

## Ethics & Society II (PHIL 28)

Winter 2023

David Danks  
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**Lecture:** 11:00 – 11:50 am, Mondays & Wednesdays, Ledden Auditorium

**Course TAs:**

- **Nate Greely** <ngreely@ucsd.edu>
  - Monday, 10:00 - 10:50 am
  - Monday, 12:00 - 12:50 pm
- **Faron Ray** <fray@ucsd.edu>
  - Wednesday, 12:00 - 12:50 pm
  - Friday, 12:00 - 12:50 pm
- **Joseph Martinez** <jdm001@ucsd.edu>
  - Wednesday, 4:00 - 4:50 pm
  - Wednesday, 5:00 - 5:50 pm

**Danks office hours:** Tuesdays, 2:00 – 3:00 pm either in-person (A&H 0462) or Zoom (link on Canvas). Please use Canvas to sign-up for a timeslot (or to check about drop-in)

**Course materials:** Everything will be on the course Canvas site (<http://canvas.ucsd.edu>)

**Course communication:** All course announcements will be posted on Canvas. If you need to contact Prof. Danks or a TA, then you must use your UCSD email address and include 'PHIL 28' in the subject line. Replies can be expected within 24-48 hours. Please note that grade disputes will be discussed and resolved in-person (or via Zoom), not via email.

### Learning objectives

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

- Describe key ethical and societal impacts & challenges of social media and social networks
- Analyze the ways in which their own lives are affected (ethically & psychologically) by social media use, both their own & others
- Characterize significant constraints and opportunities for future governance of social media

### Course requirements

**Grading & Assignments:** This course is designed for “specifications grading”: each assignment will be graded only as Satisfactory (roughly, B/B+ level performance) or Unsatisfactory, rather than the more traditional A/B/C/D/F scale. Your overall course grade will then be based on the number (& type) of assignments that you complete satisfactorily. More precisely, the course requirements are:

- 3 longer writing assignments (*due: Feb. 10, March 3, & March 19*)
- 6 shorter writing assignments (*due: Jan. 13, 20, 27; Feb. 3, 24; & March 10*)
- 7 required discussion section meetings  
(*No discussion sections in weeks 2 & 7, and section is optional during week 1*)

and the Satisfactory assignments required for particular final letter grades are:

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<i>Longer writing</i>	3/3	3/3	2/3	1/3
<i>Shorter writing</i>	5/6	3/6	2/6	2/6
<i>Discussion section</i>	6/7	4/7	3/7	1/7

You will receive a ‘+’ on the letter grade if you (i) complete one additional shorter writing assignment *and* (ii) attend an additional discussion section. You will receive a ‘-’ on the letter grade if you *either* (i) complete one fewer shorter writing assignment *or* (ii) attend one fewer discussion section. (If you fall short on both dimensions, then you will drop to the lower letter grade.) Please note that this grading scheme means that the “points” you see in Canvas will *not* be informative about your final grade!

- *Example:* Satisfactorily complete 3-of-3 longer writing assignments, 5-of-6 shorter writing assignments, and attend 6-of-7 discussion sections ⇒ Receive an A
- *Example:* 2-of-3 longer writing assignments, 3-of-6 shorter writing assignments, and 4-of-7 discussion sections ⇒ Receive a C+
- *Example:* 3-of-3 longer writing assignments, 3-of-6 shorter writing assignments, and 3-of-7 discussion sections ⇒ Receive a B-

For the two types of writing assignments, you may have the opportunity to rewrite/resubmit if you receive an Unsatisfactory. Specifically:

- If you submit on-time: You can rewrite/resubmit within 4 days (96 hours) of the assignment being returned. You must also provide a brief (~1 paragraph) reflection about how you have changed your submission in light of feedback.
- If you submit 0-47.99 hours late: Your submission will still be graded, but you will not have an opportunity to rewrite/resubmit (if it receives an Unsatisfactory)
- If you submit 48+ hours late: The submission will receive an Unsatisfactory.

Due dates for all assignments are listed below ((almost) always 11:59 pm on Fridays), and all relevant materials will be provided in a timely manner so you can complete assignments significantly before their due dates, if you choose. **Please plan ahead, as no extensions will be granted, except in *truly exceptional circumstances*** (such as Canvas going offline or documented medical emergency).

**Lecture attendance:** This course will be exploring ethical & societal issues involving social media and social networks. Some parts of this class will likely take you outside of your intellectual comfort zone. So although attendance during lectures is *not* required, I strongly urge you to consider attending them. There will be opportunities for questions and discussion in every lecture, which can play a helpful role in building your understanding of key concepts. I realize that you may sometimes need to miss lecture, so podcasts will be provided, but there will *not* be a synchronous Zoom option.

