

Fall 2021

## **STS 359-453: Foundations of Cyberpsychology**

Narendra-Neel Khichi

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STS 359 Cyberpsychology  
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ONLINE

New Jersey Institute of Technology  
Fall 2021

**Instructor:** Dr. Neel Khichi

**Office:** Cullimore 314

**Office Hours:**

Mondays: 7:45am-8:15am & 11:30am-12:30pm

Tuesdays: 11:30am-12:30pm

Wednesdays: 7:45am-8:15am

by appointment

Email: [nkhichi@njit.edu](mailto:nkhichi@njit.edu)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is an introduction to the study of the effects of the Internet and cyberspace on the psychology of individuals and the sociology of communities and groups. Some topics covered include: online identity in the age of the app, online and internet relationships, understanding communication and interaction in cyberspace, personality types in cyberspace, internet addiction, cyberbullying and other types of behavior in cyberspace, online gender roles and interactions etc; digital environments including, but not limited to, our engagement with various social media platforms; the cultural, social, and psychological impact of drones, the social-psychology of search engines, and distinguishing actions, thoughts, and behavior between the online and the offline world. We will cover current and future technologies and the impact it has on the overall meaning of being human. Some themes we will discuss, explore, and revisit are: Is there a distinction between the online world vs the offline world? How does the virtual-self compare to a traditional self? Is technology and the digital world changing what it means to be human? How does technology and the digital world shape our behavior, thoughts, words, and actions? We will also address, discuss, and evaluate our relationship with technology and the digital world during the global pandemic\*\*

(\*\*the conversations involving the pandemic are exploratory, ongoing, and organic in nature. As this is new territory for all of us and due to the ever changing nature of our social, cultural, and global climate, as well as data and statistics, during the pandemic, the information, readings, and data are strictly for exploratory, conversational, inquisitive discussions, and an exchange of ideas and thoughts only).

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. Define and discuss the term Cyber-psychology and demonstrate the basic terminology, concepts, and principles of the discipline.
2. Identify, evaluate, and compare the major perspectives in Cyber-psychology
3. Recognize that some human behavior is motivated by the virtual world and has multiple effects
4. Discuss the ways that Cyber-psychological theories are used to assess, predict, or change human behavior
5. Discuss and demonstrate how Cyber-psychology is applied to influence and improve the lives of human beings.

6. Gain insight into one's own personality and personal relationships by thinking critically about Cyber-psychological theories and principles.
7. Recognize how each approach views human thought and behavior in the Cyberworld

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:**

Superconnected: The Internet, Digital Media, and Techno-Social Life  
 By: Mary Chayko  
 Publisher: SAGE Publications, Inc  
 Print ISBN: 9781506394855, 150639485X  
 eText ISBN: 9781506394848, 1506394841  
 Edition: 2nd  
 Copyright year: 2018

**RECOMMENDED READING**

(notes are from these texts, as well):

The McDonaldization of Society 9th Edition: Into the Digital Age by George Ritzer  
 (c) 2019 Sage Publications 978 1 5063 4855 1  
 The APP Generation: How Today’s Youth Navigate Identity, Intimacy, and Imagination in a Digital World by Gardner and Davis. Yale University Press ©2014  
 Social Media: A Critical Introduction. 2nd Edition (paperback) (Fuchs). (c) 2017 Sage Publications  
 Personal Connections in the Digital Age by Nancy Baym  
 Alone Together by Sherry Turkle  
 Infinite Reality: Avatars, Eternal Life, New Worlds and the Dawn of the Virtual Revolution by Blascovich and Bailenson  
 I Know Who You Are and I Saw What You Did by Lori Andrews  
 The Shallows: What Is The Internet Doing to Our Brains? By Nicholas Carr  
 A History of the Internet and the Digital Future by Ryan.

**GRADING POLICY**

Syllabus Overview	50 points
Group Presentation	50 points
Essay #1/Discussion #1 Combo	100 points
Essay #2/Discussion #2 Combo	100 points
Essay #3/Discussion #3 Combo	100 points
Quiz #1	100 points
Quiz #2	100 points
Quiz #3	100 points
Quiz #4 (cumulative)	200 points
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Total Point Value	900 points

**GRADING SCALE:**

100-90.....	A
89-87.....	B+
86-80.....	B
79-77.....	C+
76-70.....	C
69-65.....	D
65 <.....	F

**Quizzes:**

Quizzes must be submitted during the scheduled time they are open. No exceptions to this rule.

