

**HA 4120B: Social Media & Health
Winter 2025**

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| Instructor: Eric Collins Office: Email: ecollin9@uwo.ca Phone: TBA Office Hrs: TBA TAs: TBA | Lectures: Winter 2025 Instruction Mode: In-person |
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NOTE: All course information including grades, assignment outlines, deadlines, etc. are available via OWL. Check the website regularly for course announcements.

Calendar Course Description (including prerequisites/anti-requisites): Social media and its associated technologies have become ubiquitous in all aspects of our lives. This course integrates an understanding of social media with research in health and medicine. The course explores social media uses in health to address methodological, conceptual, ethical and design issues pertinent to these emergent technologies. Antirequisite(s): Health Sciences 4091B (if taken in 2015-2017). Extra Information: 3 lecture hours.

You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course pre-requisites, and that you have not taken an anti-requisite course.

Statement on Prerequisite Checking

Unless you have either the requisites 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. This 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

NOTE: If you wish to enroll in this course without the stated pre-requisite(s), you must obtain written approval from the course instructor. The approval should then be forwarded to your academic counsellor.

My Course Description

In this course, we will explore the relationship between social media and several areas of health. We will begin our exploration by unpacking the history of social media and the development of digital health technologies. Then, we will examine how social media impacts and influences our mental health, sexual health, as well as our interpersonal relationships. We will also investigate how and why social media is used as a tool in medicine, public health, and health promotion. Lastly, we will evaluate how social media has influenced our parenting beliefs and behaviours.

Learning Outcomes/Schedule:

| Learning Outcome | Learning Activity | Learning Assessment |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Depth and Breadth of Knowledge</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Understand how and why social media has become a significant tool in our society and examine its overall impact on our health beliefs, health behaviours, and provision of health care. | Lectures Readings | Forums Essay Exams |
| <i>Application of Knowledge</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Assess real-world scenarios and situations to predict how people will use digital health technologies and interpret the health information found on social media. | Lectures Readings | Forums Essay Exams |
| <i>Application of Methodologies</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Explain the scientific models, concepts, and theories that have been used to understand the relationship between social media and health. | Lectures Readings | Forums Essay Exams |

Required Course Material:

Haidt, J. (2024). *The anxious generation. How the great rewiring of childhood is causing an epidemic of mental illness*. Penguin Publishing Group.

OR

Kardaras, N. (2022). *Digital madness. How social media is driving our mental health crisis – and how to restore our sanity*. St. Martin's Press.

Course Evaluation:

Forum (10%): Ten questions will be posted to **Brightspace** throughout the term. Questions will be generated from weekly lectures and readings. Each student is required to provide an original response to each week's posting and comment on a fellow student's original response. Each week's original response and comment are worth a total of 1%. There are no part marks. "I agree" or "I disagree" are insufficient responses/comments and will not be awarded marks. Students are expected to provide thoughtful responses and comments that demonstrate critical thinking and an understanding of constructs and theorems. Each post must include a minimum of 80 words (160 words in total). Examples of original responses can be found on **Brightspace**.

Midterm Exam (25%). The midterm exam covers all assigned readings and PowerPoint materials presented from lectures 1-5. This assessment consists of 60 questions and is formatted as multiple-choice, true or false, matching, as well as fill-in-the-blanks. This exam takes place on **March 1**. The exact time and location will be posted after the term begins. This exam is synchronous and in-person.

Group presentation (25%). At the beginning of the term, students will be randomly assigned to a group and are expected to prepare a PowerPoint style presentation with a companion audio recording. Presentations are based on any topic from the course. Group presentations will be submitted through **Brightspace**. Group sizes and presentation lengths will be determined based on the final enrollment of this course. A presentation rubric will be posted. Presentations are due on **April 3**.

Final Exam (40%). The final exam is **cumulative** and covers all the assigned readings, PowerPoint materials, and the documentary. The final exam consists of 75 questions and is formatted as multiple-choice, true or false, matching, as well as fill-in-the-blanks. The exact date, time, and locations will be posted once the exam schedule is released. This exam is synchronous and in-person.

| Component | Value % |
|--------------------|------------|
| Forum | 10 |
| Midterm Exam | 25 |
| Group Presentation | 25 |
| Final Exam | 40 |
| Total | 100 |

| Lecture | Day | Topic | Assessment |
|---------|--------------|--|---------------------|
| 1 | Jan 16 | A History of Social Media | Forum 1 |
| 2 | Jan 23 | Digital Health Technologies (eHealth) | Forum 2 |
| 3 | Jan 30 | Social Media and Mental Health | Forum 3 |
| 4 | Feb 6 | Social Media and Sexual Health | Forum 4 |
| 5 | Feb 13 | Social Media and Interpersonal Relationships | Forum 5 |
| 6 | Feb 27 | Social Media and Public Health | Forum 6 |
| | Mar 1 | Lectures 1-5 | Midterm Exam |
| 7 | Mar 6 | Social Media and Health Promotion | Forum 7 |
| 8 | Mar 13 | Social Media and Medicine | Forum 8 |
| 9 | Mar 20 | Social Media and Parenting | Forum 9 |
| 10 | Mar 27 | The Social Dilemma | Forum 10 |
| | Apr 3 | Group Presentations | Due Online |
| | TBA | Episodes 1-9 | Final Exam |

Course/University Policies

1. The website for Registrar Services is <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>.

In accordance with policy, the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at his/her official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

2. 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, in the Academic Calendar (westerncalendar.uwo.ca).

