

Empathy and Instagram, Fall 2020

IDS2935: Section 2SA1

Time: Tuesday, periods 5-6 (11:45am-1:40pm), & Thursday, period 6 (12:50-1:40pm)

Location: This course will be taught synchronously online via Canvas

Instructor: Dr. Lisa Athearn (Dr. A)

209 Rolfs Hall (No in-person contact for Fall 2020 scheduled)

Course Canvas: elearning.ufl.edu

Phone: 352-392-6557 (please use email for quickest communication)

YouTube playlist: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLq_Bd341q2Jjsf5q7Bb4iLYNdheW-thC7

loniakathearn@ufl.edu (email or Canvas are the best ways to reach me)

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday & Thursday, period 5 (11:45am-12:35pm) via Zoom

Office Hours Zoom Link: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/95649418707>

Course Description: The ability to feel with another person or culture is a key component to our society. As such, empathy is an essential element to sparking compassion and social growth, both individually and as a nation. We have never before had so many social media tools to help us share our stories with others; however recent studies suggest that empathy seems to be on the decline in the US. This course investigates how we can promote everyday empathy via social media. Several important questions will be posed: What is an empathic response via social media (e.g. can emoji's adequately express empathy?) What role does communication and critical thinking play in the development and expression of empathetic listening via social media? How can we build empathic responses and develop 'best practices' for expressing empathy online? This class examines the complex relationship between humans, communication, technology and empathy. This course is multidisciplinary in nature, drawing from psychology, sociology and communication studies. Students will explore these themes through participatory discussions, observational analysis, self-reflections and evaluation. Students will build concrete skills that will help support and promote empathy within our technological world.

Course Delivery: Tuesday classes will focus on content delivery and discussion, while Thursday classes will consist of case-study discussions and activities. Lectures will cover course content that will be organized each week thematically. Students will be responsible for examining course content and be prepared to engage in discussion and activities. Students are encouraged to fully participate in active learning opportunities and build their communication and critical thinking skills. Students will create arguments, build evidence and articulate their ideas regarding the course content.

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate

orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

This class in the Quest 2 (Q2) Curriculum fills Social and Behavioral Science (S) and Diversity (D) Gen-Ed Requirements

What are the Objectives of Quest 2 (Q2)?

Grounded in the modes of inquiry and analysis characteristic of the social and/or biophysical sciences, Quest 2 courses invite students to address pressing questions facing human society and the planet--questions that outstrip the boundaries of any one discipline and that represent the kind of open-ended, complex issues they will face as critical, creative, and thoughtful adults navigating a complex and interconnected world.

What are the Objectives of Gen Ed Social and Behavioral Science (S) Classes?

Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

What are the Objectives of Gen Ed Diversity (D) Classes?

In Diversity courses, students examine the historical processes and contemporary experiences characterizing social and cultural differences within the United States. Students engage with diversity as a dynamic concept related to human differences and their intersections, such as (but not limited to) race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and (dis)abilities. Students critically analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect the opportunities and constraints across the US population. Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultures and beliefs mediate their own and other people's understandings of themselves and an increasingly diverse U.S. society.

THESE QUEST AND SUBJECT AREA OBJECTIVES WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH:

- Identifying, describing and explaining the cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary dimensions of how a decline in empathetic communication via technology impacts society.
- Critically analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data related to how diversity is portrayed within different social media platforms and how the concept of 'other' is portrayed and emphasized via social media (e.g. how has Facebook Live impacted one's beliefs and ability to empathize about police and race?).

- Connect course content with personal reflection, especially as it relates to their development at UF and beyond.
- Build effective communication skills that help to support ideas and actions.

AT THE END OF THIS COURSE, STUDENTS WILL BE ASSESSED ON Q2, S, D, AND N LEARNING OUTCOMES IN FOUR AREAS: CONTENT, CRITICAL THINKING, COMMUNICATION, AND CONNECTION

1) CONTENT SLOs:

Gen Ed S: Identify, describe, and explain key themes, principles, and terminology; the history, theory and/or methodologies used; and social institutions, structures and processes.

