

Fall 2020

## **STS 359-457: Foundations of Cyberpsychology**

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STS 359, Sections 457 & 459  
Foundations of Cyberpsychology  
3 credits, Fall 2020

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### Course Description

This course is conducted entirely online. The class is asynchronous, which means there are no specific hours or set times that we meet; rather, the work and lecture materials will be distributed in an organized manner and are to be completed by the listed deadlines.

With the exception of the first week, materials will generally be available at least one week in advance, although some materials (e.g., reading assignments) will be available sooner. The course, including films, assignments, and all lecture materials, will be distributed and managed entirely via the Canvas course site.

STS 359: Cyberpsychology is an introduction to the study of the effects of the internet and cyberspace on the psychology of individuals and groups. Some topics covered include: online identity, online relationships, personality types in cyberspace, transference to computers, addiction to computers and the internet, regressive behavior in cyberspace, online gender-switching, etc.

### Learning Outcomes

Primary learning outcomes (*do/create/decide*):

- Use different psychological theories and perspectives to research and analyze the ways in which we, as individuals and in groups, use contemporary internet-based information and communication technologies.
- Use social science to describe and convey the numerous ways in which online environments affect, guide, and shape human behavior.

Secondary learning outcomes (*believe/feel/know*):

- Display a satisfactory undergraduate-level understanding and awareness of key cyberpsychology introductory terms, ideas, and theories.
- Understand how statistical data can relate to and provide empirical evidence for making claims about the relationship between cyberpsychology and human behavior.
- Be able to think critically about issues in the field of cyberpsychology, contextualizing them in terms of existing psychology theory.

### Textbook & Readings

There is one required textbook for this course:

- *The Psychology of the Internet*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Patricia Wallace. 2016. Cambridge University Press.

The textbook is available for purchase through the NJIT bookstore, although you are welcome to purchase copies of the text (whether new or used) from third party sellers (e.g., Amazon). **All readings are required and should be completed in tandem with lecture for which they are assigned.** Readings are meant to supplement class lectures and discussions. Thus, while I may not

directly engage every concept covered in the readings, it is my expectation that you have completed the reading for every lecture.

### **Course Structure**

Although you will work at your own pace, this course is designed to mimic the process of a face-to-face class. As previously stated, with the exception of the first week, materials will generally be available at least one week in advance, although some materials (e.g., reading assignments) will be available sooner. Since this is a distance learning course, the kind of interaction that takes place in a face-to-face class will be noticeably absent (especially if this is your first online class!). This is an unfortunate byproduct of the online learning environment, and it should not be disregarded without consideration. Interaction in the face-to-face classroom is often seen as an integral part of the learning process. Despite this being an online course, we will seek to create space for interaction through the use of online forums and—if desired and/or necessary—through the use of virtual, instant message-based chats.

Rather than making all the course materials for the entire semester available to you at once, materials will generally be made available in one-week increments. The content invites a structure in which it is evenly distributed throughout the term, including time built in for assimilation, review, and evaluating your understanding of course materials.

### *Vodcast Lectures*

The main resource for this distance learning class is videos that are organized by the content and structure of the textbook. Each week for which a topic is assigned will correspond to a chapter in the textbook, the videos for which will be broken up into smaller pieces, organized by content from the chapter. The videos take the form of vodcast (a portmanteau of “video podcasts”) lectures, which present PowerPoint shows that have been supplemented with audio narration. Admittedly, the vodcasts are less than perfect resources for comprehending course materials and are meant to serve as a starting point in the learning process. This means that, in addition to vodcasts, each lecture topic will be accompanied by supplemental materials (including readings, videos, interactive psychological quizzes, assignments, etc.) that are meant to help facilitate the learning process.

It is helpful (and recommended) to take notes while watching the vodcasts, as the narration often provides materials that the slides themselves do not offer. I will provide content-only (that is: non-narrated) versions of the PowerPoint slides to encourage this process (a good place to take notes is in the “Notes” section underneath the PowerPoint slides—just be sure to save the slides to your drive if you choose to take notes this way). *Please note that the slides-only version of the PowerPoint lectures are meant to enhance the vodcasts and are NOT intended to serve as a replacement for them.*

## Assessment

You will be assessed regularly throughout the semester using assignments, short papers, and a final exam. You should access/submit all assignments via the Canvas course site.

The submission deadlines for assignments are listed on the Canvas course site and should be observed strictly. It is important that you stay on top of the assigned work and that you plan ahead.

