

FWIS 176:

WRITING WITH AND ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

Course Info

Room: Sewall 133

Date/Time: MWF 1:00-1:50

Instructor:

Dr. Baird Campbell

Email: baird@rice.edu

Office Hours: TWTh, by appointment

Required Texts

*The Breakup 2.0:
Disconnecting over new
media*

by Ilana Gershon

Please ask me ASAP for access to Netflix or Hulu

Course Description

Social media is everywhere. From social justice hashtags like #BLM and #MeToo, to the market power of popular TikTokers, to the sometimes earth-shaking tweets from the former President of the United States, whether we like it or not, social media is part of our everyday lives.

In this course, we will explore social media from a number of perspectives: we will learn its history; explore its technicalities; think critically about its content; and ultimately seek to understand why and how social media has quickly become a mainstream tool for written and audiovisual communication.

Along the way, you'll craft and explore a research question on a social media issue of your choice, engaging in digital ethnography to collect data.

The course is divided into 4 units:

1. The Theory, Study, and Ethics of Social Media
2. Identity on Social Media
3. Social Media as a Tool for Activism
4. Navigating Relationships Online



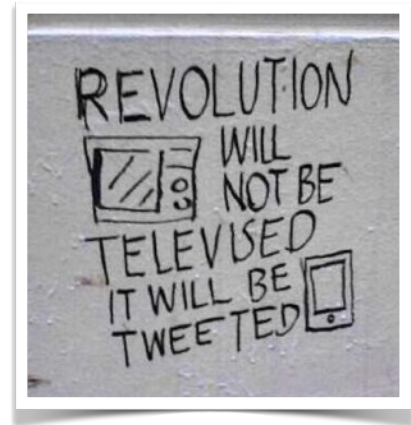
What is a FWIS Course?

First-year Writing Intensive Seminar (FWIS) courses fulfill Rice's Writing and Communication Requirement, which all students must complete in order to earn a bachelor's degree from the university. They are capped at 15 students to support group discussion and foster relationships between students and faculty, and also to ensure that students receive substantive feedback from instructors on their writing, speaking, and visual communication.

Student Learning Goals

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Critically analyze** an academic text, identifying main arguments and supporting evidence
2. **Produce** an **argumentative text** with **scholarly supporting evidence**
3. **Engage** in **ethnographic research** both on- and offline
4. **Describe** and **analyze** the relationship between **on-/offline identity**
5. **Identify** and **replicate** the key components of ethnographic writing
6. Coherently and effectively **express** a **scholarly argument** orally
7. **Think critically** about social media as both a part of **everyday life** and as a **scholarly tool**



Classroom Expectations

Students will **arrive on time** and **be prepared** for the day's activities. This means:

- All assigned reading has been **read**, key terms **defined**, and questions **prepared**
- All assignments have been **turned in**, and **printed copies** prepared if requested
- Students will treat **each other, the instructor, the classroom, and the people who keep it running** with respect.

This means:

- Respecting **class-defined norms** governing class interactions
- Respecting the time of both the **instructor** and your **classmates** (arriving on time, meeting deadlines, etc.)
- Leaving the classroom in **better condition** than you found it (picking up trash, straightening chairs, etc.)

ASSIGNMENTS

Participation - 20%

Participation is more than just speaking up in class. It means doing all the reading, completing all assignments, being a generous and thoughtful peer reviewer, and coming to office hours.

Class facilitation -10%

Students will work with a group to facilitate the discussion of one article. Groups will be assigned in class.

Guided Social Media Ethnography - 5%

In this activity, I will guide you through the steps of doing social media research, and you will write up the results ethnographically.

Field Notes - 10%

You will be responsible for taking weekly field notes on your topic of choice throughout the semester. You will submit 8 weeks of field notes using the provided template. You may also be asked to draw on them in class.

Ethnography Drafts - 10%

These are your first forays into ethnographic writing. Each draft will build on the previous one, and will be graded on improvement from one version to the next. The best two grades will be kept.

Abstract - 5%

You will produce a 250-word final paper proposal, in the form of an abstract, to be peer edited in class and included in your final paper.

