



# The University of Western Ontario Department of Sociology

**SOCIOLOGY 3301F-001**

**The Internet & Society**

**Fall 2025**

**Delivery method:** In-person

**Instructor:** Dr. Molly-Gloria Patel ([mharpe22@uwo.ca](mailto:mharpe22@uwo.ca))

**Office Hours:** By appointment (in-person or via Teams)

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*This is a DRAFT copy only. Please see the course site for the final version.*

**Course Description:** This course will investigate various internet platforms and the social implications these have for our understanding of social phenomena, such as friendship, work, and privacy. The aim is to not only have a good understanding of Internet theories, but also of the methodological challenges inherent in studies of the socio-digital.

**Prerequisite(s):** Registration in third year or above.

*Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.*

**Anti-requisite(s):** None.

## **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Critically examine the role of the Internet on society, particularly identifying both benefits and challenges associated with the Internet.
2. Examine different theoretical approaches and their application for examining the effects of the Internet on society.
3. Assess methodological challenges inherent to studies of the socio-digital.
4. Apply key concepts, ideas, and theoretical approaches to the study of the Internet and social life.

## **Course Material:**

- ***Required Course Textbook:*** Lindgren, S. (2025). *Digital Media & Society (3rd Edition)*. Sage Publications

The required textbook can be purchased through the campus bookstore in either physical form or as a digital text ([https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2025A&courses\[0\]=001\\_UW/SOC3301F](https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2025A&courses[0]=001_UW/SOC3301F))

*Note: Course materials will reference and draw from the newest edition (the third edition).*

*Students may use any earlier editions of the textbook at their own discretion.*

- **Additional Required Readings:** Additional required readings will be available electronically through Western Libraries. If not available via Western Libraries, readings will be posted on OWL Brightspace in the resources/readings folder.

*Note: Students are expected to do the weekly readings and engage with any required materials as these will be the basis for discussions, assignments, and evaluations. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to engage with any additional/suggested material as these will help to contextualize the lecture material and provide further examples.*

## **Communication:**

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL Brightspace site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/login>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

- **How to contact the course instructor:** The best way to contact me is via email ([mharpe22@uwo.ca](mailto:mharpe22@uwo.ca)). When emailing, students ***must*** use their UWO account and put the course code (SOC3301) as the subject line. From Monday to Friday, emails are checked regularly and will usually be responded to within 24 to 48 hours. Emails received over the weekend will be promptly responded to the following Monday. Please note that there may be delays in response times during long weekends/holidays. Alternatively, students can also speak with me before and/or after class or they can arrange an appointment, which will take place either in-person or via Teams. Please note that any message sent via OWL Brightspace in the discussion forum will not receive a timely response as it is not regularly monitored.
- **Email etiquette:** When communicating via email, please use appropriate language (e.g., spell-checked, no slang or texting lingo, etc.). For instance, the appropriate way to start your email is with a greeting of your choice (e.g., “good morning” or “hello”), followed by the person’s title and name (e.g., “Dr. Patel,” “Dr. Molly Patel,” “Professor Patel,” etc.). You should assume that we are colleagues in a work environment and act accordingly. Please avoid writing emails in the “heat of the moment” or out of “passion.”
- **How to get important information:** Visit the course OWL Brightspace site and see the course outline. It is strongly encouraged for students to check the course site regularly to properly engage with course material, to not miss important announcements, and to receive course-related updates.

## **Course Schedule and Readings:**

The course reading and lecture schedule will be posted on OWL Brightspace prior to the start of the course.

## **Method of Evaluation:**

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

### ***Evaluation Breakdown:***

Description	Weight	Due Date
Lecture Attendance & In-class Participation	20%	Ongoing, weekly
Paper Proposal	10%	October 6th, by the start of class (1:30pm EST)
Midterm	35%	October 27th, during class time
Final Paper	35%	December 8th, by 11:59pm (EST)
	100%	

### ***Evaluation Details:***

**Lecture attendance and in-class participation (20% of your final grade):** Students are expected to attend the course lectures. Additionally, students are expected to proactively participate in class discussions and activities. Class participation will be measured through an assessment of the quality of contributions, engagement in in-class activities and discussion questions, as well as a student's preparedness based on reading course materials, raising interesting questions/points of discussion, applying course concepts, and engagement with peers. Class participation is **not** solely based on how much or how often one talks.

*Note: Students may miss **one** lecture without supporting documentation. Should a student not be able to attend a class due to illness or other reasons, it is expected that they inform the course professor ahead of time. Students are responsible for catching up on any material that they miss, and are encouraged to get notes from a classmate and/or meet with the course professor should questions arise. For any additional missed lectures, students will receive a grade of zero for that class's attendance/participation. Please note that because not all elements of this assessment are*

*required in the calculation of the final course grade, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for any additional missed classes.*

**Paper proposal (10% of your final grade):** Students will work independently and write a 2-3 page proposal (double-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman font, one-inch margins), allowing them the opportunity to critically think about their final paper, which will be a content analysis or netnography of one of their chosen social media accounts. The write-up of the proposal will include a brief synopsis of the chosen topic and its relevance to the course, the research problem (e.g., the research question), the chosen social media, and some thought toward the methodological strategy. If external sources are used, students must cite them appropriately using APA (7th ed.) format. Please note that the reference page is ***not*** included as part of the page limit. The proposal will be submitted by the start of class time online via OWL Brightspace in PDF format saved as your First Name\_Last Name\_AssignmentName (e.g., Molly\_Patel\_PaperProposal.pdf). More details on the proposal, expectations, and grading breakdown will be discussed in class as well as provided on OWL Brightspace. A digital copy of the proposal will be submitted online to Turnitin.com to check for plagiarism.