*The course is too large to allow for individual exceptions when it comes to submitting work late, thus, unless specific arrangements are made otherwise with the instructor, late work will not be accepted and will count as a “0” toward your final grade in the class.*

### Practice Problem Sets

For each course unit, you must complete the assigned practice problems. Practice problems are generally multiple-choice and short answer, and are designed to help prepare you for the exams. Length will vary, but you should anticipate at least 10 practice problems per course unit. ***You may submit each practice problem set twice, and your final grade for each problem set will be AN AVERAGE of your attempts.*** Practice problem sets are generally due by the end of the week for which they are assigned. *In total, practice problems will comprise 15% of your final grade in the class.*

### Short Papers

You are required to write two short papers for this course. Papers should be at least 500 words in length, not including titles, headers, identifying information etc. Papers are graded using a rubric that will be provided alongside the short paper prompts. Papers that are not submitted receive a 0. *In total, short papers will comprise 20% of your final grade in the class.*

### Use of Turnitin

***IN ORDER TO RECEIVE CREDIT, ALL SHORT PAPERS MUST BE SUBMITTED USING TURNITIN; PAPERS THAT ARE NOT SUBMITTED TO TURNITIN WILL NOT BE GRADED AND WILL RECEIVE A “0.”***

Furthermore, ***it is important to note that uploads to Turnitin are final.*** This means that once you upload a short paper, you will *NOT* be able to delete the submission. Therefore, it is critical to your success in the course that you properly reference citations and quotations, even when using materials from the course (e.g., the textbooks, the lecture materials, etc.). ***Submissions in which the majority of a post is copied and pasted from other sources will NOT be accepted (even if properly cited) and will receive a “0.”***

### Exams

There will be three exams throughout the semester (in addition to the final exam). Exams will evaluate your understanding of course materials. Exams, although open-note and open-book, will be timed, so it is essential that you study and prepare in advance of attempting

them. *Exam attempts MAY NOT BE SUBMITTED LATE without PRIOR instructor approval. In total, exams will comprise 30% of your final grade in the class.*

### *Final Exam*

In addition to the exams, a final exam will be made available and due during the last week of the semester. The final exam will be cumulative as well as open-book and open-note. *The final exam MAY NOT BE SUBMITTED LATE without PRIOR instructor approval. In total, the final exam will comprise 35% of your final grade in the class.*

### *Assignment Deadlines*

Regarding assignment deadlines: it will be common for me to indicate that a given assignment or quiz is “due by the end of the day” and/or “due by the end of the week.” For the purposes of this class, “end of the day” is 11:59 PM on the day being referenced (thus, “end of the day on Friday” means “by 11:59 PM on Friday”) and “end of the week” refers to Sunday for the week being referenced (for example, “end of Week #2” means “by Sunday, September 13”).

All deadlines are given in Eastern Time (five hours behind Coordinated Universal Time when in standard time, and four hours behind when observing daylight saving time). Thus, if you are traveling, it is up to you to ensure that you submit assignments on time (this may be especially germane for those of you who have out-of-town engagements, athletics, etc. planned throughout the semester).

### *Grading Scale*

The grade you receive in this course will be based on a tally of your scores on all assignments, quizzes, exams, etc. throughout the term. Letter grades will be assigned using the following scale:

|             |    |
|-------------|----|
| > 89.5      | A  |
| 89.4 – 86.5 | B+ |
| 86.4 – 79.5 | B  |
| 79.4 – 75.5 | C+ |
| 75.4 – 65.5 | C  |
| 65.4 – 55.5 | D  |
| < 55.4      | F  |

***As a general rule: I do not give extra credit. Nor do I respond to emails or questions that ask, “Is there anything I can do to get an A or to bump up my grade a few extra points.” Please do not send me emails of this nature, as I will not respond to them.***

You are responsible for keeping track of your own grades, assignment deadlines, and any missing assignments. Any issue with a grade for a specific assignment or quiz must be addressed within one week of the assignment deadline. After one week, any issue will **not** be considered and your grade will remain as is.

## **Canvas Activity**

***PLEASE NOTE:*** Canvas allows me to view your online course activity. It allows me to see if you looked at the vodcasts, when you accessed a forum post prompt, when you posted, etc. Please understand that Canvas maintains a detailed record of your course site activity. Please be aware that the course logs maintain a full transcript of your course activity.

## **Email Policy & Communication with Instructor**

I will respond to emails as quickly as possible (usually no later than the next business day), but it's important that you understand my email policy so that you know when you can reasonably anticipate a reply.

During non-holiday weekdays (Monday-Friday), it is my policy to check email at least twice daily: once in the morning/early afternoon (usually by or before 1:00 PM) and once in the late afternoon or early evening (usually by or before 6:00 PM). Thus, it may take several hours for me to reply to your email, depending on when you send it. *Please allow 24 hours before sending a second email regarding the same topic.*

If sending emails in the evening or during the late night: I *CANNOT* guarantee you a response before the next business day. Furthermore, you should *NOT* expect a response to emails sent over the weekend (from Friday evening through Sunday) until the following business day (usually Monday, unless Monday is a holiday). Thus, it will be unequivocally to your benefit to plan ahead and work accordingly!