Gen Ed D: Identify, describe, and explain the historical processes and contemporary experiences characterizing diversity as a dynamic concept related to human differences and their intersections, such as (but not limited to) race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disability.

Quest 2: Identify, describe, and explain the cross-disciplinary dimensions of a pressing societal issue or challenge as represented by the social sciences and/or biophysical sciences incorporated into the course.

This Course:

- AT THE END OF THE COURSE, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO... EXPLAIN fundamental concepts related to empathy, communication, cultural dissonance, technology, interpersonal belonging, social media usage, critical thinking and evaluation.
- ACHIEVEMENT OF THIS LEARNING OUTCOME WILL BE ASSESSED THROUGH: several quizzes, discussions, activities, reflections, case-studies and field-research experiential project and presentation.

2) CRITICAL THINKING SLOs:

Gen Ed S: Apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis effectively to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions. Assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

Gen Ed D: Analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect the opportunities and constraints of different groups in the United States. Analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultures and beliefs mediate understandings of an increasingly diverse U.S. society.

Quest 2: Critically analyze quantitative or qualitative data appropriate for informing an approach, policy, or praxis that addresses some dimension of an important societal issue or challenge.

This Course:

- AT THE END OF THE COURSE, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...ANALYZE AND INTERPRET the complex relationship between humans, communication, technology and empathy. SYNTHESIZE course information and activities to develop skills and understanding the issue and present information and actions needed.
- ACHIEVEMENT OF THESE LEARNING OUTCOMES WILL BE ASSESSED THROUGH: individual and group projects as well as class activities.

3) COMMUNICATION SLOs:

Gen Ed S: Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively.

Gen Ed D: N/A

Quest 2: Develop and present, in terms accessible to an educated public, clear and effective responses to proposed approaches, policies, or practices that address important societal issues or challenges.

This Course:

- AT THE END OF THE COURSE, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...DEVELOP AND PRESENT well-thought out ideas, and solutions for real-world problems; EXPLAIN key social scientific data in a variety of formats.
- ACHIEVEMENT OF THESE LEARNING OUTCOMES WILL BE ASSESSED THROUGH: Class discussions and formal presentations.

4) Connection SLOs:

Gen Ed S: N/A

Gen Ed D: N/A

Quest 2: Connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.

This Course:

- AT THE END OF THE COURSE, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...ARTICULATE AND CRITIQUE their own personal beliefs and behaviors related to technology, communication and empathy.
- ACHIEVEMENT OF THESE LEARNING OUTCOMES WILL BE ASSESSED THROUGH: Class discussions and activities.

Required Text:

Ugolik Phillips, K. (2020). *The Future of Feeling: Building Empathy in a Tech-Obsessed World*, (ISBN: 9781542041848) Little A Publishers.

Other Assigned Readings (provided through Canvas):

Davis, M.H. (1980). "A multidimensional approach to individual difference in empathy." *JSAS Catalog of Selected Documents in Psychology*. 10(18).

Gerson, M.W. and L. Neilson. (2014). "The importance of identity development, principled moral reasoning and empathy as predictors of openness to diversity in emerging adults." *Creative Commons*, 4.4, Sage.

Konrath, S. (2013). "The empathy paradox: Increasing disconnection in the age of increasing connection." chapter in *Handbook of Research on Technoself: Identity in a Technological Society*. (ISBN: 9781466622111) IGI Global Publishers. 25 pages.

Kozubal, M and et. al. (2019). "Cyberbystanders: Affective empathy and social norms." *Journal for Basic Research in Psychological Sciences*. 61.2: 120(12).

Vossen, H. and P. Valkenburg. (2016). "Do social media foster or curtail adolescents' empathy? A longitudinal study." *Computers in Human Behavior*, 63: 118-124.