*Flexible submission window: Students are expected to submit their assignments by the deadline listed. Should illness or extenuating circumstances arise, students are permitted to submit their assignment up to 48 hours past the deadline without academic penalty. Should students submit their assignment beyond the 48 hour deadline, a late penalty of 2% per day will be subtracted from the assigned grade. Assignments will not be accepted after 5 days past the 48-hour submission window. **Please note that because the submission deadline for this assignment already includes flexibility in the form of the 48-hour submission window, requests for academic consideration will not be granted.***

**Midterm (35% of your final grade):** The course midterm will cover ***all*** course content covered prior to the date of the test. The midterm *may* consist of a series of multiple-choice, true/false, fill in the blank, short answer, and/or essay questions. Questions will be based on lectures, readings, and class activities/discussions. The detailed format of the midterm, including the number and type of questions as well as what to expect, will be discussed in class the week prior to the course midterm and details will be posted via OWL Brightspace. The midterm will take place during class time and there will be no lecture on the day of the midterm. Electronic devices (e.g., mobile phones, headphones, smart watches, etc.) will not be permitted during the midterm. The midterm will be a closed-book test, meaning students will not be permitted to use any course materials (e.g., textbooks, notes, lecture slides, aides, etc.) when completing the test. Please be advised that computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

*Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course, per term as requiring supporting documentation to receive academic consideration. For this course, the following assessment: Midterm on October 27th (in-class) has been designated as requiring supporting*

*documentation. You will not be eligible to write a make-up for this missed assessment unless you receive academic consideration from your home facility academic counsellor. If students receive approval to write the make-up midterm, please note that the course professor may not be available to answer questions during the make-up midterm. As well, students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original midterm.*

**Final paper (40% of your final grade):** The final paper for this course is a content analysis or netnography analysis of the student's chosen social media account. Using the feedback obtained from the proposal, students will work independently and write a 10-12 page paper (double-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman font, one-inch margins). In their papers, students will design a research question, engage the methodological strategy to collect their virtual qualitative data, and apply relevant socio-digital concepts and theories pertaining to the internet and digital society to address their research question(s). Remember, the chosen research question and corresponding theories and concepts should explore a topic of the student's choice discussed in class or related more broadly to the topic of the Internet and Society. All topics should be approved by the course instructor, especially if different from that in which they wrote about in their proposal. Students are encouraged to meet with the course instructor if they are having difficulty with any part of the final paper. *Remember, seeking out help early (rather than waiting to the last minute...like the night before the due date) is always recommended!* All external sources used must be cited appropriately using APA (7th ed.) format. Please note that the reference page is ***not*** included as part of the page limit. The final paper will be submitted by 11:59pm online via OWL Brightspace in PDF format saved as your First Name\_Last Name\_AssignmentName (e.g., Molly\_Patel\_FinalPaper.pdf). More details on the final assignment, expectations, and grading breakdown will be discussed in class as well as provided on OWL Brightspace. A digital copy of the final paper will be submitted online to Turnitin.com to check for plagiarism.

*Flexible submission window: Students are expected to submit their assignments by the deadline listed. Should illness or extenuating circumstances arise, students are permitted to submit their assignment up to 48 hours past the deadline without academic penalty. Should students submit their assignment beyond the 48 hour deadline, a late penalty of 5% per day will be subtracted from the assigned grade. Assignments will not be accepted after 7 days past the 48-hour submission window. **Please note that because the submission deadline for this assignment already includes flexibility in the form of the 48-hour submission window, requests for academic consideration will not be granted.***

### **Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):**

All assignments for this course must be completed independently, without the aid of artificial intelligence (AI). Any suspected use of AI will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and the matter will be escalated to the department chair for investigation of possible scholastic offence(s).

## **Electronic Devices:**

Students are permitted to use laptops during class time, particularly for note-taking purposes and to follow along with the course lecture. However, if it is observed that students are using their laptops or any other digital device in a distracting manner (e.g., texting/messaging, using social media, watching videos, etc.), they will be asked to put the device away and will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cellphones are silenced or turned off at the beginning of class. Should a student need access to their device for any pertinent reasons or emergencies, they can speak with the course instructor ahead of class time. Electronic devices (e.g., mobile phones, headphones, smart watches, etc.) will not be permitted during course evaluations (e.g., midterms, tests, exams).

