

**COMM/SOCI 481 – Social Networks
Annenberg School for Communication
University of Pennsylvania**

Spring, 2008

Thu 1:30-4:30 (Room ASC 318)

Prof. Keith Hampton
Email: khampton@asc.upenn.edu
Office Hours : Thursdays 12:00-1:00 (Room ASC 327)

DESCRIPTION

Social network analysis is the study of the patterns of social relations. Network analysis examines how the structure of social relations allocates resources, constrains behavior, and channels social change. It has applications in the study of friendship, communities, social support, Internet use, organizational behavior, mental and physical health, and the diffusion of information. This seminar takes a non-mathematical approach to the study of network theories and methods. It is an introduction to the fundamental concepts of social structure, including: network size, diversity, density, centrality, multiplexity, frequency of contact, tie duration, and tie strength. The course focuses on how network structure is related to everyday life, such as health, access to social support, job attainment, and the spread of information. Particular attention is given to the role of communications media in facilitating interpersonal connectivity (face-to-face, telephone, and new media), and the role of information and communication technologies (i.e. the Internet) in social support. Students will critically examine empirical studies, formulate theories of how networks influence behavior and how behavior influences networks, and test theories through the use of network methods.

REQUIREMENTS

Seminar sessions will involve intensive discussions of assigned readings. Final grades will be based on an evaluation of 10 blog postings on the subject of the weekly course readings (30%), 20 comments on other students' blog postings (10%), four assignments (50%), and class participation (10%). Students are urged to pay close attention to due dates, late assignments will not be accepted.

A major component of the course will involve the development and use of a personal blog. Students will receive access to the necessary blogging software and will be provided with basic instruction on how to maintain a blog. Students are not expected to have prior experience with blogs.

Course readings and participation: Students are expected to have read the week's readings in advance of the course meeting. Class meetings will be in a seminar format and students should be prepared to participate in a discussion based on the topic and readings of the week.

Blog Postings: Students are responsible for submitting short commentaries on 10 of the weeks' readings (300-500 words). Commentaries should focus on all of the readings from each week and should consist of limited summary; focusing on an evaluation of the readings and identifying 2-3 questions for discussion during the class meeting (focus on the papers' key issues, strengths and limitations, and a comparison to previous weeks' readings). Each commentary should be submitted as a post to the student's blog by 8:00am on the Tuesday before the class meeting. To be clear, students should post commentaries to their blog on the Tuesday before the topic is discussed in class.

Blog Comments: Each student is responsible for contributing comments to fellow students' blogs. Comments should be a minimum of 125 words and offer a critique of that week's posting, seek

v. January 14, 2008

clarification, compare or contrast postings, or provide additional evidence or new information (such as a link to a related article, website, etc.). Each student must contribute a minimum of 20 comments, credit will be given for a maximum of two comments each week, students cannot comment on the same blog more than three times over the duration of the course. Comments must be posted by 8:00am on the day of class for posts related to that week's readings.

Assignments: Students are responsible for completing all four of the following assignments. The following are intended as brief outlines of each assignment, detailed instructions will be provided in class and supporting material will be posted to the course blog.

1) The Small World of the University (25%). Handout: January 31, Part 1 due: February 7, Part II in class on March 27, Part III due: April 24. Your goal is to get your folder to the target person through the shortest chain of intermediaries. Following the instructions in the assignment handout, start the chain by passing your folder to someone on the Penn campus that you have had at least several conversations with outside the classroom and who is more likely than you to reach the target person. Each intermediary is instructed to return a postcard describing themselves. Part I (5%): Post a commentary to your blog (500-750 words) addressing the questions and hypotheses outlined in the assignment handout. Part II (5%) (in class): Meet with your small group and compile the results using the group handout. Part III (15%): Post a short paper to your blog (1250-2000 words) discussing the findings of your individual project and the aggregated findings of your group, address the questions and hypotheses you formulated in Part I.

2) Important Matters (5%), Handout: February 7, Due: February 21. Listen to the radio interview featuring Prof. Lynn Smith-Lovin (Duke University) and Prof. Robert Putnam (Harvard University). Write a blog posting (500-750 words) addressing the questions in the assignment handout.

3) Communication Diary (10%), Handout: February 28, Due: March 27. Over the next week, track the interactions you have with people using 'new media' (e.g., mobile phones and the Internet). Addressing the questions in the assignment handout, write a blog posting (1250-1750 words) discussing your findings. Bring the project handout to class, meet with your small group, combine your results using the group handout and make a short 10 minute group presentation explaining your findings.

