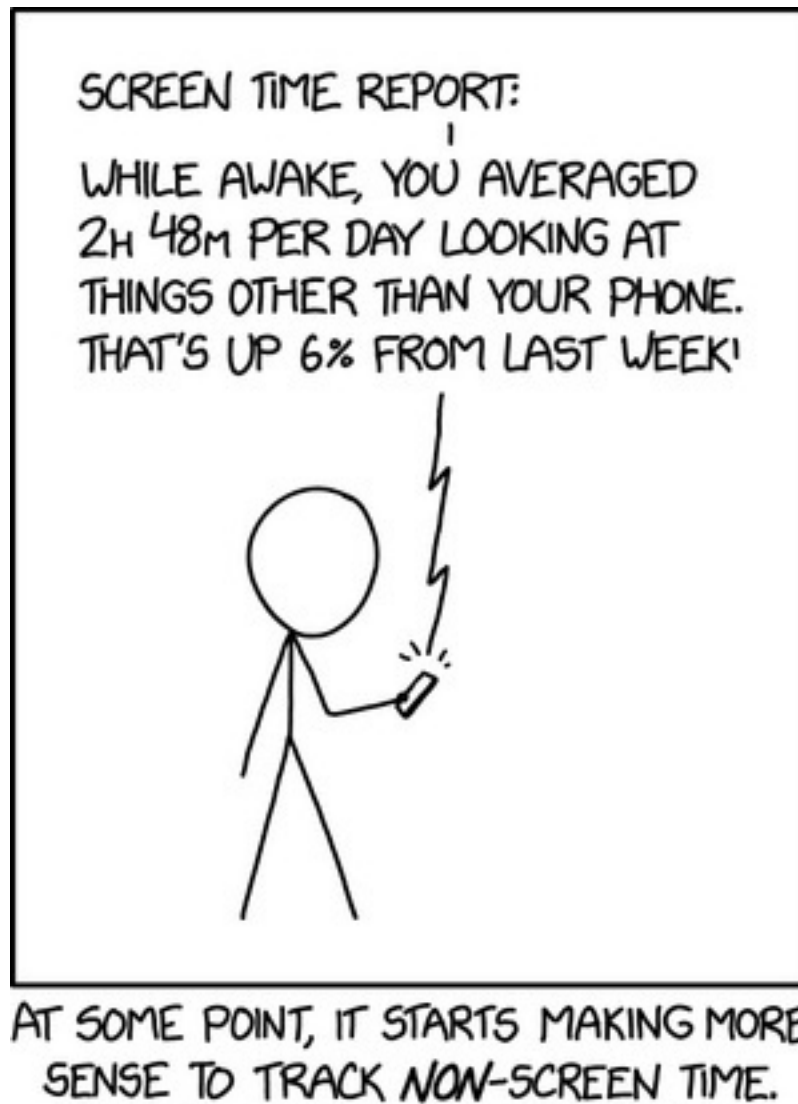


DTEM1402

Digital Cultures



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Digital Cultures

Digital cultures (DC) consist of the cultures situated in and supported by the new digital media platforms and devices.

The major differences between DC and pre-digital culture stem from the affordances and characteristics of the new tools and media techniques, such as interactivity, simultaneousness, multitasking, convergence, and immediacy. These devices and techniques and our adoption have altered how people express cultural identity.



Culture is a complex and challenging concept, and digital, likewise. The culmination of the two gives a problematic theoretical concept that is hard to describe, let alone definitively define. The study of DC explores the consequences and meaning of technical innovations in social media, economics, politics, social life, and more through the observation of the artifacts and rituals connected with digital technologies and new media.