Assigned Video Links (in Canvas):

[Zachary R. Wood. TED Talk \(2018\) "Why it's worth listening to people you disagree with."](#)

[Brene Brown. TED Talk \(2011\) "The power of vulnerability."](#)

[Dylan Marron. TED Talk \(2018\) "Empathy is not endorsement."](#)

[Sam Richards. TED Talk \(2012\) "A radical experiment in empathy."](#)

[Jacquelyn Quinones. TED Talk \(2016\) "Is technology killing our empathy?"](#)

Weekly Course Schedule (T = Tuesday; R = Thursday)

Module 1 (Weeks 1-3): What is Empathy?

Module 2 (Weeks 4-7): The Problem with Empathy

Module 3 (Weeks 8-10): Technology & Empathy

Module 4 (Weeks 11-13): Synthesizing Information, Creating Solutions

Module 5 (Weeks 14-15): Topical Presentations

Module/Week	Topic	Assessment	Assignment
Module 1/Week 1 Tuesday(T), 9/1 Thursday(R), 9/3	T: Introduction to Course & Syllabus R: Lecture & Discussion (Why is Empathy Important)	T: Take Syllabus Quiz Post Introduction Discussion R: AMES Assessment	T: Ugolik: Author's Note & Introduction (pp. xi-17) T: Article: Davis R: TED talk: Wood
Module 1/Week 2 Tuesday(T), 9/8 Thursday(R), 9/10	T: Lecture & Discussion (The Science of Empathy) R: Activity/Discussion		T: Ugolik: Ch. 1 (pp. 19-40) R: TED talk: Brown

Module 1/Week 3 Tuesday(T), 9/15 Thursday(R), 9/17	T: Wrap-up & Meet with Groups 1-3 (preplanning) R: Quiz 1 (Module 1)	R: Quiz 1 (Module 1)	R: Quiz 1 (Module 1)
Module 2/Week 4 Tuesday(T), 9/22 Thursday(R), 9/24	T: Lecture & Discussion (The Problem with Empathy) R: Activity/Meeting (post meet Group 1)	Group 1 (Problem with Empathy, Week 4) Discussion Leading	T: Article: Konrath
Module 2/Week 5 Tuesday(T), 9/29 Thursday(R), 10/1	T: Lecture & Discussion (Empathy & Adolescents) R: Activity/Meeting (post meet Group 2)	Group 2 (Empathy & Adolescents, Week 5) Discussion Leading	T: Ugolik: Ch. 2 (pp. 41-59) T: Article: Vossen T: Article: Gerson
Module 2/Week 6 Tuesday(T), 10/6 Thursday(R), 10/8	T: Lecture & Discussion (Technological Disconnect) R: Activity/Meeting (post meet Group 3)	Group 3 (Technological Disconnect, Week 6) Discussion Leading	T: Ugolik: Ch. 3 (pp.61-82) T: TED talk: Marron
Module 2/Week 7 Tuesday(T), 10/13 Thursday(R), 10/15	T: Wrap-up & Meet Groups 4 & 5 (preplanning) R: Quiz 2 (Module 2)		R: Quiz 2 (Module 2)
Module 3/Week 8 Tuesday(T), 10/20 Thursday(R), 10/22	T: Lecture & Discussion (Technology & Empathy) R: Activity/Meeting (post meet Group 4)	Group 4 (Technology & Empathy, Week 8) Discussion Leading	T: Ugolik: Ch. 4 (pp. 83-97) T: Article: Kozubal T: TED talk: Richards
Module 3/Week 9 Tuesday(T), 10/27 Thursday(R), 10/29	T: Lecture & Discussion (Empathy through Technology)	Group 5 (Empathy through Technology, Week 9) Discussion Leading	T: Ugolik: Ch. 5 & 6 (pp.99-137) T: TED talk: Quinones