4) Network Measures (10%), Handout: March 20, Due: April 24. Administer the "important matters" name generator, the "position generator," and short demographic survey to 20 people. Write a blog posting (1250-1700 words) discussing the interview process and your findings.

COURSE MATERIALS

Readings, audio files, and grades will be available from the course Blackboard website:

<https://courseweb.library.upenn.edu/>

Handouts, information on assignments, and other announcements will be available from the course blog:

<http://www.mysocialnetwork.net/blog08/481/>

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (January 17) - Introduction and Organization

Week 2 (January 24) – What is Social Network Analysis? (NOTE: NO CLASS!)

Wellman, Barry. 1999. The Network Community: an Introduction. Pp. 1-48 in *Networks in the Global Village*, edited by Barry Wellman. Boulder: Westview Press.

Freeman, L. C. (2000). See you in the funny papers: Cartoons and social networks. *Connections*, 23(1), 32-42.

Munge, Peter and Noshir Contractor. 2003. *Theories of Communication Networks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (pp 29-45).

Week 3 (January 31) – Small World

Milgram, Stanley. (1967). The Small-World Problem. *Psychology Today* 1:62-67

Gladwell, M. (1999). Six Degrees of Lois Weisberg. *The New Yorker* 74(41): 52-64.

Korte, C., & Milgram, S. (1970). Acquaintance Networks Between Racial Groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 15(2), 101-108.

Kilworth, Peter, Christopher McCarthy, Russell Bernard and Mark House. (2006). The Accuracy of Small World Chains in Social Networks. *Social Networks* 28(1): 85-96.

Watts, Duncan. (2004). The 'New' Science of Networks. *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 243-270.

Week 4 (February 7) – Tie Strength.

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

Burt, Ronald. (1993). The Social Structure of Competition. Pp. 65-103 in *Explorations in Economic Sociology*, edited by Richard Swedberg. New York: Sage.

McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Brashears, M. E. (2006). Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks over Two decades. *American Sociological Review*, 71, 353-375.

Week 5 (February 14) – Community

Bott, Elizabeth. (1955). Urban Families: Conjugal Roles and Social Networks. *Human Relations* 8:345-83

Fischer, Claude. (1982). *To Dwell Among Friends*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [Ch. 1, 7-10]

Wellman, Barry, and Scot Wortley. (1990). Different Strokes From Different Folks: Community Ties and Social Support. *American Journal of Sociology* 96(3):558-88.

Kalmijn, M. (2003). Shared friendship networks and the life course. *Social Networks*, 25, 231-249.

Week 6 (February 21) – Network Size and Homophily.

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

Pearson, M., Steglich, C., & Snijders, T. (2006). Homophily and assimilation among sport-active adolescent substance users. *Connections*, 27(1), 47-63.

Hill, R. A., & Dunbar, R. I. M. (2003). Social Network Size in Humans. *Human Nature*, 14(1), 53-72.

Killworth, Peter, Eugene Johnsen, H Russell Bernard, Gene Ann Shelley, and Christopher McCarthy. 1990. Estimating the Size of Personal Networks. *Social Networks* 12: 289-312.

Week 7 (February 28) – Popularity, Centrality and Prestige

Wasserman, S., & Faust, K. (1994). Chapter 6: Centrality and prestige. In *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications*. Cambridge University Press.

Freeman, Linton. 1979. Centrality in Social Networks: Conceptual Clarification. *Social Networks 1*: 215-39.

Krebs, V. (2002). Uncloaking Terrorist Networks. *First Monday*, 7(4).

Valente, T., Unger, J., & Johnson, A. (2005). Do popular students smoke? The association between popularity and smoking among middle school students. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 37, 323-329.

Week 8 (March 6) – Measurement

Zwijze-Koning, K., & Jong, M. D. T. d. (2005). Auditing Information Structures in Organizations. *Organizational Research methods*, 8(4), 429-453.

Marin, Alexandra & Keith Hampton (2007). Simplifying the Personal Network Name Generator: Alternatives to Traditional Multiple and Single Name Generators. *Field Methods* 19(2), 163-193.