## **Course Policies:**

- **In-class attendance and participation expectations:** Our classes will exclusively take place in-person and lectures will not be recorded. Rather, students are expected to attend class as well as actively engage with all course readings and activities throughout the semester. This includes reading and viewing all course material as well as participating in course discussion questions and activities (both graded and ungraded). It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, and midterms/examinations.
- **Re-evaluations, extra credit, and other grading requests:** Students are welcome to consult with the course instructor at any time about any matters concerning their progress and success in this course. However, remember that this should be ongoing throughout the term, and students should not be waiting until the end of the course to express concerns. Any review of course evaluations should be done within one week of the mark being released. Students who wish to seek re-evaluation of their grade must reach out to the course professor, justifying why they feel the mark is not justified. Such reasoning must be based on the specific course content and by keeping in mind the expectations for the specific method of evaluation and course overall. Please note that the course instructor reserves the right to adjust the mark both upwards and downwards. The revised mark will stand. *It is important to note that there are no re-dos or supplemental or make-up work in this course, so please do not ask for this.*
- **Recording course content:** Students who do not have the necessary accommodations are not permitted to record lectures or discussions in any format (audio, video, photograph, etc.). Posting course materials or any recordings you may make to other websites without the expressed permission of the instructor may constitute copyright infringement.
- **Redistributing course materials/content:** All course content created by a faculty member is considered the faculty member's intellectual property. It should not be distributed, shared in any public domain, or sold by a student or other third party without prior written consent of the faculty member.
- **Course content disclaimer:** Some readings, discussions, and other course content will include topics that some students may find offensive, uncomfortable, triggering, and/or traumatizing. All students are asked to help to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and

sensitivity. Students are encouraged to speak to the course instructor and/or seek additional support as needed.

- **Lecture materials:** The course instructor will post the lecture slides on OWL Brightspace in advance of each class (e.g., a minimum of 24 hours prior to the start of class time). This material will help guide students through the lecture; however, they are **not** complete notes and are **not** a substitute for the lecture. Rather, students should be creating a complete set of notes by following along through the posted slides and making additional notes as they engage with the lecture, including additional resources like videos, discussion questions, etc. that are part of the class material.

**Academic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

Students are expected to retain all research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, your instructor may ask you to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against you.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

**Copyright:** Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

**Absence from Course Commitments:** Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration](#) – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs [https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration\\_Sep24.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf)

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request using the Student Absence Portal (SAP) [https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic\\_considerations/index.html](https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html) . Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is always required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described in the course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness must include the completed Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf> or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner. Students must request academic consideration as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

Once the request and supporting documentation have been received and reviewed, appropriate academic consideration, if granted, shall be determined by the instructor in consultation with the academic advisor, in a manner consistent with the course outline. Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam, unless otherwise specified in the course outline. The course instructor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup text/exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test/exam will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test/exam.

**Note:** missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty Academic Counselling Office.

Students who fail to write a make-up test or special examination will receive a grade of zero on that assessment. No other make-up opportunities will be provided unless further academic consideration is granted by the student's Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

**Religious Accommodation:** Students should review the policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_religious.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

**Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning:** In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence or University approved emergency during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL Brightspace for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

**Code of Student Conduct:** It is the responsibility of every student to read the Code and familiarize him or herself with its contents. The Code is available at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/code\\_of\\_conduct.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/code_of_conduct.pdf). Sanctions for non-compliance range from a warning or reprimand to expulsion from the University.

**Student Responsibility:** Students in a degree program must select courses in accordance with the published requirements. Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and

that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) they may have taken. Students must familiarize themselves with the Student Responsibility for Course Selection policy [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/general/academic\\_counselling.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/academic_counselling.pdf) and the Registration and Progression policy [https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/registration\\_progression\\_grad/registration\\_progression.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/registration_progression.pdf). Students are responsible for the successful completion of the Graduation Requirements for their degree program [https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/registration\\_progression\\_grad/graduation.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/graduation.pdf).

## ***Support Services:***

Office of the Registrar Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

[Faculty Academic Advising](#) - Please visit your Home Faculty Academic advising webpage for information regarding adding/dropping courses, important dates, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters [https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty\\_academic\\_counselling.html](https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html).

[USC services](#) offers information about student the health/dental plan, Bus Pass, food support services, Peer support Centre etc <http://westernusc.ca/services/>.

[Mental health](#) – Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

[Health & Wellness Services](#) – Registered part-time and full-time students can book a physical health appointment at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/index.html>. Additional on-campus services are also available <https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/services/index.html>.

[Accessible Education](#) provides supports and services to students with disabilities at Western, in all programs and faculties. Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) [http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.

[Gender-Based and Sexual Violence](#) – Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experience GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [http://uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](http://uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html)

[Western Libraries](#) – Visit the many library locations on campus. Western Libraries provide access to material in physical and digital formats <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/catalogue/index.html>. Research support is available <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/research/index.html>.

[Writing support](#) – Online writing resources, writing support and writing modules are available <https://writing.uwo.ca/undergrads/>

**Bookstore:** Search for Textbook availability and cost <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search>