

POLI 100F: Social Networks

Winter 2016

TTh 5:00pm – 6:20pm, Peterson 102

Prof: James Fowler, SSB 392, <http://fowler.ucsd.edu>, Office Hours: Th 10am-Noon (please email to schedule)

TA: Will Hobbs, SSB 345, Email: whobbs@ucsd.edu, Office Hours: Tu 12:30pm-2:30pm

Course description

The public is obsessed with social networking and the new ways to connect online, but scholars have been studying connectivity for decades. Recent research shows that if you want to understand this phenomenon, you have to start with the real, everyday, face-to-face networks we have always had, ever since we were huddled around campfires on the Serengeti. We will explore the many ways in which social networks have a powerful effect on a wide range of human behaviors. With a foundation in understanding real world networks, we can then consider how these networks function online.

The format of this course is social. Science is a *social* activity, so there will be a large emphasis on soliciting feedback from and providing feedback to your peers.

Course materials

The main text we will use for this class is:

Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler. 2011. *Connected: How Your Friends' Friends' Friends Affect Everything You Feel Think and Do*. New York: Little Brown, ISBN: 9780316036139.

The hardcover edition is nearly identical in all respects, but has a different subtitle (*The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives*, ISBN: 9780316036146).

This book is available on Amazon and there is also a Kindle version. All scientific articles assigned are available via libraries.ucsd.edu. To set up remote access to these articles, visit <http://blink.ucsd.edu/technology/network/connections/off-campus/proxy/index.html>.

We will use i>clickers in this class for quizzes and peer evaluation – make sure you have one. They can also be purchased online here: <http://www.amazon.com/I-Clicker-2-I-CLICKER/dp/1429280476>

Requirements

Your grade for this course depends on in-class quizzes on readings and lectures and biweekly assignments that should help you with your final paper. You will trade assignments with a peer in class and exchange feedback, and your grade will depend on the quality of feedback you give, **and also your peers' performance**.

- **your** responses to in-class clicker quizzes (20%)
 - Correct answer = A, incorrect answer = B, no answer = 0
- **peer** evaluation of your **work** at each stage (20%)
 - Awesome = A, Adequate = B, Needs Help! = C, AWOL = 0
- **peer** evaluation of your **feedback** at each stage (10%)
 - Extremely Helpful = A, Helpful = B, Not Helpful = C, AWOL = 0
- instructors' evaluation of **your** final paper (40%)
 - Amazing = A, Adequate = B, Huh? = C or less
- instructors' evaluation of your **peers'** final papers (10%)

We will drop your two lowest grades in each category EXCEPT evaluation of your final paper.

Assignments

For each assignment except the final paper, please bring a written copy of your assignment to class or be prepared to show it on a computer or mobile device (your peer will appreciate being able to read your assignment easily). On days assignments are due, we will pair up in class, exchange work, read it, and then provide feedback. We will then use clickers to grade our peers' work and the quality of their feedback. To ensure peer feedback is honest, your peer evaluations are **anonymous**. Your peers will only be able to see their AVERAGE peer evaluation at the end of the quarter (after dropping the two lowest grades), so it is highly unlikely that they will be able to guess what score you gave them. **IMPORTANT: YOU MUST HAVE A DIFFERENT PEER FOR EVERY ASSIGNMENT.**

1. **List of Questions and Hypotheses.** Five questions about **social networks** and/or **social media** that you are interested in and three hypotheses related to each question are due in class on Jan 14. Examples include: What makes networks work? Why do people occupy different positions in the network? What makes people influential? What makes them susceptible to influence? What kinds of networks work best and why?

You should evaluate your peer's questions and hypotheses based on (a) how interesting they are, (b) how important they are, and (c) how plausible the hypotheses are.

2. **Topic and annotated bibliography.** A paper topic and annotations of five scientific articles related to your topic (four to six sentences per article entry) are due in class on Jan 28. At least three of these must be from sources outside the syllabus. Your annotations should answer these questions: (a) What is the main thesis of the article? Summarize its conclusions in a couple of sentences. (b) Who is the author? Has s/he written other articles or books? What are the broad themes of their work? (c) What kind of journal is the article published in? Who is its audience? (d) How did the article help you in trying to narrow the focus of your research? (e) What is the scope of the article? Does it present a broad overview? Does it zero in on a very specific topic?

You should evaluate your peer's work based on (a) how relevant the articles are to the topic, and (b) how well they are doing in summarizing the information.