	R: Activity/Meeting (post meet Group 5)		
Module 3/Week 10 Tuesday(T), 11/3 Thursday(R), 11/5	T: Lecture & Discussion (The Future of Feeling) R: Quiz 3 (Module 3)		T: Ugolik: Ch. 7, 8 & Epilogue (pp. 139- 189). R: Quiz 3 (Module 3)
Module 4/Week 11 Tuesday(T), 11/11 Thursday(R), 10/13	T: Veteran's Day-No Class R: Case Study Discussion		R: Case Study Presentation Groups Formed
Module 4/Week 12 Tuesday(T), 11/17 Thursday(R), 11/19	T & R: Synthesizing Information & Creating Solutions		Case Study Groups Planning
Module 4/Week 13 Tuesday(T), 11/24 Thursday(R), 11/26	T: Synthesizing Information & Creating Solutions R: Thanksgiving-No Class		Case Study Groups Planning
Module 5/Week 14 Tuesday(T), 12/1 Thursday(R), 12/3	T & R: Case Study Presentations		Case Study Groups Present
Module 5/Week 15 Tuesday(T), 12/8 Thursday(R), 12/11	T: Case Study Presentations R: Reading Day-No Class		Case Study Groups Present
Finals-Week 16 Wednesday, 12/16	Finals Week	Reflection Essay Due by 2:30 pm on 12/16	Turn in Reflection Essay

Evaluation of Grades:

Requirement	Total Points
Activities	100
Quizzes (3 x 50)	150
Group Discussion Leading	250

Topical Presentations	250
Case Study	250
Total Points	1000

Assessment Descriptions:

Activities: This class emphasizes the ability to integrate class materials into class discussion and assignments. It is imperative that you stay up to date on the assigned readings and ask questions in class discussions (both during class and via discussion posts). We will be engaging in a variety of active learning and class activities throughout the semester. These activities will involve self-reflection and engagement. Each one will have a specific point value, which will be given ahead of time.

Quizzes: There will be a quiz at the end of Modules 1, 2, and 3. You can access quizzes via our course Canvas site. Quizzes will be worth 50 points each, for a quiz total of 150 points.

Group Discussion Leading: You will work with a small group (4-6 people) to select and plan the class discussion for that day. The topic will be based on the readings assigned for that particular class period. Your job is to work with the professor and your team to identify relevant concepts and effective ways to communicate those concepts to the class. You will create a plan to integrate interesting discussion with the class, centered on that day's readings. You will share your plan with the professor in advance to your group discussion date. In addition, you will engage in a debriefing with the professor after your session to examine how your discussion went. Finally, you will individually submit three potential quiz questions to the professor. Dr. A will review these questions and you may even see yours on the quiz at the end of the module. You can work together on these questions, but each group member should submit three unique questions (no repeater among the group). Your group will be evaluated 20% as a team and 80% as an individual. Team evaluation is based on how well you worked together, your presentation/discussion aids and effectiveness of discussion. Individual evaluation is based on your participation in the assignment, including the substance and quality of your deliverables (both prior and during the presentation). A specific rubric for this assignment will be available on Canvas.

Case Study Presentations: You will work in small teams (2-4 people) and give a short (10 minutes) presentation on a particular case that illustrates how social media played a role in shaping people's empathetic response to an event. The event you choose is up to you, I encourage you to pick something that is meaningful and moving to you. Be sure to incorporate relevant up-to-date information and clear understanding of the case (give the class a well-rounded understanding). Visual aids are an important element to effectively communicate your ideas (e.g. screenshots to help illustrate ideas). Your group will be evaluated 20% as a team and 80% as an individual. Team evaluation is based on how well you worked together, your presentation/discussion aids and effectiveness of presentation. Individual evaluation is based on

your participation in the assignment, including the substance and quality of your deliverables (both prior and during the presentation). A specific rubric for this assignment will be available on Canvas.

