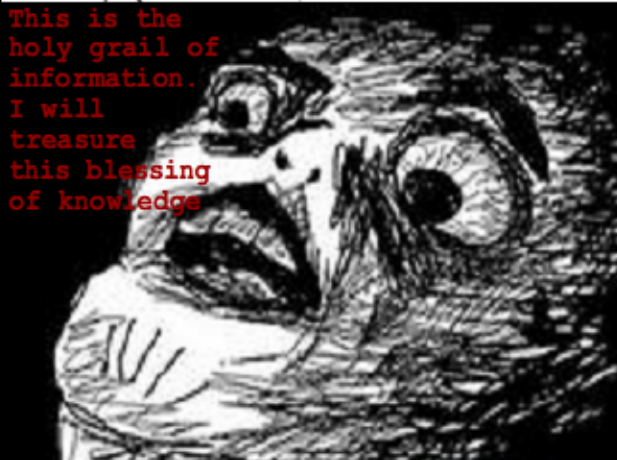**CMS 2525: Digital Media and Cyberculture**
Internet Ethnography

11:30 am - 12:45 pm   Monday/Thursday   Faculty Memorial Hall 311

Professor Alice Marwick
Email: amarwick@fordham.edu
Office: FMH 432 (NEW)
Mailbox: Main CMS office, FMH 430
Phone: 718-817-4861

Office Hours:
Monday 2-3pm
Tuesday 11-12pm

Course Description

With the exponential global growth of the internet, all forms of digital media—apps, websites, social media, mobile telephony, video games—have increased and multiplied. This class looks at the *cultures* of this new digital landscape, using cultural theory, sociology, and ethnographic methods to examine and analyze popular internet culture, self-expression, relationships, social practices, and emerging technological forms. Students will learn the basics of digital ethnography, and be able to competently leverage cultural analysis to understand digital artifacts.

- What types of online culture exist, and what are some patterns or themes we see appearing and reappearing in discussions of digital culture?

- How do we study online culture? What is "ethnography," and what does it look like online?

- What is the relationship between the digital and other forms of cultural expression?

Readings

Everything will be available on Blackboard. Please **print out** the readings and bring them to class.

Assignments

Short Paper #1:	10%
Short Paper #2:	15%
Presentation:	15%
Midterm Exam:	20%
Final Paper:	20%
Final Exam:	20%
TOTAL:	100%

Participation
While I am sympathetic to the fact that not everyone likes to speak in public, this is an important skill to develop in a Communication class. I frequently pose questions to the class: please try answering them!

Short Papers
- Students will be responsible for 2 short papers of approx. 5 pages each.
- Assignments will be handed out in class
- The first paper will be worth less to acclimate students to class expectations
- Papers will be graded based on:
    o Grammar/spelling/writing/structure
    o Originality of ideas
    o Demonstration of class material
- Paper One: Due 9/19
- Paper Two: Due 10/31

Midterm Exam
- The midterm exam will consist of:

- o Short answer questions
- o Multiple-choice questions
- o Several multi-paragraph essays explaining class concepts
- It will be taken in class during midterm period (October 10)

Class Presentation
- During selected classes, a team of two students will be responsible for a 15-minute presentation or exercise about the reading.
- You can do ANYTHING: give a lecture, show a movie, lead a discussion, do an in-class exercise, have students fill out a worksheet. Up to you!
- You MUST hand out a summary of the reading (up to one page).
- Make copies for the class and one for me. (If you send it by 5pm the previous day, I will make the copies for you)

Final Paper
- 7-10 pages
- This will be a *research* paper on the digital media topic of your choice.
- You will be required to turn in a paper topic several weeks before the final paper is due.
- Details to be provided
- Due the last day of class

Final Exam
The final exam will be similar in form to the midterm. It is cumulative. The final will be given during exam week (tentative date is Monday, December 16, 9:30 am; this is subject to change based on Enrollment Services).

Extra credit
- Will be awarded for helping Dr. Marwick with a cyberculture research project
- Details TBA in class.

<u>Schedule</u>

1. Week One: Introduction

8/29 (Thursday)
- Review syllabus
- Class policies
- Handout: "Tips for Reading an Academic Article"
    - *Note: you'll have a chance to practice these skills on the Correll article due on 9/5.*
    - *Note #2: All reading dates (e.g. 2011) are provided for context.*

2. Week Two: What is culture? What is cyberculture?

We begin the class by looking at how cultural studies scholars and anthropologists have conceptualized "culture." When you think of "culture," you might think of opera, the ballet, or art galleries. We're going to think of "culture" in a much broader sense—a whole way of life, from media representations down to the habits and actions of everyday life.