## *Office Hours*

I will hold office hours weekly on Wednesdays from 9:00 until 11:00 AM via WebEx or by appointment. I will post to the Canvas course site a link to my WebEx room prior to my first office-hour session on Wednesday, September 2.

### FALL 2020 SEMESTER SCHEDULE

| WEEK          | TOPIC(S)  | READING  | ASSIGNMENT(S)                             |
|---------------|---|--|---|
| 09/01 – 09/06 | Introduction to Course<br>The Internet in a Psychological Context | Syllabus<br>Chapter 1, pp. 1–24                    | Practice Problem Set #1                   |
| 09/07 – 09/13 | The Psychology of Impression Formation                            | Chapter 2, pp. 35–56                               | Practice Problem Set #2                   |
| 09/14 – 09/20 | Group Dynamics on the Internet                                    | Chapter 3, pp. 57–95                               | Practice Problem Set #3                   |
| 09/21 – 09/27 | The Psychology of Online Aggression                               | Chapter 4, pp. 96–123                              | Practice Problem Set #4<br>Short Paper #1 |
| 09/28 – 10/04 | EXAM #1   |  |   |
| 10/05 – 10/11 | The Psychology of Interpersonal Interaction                       | Chapter 5, pp. 124–157                             | Practice Problem Set #5                   |
| 10/12 – 10/18 | The Psychology of Prosocial Behavior                              | Chapter 6, pp. 158–192                             | Practice Problem Set #6                   |
| 10/19 – 10/25 | The Psychology of Online Gaming                                   | Chapter 7, pp. 193–227                             | Practice Problem Set #7                   |
| 10/26 – 11/01 | Child Development and the Internet                                | Chapter 8, pp. 228–263                             | Practice Problem Set #8                   |
| 11/02 – 11/08 | EXAM #2   |  |   |
| 11/09 – 11/15 | Gender Issues and Sexuality on the Internet                       | Chapter 9, pp. 264–293                             | Practice Problem Set #9<br>Short Paper #2 |
| 11/16 – 11/22 | The Psychology of Online Privacy                                  | Chapter 10, pp. 294–320                            | Practice Problem Set #10                  |
| 11/23 – 11/29 | Thanksgiving Recess   |  |   |
| 11/30 – 12/06 | The Internet as a Time Suck<br>Life on the Internet: Conclusions  | Chapter 11, pp. 321–342<br>Chapter 12, pp. 343–366 | Practice Problem Sets #11/12              |
| 12/07 – 12/13 | EXAM #3   |  |   |
| 12/14 – 12/20 | Tuesday, December 15, 2020 – FINAL EXAM OPENS                     |  |   |
|               | Thursday, December 17, 2020 – FINAL EXAM CLOSES                   |  |   |

## **Boilerplate Provisions**

### [University Code on Academic Integrity](#)

The essential quality of this Policy is that each student shall demonstrate honesty and integrity in the completion of all assignments and in the participation of the learning process. Adherence to the University policy on Academic Integrity promotes the level of integrity required within the university and professional communities and assures students that their work is being judged fairly with the work of others. This Policy defines those behaviors which violate the principles of academic integrity, describes a range of appropriate sanctions for offenses, and identifies a method for promoting the principle of academic integrity on campus.

### [Accessibility Resources & Service Accommodations](#)

The Office of Accessibility Resources and Services works in partnership with administrators, faculty and staff to provide reasonable accommodations and support services for undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and visiting students with disabilities who have provided our office with medical documentation to receive services. We strive to promote an inclusive environment that encompasses advocacy and access to all campus resources.

### *Flexible Syllabus*

This course syllabus is an orderly arranged procedure for structuring the learning process. However, it is open for alteration or change by mutual understanding and agreement, so long as the change is consistent with the stated course goals or objectives.

## **Helpful Links**

### [Office of Academic Advising \(OAA\)](#)

The Office of Academic Advising (OAA) was established in order to assist in the advisement of students who are undecided in their major, transitioning into another major at NJIT, and those students who need additional support to graduate successfully and in a timely manner. OAA is a place where students will get intentional and intrusive advising, by a supportive academic advisor that will enable them to grow developmentally and give them the motivation they need to complete their degree.

### [The Writing Center](#)

The Writing Center, located on the ground floor of CKB, is a free resource which offers on-site tutoring. We provide one-on-one and group tutoring sessions to students from all disciplines, during the fall and spring semesters. During Center hours, tutors are available to work with students on any aspect of their writing, from generating ideas and developing arguments, to working through drafts to their completion and revising effectively.