Lin, Nan, Yang-chih Fu, & Ray-May Hsung. (2001). The Position Generator: Measurement Techniques for Investigations of Social Capital. Pp. 57-84 in *Social Capital: Theory and Research*, edited by Nan Lin, Karen Cook, and Ronald Burt. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

van der Gaag, Martin and Tom .A.B. Snijders. (2005). The Resource Generator: Social Capital Quantification with Concrete Items. *Social Networks* 27(1): 1-29.

Week 9 (March 13) – Spring Break (NO CLASS!)

Week 10 (March 20) -- Computer Networks as Social Networks I.

Kronholz , June (2003, February 13). After the Science Fair: Dear World, Please Stop Writing Me: A Girl's E-Mail Experiment Clogs In-Box for Weeks. *The Wall Street Journal*: A1.

Wellman, Barry and Milena Gulia. 1999. Net-Surfers Don't Ride Alone: Virtual Communities as Communities. Pp. 331-366 in *Networks in the Global Village*, edited by Barry Wellman. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Hampton, Keith & Barry Wellman (2003). Neighboring in Netville: How the Internet Supports Community and Social Capital in a Wired Suburb. *City and Community* 2(4), 277-311.

Baym, N., Zhang, Y. B., & Lin, M.-C. (2004). Social Interactions Across Media: Interpersonal Communication on the Internet, Telephone and Face-to-Face. *New Media & Society*, 6(3), 299-318.

Mesch, Gustavo, & Talmud, Ilan. (2007). Similarity and the Quality of Online and Offline Social Relationships Among Adolescents in Israel. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 17(2), 455-466.

Week 11 (March 27) – Small World Assignment Part II (ATTENDANCE MANDATORY!)

Week 12 (April 3) – Computer Networks as Social Networks II.

Marks, Paul (2006, June 9). Pentagon sets its sights on social networking websites. *New Scientist*.
<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg19025556.200>

Ellison, N., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The Benefits of Facebook 'Friends': Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4). <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue4/ellison.html>

Miyata, Kakuko, Boase, Jeffrey., & Wellman, Barry (2008). The Social Effects of Keitai and Personal Computer E-mail in Japan. In *Handbook of Mobile Communication Studies*, edited by James Katz. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hampton, Keith, et al (forthcoming). WiFi and Public Space, a Poor Interface? An Empirical Study of Wireless Internet Use and Sociability.

Wellman, Barry (2001). Physical Place and Cyber Place: The Rise of Personalized Networking. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 25(2), 227-252.

V January 14, 2008

Week 13 (April 10) – Search Process and Information Flow

- Tepperman, Lorne. (1975). Deviance as a Search Process. *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 1 (3): 277-294.
- Rogers, Everett. (2003). Diffusion Networks. Pp. 300-364 in *Diffusion of Innovations*. New York: The Free Press.
- Markus, Lynne (1987). Toward a ‘Critical Mass’ Theory of Interactive Media: Universal Access, Interdependences and Diffusion. *Communication Research* 14(5): 491-511.
- Metcalf, Bob (2006, August 18). Guest Blogger Bob Metcalf’s Law Recurses Down the Long Tail of Social Networks. VCMike’s Blog. Retrieved on January 1, 2007:
<http://vc mike.wordpress.com/2006/08/18/metcalf-social-networks/>

Week 14 (April 17) – Health

- Cohen, S., Brissette, I., Doyle, W. J., & Skoner, D. P. (2000). Social Integration and Health: The Case of the Common Cold. *Journal of Social Structure* 1(3).
- Dickens, C.M., L. McGowen, C. Percival, J. Douglas, B. Tomensen, L. Cotter, A Heagerty, and F.H. Creed. (2004). Lack of Close Confidant, but not Depression, Predicts Further Cardiac Events After Myocardial Infraction. *Heart* 90(5): 518-522.
- Christakis, N.A. & Fowler, J.H. (2007). The Spread of Obesity in a Large Social Network over 32 Years. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 357: 370-379.
- Bearman, P. S., Moody, J., & Stovel, K. (2004). Chains of Affection: The Structure of Adolescent Romantic and Sexual Networks. *American Journal of Sociology*, 110(1), 44-91.

Week 15 (April 24) – Social Inequality

- Fernandez, Roberto and David Harris. (1992). Social Isolation and the Underclass. Pp. 257-293 in *Drugs, Crime, and Social Isolation*, edited by Adele Harrell and George Peterson: The Urban Institute.
- Marsden, Peter, and Jeanne Hurlbert. (1988). Social Resources and Mobility Outcomes. *Social Forces* 66:1038-1059.