9/2 (Monday) – No class, Labor Day

9/4: (Wednesday): *[Monday Schedule]*
Williams, "Culture is Ordinary" (1958)
- What does Williams mean when he says "culture is ordinary"?
- Look around you. How would you describe the culture you live in?
- How would you describe "internet" culture if you had to?
Lecture: Culture

9/5 (Thursday): Correll, "Ethnography of an electronic bar: the lesbian café" (1995)
- What is the "culture" of the lesbian café?
- How is it created?
- *Please refer to the "Tips for Reading an Academic Article" while reading this. We will discuss both in class.*
Lecture: The basics of digital culture, and why I hate the word "cyber."

3. Week Three: Community I

One of the first major debates around the internet was whether spaces for online discussions, games, and message boards could constitute "community." We'll go over the basics of community, and then evaluate some online spaces to see if they meet the criteria.

9/9 (Monday): What is community, and can it exist online? *Note that these issues are also discussed in the Correll article we talked about last class.*
Putnam, *Bowling Alone* selections (2000)
Oldenberg, *The Great Good Place* selections (1989) (Read first chapter, skim the second)

- Is Fordham a community?
- What is required for a social group to be a community?

First Short Paper Assigned

9/12 (Thursday): Dibbell, J. (1993). A rape in cyberspace: How an evil clown, a haitian trickster spirit, two wizards, and a cast of dozens turned a database into a society. *The Village Voice*, from http://www.juliandibbell.com/texts/bungle_vv.html

Shaer, "Reddit in the Flesh," *New York Magazine* (2011).

Class Presentation #1

4. Week Four: Community II

We'll talk about various ways in which community is reinforced online- especially through norms and language.

9/16 (Monday): Lingel, Jessa and boyd, danah. (2013). ""Keep It Secret, Keep It Safe": Information Poverty, Information Norms, and Stigma."
- What are "norms"?
- What are "information norms"?
- How does this community enforce "information norms"?

Class Presentation #2

Lecture: Norms

9/19 (Thursday): Chen, "Community, Coordination, and Camaraderie" from *Leet Noobs* (2012)
- This article is about *World of Warcraft*. If you don't know what *World of Warcraft* is, please read Nardi, "What is *World of Warcraft* and who plays it?"

Lecture: Affordances and community interaction

First Short Paper Due

5. Week Five: Identity I

Now we've discussed community, we'll turn our attention to *identity*. Identity can mean a great deal of different things, but think about how you express your own identities online, and how this is constrained or enabled by the different technologies you use. We'll also talk about how identity and community *online* is deeply intertwined with identity and community *offline* (and whether the terms "online" and "offline" are really useful at all).

9/23 (Monday): Marwick, "Online Identity" (2013)
- Worksheet: The Presentation of Self in Different Social Media Sites

Class Presentation #3

9/26 (Thursday): boyd, "Why Youth Heart Social Network Sites." (2007)
Class Presentation #4

6. Week Six: Identity II

We live in an "attention economy" in which often what's the most outrageous, pornographic, controversial, or hilarious bubbles up (see: Miley Cyrus' VMAs performance). This week we will examine the impact of huge online audiences for self-presentation and interactions.

9/30 (Monday): Senft, selections from *Camgirls* (2008)
- What is the impact of audience and publicity on identity expression?
- What is micro-celebrity?

Class Presentation #5

10/3 (Thursday): Marwick & boyd, "It's just drama": Teen perspectives on conflict and aggression in a networked era" (2012)
- What impact does the audience have on traditional forms of conflict like gossip, bullying, and "mean girling"?

Class Presentation #6

7. Week Seven: Midterms

10/7 (Monday): Midterm review

10/10 (Thursday): Midterm Exam

8. Week Eight: Digital Ethnography I

We'll now turn to a method of studying online culture: digital ethnography. "Ethnography" is a method that comes from anthropology, where pioneering anthropologists would go to far-away places and write analyses of non-Western cultures (this was deeply tied up in colonialism and racism, but that's another story). How do we think about online ethnography, and what can it teach us?

No class October 14 – Columbus Day

10/17 (Thursday): Miller & Slater, "Relationships" (2000)
Class Presentation #7
Lecture: What can we learn from Ethnography?

Short Paper #2 Assigned: Ethnographic Exercise

9. Week Nine: Digital Ethnography II

We'll look at ethnography as a practical exercise, and learn from our guest lecturer about her research project and its challenges and benefits.