Reflection Essay: In this personal essay, you will reflect on what you have learned throughout the course and how it has impacted your views about empathetic responses and social media. Your essay will incorporate the relevant concepts discussed in class and provide meaningful insights. Your essay will be graded on substance, structure, focus, accuracy and technical control. A specific grading rubric for the reflection essay will be provided via Canvas. Reflections Essays are due by no later than Wednesday, December 16th and can be submitted via Canvas.

Score	Percent	Grade	Grade Points
943-1000	93.4-100	A	4.00
900-933	90.0-93.3	A-	3.67
867-899	86.7-89.9	B+	3.33
843-866	83.4-86.6	B+	3.00
800-833	80.0-83.3	B-	2.67
767-799	76.6-79.9	C+	2.33
734-766	73.4-76.6	C	2.00
700-733	70.0-73.3	C-	1.67
667-699	66.7-69.9	D+	1.33
634-666	63.4-66.6	D	1.00
600-633	60-63.3	D-	0.67
0-599	0-59.9	E	0.00

A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit. More information on grades and grading policies can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Attendance: Our class is meeting synchronously during our scheduled time (unless otherwise noted). Class attendance is expected. Each unexcused absence will result in a 20 point reduction in the final grade. Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>) and require appropriate documentation. Students are responsible for participating in chat roll call during class meetings.

Participation: This class emphasizes the ability to integrate class materials into class discussion and assignments. It is imperative that you stay up to date on the assigned readings and ask questions in class discussions. Being present in body is not considered a substitute for being here in mind. Consistent and competent participation in class is essential to maintaining an acceptable grade in this course. **Exemplary participation** (90%-100%) includes initiating contributions to class discussions, insightful and constructive contributions, and excellent focus

and listening to others in every class session. **Proficient participation** (80%-90%) includes mostly insightful contributions to class discourse, plus a sharp focus and attentive listening to others for most class sessions. **Developing participation** (70%-80%) includes contributing to classroom discussion at least half of the time, sometimes offering constructive comments with some signs of insight, but a general lack of focus and attention to others. **Unacceptable participation** (<70%) includes a lack of participation, uninformed comments to class discussion, lack of involvement in activities, constant lack of focus (e.g. distracted on phone) and poor listening to others.

Class Demeanor: Students are expected to behave according to the UF student code of conduct in their classes. This means treating their instructors and fellow classmates with respect. To ensure a positive learning environment, students should not: make complaints publicly (in front of other students); attack the instructor verbally, physically, or in written form; or express reactions in the classroom that would bring harm to other students. Failure to meet the UF code of conduct can impact a student's class participation grade or result in referral to the UF judicial office. Signing another student into class also violates the UF code of conduct. Class atmosphere can be made or broken by the approach that students take to the challenges of the course. Students that support others, show good humor in the face of obstacles, show dedication in the face of setbacks, and show grace when others are not doing as well will help to create a positive communication climate.

Zoom Etiquette: One of the best ways we can connect, both as speakers and listeners is through your webcam. So much of the communication process happens non-verbally. Please try to join class meetings with a device that shows your face. If that's not possible, please upload a recent image of you to try and humanize the experience. Make sure your name is displayed and if you like you can put your preferred pronouns after your name. During class time, try to find a location with excellent wifi and make sure it's a place that's not too distracting or noisy. Remember to make sure you are well-lit (i.e. primary light source should be in front of you, not behind you). Avoid sitting with windows behind you, and also avoid tilting the camera up at spinning ceiling fans. Make eye contact when speaking and mute your mic when you are not speaking. Please wear appropriate clothing. Do not lay down in bed. Feel free to choose an appropriate background (or blur your background).

Accommodations: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester in order to allow us to provide the most effective support. Students with any accommodations should arrange a meeting with the instructor during the first week of class (and ideally before the end of drop/add) to discuss how we can work together to meet the students' needs and still adhere to the essential elements/functions of the course in regards to attendance and class participation.

Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals.

Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/> Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/> Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/publicresults/> .

University Honesty Policy: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conducthonor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police

Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.