Time on Your Tech Journals Think About A Group Project
5	10/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lecture: Sociological Questions and the Internet</li> <li>Discuss Tech Journals</li> <li>Lab Time</li> </ul>	CL 202	Read <i>Personal Connections</i> , Ch.4
6	10/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lecture: Race in Cyberspace (<i>in conjunction with Diversity Week</i>)</li> <li>Class Discussion: <i>Personal Connections</i></li> <li>Lecture: "How does the Internet Build or Break down Community?"</li> </ul>	CL 202/ Gaige 168	Read <i>Who Controls the Internet</i> , Ch. 5 and 6 Spend Time on Your Tech Journals
7	10/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class Discussion of <i>Who Controls the Internet</i></li> <li>Discuss Tech Journals</li> <li>Lecture: "How has the Internet Affected Political Participation?"</li> <li>Lab Time</li> </ul>	Gaige 168	Read <i>The Internet and Social Inequalities</i> , Ch. 1 & 2
8	10/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class Discussion of <i>The Internet and Social Inequalities</i></li> <li>Lecture: "What are the Consequences of Unequal Internet Usage?"</li> <li>Lab Time</li> </ul>	Gaige 168	Read <i>Cybercrime</i> , Ch. 3, 7, & 11
9	11/02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class Discussion <i>Cybercrime</i></li> <li>Lecture: "How Does the Internet Facilitate Deviance and Crime?"</li> <li>Lab Time</li> <li><b>Turn in Rough Draft of Written Report</b></li> </ul>	Gaige 168	Begin Preparing for Exam Spend Time on Your Tech Journals
10	11/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewing Past Readings</li> <li>Discuss Tech Journals</li> </ul>	Gaige 168	Prepare for Exam
11	11/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Exam #2</b></li> <li>Lab Time</li> </ul>	CL 202/Gaige 168	Prepare Mock Presentations Finalize Your Tech Journals
12	11/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Final Discussion of Tech Journals</b></li> <li><b>Turn in Final Paper</b></li> <li><b>Mock Presentations</b></li> <li>Lab Time</li> </ul>	CL 202/ Gaige 168	Prepare Final Presentations
13	12/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Group Presentations</b></li> <li><b>Final Class Discussions and Feedback</b></li> </ul>	CL 202	Prepare for Winter Break

**Grading Rubrics  
Internet and Society  
Instructor: Roderick Graham**

Topic/Title of Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Members: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Group Paper Components</b>		
<b>Written Paper Components</b>	<b>Points Available</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
<u>Introduction</u> Does the introduction present a clear research question? Does the introduction present a clear rationale for the paper? Does the introduction prepare the reader for what is to follow?	10	
<u>Review of Literature</u> Are at least five different sources cited? Is the review presented as an <i>overall summary</i> of prior work? Does the review work to help prepare you to answer your research question?	20	
<u>Methods</u> Are the methods by which findings are presented written clearly?	15	
<u>Findings</u> Are the findings presented clearly? Do the findings help answer the research question?	15	
<u>Conclusion</u> Does the conclusion summarize the preceding paper? Does the conclusion present an answer to the research question using the review of the literature and the conclusion as a guide?	20	
<u>Format</u> Is the paper formatted properly (spacing, length, font)? Is proper referencing used?	10	
<u>Grammar and Composition</u> In general, is the paper free from egregious spelling and grammatical errors?	5	
<u>Rough Draft</u> Was a rough draft turned in on time?	5	
<b>Total Score</b>		



Grading Rubric for Wikipage		
WikiPage Components	Points Available	Points Earned
<u>Content</u> Does the webpage present the findings from the report clearly? Was a combination of text, charts, graphs, audio, and visual content presented on the webpage?	30	
<u>Web Applications</u> Does the webpage use at least two web applications? Is the use of these web applications important to the overall purpose of the page?	30	
<u>Originality</u> Does the webpage present the information from the written report in an original way?	20	
<u>Organization</u> Is the webpage organized, with headings, subheadings, and other means of ordering content?	10	
<u>Quality</u> This is an overall judgment of how well the group's page is presented - from the density of content, proofreading, and creativity.	10	
<b>Total Score</b>		

Grading Rubric for Group Presentation		
Presentation Components	Points Available	Points Earned
<u>Knowledge</u> Could members of the group answer questions from the audience?	45	
<u>Participation</u> Did everyone participate in the presentation?	20	
<u>Organization</u> Was the group's presentation organized?	20	
<u>Mock Presentation</u> Had the group prepared enough to deliver a mock presentation?	15	
<b>Total Score</b>		