Plagiarism

Student work is expected to be original. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and could lead to a zero on the assignment in question, a zero in this course, or your expulsion from the university. You are plagiarizing if you insert a phrase, sentence or paragraph taken directly from another author without acknowledging that the work belongs to him/her. Similarly, you are plagiarizing if you paraphrase or summarize another author's ideas without acknowledging that the ideas belong to someone else. All papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted 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 Western University and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Re-submission of Previously Graded Material

Without the explicit written permission of the instructor, you may not submit any academic work for which credit has been obtained previously, or for which credit

is being sought, in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

Use of Statistical Pattern Recognition on Multiple Choice Exams

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.

3. Use of Electronic Devices

During Exams: Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices during ANY tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations.

During Lectures and Tutorials: Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture and tutorial periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only, and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers, to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in a particular class. **Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of lectures – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.**

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. For those classes in which we use this technology, it is your responsibility to ensure that the device is activated and functional. You must speak with the course instructor immediately, if you have any concerns about whether or not your clicker is malfunctioning.

You must use only your own clicker. For all components of this course in which clicker records are used to compute a portion of the grade:

- The use of somebody else’s clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence;
- The possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offense

4. Academic Considerations and Absences from Lectures and Assessments

Religious Accommodation

When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request (in writing) any necessary academic considerations at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the academic counsellors in their Home Department. Additional information is provided in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Academic Accommodation

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in

an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. Students with ongoing accommodation needs within this course are also encouraged to contact [Accessible Education](#), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by extenuating circumstances that are medical or compassionate in nature. These extenuating circumstances may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. In all cases, students are advised to consult with the academic counsellors in their home units, at their earliest opportunity. Academic counsellors may refer students to [Accessible Education](#) for ongoing academic accommodations.

Most forms of academic consideration require documentation, and this documentation is to be submitted to academic counsellors within five (5) business days of their return to academic responsibilities. Any such documents will be retained in the student's file, and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's [Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy](#). Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic considerations shall be determined by academic counseling, in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic considerations may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Academic considerations shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. (Note – it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill.”).

Whenever possible, students who require academic considerations should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Under no circumstances are students expected to submit rationales for (or documentation of) any absences, to course instructors. Students are, however, required to follow-up with course instructors, in a timely fashion, to identify the ways in which the academic consideration will be implemented.

Examination Conflicts

A student completing tests or examinations with flexible submission times (e.g., where one or more evaluation is a take-home assessment) cannot request alternative arrangements unless a conflict cannot be avoided by rescheduling writing the exam to a different time within the window specified by the instructor. This applies to direct conflicts as well as “heavy load” conflicts (e.g., three exams within a 23-hour period). The student should discuss any concerns about a potential conflict and/or request academic considerations with their academic counselling unit prior to the deadline to drop a course without academic penalty

In the case of online tests and examinations, use of a “Conflict Room,” wherein student can write two proctored exams concurrently, will be interpreted as arrangements for continuous proctoring.

5. **Contingency Plan for an In-Person Class Pivoting to 100% Online Learning**

In the event of a situation that requires this course to pivot to online content delivery, all remaining 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 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

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

6. **Online Proctoring**

Tests and examinations in this course may be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide **personal information** (including some biometric data) and the session will be **recorded**. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western’s Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

7. **Grades**

Where possible assignment objectives and rubrics will be posted on OWL.

Generally, students can expect some form of feedback on their performance in a course before the drop date.

- November 13th, 2023 (for first term half-courses)
- November 30th, 2023 (for full-year courses)
- March 7th, 2024 (for second term half-or full year courses)

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| A+ | 90-100 | <i>One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level</i> |
| A | 80-89 | <i>Superior work that is clearly above average</i> |
| B | 70-79 | <i>Good work, meeting all requirements and eminently satisfactory</i> |
| C | 60-69 | <i>Competent work, meeting requirements</i> |
| D | 50-59 | <i>Fair work, minimally acceptable.</i> |
| F | below 50 | <i>Fail</i> |

Rounding of Grades (for example, bumping a 79 to 80%):

This is a practice some students request. The final grade documented is the grade that you have achieved. There is no rounding to the next grade level, or ‘giving away’ of marks. Please don’t ask me to do this for you; the response will be “please review the course outline where this is presented”.

Appealing a Grade Within this Course

You have the right to appeal any grade within this course. The grounds for a grade appeal may be one or more of: medical or compassionate circumstances, extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control, bias, inaccuracy, or unfairness. All grounds advanced in a request for relief must be supported by a clear and detailed explanation of the reasons for the request together with all supporting documentation.

Appeals generally proceed in this order:

1. Course instructor (informal consultation)
2. Department Chair (submission of written request)
3. The Dean of the Faculty (submission of written request)

In the case of perceived procedural unfairness, steps 2 and 3 are carried out within the Department and Faculty offering the course. In the case of extenuating medical or compassionate circumstances that impact on a grade, steps 2 and 3 are carried out within a student's Home Department and Faculty.

A request for relief against a mark or grade must be initiated with the instructor as soon as possible after the mark is issued. In the event that the instructor is not available to the student, or fails to act, or if the matter is not resolved satisfactorily with the instructor, a written request for relief must be submitted to the Chair of the Department within three weeks of the date that the mark was issued. In the case of a final grade in a course, the written request for relief must be submitted to the Chair of the department by January 31st (for first-term half courses) or June 30th (for second-term half courses or full-year courses)

8. Support Services

Health and Wellness:

Information regarding health and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>.

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

There are various support services around campus and these include, but are not limited to:
Student Development Centre -- <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>
Ombudsperson Office -- <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/>

9. Student Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at Western University, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For more information, visit <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>