Grading

A: 94-100, A-: 90-93

B+: 87-89, B: 84-86, B-: 80-83

C+: 77-79, C: 74-76, C-: 70-73

D+: 67-69, D: 64-66, D-: 60-63

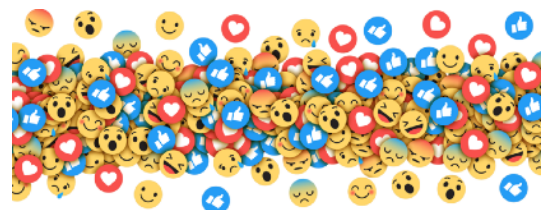
F/I: 59 and lower

Academic Accommodations

I am committed to making our classroom an accessible space for all. If you have a disability or other condition that may affect academic performance:

- make sure this documentation is on file with the Disability Resource Center (Allen Center, Room 111 /adarice@rice.edu / x5841) to determine the accommodations you need
- speak with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

Important: Sometimes we need accommodations that fall outside the framework of disability as understood by the DRC. Please do not hesitate to let me know about any additional help you may need.



Formatting Your Work

All written work should be formatted as follows:

- Font - Times New Roman
- Size - 12
- Margins - 1 inch all around
- Page Numbers
- Double spaced

In top left corner:

- Name
- Date
- Course

All work should be spellchecked, proofread, and have a meaningful title.

Final "TED" talk - 10%

At the end of the semester you will give a 7 minute "TED-style" presentation about your final paper topic. This presentation should communicate the main arguments of your paper, necessary background information, methods, and ethical considerations you encountered.

Final Paper - 20%

The final paper is the culmination of your work throughout the semester. It should incorporate what you have learned about ethnographic writing, and how it can be used to make a cogent argument. It should rely on sources from both the syllabus and independent research. The final paper will also be graded in relation to your drafts throughout the semester, and your ability to implement feedback from your classmates and from me.

Attendance

Showing up to class is the single biggest determiner of your success. However, life happens, and sometimes absences are not avoidable. **You may miss three (3) classes without penalty.** After this, each missed class will result in a deduction of 1/3 of a letter grade from your semester grade.

- If you miss a class, you must **find out what you missed** from a classmate and come to the next class **prepared**.
- Tardiness of **more than 15 minutes** is considered an absence.

School-sanctioned absences: Students who anticipate multiple school-sanctioned absences **are expected to attend all other classes unless absolutely necessary.**

Students who present a **letter** with anticipated absences **must still email Dr. Campbell** to confirm each absence.

-Unconfirmed sanctioned absences will be considered unsanctioned and will count against your attendance and participation grades.-

Need Help with Class?

CAPC

(Center for Academic and Professional Communication)

Currently doing consultations via Zoom and in person. You can book an appointment with a writing consultant online.

The Reference Desk

Any of the librarians at the Reference Desk will be helpful, but Joe Goetz (jgoetz@rice.edu) is the dedicated librarian for anthropology, and loves to help students!

Digital Media Commons

The staff at the DMC can help you with audiovisual assignments, and can also provide you with any equipment you may need. Located in the Fondren basement.

Need Other Help?

Counseling Services

To help you manage course work, deadlines, personal and professional relationships and being away from home and/or family matters, the Rice Counseling Center (RCC) offers free, confidential support.

A more complete list is available under "**On Campus Resources.**" on Canvas.

Late Work

Missing a deadline is a **stressful** experience. Students in this situation often **blame themselves** and feel they could complete the assignment if they had **one more day**, but the next day might not be any easier, and the stress snowballs as late penalties accumulate. Students sometimes **fail classes** because they get **trapped in this cycle!**

If you're not going to make a deadline:

1. **Email me** whatever you have before the deadline, and you'll be granted an **automatic 24-hour extension** (exceptions apply)
2. Each additional day late will result in a **1/3 letter grade reduction** from the assignment in question

Technology Policy

Some studies show that reading on a screen **negatively affects reading comprehension**; on the other hand, many people find screens **more accessible** for reading and note-taking. I trust that if you choose to have a screen in class, you will remain focused and use it only for class purposes. However, **I reserve the right to ask you to put your technology away.** If you have suggestions for a better technology policy, I am very open to ideas!



Office Hours

Attending office hours is one of the easiest things you can do to guarantee your success in any course. To help get you into this habit, I require students to attend office hours at least once during the semester **before October 7**.

Reasons to go to office hours include:

- To **discuss** something you **found interesting**
- To **discuss** something you **found confusing**
- To **work** on improving a **particular assignment**
- To **get to know your instructor**

Make an appointment using the link on Canvas

If you are unable to attend during regular hours, please email me to set up an appointment.

Academic Accommodations

I am committed to making our classroom an **accessible space for all**.

If you have a disability or other condition that may affect academic performance:

- **File documentation** with the Disability Resource Center (Allen Center, Room 111 / adarice@rice.edu / x5841) to determine the accommodations you need
- **Speak with me** to discuss your accommodation needs.

