

SOCI 3102: Social Networks and Social Capital

Department of Sociology
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

2024-25 Term 1

Tuesdays 16:30-18:15
Esther Lee Building 403

Contact Information

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Course Description

Social networks represent one of the most fundamental approaches sociologists have used in "relationally" describing and explaining various human behaviour and group processes. The science of social networks focuses on measuring, modelling, and understanding how people are connected. Social network studies have advanced a structural understanding of our social relationships, accompanied by a set of distinct methodologies (social network analysis) that help illuminate and visualize the connected patterns of social life.

This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to

1. Master the major concepts within the field of social networks, with particular attention to social capital theory;
2. Critically examine the causes and consequences of social networks across a variety of behavioural contexts and academic domains;
3. Achieve minimum literacy and competency in social network analysis.

Assessment and Grading

The grade for the course will be calculated as a weighted average of the following components:

Participation	15%
Online Discussion	15%
Scrapbook	30%
Final Paper	40%

Participation (15%)

- Attendance will be an important grading component. I will highly compensate diligent and active students (i.e., full attendance for lectures and tutorials).
- Class starts promptly on time. Arrivals after attendance check will be counted as lateness.
- Equal weights will be given for participation in tutorials.

Online Discussion (15%)

- We will use Blackboard to share knowledge and views with one another. There will be one or two graded assignments to post a reflection memo and react to others' posts. Schedules and topics TBA.

Scrapbook (30%)

- Scrapbook is a collection of media clippings and commentaries. The goal of this exercise is to take the course concepts out of the classroom and use them to interpret the world around you.
- Specific instructions and assessment criteria will be provided. Due: TBA.

Final Paper (40%)

- The final paper is a team project of two to three students.
- Presentation (10%) + Paper (30%).
- Specific instructions and assessment criteria will be provided.
- Due: **11:59 pm, December 17.**

Grading

GradeDescriptors

- A Excellent: Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
- A- Very Good: Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
- B Good: Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
- C Fair: Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
- D Pass: Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
- F Failure: Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.
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Reading

I recommend these books as primary references for lectures:

Rawlings, Craig M., Jeffrey A. Smith, James Moody, Daniel A. McFarland. 2023. *Network Analysis : Integrating Social Network Theory, Method, and Application with R*. Cambridge University Press. Online accessible via the CUHK library: [link](#)

Light, Ryan and James Moody. 2020. *The Oxford Handbook of Social Networks*. Oxford University Press. Online accessible via the CUHK library: [link](#)

Barabasi, Albert-László. 2018. *Network Science*. Cambridge University Press. Online access: <http://networksciencebook.com/>

Luke, Douglas. 2015. *A User's Guide to Network Analysis in R*. 1st ed. 2015. Cham: Springer International Publishing. Online accessible via the CUHK library: [link](#)

Other useful readings will be uploaded on Blackboard. Required readings, if any, will be announced in class.

Lectures

1	September 3	Course Introduction
2	September 10	Network Structure (1): Social Structure
3	September 17	Network Structure (2): Tie strength
4	September 24	Network Structure (3): Cohesion and Hierarchy
5	October 1	NO CLASS: National Day
6	October 8	Network Structure (4): East Asian Social Networks
7	October 15	Network Effects (1): Social Capital
8	October 22	Network Effects (2): Positional Effects
9	October 29	CONSULTATION WEEK*
10	November 5	Network Effects (3): Social Media
11	November 12	Network Effects (4): Diffusion and Influence
12	November 19	Networks and Culture / Student Presentation
13	November 26	Student Presentation

* The lecture will be replaced by meetings with project teams. Project teams will be asked to register a time to meet the instructor.

Tutorials

You are required to attend tutorials (4 to 5 meetings). Tutorial times will be determined according to the tutor and students' availability. Around the end of the add/drop period, the tutor will distribute a time survey, and students fill out the form.

Academic Honesty

Please keep in mind [the university's policy on academic honesty](#). Plagiarism will not be tolerated in the term paper and assignments. The ideas and language should be your own, and any outside sources must be clearly and properly cited. There are severe consequences if you commit any acts of academic dishonesty. In addition to the [department's policy and guidelines for citations](#), please refer to the [university-level disciplinary guidelines and procedures](#). The Faculty of Social Science has also compiled a [handout](#) to alert students of the importance of academic honesty and the consequences of violating the University's Rules. To this end, the final term paper should be submitted to [VeriGuide](#).