**Communication:**

It is extremely important you keep in touch with me (via email or schedule an office hour meeting) to inform me of any issues that come up. Emailing me mid-way through the semester is not enough. If you have any specific personal issues that prevents you from participating in the course, I will need documentation from the Dean of Students. You have access to email through numerous devices. It is your responsibility to keep me informed for any reason on why you cannot/have not participated. 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 attempt to send me emails of this nature.

Students are responsible to keep track of their own grades, what work they owe, and what they are missing. Please note where an 'A' begins and where a 'B+' begins and ends. Any issue with a grade for a specific quiz or assignment must be addressed via email, with screenshots, and/or specific issue NO MORE than one week after the quiz, reader response, or assignment is administered. Anything issue after a week will not be considered and your grade will remain as is. Any issue with a missed assignment must be addressed within one week after the assignment in due otherwise a "O" will be entered for the grade and will remain as is. This is the policy of the course.

Furthermore, Canvas allows me to see your online activity in regards to this course and during this Fall session. It allows me to see what articles you read, how long you read them for, if you looked at the notes, when you opened the quizzes, and when they are closed. Please understand that Canvas maintains a detail track record of your use and interaction with the course materials. So I see/have/ and maintain a full transcript of your activity online in this course. Please be aware that before any conversation occurs between you and I, I will have this detailed activity report in front of me. Please also understand that should there be any "technical" issues, I am provided and have access to detailed reports that inform me of any issues Canvas has.

**Academic Integrity:**

"Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at:

<http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>

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Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu

Students are expected to read and understand NJIT's academic integrity policy. Members of the NJIT community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. There is a zero tolerance policy on any and all forms of cheating.

### **Student's that require special accommodations Disabilities Service Policy**

Students with disabilities who are otherwise qualified and are college able will receive reasonable accommodations to support their special needs. Students must self-identify to the Disabilities Services office to qualify to receive services. NJIT is in full compliance with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. New Jersey Institute of Technology is committed to making students with disabilities full participants in its academic and other programs, services and activities through the provision of reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities.

The Coordinator of Student Disability Services will coordinate the provision of appropriate accommodations and/or academic adjustments on a case-by-case basis for students with disabilities who identify themselves, provide adequate documentation of their disability and need for accommodation, request services and complete appropriate forms. Appropriate accommodations are provided at no cost to the student.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Dr. Phyllis Bolling, Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (C-CAPS), Campbell Hall, (entry level), room 205, (973) 596-3420.

### **Personal Conflicts/Issues**

Should you have any personal issues or conflicts that prevent you from participation in the online course, miss assignments, or do not log onto the course for an extended period of time- by extended period of time I define as more than two weeks- you must provide me with documentation from the Dean of Students. Otherwise, you will not be allowed to make up the work you miss. In addition, anything that requires discussion must be done during office hours. If you are not engaged with the class for weeks- simply writing me an email stating "I've been really sick and couldn't do my work" is not a viable excuse.

### **Email**

Please check your NJIT email regularly. Any announcements, reminders, or notifications are sent via Canvas directly to your NJIT email account. Also note I respond to emails relatively quickly during the week between the hours of 8am and 12pm. Please be patient and do not send multiple emails with the same information or the same question. Any email sent after 1:00pm will be responded to the next day. Any email sent on Fridays will be responded to on Monday morning.

## **Graded Assignments:**

### **Quizzes**

There are 4 timed quizzes. Dates and details are provided in the syllabus. No make ups for quizzes are provided unless we discuss PRIOR to the quiz.

### **Syllabus Overview Agreement:**

50 points

### **Group Presentation:**

Each group presents for 30 minutes on a topic of their choice from the week's content. You should plan for a 15 minute presentation and a 10-15 current event connection, and a 5 minutes "questions to consider."

### **Discussion Forum/Essay #1, #2, and #3:**

There is a discussion/essay combo due at the end of the first 3 weeks of the session. They are worth 100 points.

### **Essay/Discussion Forum Rubric:**

45-50: You have posted at least 6x on the forum. Your initial post (essay) provides a minimum of five examples, provides thoughtful and detailed analysis. The essay ties in both the student's views and supports those views the sources and data from the course content. The assignment is structured and organized well, there is a strong fluid writing style, and there is an originality in style and presentation. There is a clear connection and relationship among the examples. Your other posts should reply to at least 5 different students. Each reply post is a minimum of 100 words. You stay on topic. You comment on other student's views. You offer evidence in the form of an article, a quote, in which you put in bold in your references.