Important: Sometimes we need accommodations that fall outside the framework of disability as understood by the DRC. Please **do not hesitate** to let me know about any additional help you may need.

Rice Honor Code

In this course, all students will be held to the standards of the Rice Honor Code, a code that you pledged to honor when you matriculated at this institution. If you are unfamiliar with the details of this code and how it is administered, you should consult the Honor System Handbook at:

<http://honor.rice.edu/honor-systemhandbook/>.

This handbook outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This syllabus is a guideline for this course. As such, I reserve the right to make changes in it as necessary. All changes to the syllabus will be announced in class and on Canvas.

	Week 1: Welcome to College	
	In Class	Reading / Assignment
Monday August 22	Welcome Introductions Syllabus Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to Know You Survey due Thursday by 11:59 PM
Wednesday August 24	Hidden Curriculum Collaborative class norms	<i>No reading</i>
Friday August 26	The "college read" Professional communication norms	"How to Email Your Professor..." by Laura Portwood-Stacer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional email due to baird@rice.edu Sunday by 11:59 • FWIS Writing Sample due Sunday by 11:59 PM
	Week 2: Building Blocks	
	In Class	Reading / Assignment
Monday August 29	Discussion of readings	"Dialectics of Complexity: A Five-Country Examination of Lived Experiences on Social Media." by Gina M. Masullo, Martin J. Riedl, Ori Tenenboim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post one discussion question to Canvas by 10 AM on Wednesday

Wednesday August 31	Discussion of readings	"Dialectics of Complexity: A Five-Country Examination of Lived Experiences on Social Media." by Gina M. Masullo, Martin J. Riedl, Ori Tenenboim
Friday September 2	Discussion of readings	Video - "Why Ethnography Matters" #potsandpans: Rethinking Social Media in Istanbul during Occupy Gezi by Zeynep Devrim Gürsel
Week 3: Framing Theory		
	In Class	Reading / Assignment
Monday September 5	LABOR DAY - NO CLASS	
Wednesday September 7	Framing theory Discussion of film	Film: "FYRE: The Greatest Party that Never Happened" Available on Netflix
Friday September 9	Discussion of film	Film: "Fyre Fraud" Available on Hulu <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit your preferences for class facilitation by Friday at 11:59 PM https://forms.gle/B4163PcSJQ2MUuSr8
Week 4: Digital Ethnographic Methods		
	In Class	Reading / Assignment
Monday September 12	Discussion of reading Citation/Literature Review workshop	#BlackOutEid: Resisting Anti-Blackness in Digital Muslim Life by Mariam Durrani
Wednesday September 14	In class guided ethnography practice	Review field notes Template on Canvas and prepare questions

Friday September 16	Class facilitation In class guided ethnography practice	• Bring field notes to class!
	Week 5: Ethics	
	In Class	Reading / Assignment
Monday September 19	Discussion of readings	<p>"The Human Toll of Protecting the Internet from the Worst of Humanity" by Adrian Chen</p> <p>"Facebook, Cambridge Analytica Share A Liking For Beta Tests In The Developing World" by Paul Blumenthal</p>
Wednesday September 21	Discussion of reading	<p>Care and Scale: Decorrelative Ethics in Algorithmic Recommendation by Nick Seaver</p> <p>• Post one discussion question to Canvas by 10 AM on Friday</p>
Friday September 23	<p>Preliminary paper proposals</p> <p>Discussion of reading</p>	<p>Care and Scale: Decorrelative Ethics in Algorithmic Recommendation by Nick Seaver</p> <p>• Guided Ethnography Write-up due Sunday by 11:59 PM</p>
	Week 6: Research Methods	
	In Class	Reading / Assignment
Monday September 26	Picking your topic (speed collaboration)	<p>One research topic idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Why you're interested •What can it tell you about a larger question? •Another perspective you could take <p>Start taking field notes today!</p>

Wednesday September 28	Research workshop	Meet at Fondren
Friday September 30	Writing a research question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary paper proposal due Sunday at 11:59 PM • Field Notes #1 due Sunday at 11:59 PM
Week 7: Public/Private		
	In Class	Reading / Assignment
Monday October 3	Discussion	"Habermas & the Public Sphere." Watch video on Canvas and take notes.
Wednesday October 5	Discussion of reading	"Default publicness: Queer youth of color, social media, and being outed by the machine" by Alexander Cho
Friday October 7	Social Media Ethnography Draft #1 Discussion of reading	Discussion Group 1 "Default publicness: Queer youth of color, social media, and being outed by the machine" by Alexander Cho <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-semester Check-in survey due Sunday by 11:59 PM • Field notes #2 due Sunday by 11:59 PM
Week 8: Navigating Identity Online		
	In Class	Reading / Assignment
Monday October 10	NO CLASS	
Wednesday October 12	Performativity Discussion of video	Video: What does it mean that gender is performative? (On Canvas)