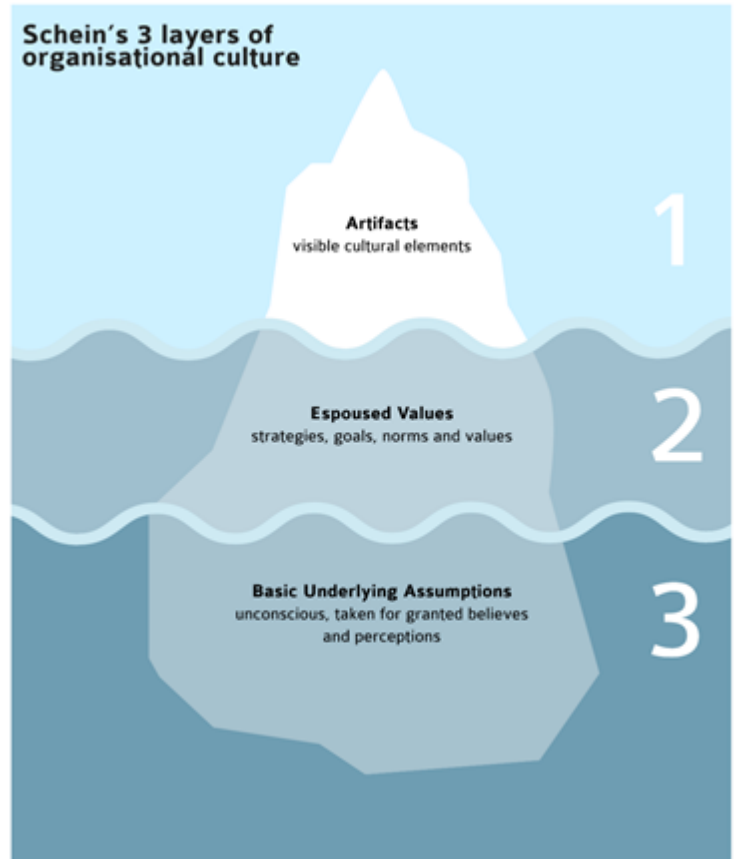
As the digital media landscape is constantly evolving, this course will take a specific interest in understanding the evolution of media technologies and investigate the emergence of older forms of "new" media, from the original internet to big data, from graphical user interfaces to social media

platforms. As we do so, we will focus on how we use digital media and how that use impacts individual identities, connections between people, our knowledge levels, relationships of power, and so on.

Course Objectives

Students will gain an understanding of core concepts of digital content, such as mobility, interactivity, and networking, as well as its technical components and how it impacts communication and information.

- Students will historicize media technologies we consider(ed) “new” media.
- Students will understand and contribute to contemporary debates over changes in identity, sociality, the economy, education, and play associated with the emergence of new media.
- Students will recognize how digital media constantly impacts and/or structures their everyday social interactions, identities, and seemingly mundane or rote behaviors.



We Slack

I like using Slack as a communications platform in my courses. It is faster, more informal, and more fun (?), enabling you to get to know each other and help each other answer questions you may have. So in Digital Cultures, we will use Slack to post questions, share information, and goof off. Indeed we could argue that Slack IS a form of digital culture... (how Meta?!) - if you have any questions, they will be answered quicker on Slack than via email. Make sure you are on the course slack admin and random channels. Have you read the syllabus? Post a picture of one of your shoes on #random (no explanation why)

Dates	Monday	Thursday
8/29		Intro ON ZOOM https://fordham.zoom.us/j/8897318580
9/4 9/5	What is Culture? Paper 1 Prompt: Why do you think Schein places so much importance in things? ARTIFACT EXERCISE	CULTURE EXERCISE Apply Schein to your family dinner. What significant artifacts, values & assumptions are expressed/present?
9/9 9/12	Performing Identity Paper 2	Prompt: What is lost/gained in mediated identity?
9/16 9/19	Digital Culture: Manifesto Paper 3, 4, 5	Prompt: What do the manifestos tell us about our culture? What are the expectations/fears expressed in the manifestos compared with the promise of our devices? (Tip: google the authors...)
9/23 9/26	Influencer Culture Paper 6 Prompt: What kind of labor is an influencer doing?	Fitness Culture Paper 7 Prompt: What culture do trackers create?
9/30 10/3	Alt religions Paper 8 Prompt: Is digital Religion?	Sharing is caring... Paper 9 Prompt: What is the economic culture of technology? Who owns knowledge?
10/7 10/10	Brubaker Introduction	CHAPTER SEMINAR 1 Selves
10/14 10/17	Indigenous Peoples' Day Prompt: Which peoples lived where you live now? Explain one element from their culture.	Algorithm Culture Paper 10 & 11 Prompt Why should we worry about AI friends/companions?
10/21 10/24	Algorithm culture part 2	Activist Culture Paper 12 Prompt: Why tools matter for the activist?
10/28 10/31	CHAPTER SEMINAR 2 Interactions	EXAM
11/4 11/7	Enshittification Paper 13 Prompt: Using an example (not mentioned in the paper) illustrating enshittification	Neo-Luddites & detox culture Paper 14 Prompt: Is anti-techno culture a thing?
11/11 11/14	Surveillance culture Paper 15 Prompt: Is stalking a good thing now?	CHAPTER SEMINAR 3 Culture
11/18 11/21	Play Culture & Gamification Paper 16 Prompt: Is gamification a culture? What are its harms?	TBA
11/25 11/28	CHAPTER SEMINAR 4 Economics	THANKSGIVING
12/2 12/5	CHAPTER SEMINAR 5 Politics	Discussion Brubaker
12/9	The Future of Digital Culture Exercise	

