

MEMES AND DIGITAL CULTURE

Dr. Inbar Kaminsky

Fall Semester

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Office Hours: TBD

Short description:

In his 1976 book, *The Selfish Gene*, evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins coined the phrase *meme* as a replicator or a unit of imitation in order to explain how ideas, styles or behaviors spread from one person to the other within a single culture. However, the concept of meme has been reappropriated by the internet in order to define how images with a catchphrase spread virally, leaping from one IP address to another (and from one mind to another) via a process that can generally be referred to as imitation. This course explores the growing significance of Internet memes and their influence on events in the physical world, from viral marketing to presidential elections, despite primarily operating within online spaces of social media. The course also examines the concept of memes from a neuroscientific perspective by exploring the cognitive mechanisms it employs.

Assessment

Midterm: 30%

A paper between 2 and 5 pages long (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 font)

Final requirement: 60%

A paper between 6 and 10 pages long (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 font)

Participation: 10%

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the course.

Academic conduct:

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.