3. **Literature Review.** A 1200 to 1500 word *synthetic* literature review is due on Feb 18. The goal of this paper is to use course material from the syllabus and outside sources to (a) describe a topic, (b) show why it is important, (c) analyze what we currently know about the topic based on current scientific research, and (d) explain what a next step would be in advancing our understanding of the topic. This next step can be very, very small, but it must be your own idea, and it will be very helpful if you can use this to guide your thinking for a potential final paper!

You should evaluate your peer's work based on how well they achieve the above goals.

4. **First paper draft.** A 2000-2500 word paper draft is due on Mar 10. This paper could take the form of a scientific article, white paper, proposal (to a council, funding agency, leader, etc.), or critical review. In this paper, you are required to demonstrate your understanding of a) the framework/theories of the course (with reference to at least three scientific articles), b) your use of research in advancing your argument, and c) your original thinking on the topic.

You should evaluate your peer's work based on how well they achieve the above goals.

5. **Final paper draft.** A 2000-2500 word final paper that incorporates peer feedback is due by 3pm on Mar 15 in hard copy at Social Sciences Building 392. You should also include a postscript of 200 to 250 words that explains how peer feedback (at any stage) helped you write your paper.

Tentative Schedule and Assigned Readings

Week 1 (Jan 5, 7) *Introduction to Social Networks*

- *Connected*, Chapter 1
- Milgram, Stanley. "The small world problem." *Psychology Today* 2.1 (1967): 60-67.
- Milgram, Stanley, Leonard Bickman, and Lawrence Berkowitz. "Note on the drawing power of crowds of different size." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 13.2 (1969): 79–82.

Week 2 (Jan 12, 14) *Emotional Contagion*

QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES DUE ON THURSDAY

- *Connected*, Chapter 2
- R. A. Easterlin, "Explaining Happiness," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 100, no. 19 (2003): 11176-11183.
- Coviello, Lorenzo, et al. "Detecting Emotional Contagion in Massive Social Networks." *PLOS ONE* 9.3 (2014): e90315.

Week 3 (Jan 19, 21) *Love and Sex*

- *Connected*, Chapter 3
- F. Elwert and N. A. Christakis, "Variation in the Effect of Widowhood on Mortality by the Causes of Death of Both Spouses," *American Journal of Public Health* 98 (2008): 2092–2098.
- D. T. Gilbert, and others, "The Surprising Power of Neighborly Advice," *Science* 323 (2009): 1617-1619.

Week 4 (Jan 26, 28) *The Spread of Health Behaviors*

TOPIC AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE ON THURSDAY

- *Connected*, Chapter 4
- P. S. Bearman, J. Moody, and K. Stovel, "Chains of Affection," *American Journal of Sociology* 110 (2004): 44–91.
- Centola, Damon. "An experimental study of homophily in the adoption of health behavior." *Science* 334.6060 (2011): 1269-1272.

Week 5 (Feb 2, 4) *Economic Networks*

- *Connected*, Chapter 5
- M. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (1973): 1360-1380, p. 1372.
- B. Uzzi and J. Spiro, "Collaboration and Creativity: The Small World Problem," *American Journal of Sociology* 111 (2005): 447–504.

Week 6 (Feb 9, 11) *Political Networks*

- *Connected*, Chapter 6
- L. A. Adamic and N. Glance, "The Political Blogosphere and the 2004 U.S. Election: Divided They Blog," *Proceedings of the 3rd International Workshop on Link Discovery* (New York: Association for Computing Machinery, 2005): 36–43.
- Bond, Robert M., et al. "A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization." *Nature* 489.7415 (2012): 295-298.

Week 7 (Feb 16, 18) *The Evolutionary Basis of Social Life*

LITERATURE REVIEW DUE ON THURSDAY

- *Connected*, Chapter 7
- J.H. Fowler, C.T. Dawes, and N.A. Christakis, "Model of Genetic Variation in Human Social Networks," *PNAS: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 2009; 106: 1720-1724.
- R. Dunbar, "Coevolution of Neocortex Size, Group Size, and Language in Humans," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16 (1993): 681–735.

Week 8 (Feb 23, 25) *Social Media*

- *Connected*, Chapter 8
- Duggan, Maeve. "Mobile Messaging and Social Media – 2015" *Pew Research Center*. August 2015. Available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/19/mobile-messaging-and-social-media-2015/>

Week 9 (Mar 1, 3) *The Human Superorganism*

- *Connected*, Chapter 9

Week 10 (Mar 8, 10) **TBD**

FIRST PAPER DRAFT DUE ON THURSDAY

Mar 15 Final Paper Due by 3pm in Social Sciences Building 392