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS	DUE
Artifact	3	
Culture Exercise	10	
Paper prompts x 16	48	Before class
Book Seminar x5	50	Before in class discussion
Exam	50	
Future of Culture	10	
Final Paper	50	
Participation	30	
Total	251	

The final letter grade for the course is a percentage of your total points, A 94 or above A- 90-93, B+ 87-89, B 83-86, B- 80-82, C+ 77-79, C 73-76

How the course works

Each week is a new module that begins on Monday with a mix of lecture and discussion (group and whole class), I expect you to have read the material for the coming week to be able to participate in a discussion. In order to have a discussion I need you to have read and thought about the readings, therefore late

work will not be graded. If you have to miss a class for any reason you must discuss this with me before it happens so that we can work something out.



Artifact: Show & Tell

A "cultural artifact" is any human-made object, practice, or expression that provides insight into the culture of its creators and users, offering information about their history, social structure, technology, and beliefs; essentially, anything that reflects the values and customs of a particular society, whether tangible like a tool or intangible like a tradition.

This exercise aims to bring an artifact (or an image of an artifact) and use it to explain the espoused values and basic underlying assumptions (check out Schein) of a group. Imagine how the artifact may be understood and misunderstood by members and non-members of the culture. Aside from discussing these in class, please submit a 200-word explainer to Blackboard.

1. Pick an artifact that represents a group to which you belong. Preferably not digital technology. It needs to be mostly specific or representative to one group. Think of the artifact as pointing to that group. For example, if you see a dog leash, you probably think of a dog or dog owner. The leash represents how we think about dogs (mostly) and how we adapt our laws and values. I could use it to walk an alligator, but that would be weird (unless it's Florida?)

2. Explain what the artifact can 'teach' us about the culture/group to which it belongs

3. Don't forget to explain how it relates to you.

Culture Exercise



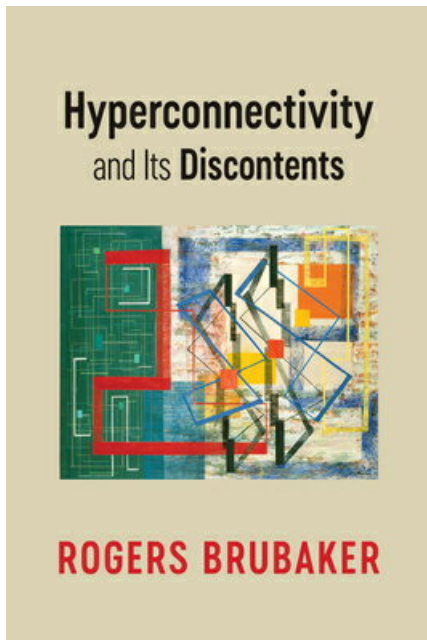
The purpose of this exercise is to begin to understand the recognition and interpretation of culture. For this exercise, you should identify a practice that is common in your culture and explain it to the class. One way of identifying a cultural practice is to imagine that you are explaining why your group (family, team, class, etc.) does something to an intelligent creature from another planet. The point is not to explain something wildly exotic but to demonstrate that something very ordinary (for the group) can be seen as exotic to everyone else. The minimum length of this exercise is 400 words, and should use Schein's 3 levels of culture as an explanatory tool. Therefore you will need to talk about artifacts, expressed values, and underlying assumptions.

Prompts & discussions

Each paper has a prompt attached with it. The purpose is to guide your thinking (but not really control it). The idea is that you will read, think individually, and write a 200 word reflection on the paper. These are due before the class where the prompt is in the syllabus as we will be discussing the papers in class. Remember I am interested in knowing your thoughts so participation is really important (and also graded).

Book Seminar

The course is mostly built on resarch articles other written materials, these are available via Blackboard. However, each semester I like to present a (newer) work that discusses the impacts of technology from one authorial perspective. This semester we will be reading Roger Brubaker *Hyperconnectivity & its Discontents* from 2022.



Think of this exercise as a book club, you will be organized into groups and will be expected to discuss specific sections of the book together before we meet in class.

Things to think about in your group discussion (1) identify the arguments & compare the with the other literature on the topic. (2) What is the author contributing to our understanding. Is it groundbreaking or original? (Why? Why not?) (3) Why would you recommned this book?

