SII 300-13: Intimacy in a Virtual World

Contact Information
Room: Lone Mountain 141B
Time 4:35-6:20 pm, T
Instructor: Stephen Pitts, SJ
Office Hours: SII Office Tuesdays 2-4pm and by appointment.
Email: spittssj@usfca.edu

Course Description
What does Jesuit spirituality have to say to the world of the *Social Network*? In our technological age, we relate to one another through a variety of devices and media that St Ignatius could not imagine. Yet his basic insight remains: we ought to see these objects not as evil things to reject but instead as tools we can use to foster our relationships with God and neighbor. In this seminar, we will bring St. Ignatius into dialogue with the sociologist Sherry Turkle, whose recent work "Alone Together" asks whether the present generation "expects more from technology and less from each other." In turn, we hope to come away with a sense of when to pick up the device and when to put it down, what to communicate over text message and what to say face to face.

Required Texts (Available in physical or electronic format)
Sherry Turkle. *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. New York: Basic Books, 2011.
Carrie James. *Disconnected: Youth, New Media, and the Ethics Gap*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014.

Course Requirements
1. Attendance.
2. Response Papers (30%)
3. Class Presentation (20%)
4. Midterm Reflection (20%)
5. Group Project (30%)

Attendance
Students are expected to attend class regularly and to be punctual in arrival. Any absence will result in one-third of a letter grade being deducted from the student's final grade. To avoid the grade penalty, a student must turn in a three-page summary of the readings by the next class. If a personal situation affects a student's ability to participate in class, the student should consult with the professor to make alternate arrangements.

Response Papers (30%)
In preparation for class each week, students will write a 250-word response paper covering: 1) a brief summary of one theme in the reading; 2) a critical response to this theme; 3) three discussion questions around this theme. They will upload this paper to Canvas no later than noon on the day of the class meeting.

Class Presentation (20%)
Every student will take a turn leading class discussion on one of the Turkle chapters. The student will provide either a handout or an electronic presentation with the pertinent themes from the chapter and speak for about ten minutes. Then, the student will guide the seminar discussion for another twenty minutes. These presentations will be graded on how effectively the student presents the themes and elicits class discussion. After the presentation, the student will meet with the professor in his office hours to debrief.

Midterm Reflection (20%)
As a midterm assignment, students will write three pages, describing two themes from the course have affected their own thinking on these issues and highlighting one theme that they would like to continue to investigate as the course progresses. They should email the professor this assignment by midnight on **Sunday, March 29.**

Group Project (30%)
Students will work in groups of four or five students to investigate a particular example of one of the ethical issues posed by James. On the last day of class, they will present on the issue using a variety of sources: a conversation with a peer, a conversation with someone from another generation, a peer-reviewed article that James references, a personal experience, and an article in the popular press. Ultimately, they will take a side and justify their position.

Student Writing
All assignments for the course should be written in standard academic English as described in Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers.* Mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization will affect grading. All students concerned about their writing ability should contact the Writing Center in Cowell Hall, Room 215 (422-6713). Additional inquiries and training regarding study habits may be directed to the Learning Center (422-6715).

In-Class Behavior
Much of the material of this course concerns the theme of presence. The seminar format requires that we be present—to the text, to each other, and ultimately to ourselves—as we engage in the ancient discipline of the communal search for truth. Cell phone use is prohibited during class. In extraordinary circumstances, students may leave class to take phone calls or return text messages. Tablets and laptops may be used for academic purposes only. Disruptive students may be asked to leave the classroom.

Class Schedule (Starred classes require response papers)

1/27   Course Overview; Technology Attitude Survey; Principle and Foundation

Part I: The Robotic Moment, In Solitude New Intimacies
2/3   *Turkel pp. 1-34   Introduction and Chapter 1 (Nearest Neighbors)

2/10   *Turkel pp. 35 - 66   Chapter 2 (Alive Enough)
                                Chapter 3 (True Companions)

2/17   *Turkel pp. 67-102   Chapter 4 (Enchantment)
                                Chapter 5 (Complicities)

2/24   *Turkel pp. 103-150   Chapter 6 (Love's Labor Lost)
                                Chapter 7 (Communion)

Part II: Networked, In Intimacy, New Solitudes
3/3   *Turkel pp. 151-186   Chapter 8 (Always On)
                                Chapter 9 (Growing Up Tethered)

3/10   *Turkel pp. 187-228   Chapter 10 (No Need to Call)
                                Chapter 11 (Reduction and Betrayal)

3/17   USF Spring Break

3/24   No class   *Midsemester Personal Response* due 3/29 by midnight.

3/31   *Turkel pp. 229-264   Chapter 12 (True Confessions)
                                Chapter 13 (Anxiety)

4/7   *Turkel pp. 265-306   Chapter 14 (The Nostalgia of the Young)
                                Conclusion & Epilogue

Part III: Disconnected: Youth, New Media, and the Ethics Gap
4/14   *James pp. 1-46   Introduction; Chapter 1 (Morality, Ethics, Digital Life)
                                Chapter 2 (Privacy)

4/21   *James pp. 47-74   Chapter 3 (Property)
                                Chapter 4 (Participation)

4/28   *James pp. 75-124   Chapter 5 (Correcting the Blind Spots; Reconnecting the
                                Disconnects); Introduce Group Project

5/5   Group Project Work Day.

5/12   Group Project Presentations.