School of Informatics and Computing
Indiana University – Bloomington
Department of Information and Library Science

I399/Z518 – Communication in Electronic Environments:
Online Trolling
Fall 2015

Instructor: Madelyn Sanfilippo
Day and Time: Thursdays 1:00-3:45
Location: LI001
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-5:00 and by appointment

Introduction and Purpose:
This course aims to allow students to critically examine a common phenomenon in online environments, with which they are likely familiar: trolling. Students will be introduced to theories about why people engage in online deviant behaviors, how people interpret and respond to these behaviors, and how to effectively manage these behaviors, as well as conceptualizations of trolls and trolling. Inconsistencies in dialogues between scholarly literature, popular media, and various social communities will be debated, as will particular examples of trolling and responses to trolling. Assignments and examinations emphasize critical thinking and are designed to encourage students to form their own opinions on contested behaviors and their impact on society.

Course Objectives:
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
1. Identify and challenge assumptions underlying scholarly, media, and social narratives about online deviant behaviors;
2. Evaluate and interpret what motivations may underlie particular behaviors and what the objectives of particular actions might be; and
3. Develop recommendations for management of online communities.

Assignments:

Grades for this course will be based on a combination of written assignments, presentations, exams, and participation during sessions.

Assignment	Portion of Final Grade	Due Date
Attendance, Participation	25%	Ongoing basis
Case Study 1	5%	October 8, 2015
Case Study 2	5%	December 3, 2015
Midterm	20%	October 13, 2015
Course Paper	20%	December 10, 2015

| Presentation | 5% | December 10, 2015 |
| Final | 20% | December 15, 2015 |

Reading, attendance and participation:
Attendance is very important and will affect grades in this course. Students must notify
the instructor in advance, if they are unable to attend a session. One absence will not
negatively impact a students' final grade, however multiple absences will be noted in
participation grades. Participation will be assessed both in class and online. Students are
expected to submit comments or questions for discussion for all class sessions for which
readings are assigned.

Case studies
Case studies will provide an opportunity for students to analyze specific instances of
trolling. Detailed guidelines will be distributed, along with cases, two weeks prior to due
dates.

Course project
Each student will be expected to focus on a particular trolling behavior in a particular
online community for their course project. During the second week of class, in discussing
various examples of trolling, students will be asked to identify their area of interest for
their final project. One the behavior and context have been selected, students will
consider the following questions: who do people behave this way; how do others within
the community perceive this behavior; what is the impact of this behavior; and how
should the community respond to this behavior. A written paper is due at the end of the
semester, the content of which will be formally presented during one of two sessions the
last week of class. Presentations will be brief (approximately 10 minutes). Additional
details will be provided, including rubrics.

Exams
The purpose of examinations in this class will be to assess student understanding of
theories associated with trolling and online deviance, as well as to provide additional
opportunities for students to apply their understanding to explain particular cases. Exams
will be brief in nature, comprised of both multiple choice questions and short answers in
response to prompts on particular acts of trolling.

Note:
All assignments are due electronically by the start of class on the assigned day. Grades
will be reduced by half a letter grade for each day that an assignment is late.

Honor Code:

"Individual rights are best protected by a collective commitment to mutual respect. We
have a social contract with each other. Without this contract and without these obligations
and responsibilities, personal rights are jeopardized. Our responsibilities and obligations
to one another preserve our individual rights and freedoms and promote our collective

values. For these reasons, this Code was created with an expectation that each student will commit to carrying out the following responsibilities:

1. To be ethical in his or her academic work.
2. To take responsibility for what he or she says and does.
3. To behave in a manner that is respectful of the dignity of others, treating others with civility and understanding.
4. To use University resources and facilities in appropriate ways that respect the rights of other users.

To facilitate meeting these responsibilities, every student is expected to be familiar with the contents of this Code." (The full Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct is available at: http://dsa.indiana.edu/Code/)

Course Schedule & Reading Assignments:

All required readings are available through OnCourse.