### **Plagiarism**

The representation of other people’s ideas as though they were your own is plagiarism, and a violation of academic integrity. I have an absolutely zero tolerance policy about plagiarism. Plagiarism is *not* restricted to verbatim copying of other people’s words. Basically, you should cite anything that (a) you got from someone else; and (b) a reasonable person would not know ahead of time. For proper citation, you should cite any ideas and quotes that are due to other people. (Your choice about citation format, but please be consistent.)

I realize that the vast majority of you will never consider cheating. However, a few of you may (for a variety of reasons) be tempted to plagiarize others’ work. Do not take chances with plagiarism: **if you are uncertain whether you are doing something acceptable, please just ask.** We are happy to answer questions about whether something constitutes plagiarism. And if you are ever tempted to present someone else’s ideas as your own, then please come talk to me so that we can address the underlying challenges that are pushing you to that point.

### **Statement of support for your well-being**

We as a community have to support one another. If you, or anyone you know, experiences academic stresses, difficult life events, or feelings of anxiety or depression, then we strongly encourage you to seek support. Take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this quarter by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep, and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. More generally, all of us benefit from support during times of struggle. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is almost always helpful. If you need it, please consider reaching out to a friend, faculty, or family member you trust for help getting connected to support that can help.

## Schedule

(subject to revision)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Lecture Topic</i>	<i>Reading/Listening</i>
1/9	Course overview <b>Discussion sections optional this week</b>	[no reading]
1/11	Social media & its infrastructure	Vallor, “Social networking and ethics” (mainly Sec. 3)
1/13	<i>SWA #1 due at 11:59 pm</i>	
1/16	<b>No class: Martin Luther King Jr. Day</b> <b>No discussion sections this week</b>	
1/18	Surveillance economy	Zuboff, “You are the object of a secret extraction operation”
1/20	<i>SWA #2 due at 11:59 pm</i>	

### Social media, Privacy, & Identity

1/23	Privacy in social media	Gersen, “Why the ‘privacy’ wars rage on” Marmor, “Privacy in social media” (mainly Secs. 1&2)
1/25	Privacy paradox	Acquisti, <i>et al.</i> , “Privacy and human behavior in the age of information”
1/27	<i>SWA #3 due at 11:59 pm</i>	
1/30	Constructing identities	Huang, <i>et al.</i> , “A literature review of online identity reconstruction” (focus on key findings)
2/1	Blurring online & offline identities	Rodogno, “Personal identity online”
2/3	<i>SWA #4 due at 11:59 pm</i>	
2/6	Shaping preferences & identities	Kramer, <i>et al.</i> , “Experimental evidence of massive-scale emotional contagion...” Goel, “Facebook tinkers with users’ emotions...”
2/10	<i>LWA #1 due at 11:59 pm</i>	

### Social networks, Society, & Community

2/8	Constructing social narratives	<i>TBA</i>
2/13	Power of online communities	The Gov Lab, “The power of virtual communities” (focus on 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> sections)
2/15	Belief polarization	Van Bavel, <i>et al.</i> , “How social media shapes polarization”
2/20	<b>No class: Presidents’ Day</b> <b>No discussion sections this week</b>	
2/22	Information bubbles & echo chambers	Barberá, <i>et al.</i> , “Tweeting from left to right...” Cinelli, <i>et al.</i> , “The echo chamber effect on social media”
2/24	<i>SWA #5 due at 11:59 pm</i>	
2/27	Challenges of offensive speech	Ullmann & Tomalin, “Quarantining online hate speech...”
3/3	<i>LWA #2 due at 11:59 pm</i>	

<i>Date</i>	<i>Lecture Topic</i>	<i>Reading/Listening</i>
<b>Future of social media</b>		
3/1	Current & potential regulations	Citron, “How to fix Section 230” (focus on Secs. I & III, and ignore the many footnotes)
3/6	The power of social norms	Rost, <i>et al.</i> , “Digital social norm enforcement: Online firestorms in social media”
3/8	A need for paternalism?	<i>TBA</i>
3/10	<i>SWA #6 due at 11:59 pm</i>	
3/13	Whither content moderation?	<i>TBA</i>
3/15	Possible paths for regulation	Balkin, “How to regulate (and not regulate) social media” (focus on the various options)
3/19	<i>LWA #3 due at 11:59 pm</i>	