

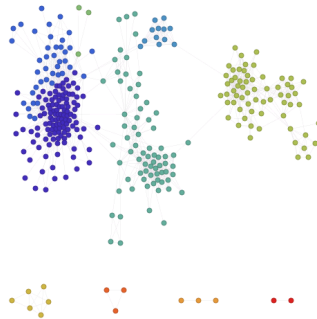
# Social Networks

SOCI-294-001

Loyola University New Orleans

Spring 2014

Monroe 157



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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2-3:30, Wednesday 2-5, and by appointment

## Course Description

This class is a forum for the discussion of the significance of social networks in everyday life. Given the rise of online social networks like Facebook and Twitter we are more aware of connections between people and the diffusion of innovations than ever before. However, there remains a tendency to think that societies are just collections of independent individuals. We challenge that assumption and consider to what extent humans are like schools of fish, led by those around us. In the first half of the class we explore various structural properties of networks and consider the value of looking at connections themselves. In the second half of the class we consider how these connections might influence political life, health, crime, inequalities, and other outcomes.

Note: This is not a class in Social Network *Analysis* but students with sufficient mathematical and social statistics background may conduct analysis, using UCInet, as part of their final project. Please consult with me if you are interested in pursuing this option.

## Course Objectives

- Introduce social network theories and the basic conceptual properties of social networks (such as centrality, embeddedness, transitivity and homophily)
- Introduce the ways social scientists measure social networks with special emphasis on the benefits and limitations of these methodological approaches

- Provide an opportunity for compassionate engagement with the world and community engaged learning.

### Student Learning Outcomes

After completing the course you should be able to:

- Understand how to interpret the diagram presented on the first page of this syllabus and comprehend the jargon associated with the study of social networks across disciplines
- Understand how social networks influence every day life and reflect critically on the composition of your own social network
- Use your understanding of social network dynamics to pursue social change

Claim that you are part of a new social network 😊

### Required Texts

1. All readings, as noted below under “Class Schedule”, can be found on Blackboard.

### Recommended Text

1. Although I do not assign any readings from this book an accessible and affordable introductory text for those that are interested is:
  - Kadushin, Charles (2012) *Understanding Social Networks: Theories, Concepts, and Findings* New York: Oxford University Press (ISBN: 0195379470, \$20.11 in Paperback on Amazon)

### Assignments and Assessment

<b>Reading Reflections</b>	<b>30% (6 x 5%)</b>
<b>Midterm Exam (Take Home)</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Service Learning or Final Paper</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Class Participation and Attendance</b>	<b>10%</b>

*Reading Reflections* – to be submitted in class or via email no later one week after the reading(s) you are writing about have been listed in the syllabus and discussed in class. Please choose 6 readings/sets of readings to write short response papers. In these 2-3 page double spaced response papers you should critically reflect on the week’s topic and reading materials. You should avoid simply summarizing the readings. Instead, you can use these papers to raise questions that the readings raised for you, to critique the authors’ methodology or conclusions, or to introduce relevant material on the topic that you discovered in other forums (e.g. a recent article in the *New York Times*). Occasionally (see Week 1-Wolfram Alpha) I will suggest an assignment that is equivalent to a reading response that you may complete as part of the 6. Further guidelines appear on Blackboard.

*Midterm Examination*—Questions will be in the form of short-essays. You will have a choice of several questions. This exam is a take home and you may use all of your books and notes.

### *Major Assignment*

#### *Option 1 (Traditional):*

In this 10 to 12 page (double spaced) research paper I would like you to consider how social networks impact an outcome you are particularly passionate about. This might be a social

problem or injustice such as hunger or a more concrete product like an artist or invention. There are three key questions you should consider:

- How do properties of social networks hinder progress on your issue or concern or prevent your entity from achieving widespread appeal?
- How might social networks, if properly understood, be mobilized to advance your cause (whether that cause is solving a social problem or maximizing the success of a product)?
- What technologies, strategies or policies would you implement to achieve your aims?

In undertaking this assignment it will be necessary to discuss various properties of social networks (e.g. tendency toward homophily, three degrees of influence, six degrees of separation, transitivity, centrality) that might be relevant your case. Further instructions will be provided on a separate handout distributed in class and posted on Blackboard.