Even if nr 1 above may be tricky try to compare the authors arguments with 'established' knowledge (google it, wikipedia it, whats your gut instinct? Use as much text as you need, but at least 400 words.

Exams

What can I say? It's an exam. Some short questions, some long questions. It's me testing to see if you have read, understood and analyzed the materials thus far. I don't like timed exams, and I don't like the pressure these cause. Therefore, the exam will NOT be held in class.

Final Paper: Digital Subculture Analysis

The idea is to conduct a short analysis of an internet subculture. For this exercise, you need to choose any internet (or technologically mediated) subculture and use Schein's The Three Levels of Culture to attempt to analyze and explain it. Therefore, you will give examples of your chosen culture 1. Artifacts, 2. Espoused Beliefs and Values, and 3. Basic Underlying Assumptions. You will also need to explain why you argue this is a subculture as opposed to culture, counterculture, or individuals behaving similarly.

The final paper is an original piece of research. The topic must be within the course's parameters, chosen by the participant, and approved by the instructor. The paper should be double-spaced, 1000 words long, not including footnotes or a bibliography.

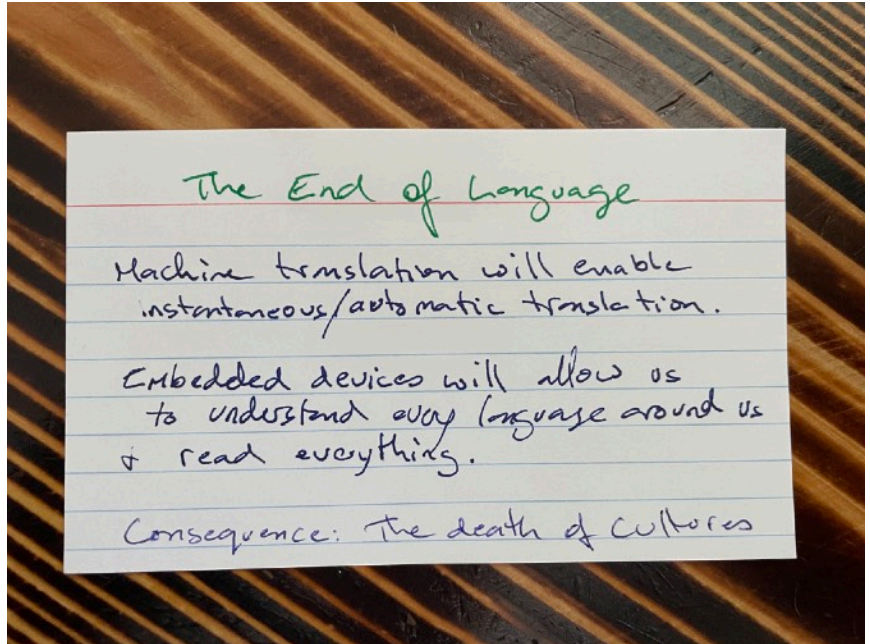
I am looking for your ability to present analytical substance in a structured argument. I want to see you use supporting material in a clear and persuasive manner. I want you to show me that you have thought about the issue you are discussing and can argue in a way that does not confuse assumptions and value judgments with analysis and argument. And I want you to do all this with high-quality of writing.

More information <http://klangable.com/uploads/teaching/FinalPaper.pdf> and thoughts on grading <http://klangable.com/blog/teaching/grading/>



Future of Digital Cultures

Once we reach this point, you will have a grasp of the concepts of culture and a wide array of dives into different aspects of digital cultures. This final exercise is an attempt at predicting the future. Despite the warning from Niels Bohr (Nobel laureate in Physics and father of the atomic model) that "Prediction is very difficult, especially if it's about the future," we shall attempt to gaze into the future of digital culture. Write your prediction in one sentence on an index card and use the rest to explain what you mean and/or provide arguments. End with a consequence the technology will bring (something like my example here). In class, you will be divided into groups, and each group will pick the prediction they think is best and present it to the class.



Writing Aid & Writing Center

Writing is a painful but rewarding process. For help and tips, see <http://klangable.com/blog/teaching/writing-resources/> If you struggle with the writing required in this course, please use the Writing Center. For more information about their services, see www.fordham.edu/academics/programs_at_fordham/english/writing_center

Academic Coaching

Students who struggle with time management and/or organization are invited to one-on-one academic coaching sessions (typically once a week for 45 minutes). Please contact disabilityservices@fordham.edu for more information.