10/21 (Monday): Boellstorff et al., "Ten Myths about Ethnography" (2012)
- What articles have we read this semester that are ethnographic in nature?
- If you were going to do an ethnography of digital culture, where would you start?

Class Presentation #8
Lecture: Ethnography as Method

10/24 (Thursday): Reading TBD
Prof. Marwick out of town - conference
Guest Lecture: Lucy Odigbe on her research

10. Week Ten: Participatory Culture I

Online "participation" can mean anything from reading an article to posting videos on YouTube to contributing to Wikipedia. We'll start by looking at different forms of participation online and determine collectively what is *meaningful.*

10/28 (Monday):
Adrienne Russell, Mizuko Ito, Todd Richmond, and Marc Tuters, "Culture: Media Convergence and Networked Participation" from *Networked Publics* (2008)
Prof. Marwick may still be out

10/31 (Thursday): Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green, "What Constitutes Meaningful Participation?" Chapter 4 of *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture* (2013)

Short Paper 2 Due: Ethnographic Exercise

11. Week Eleven: Participatory Culture II: Peer Production

We'll delve into two examples of participatory culture: Wikipedia and crowdsourcing.

11/4 (Monday): Schiff, "Know it All" from *The New Yorker* (2006)
Lecture: Networked peer production and Benkler
Class Presentation #9

11/7 (Thursday): Shirky, "It Takes a Village to Find a Phone," from *Here Comes Everybody* (2008)
James Surowiecki, "The Wise Way to Crowdsource a Manhunt" (2013)
http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/comment/2013/04/reddit-tsarnaev-marathon-bombers-wisdom-of-crowds.html
Class Presentation #10

12. Week Twelve: Participatory Culture III: Memes and Fandom

Participatory culture often uses mainstream media as building blocks, from pop remixes to cosplay to memes based on television shows like *Star Trek.* This week we'll look at memes and fan cultures online.

11/11 (Monday): *Guest lecturer, Alice at conference*
Davison, "The Language of Internet Memes" (2012)
Watch: PBS Off Book, Visual Culture Online http://www.pbs.org/arts/gallery/off-book-episode-3-visual-culture-online-meme/off-book-episode-3-visual-culture-online-meme/

11/14 (Thursday): Christian, Fandom as industrial response: Producing identity in an independent web series (2011)
http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/250/237
Screening: PBS OffBook, "Can Fandom Change Society?"
Class Presentation #11

13. Week Thirteen: Digital Photography

Digital photography has had an enormous impact on how we think about ourselves and our relationships. This week we'll look at Instagram, selfies, and sexting. If you don't already use Instagram, please sign up for an account before the 11/18 class.

11/18 (Monday):
José van Dijck, "Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory." (2008)
Yoon, "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Fake Nostalgia of Instagram" (2013)
https://medium.com/editors-picks/26eb0787569c
- Sign up for Instagram
- Worksheet: Analyzing Instagram

Final Paper Assigned

Class Presentation #12

11/21 (Thursday): Hasinoff, "Sexting as Media Production" (2012)
Professor Marwick out of town

14. Week Fourteen: Language

While the internet is a visual medium, it is also, to a large extent, a *textual* medium. We will look at why language matters online, and discuss the difference between language utilization on places like Facebook and in text messages.

11/25 (Monday): Jones et. Al, "When Friends Who Talk Together Stalk Together: Online Gossip as Metacommunication" (2011)

Skim: Bechar-Israeli, "From Bonehead to Clonehead" (1995)
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.1995.tb00325.x/full

- Worksheet: Analyzing text messages
- Handout: Academic sources; Writing thesis statements

Class Presentation #13

No class 11/28 – Thanksgiving Break

15. Week 15: Trolls, Hackers and Activism

12/2 (Monday): Phillips, "LOLing at Tragedy: Facebook Trolls, Memorial Pages and Resistance to Grief Online." *First Monday.* (2011)
Class Presentation #14

12/5 (Thursday): Coleman, E. "Anonymous: From the Lulz to Collective Action." (2011)
http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/tne/pieces/anonymous-lulz-collective-action

Final Paper Topic Due

16. Week 16: Global Contexts

12/9 (Monday): Zuckerman, "Imaginary Cosmopolitanism" from *Rewire: Digital Cosmopolitans in the Age of Connection* (2013)

Class Presentation #15

12/12 (Thursday): Burrell, "Ghanaians Online and the Innovation of 419 Scams," from *Invisible Users* (2012)

Class Presentation #16

16. Week Seventeen – wrap up and review

12/16 – Digital Media and Cyberculture – what have we learned?