#### *Option 2 (Service Learning)*

Substantively, two of the major findings presented in readings covered in this class are:

- Humans tend to form homophilous social relationships
- There are potential tangible benefits to developing bonding social capital

Building on this knowledge this option requires that you establish a network tie to an organization that serves a population that is different from you on at least one socio-demographic dimension (e.g. race or age). In your final report you will discuss how your experience of service suggests how social networks can be used to help or hinder social justice. Further instructions will be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard.

<b>Traditional Option*</b>	<b>Service Learning Option**</b>
Literature Review (5-6pp)-15%	Complete Required 20 Hours-10%
Discussion of Network Solutions (3-4pp)-15%	Supervisor Evaluation-10%
	Final Report (3-4pp)-10%

\*\* The Service Learning website for our class is:

<http://www.loyno.edu/servicelearning/social-networks>

NOTE: You cannot simply hop between the traditional and service learning options for the assignment. By engaging in service learning you are entering a commitment with a community partner. You must fulfill the obligations of your commitment to receive full academic credit.

*Class Participation and Attendance*—The significance of being a respectful and engaged member of our classroom community is reflected in assigning this portion of your final grade to active participation. Attendance will be taken at all sessions. I do not require doctor's notes or documentation for single-class absences but I always appreciate courtesy emails if you are ill or otherwise unable to attend a session. After two absences each absence will result in a 1% deduction in your final grade. Lateness is especially frowned upon and students who are more than 15 minutes late will be considered absent for the purpose of class attendance.

### **Late Assignments**

There will be no late submission of reading reflections as you can choose which weeks/readings you would like to write about. Please avoid waiting until the last weeks of class! The midterm should be treated with the seriousness of any examination and cannot be submitted late. Given that you will have one week to submit the midterm only medical/personal exemptions that account for the whole week will be considered. The final written component of final assignment will be accepted late but the penalty is one third of a letter grade for each 24 hours of lateness after 5pm on the last day of classes.

### **Grading Scale**

A- 95-100	A- 90-95	B+ 85-89	B 80-84	B- 75-79
C+ 70-74	C 65-69	C- 60-65	D 50-59	F <50

### **Plagiarism**

Please refer to the Loyola Code of Conduct found in the Student Handbook for information about the range of consequences for cheating and the unethical use of scholarly sources. In the event that a student in this class is guilty of plagiarism, I will advocate the harshest penalty available under the university's disciplinary process and as a result, failure of the class is likely.

### **Personal Conduct**

Our classroom is an environment inclusive of all genders, races and ethnicities, and sexual orientations. It should also be a safe space to express both "liberal" and "conservative" viewpoints. Conduct that causes any one to feel uncomfortable in any way should be discussed with the instructor and may result in the offending individual's removal from the class. Debate and discussion are encouraged so long as they are undertaken with mutual respect.

### **Accommodations**

If you have a disability and wish to receive accommodations, please contact Sarah Mead Smith, Director of Disability Services at 504-865-2990. If you wish to receive test accommodations (e.g., extended test time), you will need to give the course instructor an official Accommodation Form from Disability Services. The Office of Disability Services is located in Marquette 112.

### **Emergency Procedures**

At times, ordinary university operations are interrupted as a result of tropical storms, hurricanes, or other emergencies that require evacuation or suspension of on-campus activities. To prepare for such emergencies, all students will do the following during the first week of classes:

1. Practice signing on for each course through Blackboard.
2. Provide regular and alternative e-mail address and phone contact information to each instructor.

In the event of an interruption to our course due emergency requiring an evacuation or suspension of campus activities, students will:

3. Pack textbooks, assignments, syllabi and any other needed materials for each course and bring during an evacuation/suspension.
4. Keep up with course work during the evacuation/suspension as specified on course syllabi and on-line Blackboard courses.
5. Complete any reading and/or writing assignments given by professors before emergency began.

Assuming a power source is available....

6. Log on to university Web site within 48 hours of an evacuation/suspension.
7. Monitor the main university site ([www.loyno.edu](http://www.loyno.edu)) for general information.
8. Log on to each course through Blackboard or e-mail within 48 hours of an evacuation/suspension to receive further information regarding contacting course instructors for assignments, etc.
9. Complete Blackboard and/or other online assignments posted by professors (students are required to turn in assignments on time during the evacuation/suspension period and once the university campus has reopened.
10. Contact professors during an evacuation/suspension (or as soon as classes resume on campus) to explain any emergency circumstances that may have prevented them from completing expected work.