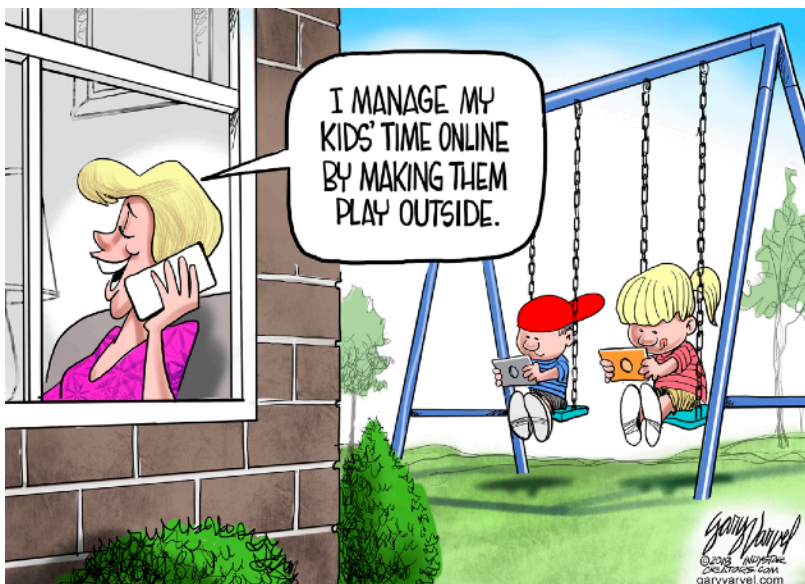
Annoying faculty & other advice

I keep a bunch of resources aimed at helping students navigate the more obscure details of academia. Check out [Annoy the faculty](#), which has surprisingly good advice on how to email your professor. Matt Might has [a great page on college](#), and the Reddit thread on [College Classroom Norms](#) has some gems. I have an unfinished page of [Classroom reflections](#) and [teaching & writing](#) resources, which may help combat insomnia...

Effort

While it may seem odd to include it in a syllabus, your effort is a required component of this course. The federal definition of credit hours assumes a minimum of "two hours of out-of-class student work per Module for a semester

hour." According to this metric, a student should assume at least six hours of out-of-class work per Module for each 3-credit course. Inclusivity



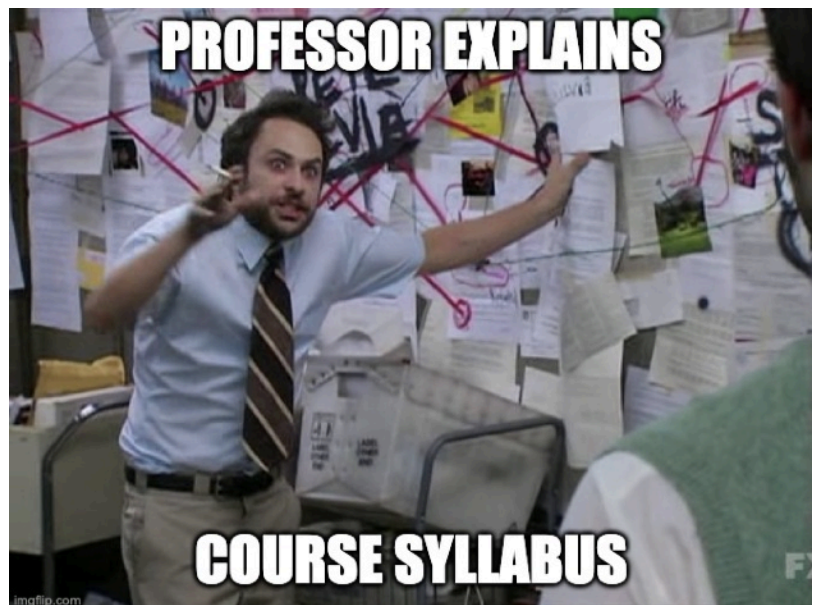
Inclusivity: Every student in this classroom, regardless of personal history or identity categories, is a valued member of this group. Your experiences are valuable and important; you should feel free to share them as they become relevant to our class. No student in this class is expected or believed to speak for all group members.