<p>Friday October 14</p>	<p>Intersectionality</p> <p>Discussion of reading</p>	<p>"It took me quite a long time to develop a voice": Examining feminist digital activism in the Indian #MeToo movement" by Paromita Pain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media Ethnography Draft #1 due Sunday by 11:59 PM • Field notes #3 due Sunday by 11:59 PM
<p>(J)</p>	<p>Week 9: Sensing Online</p>	
	<p>In Class</p>	<p>Reading / Assignment</p>
<p>Monday October 17</p>	<p>Discussion of reading</p>	<p>Discussion Group 2</p> <p>"It took me quite a long time to develop a voice": Examining feminist digital activism in the Indian #MeToo movement" by Paromita Pain</p>
<p>Wednesday October 19</p>	<p>The social model of disability</p> <p>Discussion of reading</p>	<p>"The thing about pain: The remaking of illness narratives in chronic pain expressions on social media" by Elena Gonzalez-Polledo, Jen Tarr</p>
<p>Friday October 21</p>	<p>Social Media Ethnography Draft #2</p> <p>Discussion of reading</p>	<p>Discussion Group 3</p> <p>"The thing about pain: The remaking of illness narratives in chronic pain expressions on social media" by Elena Gonzalez-Polledo, Jen Tarr</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes #4 due Sunday by 11:59 PM • Online peer review due Sunday by 11:59
<p>(J)</p>	<p>Week 10: Challenging Our Biases</p>	
	<p>In Class</p>	<p>Reading / Assignment</p>

Monday October 24	Epistemology and ontology Discussion of film	Film: Qallunaat: Why White People are Funny!
Wednesday October 26	Challenging Epistemologies Workshop	Film: Qallunaat: Why White People are Funny! Bring your field notes!
Friday October 28	Discussion of podcast	"Native People are #NotYourMascot" (on Canvas) from the <i>There are no Girls on the Internet</i> podcast • Field notes #5 due Sunday by 11:59 PM
Week 11: Social Media and Activism		
	In Class	Reading / Assignment
Monday October 31	Social movement theory Discussion of reading	"Towards Cyberactivism 2.0?: Understanding the Use of Social Media and Other Information Technologies for Political Activism and Social Movements" by Rodrigo Sandoval-Almazan & Ramon J. Gil-Garcia
Wednesday November 2	Discussion of reading	"Fakeness: Digital Inauthenticity and Emergent Political Tactics in Armenia" by Tamar Shirinian
Friday November 4	Social Media Ethnography Draft #3 Discussion of reading	Discussion Group 4 "Fakeness: Digital Inauthenticity and Emergent Political Tactics in Armenia" by Tamar Shirinian • Social Media Ethnography Draft #2 due Sunday by 11:59 PM • Field notes #6 due Sunday by 11:59 PM
Week 12: Finding Love on Social Media		
(J)	In Class	Reading / Assignment

Monday November 7	Discussion of reading	"Introduction and Chapter 1," The Breakup 2.0 by Ilana Gershon
Wednesday November 9	Discussion of reading	"Chapter 2," The Breakup 2.0 by Ilana Gershon"
Friday November 11	NO CLASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online peer review due Friday by 11:59 PM • Field notes #7 due Sunday by 11:59 PM
(J)	Week 13: Finding Love on Social Media	
	In Class	Reading / Assignment
Monday November 14	TED Talks Discussion of reading	"Chapter 3," The Breakup 2.0 by Ilana Gershon
Wednesday November 16	Discussion of reading	"Chapter 4," The Breakup 2.0 by Ilana Gershon
Friday November 18	Discussion of reading	"Chapter 5 and Conclusion," The Breakup 2.0 by Ilana Gershon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media Ethnography Draft #3 due Sunday by 11:59 PM • Field notes #8 due Sunday by 11:59 PM
	Week 14:	
	In Class	Reading / Assignment
Monday November 21	Wrap-up Abstracts Final Ethnographic Papers	
Wednesday November 23	NO CLASS	

Friday November 25	NO CLASS	
	Week 15:	
	In Class	Reading / Assignment
Monday November 28	TED Talks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online peer review due Monday by 11:59
Wednesday November 30	TED Talks	
Friday December 2	TED Talks	
Friday December 9	Abstracts and Final papers due on Canvas, Friday by 5 PM	