First-Year Seminar Fall 2019 Syllabus

Bored and Brilliant:
What Do We Know About the Effects of Smartphones?

JMC:1000:003
Fall 2019
Tuesdays 1:00 to 2:15 pm
E:254 Adler Journalism Building

Instructor: Rachel Young, PhD, MPH
Office: W333 Adler Journalism Building
Drop-in hours: Wednesday 2:00-3:00 pm; Thursday 12:30 pm-2:30 pm; or by appointment
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Course website: icon.uiowa.edu

Course Overview: In 2018 the average Americans spent 1,460 hours on a smartphone, three months’ worth of daylight hours. What does the research say on how all this smartphone use is affecting us? Can we ever learn to detach from devices designed to demand our attention? This First-Year Seminar will explore emerging research to determine what we now know, what we suspect, and what we still need to learn about smartphone use. We'll review and critique the growing body of research on the potential effects of smartphones on anxiety and depression, creativity, empathy, attention, and social interaction. Following the plan set out in the book Bored and Brilliant, each week we'll complete a different task designed to help us think about smartphone use more critically. We'll conduct primary research to understand how college students manage smartphone use. Finally, we'll develop our own personal manifestos about the place we want smartphones to play in our lives and in our culture going forward.

Grades will be based on participation in in-class discussions and a weekly response reflecting on our readings and the Bored and Brilliant challenges. You'll also collaborate with classmates on a primary research project and complete a media use manifesto.

SJMC Learning Outcomes
The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is committed to your academic and professional success. In line with this commitment, we have identified particular learning outcomes for the JMC curriculum. Our course addresses the following outcomes:

- **Media Literacy Learning Goal:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of the basic tenets of media literacy and how media literacy relates to their personal media habits and professional development.

- **Writing and Storytelling Learning Goal:** You will display the ability to access and analyze data, report facts accurately, research and edit information responsibly and in a manner commensurate with professional standards.
Course-Specific Objectives
By the end of this class you will be able to:
- Critique the research on the effects of smartphone use
- Conduct and analyze interview research on media use
- Apply research findings to develop your own beliefs and goals about smartphone use

Expectations

Required Reading, Listening and Viewing
This course has one required book: Bored and Brilliant by Manoush Zomorodi, available at Prairie Lights Bookstore, 15 S. Dubuque St.

In addition, this course will require weekly reading, listening and viewing of relevant examples. All required material will be posted on ICON as a link or pdf. Reading, listening, and reflecting is a primary goal of this course so it’s vital that you complete all assigned media each week.

Technology Policy
It would be too ironic if we spent our seminar on smartphones distracted by our devices. During class we will all put our phones and laptops away unless we’re using them for an in-class assignment.

Late Policy
Writing assignments are due at the start of class indicated. You must be in class to get credit for your writing assignment. No extensions will be given unless you have truly extenuating circumstances. In these cases, you must speak with me before the assignment is due. Writing assignments turned in late without an approved extension will receive a maximum of half credit. Diary entries will never be accepted late, but I will drop your lowest score.

Diversity and Discussion
In this class, we will be discussing current events and contemporary social issues, including potentially sensitive subjects. In this class, we support the open presentation and discussion of viewpoints, even those we don’t like or disagree with, and we will also be respectful of others’ ideas.

Academic Honesty and Misconduct
As a student in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Iowa, you are expected to abide by the College’s Code of Academic Honesty. According to the Code:
Honesty is an essential value of our academic community. You are here to learn, and learning depends upon hard work and academic honesty. Your instructors set high standards and expect you to do your very best, completing your work honestly. Any student who registers for courses in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has, in essence, agreed to the value of learning and thus to the importance of the College’s Code of Academic Honesty. Code offenses include cheating on exams and quizzes, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, willful misrepresentation, and facilitating academic misconduct of others. Academic misconduct is serious, and therefore, has serious consequences, which can impact your future.
Grade Allocation

Attendance: Required
• This is a discussion-based course. As such being there is key. Attendance is required. Every student gets one “grace” absence from class. Each additional unexcused absence will result in an automatic 1/3 letter grade deduction from your course grade. For example, if you miss two classes, the highest grade you can earn is an A- and so on.

Participation: 150 points
• Your participation grade will reflect assessment of your preparedness, cooperation, and contribution. While attendance means “showing up,” participation means completing the assigned readings and tasks on time, cooperation means working well with others, and contribution means adding value to class discussions, activities, and in-class writing.