In this classroom, you have the right to determine your own identity. You have the right to be called by whatever name you wish and for that name to be pronounced correctly. You have the right to be referred to by whatever pronouns you wish. You can adjust those things at any point in your education. If you find that there are aspects of course instruction, subject matter, or classroom environment that result in barriers to your inclusion, please contact me privately without fear of reprisal. For more, see <http://klangable.com/blog/teaching/inclusivity-policy/>

Attendance

Attendance means more than going to class. It requires speaking up in class and group discussions. Attendance-wise, you are allowed to miss TWO classes without a penalty to your grade, exclusive of serious emergencies. **(If you are very ill or have extenuating circumstances, you need to be proactive about contacting me. If you do that, make-up assignments are possible—but they MUST be cleared with me first)**. 3 absences automatically take your final grade down one tier of a grade lower (i.e. from an A- to a B+). 4 absences result in a full letter grade lowering (A- to B-). Fordham’s university-wide policy is that 4 unexcused absences result in a failing grade. It is your responsibility to get readings/ assignments for missed days from other students, and you are encouraged to come to my office to discuss unclear topics.

Please be on time for class and remain for the whole class period. If you are more than 10 minutes late or leave more than 5 minutes early, you will be counted as absent for that class.



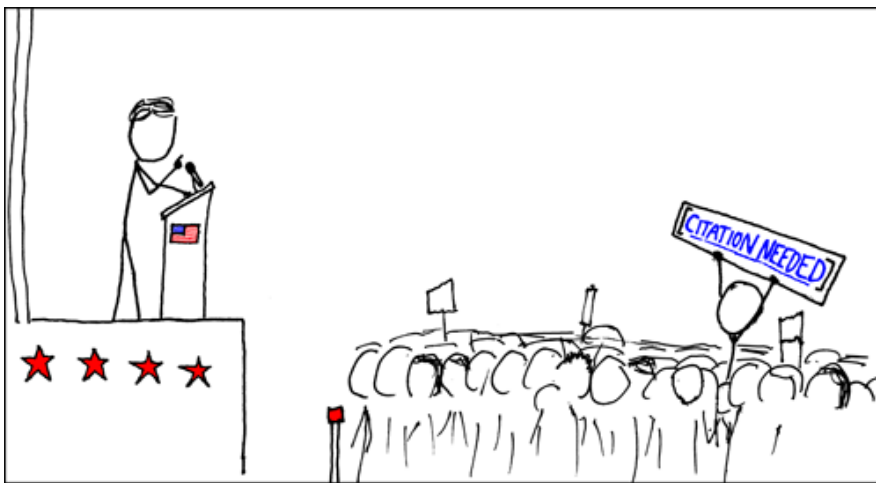
Scheduling

Changes to the syllabus may be made at the instructor’s discretion and if circumstances require. Participants will be notified of changes via Blackboard/ university email. Participants are responsible for keeping up to date with these changes.

University Statement on Academic Integrity

A University, by its nature, strives to foster and recognize the originality of thought. Originality can only be recognized when people acknowledge the sources of ideas or works that are not their own. Therefore, students must maintain the highest standards with regard to honesty, effort, and performance. As a Jesuit, Catholic University, Fordham is committed to ensuring that all members of the academic community strive not only for excellence in scholarship but also for the integrity of character. In the pursuit of knowledge and personal development, it is imperative that students present their own ideas and insights for evaluation,

critique, and eventual reformulation. As part of this process, each student must acknowledge the intellectual



Accommodations

The Office of Disability Services at Fordham University helps ensure equal educational access and opportunity for all community members. In the Jesuit tradition of *cura personalis*, members of the ODS staff work individually with each student to understand his or her strengths and limitations to develop the most effective and comprehensive accommodation plan. Fordham will offer reasonable and appropriate auxiliary aids and services to assist otherwise qualified persons in achieving access to its programs, services, and facilities once students meet with ODS for an initial intake meeting to develop an accommodation plan directly with the student in accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students seeking accommodation(s) should the Rose Hill Office of Disability Services, (718) 817-0655 or email disabilityservices@fordham.edu.

Accommodations continued

If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, please visit the Office of Disability Services, email, or call them. Counseling and Psychological Services University life is full of challenges. Fordham offers support for anyone who feels like they need help dealing with the pressures of life as a student. CPS offers free individual and group counseling and psychotherapy in a safe and confidential setting. For more information about their services see www.fordham.edu/campus_resources/student_services/counseling_and_psych/

me in class taking a picture of the notes that i'll never look at again



Student well-being

Any student who faces difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat everyday, or who lacks a stable place to live is urged to contact your class dean for support. I also urge you to contact me, or our department chair, about these or other hardships you may be going through. Your well-being is of primary importance to us. if you are facing challenges related to your physical or mental health, or obstacles like food or housing insecurity, please do not hesitate to reach out. **We can help.**