12/19 – Final Paper Due; Final Exam Review; Class evaluations

FINAL EXAM DURING EXAM WEEK

LATE FINAL PAPERS WILL HAVE ½ A GRADE DEDUCTED EVERY DAY THEY ARE LATE. LET ME KNOW THE MINUTE YOU ARE HAVING A PROBLEM!

Class Policies

E-Mail and Office Hours

I have more than 150 students; as a result, I cannot promise a quick turnaround on emails. The best way to talk to me about something specific is to come to my office hours. You do not need an appointment. If you can't make my office hours because you have class during those times, I offer very limited hours by appointment. **Internships are not an excuse.** Please do your best to come to scheduled office hours.

Attendance

I take attendance at the beginning of each class. Fordham's attendance policy is as follows:

> The maximum number of total excused absences will not exceed six class meetings for a course that meets three days per week, four class meetings for a course meeting two days per week, or two class meetings for a course that meets once a week. If a faculty member chooses to allow unexcused absences, the number of excused and unexcused absences combined may be limited to the maximum number noted above. Faculty members are under no obligation to allow make-up work for unexcused absences.

Excused absences include athletics, illness (with a doctor's note), and family emergencies. They do not include leaving early for spring break, internship obligations, or other non-essential situations. **If you miss more than four classes, excused or unexcused, you may fail the class.**

Please talk to me as early in the semester as possible about excused absences.

Written Work

Paper grades are based, in part, on the strength of your ability to communicate effectively through writing. Papers with typos, misspellings, grammatical errors, and the like will receive low grades. All papers must have a thesis statement, an introduction, a conclusion, and a works cited page. All material should be sourced, not only direct quotations. They must be in 12-point Times New Roman and must be stapled. I expect students who have trouble with written work to talk to me in office hours or seek help at the Writing Center.

Late Paper Policy

All assignments must be completed on time in order to receive full credit. Late assignments will be penalized by half a grade for each 24-hour period it is late. After five calendar days, the assignment will not be accepted and you may fail this class. No incompletes are given for this course.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is not tolerated, and will result in failing the course: this includes falsifying sources, failing to cite source material, and using unattributed quotations. I am an excellent internet researcher and I know how to use Google. The pain of plagiarizing is absolutely not worth it. Check out Fordham's policy on plagiarism, which is part of the Standards of Academic Integrity.

Grading

If you come to every class and turn in every assignment, you are guaranteed to get a C. If you put in extra effort, you may get a B. I only give As for honors-level work that is outstanding, in accordance with Fordham's grading policy.

I try to be very transparent with my grading and am happy to explain any grade to you during office hours.

Challenging a Grade

If you disagree with a grade on an assignment or paper, please email me a written, detailed explanation of why you think the grade should be re-evaluated. **DO NOT COME TALK TO ME ABOUT IT IN OFFICE HOURS OR AFTER CLASS UNTIL YOU EMAIL ME YOUR EXPLANATION**. If I find your explanation convincing (hint: "I think you should give me an A because I worked really hard" is not convincing) I will re-grade the paper. This means the grade may go up; it may go down; it may stay the same.

Resources

Office of Disability Studies
Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of Fordham University. If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule an appointment to speak with someone at the Office of Disability Services (Rose Hill - O'Hare Hall, Lower Level, x0655 or at Lincoln Center – Room 207, x6282).

Writing Center
If you are really struggling with writing, I suggest you head to the Rose Hill Writing Center— their entire reason for existence is to help undergrads become better writers.

http://www.fordham.edu/academics/programs_at_fordham_/english/writing_center/index.asp

"Providing more than a proofreading service, our tutors will work with you on a variety of logical, rhetorical, and grammatical concerns in your writing. We can assist you with any type of writing from your curriculum, from conception, to composition, to completion. Our aim is not only to help you perfect an individual essay; we want to help you develop the tools you need to become a better writer. Our service is free and, if you come with the right expectations and the willingness to participate actively in the session, extremely effective."

Open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 9:00-8:00; Tuesday 9:00-7:30; Friday 9:00-3:00 on the east side of Dealy Hall's fifth floor in the Economics Department. (718) 817-4032.

CMS on the Web
Answers to many common questions can be found on the department's website, http://www.fordham.edu/cms

We post internships and announcements frequently on the CMS Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/FordhamCMS