40-44: You have posted 5x on the forum. Your initial essay provides four examples, provides thoughtful and detailed analysis. The assignment ties in some student's views and supports those views with some of the sources and data from the course content. The assignment has good structure and organization with some minor issues in writing style. The paper does not take any creative or original risks. There is somewhat of a relationship between the examples. Your other posts should reply to at least 4 different students. Each reply post is a minimum of 100 words. You stay on topic. You comment on other student's views. You offer evidence in the form of an article, a quote, in which you put in bold in your posts.

35-39: You posted 4x in the forum. Your initial essay provides three examples, but is weak on the analysis. It ties in very little of the student's views and provides minimal support from the sources and the data. Some structural and organizational issues are present. The assignment meets the bare minimum requirements of the assignment. It is unclear if a relationship exists between the examples and the topics Your other post should reply to at least 3 students. Each reply post is a minimum of 100 words. Posts appear rushed. Very little, if any, evidence is offered.

30-34: You posted 3x in the forum. Your essay provides three examples or less, but is weak on the analysis. It ties in very little of the student's views and provides minimal support

from the sources and the data. Some structural and organizational issues are present. The assignment meets the bare minimum requirements of the assignment. It is unclear if a relationship exists between the examples and the topics. You only replied to two student. Posts appear rushed. No evidence is offered. Work is unacceptable and not on par with college level work.

25-29: You posted 2x in the forum, your initial post, and replied to one student.

10: You only submitted an initial post. Work is unacceptable and not on par with college level work.

0: You did not post at all.

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 This will be a fun, interesting course and an overall strong learning experience for you. Should you have any questions or any difficulty with anything, please do not hesitate to contact me via email. I am always available via email or during my office hours. Please give me at least 24 hours to respond to your email. If you've made it this far into the syllabus congrats and well done. Please post in the Syllabus Confirmation forum on Canvas by copying and pasting the following: "I have read, understood, and will abide by the expectations of the course. I have viewed the audio/visual syllabus in its entirety and understand how the class functions." If you do this, before Friday, September 10th, 2021 @1159pm will be given a grade of 50/50. Anything posted from September 11-12th will be given a grade of 25/50. Anything posted September 13th, 2021 and after is automatically a 0. Unless you state otherwise in the post it is understood that you have read this completely and agree to the conditions in this syllabus.  
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Week	Topics/Readings	Assignments
Week 0 (September 1 and 2)	Introduction to the Course	Syllabus Confirmation
Week 1 (September 6-12)	Generation Z Chayko Chapter 1 Ritzer Chapter 1	
Week 2 (September 13-19)	Brief History of the Internet and the Web Chayko Chapter 2 Ritzer Chapter 2	Essay/Discussion #1 assigned
Week 3 (September 20-26)	Fake News and Misinformation Chayko Chapter 3	Essay/Discussion #1 due Sunday, 9/26 @1159pm  Group 1 Presentation
Week 4 (September 27-October 3)	Google Chayko Chapter 4	Quiz #1 opens Thursday, September 30th and closes Sunday, October 3 @1159pm  Group 2 Presentation
Week 5 (October 4-10)	Social Media and the Brain Chayko Chapter 5	no assignment  Group 3 presentation
Week 6 (October 11-17)	Techno-Socialization of the Self and Identity Chayko, Chapter 6	Essay/Discussion #2 assigned

		Group 4 presentation
Week 7 (October 18-24)	The Internet of Things Chayko Chapter 7	Essay/Discussion #2 due Sunday, October 24th @1159pm  Group 5 presentation
Week 8 (October 25-31)	The Digital Divide Chayko Chapter 8	Quiz #2 opens Thursday, October 28th and closes Sunday, October 31st @1159pm  Group 6 presentation
Week 9 (November 1-7)	Facebook Chayko Chapter 9	Essay/Discussion #3 assigned  Group 7 presentation
Week 10 (November 8-14)	Current and Future Technologies Chayko Chapter 10	Essay/Discussion #3 due Sunday night, 11/14 @1159pm  Group 8 presentation
Week 11 (November 15-21)	The Pandemic and Technology Chayko Chapter 10	Quiz #3 opens Thursday, November 18th and closes Sunday night, November 21st  Group 9 presentation
Week 12 (November 22-28)	Individual Conferences by Appointment  Thanksgiving Break!	Individual Conferences by Appointment  Thanksgiving Break!
Week 13 (November 29-Dec 5)	Week of Review	Week of Review  Group 10 presentation
Week 14 (December 6-12)	Quiz #4 opens Thursday, December 9 and closes Sunday, December 12th @1159pm.	Quiz #4 opens Thursday, December 9 and closes Sunday, December 12th @1159pm.
Week 15 (December 13-19)		