Further information about student responsibilities in emergencies is available on the Academic Affairs web site: <http://academicaffairs.loyno.edu/students-emergency-responsibilities>

## **Class Schedule**

### **Week 1- Syllabus Overview/Establishing Network Ties**

Tuesday January 7<sup>th</sup>

**[NOTE: This class is cancelled because I am away at a conference]**

- Please start reading the Simmel selections we will talk about next class
- If you are a Facebook user please go to the website noted below and sign up for a free report. <http://www.wolframalpha.com/facebook/>

We will discuss the findings of these reports (which also produce the network diagram depicted at the top of this syllabus) in class but you may also choose to write a reflection paper addressing the following questions:

- Describe the different clusters of people that make up your network. How do these groups relate to one another?
- How diverse is your social network in terms of things like gender, race, age, and location?

Thursday January 9<sup>th</sup>

- Visit from Dr. Kelly Brotzman, Office of Community Engaged Learning, Teaching and Scholarship
- Simmel, Georg (1922) *The Web of Group Affiliations* (selections on Blackboard)

### **Week 2- THE Social Network vs. “Social Networks” (or, why this is not the Facebook class)**

Tuesday January 14<sup>th</sup>

- Lewis, Kevin et al (2008) “Tastes, Ties, and Time: A New Social Network Dataset Using Facebook.com” *Social Networks* 30(2): 330-342

Thursday January 16<sup>th</sup>

- boyd, danah (2011) “White Flight in Networked Publics? How Race and Class Shaped American Teen Engagement with MySpace and Facebook” in Lisa Nakamura and Peter A. Chow-White (Editors) *Race After the Internet* London: Routledge

Note: For those of you opting for service learning the SERVE Fair is today from 11:30-2 in the Danna Center

### **Week 3- Network Structure, Six Degrees and Small Worlds**

Tuesday January 21<sup>st</sup>

- Bearman, Peter S., James Moody, and Katherine Stovel (2004) “Chains of Affection: The Structure of Adolescent Romantic and Sexual Networks” *American Journal of Sociology* 110(1): 44-91.

Thursday January 23<sup>rd</sup>

- Grannis, Rick (2010) “Six Degrees of “Who Cares?”” *American Journal of Sociology* 115(4): 991-1017

### **Week 4- Network Properties: Centrality**

Tuesday January 28<sup>th</sup>

- Rossman, Gabriel, Nicole Esparza, and Phillip Bonacich (2010) “I’d Like to Thank the Academy, Team Spillovers, and Network Centrality” *American Sociological Review* 75(1): 31-51

Thursday January 30<sup>th</sup>

- Baker, Wayne E. and Robert R. Faulkner (1993) “The Social Organization of Conspiracy: Illegal Networks in the Heavy Electrical Equipment Industry” *American Sociological Review* 58(6): 837-860.

### **Week 5- Network Properties: Weak Ties, Structural Holes, and Network Closure**

Tuesday February 4<sup>th</sup>

- Granovetter, Mark S. (1973) “The Strength of Weak Ties” *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6): 1360-1380.

Thursday February 6<sup>th</sup>

- Burt, Ronald S. (2001) “Structural Holes versus Network Closure as Social Capital” in Lin, Nan, Karen Cook, and Ronald S. Burt (Editors) *Social Capital: Theory and Research* New York: Aldine Transaction

### **Week 6- Homophily**

Tuesday February 11<sup>th</sup>

- McPherson, Miller, Lynn Smith-Lovin and James M. Cook (2001) “Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks” *Annual Review of Sociology* 27:415-444.

Thursday February 13<sup>th</sup>

- Distribution of Midterm (due February 20<sup>th</sup>)

### **Week 7- Peer Effects**

Tuesday February 18<sup>th</sup>

- Sacerdote, Bruce (2001) “Peer Effects with Random Assignment: Results for Dartmouth Roommates” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 116(2): 681-704.

