

HC 170 The Psychology of Cyberspace

Faculty: Michael McMillan, MA
P.O. Box 271
Chicago, Ill 60690-0271
1-312-362-5949
E-mail: mmcmilla@depaul.edu

Semester: Summer, 2009, Oak Forest Campus, room TBA; hybrid course

Day/Time: Tuesday, 6:30 pm-9:30 pm

Class 1D#: 12955

Competencies:

H2X: Can explain how the internet functions as a social institution and can evaluate how this mass medium influences society.

1. Defines the functions of social institutions
2. Articulates criteria for evaluating the internet as a social institution
3. Explains the role mass media play in society
4. Describes and evaluates the impact of the internet as a mass medium

H3X: Can use theories of psychology to understand behavior in an electronic communications medium and can assess the impact of that medium on individuals.

Articulates two or more theories of human behavior

Uses these theories to understand a communications problem

Identifies instances of electronic miscommunication

Analyzes how the medium influences individuals

H-3-A: Can use two or more theories of human psychology to understand and solve problems.

1. Articulates two or more theories or models explaining human behavior.
2. Identifies a problem and proposes a solution using appropriate theoretical approaches.

Students demonstrate this competence by showing their familiarity with recognized theories and models of behavior, and by their ability to select appropriate ones to address a problem. In addition, students must evaluate the effectiveness or expected results of applying the theory to the problem.

.

H-2-G: Can evaluate the role and impact of mass media or information technology on society.

1. Specifies a medium of mass communication or an information technology and articulates its scope.
2. Describes the role that this medium or information technology plays in society.
3. Evaluates the impact of this medium or information technology on society or on one's perceptions of societal norms and issues.

Students demonstrate this competence by evaluating the effect of a medium of mass communication or information technology on society. The demonstration should include definitions of all the terms – mass media or information technology, society, role, and impact.

Course Description

Students will gain an understanding of the psychological dynamics of social communication and interaction in the virtual realm of cyberspace. As a hybrid course, students will have the opportunity to explore these issues online, in structured activities.

Expected Outcomes

Students will acquire skills which will:

1. Evaluate their interactions and the interactions of others based on psychological concepts.
2. Develop insights which will contribute to improved communication in the virtual realm.
3. Contribute to the recognition of dysfunctional and inappropriate behavior in cyberspace and its causes.
4. Examine issues of gender and ethnic interaction in cyberspace.
5. Enable effective interaction with people of different personalities, needs, and goals in through understanding the overarching cultural and psychological aspects of the virtual community.

Learning Experience:

Class lectures and discussion will involve understanding the internet in a psychological context. Online classes will provide an opportunity for examination of issues regarding interaction in cyberspace in that environment.

Learning Tools

1. Textbook: The Psychology of the Internet, Patricia Wallace
2. Lectures
3. Online exercises
4. Handouts

Competence Evaluation

1. Examinations covering theoretical premises
 2. Student paper(s) applying concepts learned.
 3. Online exercise participation.
- Note:** can use no more than two competencies per paper.

Class Schedule:**June 16, 2009**

Class Overview, introductions. Discussion of course outline, requirements, and grading. Discussion of instructor's expectations as well as student's. Course competences will also be discussed. Lecture will cover historical/technological antecedents to virtual environments; psychological models of internet development; positive and negative effects of social relationships on the internet. (Chapters 1 through 2 in The Psychology of the Internet; lecture notes; **June 20; last day to enroll in this class.**

June 23, 2009

Lecture: Group dynamics, in and out of cyberspace. (Chapters 4 and 5 in The Psychology of the Internet; lecture notes; **June 27; last day to drop class with 100% refund as well as select pass/fail option. June 27: last day to select auditor status. Grade of W assigned to those who withdraw after June 28.**

June 30, 2009

Class online; online exercise (Group dynamics in cyberspace)

July 7, 2009

Review of online class experience. Team/individual presentations; lecture notes.

July 14, 2009

Gender, racial/ethnic discrimination. (Chapters 5, 6, and 11; The Psychology of the Internet); lecture notes; review of mid-term exam.

July 21, 2009

Mid-term exam. Outline of next online activity.

July 28, 2009

Class online; online team/individual activity

August 4, 2009

Review of online class experience. Team/individual presentations; lecture notes.
Outline of final paper.

August 11, 2009

Class online; online team/individual activity.

August 18, 2009

Final class; review of online class experience. Team/individual presentations;
course evaluation.