Weekly Diary, Including Bored and Brilliant Challenges: 350 points
• Each week (except week 1 and week 10) you’ll complete a diary reflecting on the week’s readings and a prompt or challenge we’ve set up for that week, including the weekly challenges described in our textbook (50 points each). Diary entries must be at least 500 words and must reflect critically and thoughtfully on the readings to receive full credit. Entries that fail to do one or both of those will earn 40 points. The diary entries will not be accepted late, but I’ll drop your lowest score.

Interview Research: 200 points
• Our class will work together to conduct interview research on college students’ concerns about smartphone use. Your grade will be based on the interviews you conduct and describe and your contribution to the class analysis of interview findings.

Media Manifesto: 300 points
• Your final project will be a manifesto that states your own position on smartphone use and sets goals for the role of smartphones in your life and the culture going forward. You’ll present your manifesto to your classmates in the final week of class.

Grading Scale (percentages at 0.5 and above will be rounded to the nearest whole number)
A 94% & above, A- 90–93%
B+ 87–89%, B 83–86%, B- 80–82%,
C+ 77–79%, C 73–76%, C- 70–72%
D+ 67–69%, D 63–66% D- 60–62%
F 59% & below
Course Schedule
In addition to the assigned readings from the textbook, each week we will explore relevant cases and examples related to the topic. Additional reading/viewing/listening material will be assigned in advance and posted on ICON. Schedule subject to change.

August 26, Week 1: Course introduction
Introductions
Read (in class) articles on the effects of smartphones

September 2, Week 2: The state of smartphones
Read Introduction and Chapter 2: Digital Overload
Read Akban (on ICON), Here’s how to spot a bad study
Introduce interview assignment

September 9, Week 3: The attention economy
Read Chapter 3: Out of Sight
Watch Harris (on ICON), “Tech company tricks”

September 16, Week 4: The power of images
Read Chapter 4: Making Memories
Read Yang (on ICON), “Instagram and social comparison”

September 23, Week 5: How do apps work?
Read Chapter 5: App Addled and Chapter 7: Reclaiming Wonder
Interview assignment due

September 30, Week 6: Focus and distraction
Read Chapter 8: Wander Away and Chapter 9: You Are Brilliant
Read Suttie (on ICON), “How smartphones are killing conversation”
Introduce Media Manifesto assignment

October 7, Week 7: Manifestos
Read excerpt from You Are Not a Gadget (on ICON)
Read/Watch Odell, “How to do nothing” (on ICON)
Listen to Stitcher podcast featuring Cal Newport (on ICON)

October 14, Week 8: Whose problem is this?
Read Stewart (on ICON), “Josh Hawley’s bill to limit your Twitter use, explained”
Watch the videos in the article from The Week (on ICON)
Read APA (on ICON), “Smartphones = not so smart parenting” (on ICON)

October 21, Week 9: Smartphone effects we can’t see
Read Tufekci, “Think you’re discreet online? Think again” (on ICON)
Listen to Fresh Air podcast (on ICON)

October 28, Week 10:
Media manifesto presentations, wrap up
THE IOWA DOZEN

We learn:
- to write correctly and clearly; to conduct research and gather information responsibly; to edit and evaluate carefully; to use media technologies thoughtfully; to apply statistical concepts appropriately

We value:
- First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups; a diverse global community; creativity and independence; truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity

We explore:
- mass communication theories and concepts; media institutions and practices; the role of media in shaping cultures

University/CLAS Policies

Absences and Attendance
Students are responsible for attending class and for contributing to the learning environment of a course. Students are also responsible for knowing their course absence policies, which will vary by instructor. All absence policies, however, must uphold the UI policy related to student illness, mandatory religious obligations, including Holy Day obligations, unavoidable circumstances, or University authorized activities (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences). Students may use this absence form to aid communication; the instructor will decide if the absence is excused or unexcused (https://clas.uiowa.edu/sites/default/files/ABSENCE%20EXPLANATION%20FORM2019.pdf).

Academic Integrity
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty. Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through the UI email address (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code).

Accommodations for Disabilities
UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student is then responsible for discussing specific accommodations with the instructor. More information is at https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/.

Administrative Home of the Course
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and related policies. Other colleges may have different policies. CLAS policies may be found here: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

Communication and the Required Use of UI Email
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to the UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).
Complaints
Students with a complaint about an academic issue should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the Chair of the department or program offering the course; students may next bring the issue to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. For more information, see https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities.

Final Examination Policies
The final exam schedule is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals. Visit https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies.

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom
UI is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (diversity.uiowa.edu).

Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, please see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.
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