Thursday February 20<sup>th</sup>

- Frank, Kenneth A. et al (2008) “The Social Dynamics of Mathematics Coursetaking in High School” *American Journal of Sociology* 113(6): 1645-1696.

### **Week 8- Diffusion and Social Influence**

Tuesday February 25<sup>th</sup>

- Strang, David and Michael W. Macy (2001) “In Search of Excellence: Fads, Success Stories, and Adaptive Emulation” *American Journal of Sociology* 107(1): 147-82

Thursday February 27<sup>th</sup>

- Baskshy, Eytan et al (2012) “Social Influence in Social Advertising: Evidence from Field Experiments” Proceedings of the 13th ACM Conference on Electronic Commerce (EC '12). ACM, New York, NY, USA, 146-161.
- Salganick, Matthew and Duncan Watts (2008) “Leading the Herd Astray: An Experimental Study of Self-Fulfilling Prophecies in an Artificial Cultural Market” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 74(4): 338-

Note: Service Learners your first time sheers are due to Bobet 113 by 5pm tomorrow (Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>)

### **Week 9- Mardi Gras Break**

**Week 10- Social Capital and Networks**Tuesday March 11<sup>th</sup>

- Coleman, James S. (1988) "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital" *American Journal of Sociology* 94(S): S95-S120.

Thursday March 13<sup>th</sup>

- Selections from Putnam, Robert (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* New York: Simon & Schuster

**Week 11- Social Isolation**Tuesday March 18<sup>th</sup>

- McPherson, Miller, Lynn Smith-Lovin and Matthew E. Brashears (2006) "Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks over Two Decades" *American Sociological Review* 71(3): 353-375.

Thursday March 20<sup>th</sup>

- Fischer, Claude S. (2009) "The 2004 GSS Finding of Shrunken Social Networks: An Artifact?" *American Sociological Review* 74(3): 657-669.
- McPherson, Miller, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and Matthew E. Brashears (2009) "Models and Marginals: Using Survey Evidence to Study Social Networks" *American Sociological Review* 74(3): 670-681.

**Week 12- Social Networks and Politics**Tuesday March 25<sup>th</sup>

- Lim, Chaeyoon (2008) "Social Networks and Political Participation: How Do Networks Matter?" *Social Forces* pp. 961-982.
- Bond, Robert et al (2012) "A 61-Million-Person Experiment in Social Influence and Political Mobilization" *Nature* 489(September): 295-298.

Thursday March 27<sup>th</sup>

- Fowler, James H. (2006) "Connecting the Congress: A Study of Co-Sponsorship Networks" *Political Analysis* 14(2): 456-487.

**Week 13- Social Networks, Crime, and Punishment**Tuesday April 1<sup>st</sup>

- Papachristos, Andrew (2009) "Murder by Structure: Dominance Relations and the Social Structure of Gang Homicide" *American Journal of Sociology* 115(1): 74-128.

Thursday April 3<sup>rd</sup>

- Bailey, Amy Kate and Karen A. Snedker (2011) "Practicing What They Preach? Lynching and Religion in the American South, 1890-1929" *American Journal of Sociology* 117(3): 844-882.



**Week 14- Social Networks and Health**Tuesday April 8<sup>th</sup>

- Kohler, Hans-Peter, Jere R. Behrman, and Susan Watkins (2007) “Social Networks and HIV/AIDS Risk Perceptions” *Demography* 44(1): 1-33.

Thursday April 10<sup>th</sup>

- Liu, Ka-Yuet, Marissa King, and Peter S. Bearman (2010) “Social Influence and the Autism Epidemic” *American Journal of Sociology* 115(5): 1387-1434.

**Week 15- Easter Break****Week 16- Social Networks and Inequality**Tuesday April 22<sup>nd</sup>

- Small, Mario (2009) *Unanticipated Gains: Origins of Network Inequality in Everyday Life* New York: Oxford University Press [Chapters 1 and 3]

Thursday April 24<sup>th</sup>

- Small, Mario (2009) *Unanticipated Gains: Origins of Network Inequality in Everyday Life* New York: Oxford University Press [Chapters 4 and 5]

**Week 17- Wrap Up**Tuesday April 28<sup>th</sup>

- Discussion of Final Projects

Note: Service Learning Time Sheets are due to Bobet 113 by 5pm on April 30<sup>th</sup>.