Date	Class Topic and Reading Assignments	Due
August 27, 2015	**Week 1: On trolls and trolling (Concepts)** Bergstrom, K. (2011). A troll by any other name: Reading identity on Reddit.com. *Association of Internet Researchers – ir11*, Gothenburg, Sweden: October 21-23, 2010. Hardaker, C. (2010). Trolling in asynchronous computer-mediated communication: From user discussions to academic definitions. *Journal Of Politeness Research-Language Behaviour Culture*, *6*(2), 215-242.	
September 3, 2015	**Week 2: Call me a troll one more time (Behaviors)** Connelly, R. (2012). Rick Perry's Facebook hilariously trolled by women seeking female-problems advice. *Houston Press*, May 20, 2012. Retrieved from http://www.houstonpress.com/news/rick-perry-s-facebook-page-hilariously-trolled-by-women-seeking-female-problems-advice-the-10-best-postings-6754728 Darius Groza. (May 7, 2012). *Troll high-fiving people in Pisa*. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u06wUniQVlk Help feed the troll. http://www.helpfeedthetroll.com/ Karppi, T. (2013). 'Change name to No One. Like people's status' Facebook trolling and managing online personas. *The Fibreculture Journal, 22*(166). SteppedOnLegos. (May 8, 2012). *Troll high-fiving in Pisa*.	

	Retrieved from http://www.reddit.com/r/videos/comments/tdud1/troll_highfiving_in_pisa/ Yapalater, L. (2012). Rick Perry's Facebook gets bombarded with menstruation questions. Retrieved from http://www.buzzfeed.com/lyapalater/rick-perrys-facebook-gets-bombarded-by-menstruati	
September 10, 2015	**Week 3: Who would do such a thing? (Demographics, Gender, Culture)** Danet, B. (2006). "What a wonderful do-krav this!" Language, culture, and gender in an Israeli flame event. Paper presented at the Fifth Annual Conference, Israel Association for Language and Society, Open University, Ra'anana, Israel. Gammon, A. (2014). Over a quarter of Americans have made malicious online comments. *YouGov,* October 20, 2014. https://today.yougov.com/news/2014/10/20/over-quarter-americans-admit-malicious-online-comm/ Herring, S., Job-Sluder, K., Scheckler, R., & Barab, S. (2002). Searching for safety online: Managing "trolling" in a feminist forum. *Information Society*, *18*(5), 371-384. doi:10.1080/01972240290108186 Shaw, F. (2013). Still "Searching for Safety Online": Collective strategies and discursive resistance to trolling and harassment in a feminist network. *The Fibreculture Journal, 22*(157).	
September 17, 2015	**Week 4: A social disease or human nature (Perceptions)** Fichman, P., & Sanfilippo, M. R. (2014). The Bad Boys and Girls of Cyberspace How Gender and Context Impact Perception of and Reaction to Trolling. *Social Science Computer Review*, 0894439314533169. Hollenbaugh, E. E., & Everett, M. K. (2008). The effects of anonymity on self-disclosure in blogs: an application of the online disinhibition effect. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, 18*, 283-302.	
September 24, 2015	**Week 5: Another brick in the wall (Reactions)** Meyer, D. (2014). UK moves toward longer jail terms for trolls. *Gigaom,* March 25, 2014. https://gigaom.com/2014/03/25/uk-	

	moves-towards-longer-jail-terms-for-trolls/ Suler, J., & Phillips, W. L. (1998). The bad boys of cyberspace: Deviant behavior in a multimedia chat community. *CyberPsychology & Behavior, 1*(3): 275-294. West, L. (2015). What happened when I confronted my cruelest troll. *The Guardian,* February 2, 2015. http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/feb/02/what-happened-confronted-cruellest-troll-lindy-west Williams, M. E. (2014). Do trolls belong in jail? *Salon,* May 9, 2014. Retrieved from http://www.salon.com/2014/05/09/do_trolls_belong_in_jail/	
October 1, 2015	**Week 6: "Internet trolls really are horrible people" (Media)** Bishop, J. (2014). Representations of 'trolls' in mass media communication: a review of media-texts and moral panics relating to 'internet trolling'. *International Journal Of Web Based Communities*, *10*(1), 7-24. doi:10.1504/IJWBC.2014.058384 Chen, A. (2014). The troll hunters. *MIT Technology Review.* http://www.technologyreview.com/photoessay/533426/the-troll-hunters/ Keats, D., Coleman, G., Tillman, K., Milner, R. M., Dooling, A., Phillips, W., & Manivannan, V. (2014). The War Against Online Trolls. *The New York Times,* August 19, 2014. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/08/19/the-war-against-online-trolls?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&version=Moth-Visible&module=inside-nyt-region&region=inside-nyt-region&WT.nav=inside-nyt-region	
October 8, 2015	**Week 7: "The Internet … is something truly good, a gift from God" (Impact)** Casti, T. (2014). John Oliver's army of Internet trolls broke a government website. *The Huffington Post,* June 3, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/03/john-oliver-broke-the-fcc-website_n_5439694.html?utm_hp_ref=comedy&ir=Comedy Kirman, B., Lineham, C., and Lawson, S. (2012). Exploring mischief and mayhem in social computing or: how we learned to stop worrying and love the trolls. In *Proceedings of the 2012 ACM annual conference extended abstracts on Human Factors in*	Case Study 1

	Computing Systems Extended Abstracts (CHI EA '12). DOI=10.1145/2212776.2212790 Mangelsdorf, R. (2012). Bullies re-victimizing Amanda Todd's family – police. *Tricity News.* Retrieved from http://www.tricitynews.com/news/174459391.html Viharo, R. (2015). Wikipedia, we have a problem: Collaborative harassment on the worlds largest encyclopedia. http://wikipediawehaveaproblem.com/	
October 15, 2015	**Week 8: Midterm**	Midterm
October 22, 2015	**Week 9: What makes them tick (Motivations)** Milner, R. M. (2013). Hacking the social: Internet memes, identity antagonism, and the logic of lulz. *The Fibreculture Journal, 22*(156). Phillips, W. (2011). LOLing at tragedy: Facebook trolls, memorial pages and resistance to grief online. *First Monday, 16*(12). Shachaf, P., & Hara, N. (2010). Beyond vandalism: Wikipedia trolls. *Journal of Information Science*, *36*(3), 357-370.	
October 29, 2015	**Week 10: Can't tell if trolling or just a Republican/Liberal (Ideology)** Holmes, S. (2013). Politics is serious business: Jacques Ranciere, griefing, and the re-partitioning of the (non)sensical. *The Fibreculture Journal, 22*(160). Memmott, M. (2013). Fired White House aide admits he was Twitter troll. *NPR,* October 23, 2013. http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2013/10/23/240176136/fired-white-house-aide-admits-he-was-twitter-troll @NatSecWonk http://favstar.fm/users/NatSecWonk/recent Schwarz, H. (2015). Rand Paul trolls Hillary Clinton on Valentine's Day. *The Washington Post,* February 14, 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2015/02/14/rand-paul-trolls-hillary-clinton-on-valentines-day/ Suhay, E. (2013). The polarizing effect of incivility in the political blog commentsphere. *American Political Science Association 2013*	

	Annual Meeting Paper.	
November 5, 2015	**Week 11: For the lulz (Humor)** Buckels, E. E., Trapnell, P. D., and Paulhus, D. L. (2014). Trolls just want to have fun. *Personality and Individual Differences,* (In Press). Leaver, T. (2013). Olympic trolls: Mainstream Memes and Digital Discord? *The Fibreculture Journal, 22*(163).	
November 12, 2015	**Week 12: Narcissists, Sadists, & Psychopaths? (Psychology)** Downing, S. (2009). Attitudinal and behavioral pathways of deviance in online gaming. *Deviant Behavior*, *30*(3), 293-320. doi:10.1080/01639620802168833 Schwartz, M. (2008). Malwebolence. *New York Times Magazine*, 24-29. Suler, J. (2004). The online disinhibition effect. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, *7*(3), 321-326.	
November 19, 2015	**Week 13: Enter the trolls (Malevolence; Technological)** Dibbell, J. (1993). A rape in cyberspace. *The Village Voice* (December 21, 1993). Retrieved from http://www.juliandibbell.com/texts/bungle_vv.html Douglas, K. M., McGarty, C., Bliuc, A.-M., & Lala, G. (2005). Understanding cyberhate: Social competition and social creativity in online white supremacist groups. *Social Science Computer Review, 23*(1), 68-76. richies^ghost. (2011). Alt + F4. In *Know Your Meme.* Retrieved from: http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/alt-f4 Roberts, S. (2011). Bodes and technologies in resistance: The Wisconsin union protests, from the ground. *HASTAC: Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory.*	
December 3, 2015	**Week 14: On etiquette (Ethics)** Bruckman, A. (2006). Teaching students to study online communities ethically. *Journal of Information Ethics*, *15*(2), 82-98. Manjoo, F. (2014). Web trolls winning as incivility increases. *New*	Case Study 2

	York Times, August 15, 2014, B1. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/15/technology/web-trolls-winning-as-incivility-increases.html Richardson, K. (2008). Don't feed the trolls: Using blogs to teach civil discourse. *Learning & Leading With Technology*, *35*(7), 12-15. Williams, H. The Lack of Ethical Standards of Online Social Networking.	
December 10, 2015	**Week 15: (Presentations)**	**Course Paper Presentations**
December 15, 2015	**(Exam Week) 16: Exam**	**Final**