

# WCWP 10A, Winter Quarter 2011: Self and Society

Section 002, 007 MW 11:00 – 12:20, 3:30-4:50

**Instructor:** Gil Hertshen

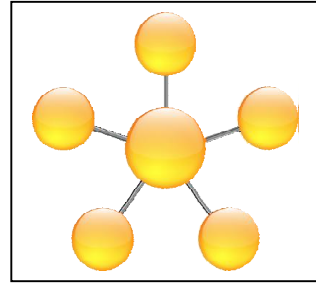
**Classroom:** EBU3B 1113

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## **Required texts**

*Self and Society*, Winter 2011 10A Course Reader

Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.

Christakis and Fowler, *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives* (all available at the UCSD Bookstore)

## **Required materials**

One manila file folder, 8.5" X 11", tabbed on the 11" side

Approximately \$10 to cover printing and photocopying costs

## **Class websites**

Warren College Writing Program: <http://warren.ucsd.edu/academics/warren-writing/index.html>

Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

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## **Course description and objectives**

In their book *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives*, Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler explain how the social networks in which we are embedded affect our lives in profound ways, ways that we may not completely realize or understand. Arguing against the primacy of the “individual,” they argue that we are unconsciously led to do things—lose weight, vote, find happiness—by these vast social networks. While their research offers new ways to address old questions about how social and cultural pressures shape identity and notions of the self, it also intersects with debates about the effects of modern communication technologies. While modern communication technologies were originally touted for allowing easy, quick, inexpensive communication freed from certain limitations of physical space (geographical distance), their effects on our sense of self and our relations with others are clearly far more profound. Over the past decade, the emergence of Web 2.0 and its integration into mobile devices have allowed and encouraged individuals to create and participate in a greater variety and number of social connections with other individuals and groups, while allowing information and media sharing with both friends and strangers alike. Among experts who study the relationship between the individual and society and those who study the effects new technologies have on identity, there is disagreement about answers to even the most fundamental questions. Where does our sense of self come from? How is it shaped by the world around us—our family and school connections, the society in which we live and work and go to school? How do understandings of the self affect social relations, scientific research, and approaches to health and well-being? How do modern communication technologies affect the way we construct a sense of self? For us, the disagreements and even confusion are an opportunity. Because argument is central to sound academic work, scholars are expected to support their conclusions with valid reasons and relevant evidence. Arguments, then, are the real point of this course, and evaluating and responding to them will be the focus of our writing assignments. We will use Anthony Weston’s *A Rulebook for Arguments* to guide our work summarizing, analyzing and writing academic arguments.

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## **Course Policies and Requirements**

**Portfolios:** You must maintain a portfolio (in a manila folder) containing all of the work you do for this class. The instructor will return papers after reading and commenting on them. You are responsible for keeping them in your portfolio. At the end of the quarter, you must submit your portfolio with all of your writing assignments. You must include the copies with the instructor's comments/grades on them. Students may pick up their portfolios after the second week of the following quarter.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. The workshop nature of the course requires participation, and you must attend to participate. No more than two absences are permitted during the quarter. Missing a scheduled conference is considered an absence. Lateness is not accepted, and being more than five minutes late twice is equal to one absence. Text messaging, e-mailing and web surfing during class are not allowed, and violations will count as an absence. Students who are on the waiting list should attend class; if students on the waiting list miss the first day of class, they may be excused for that day only. Any exceptions made to this policy must be reviewed and approved by the assistant director of the writing program.

**Copies for workshops:** On workshop days, it is expected that you come prepared with copies of your assignment to discuss with the class and/or your group. The number of copies needed is described in the course schedule and will be discussed in class. You must come to class on time with the appropriate number of copies for distribution. Failure to do so may result in a late or absent mark.

**Late papers:** No late papers will be accepted, including drafts and revisions, unless you make special arrangements with the instructor. Late papers are subject to grade penalties at the discretion of the instructor.

**Paper format:** Papers must be stapled, typed and double-spaced. Submit assignments in black ink on 8.5" X 11" white paper. Use a non-decorative 12-point font, such as Times New Roman, and use 1" margins. Do not include title pages. Include your name, instructor name, assignment number and date on the first page. Include page numbers on all pages. Use the OWL website or a current MLA style guide for style, grammar, format and citation questions. Include a Works Cited page for each graded assignment (all sources cited must be included).

**Non-sexist language:** Please refer to the non-sexist language suggestions on the Online Writing Lab website. Warren Writing allows use of the singular *they* to resolve the problem of indefinite pronoun references in written and spoken English.

**Students with disabilities:** Students with disabilities are advised to speak with the instructor at the beginning of the quarter to discuss any accommodations necessary to guarantee full participation.

**E-mail:** Please use e-mail for simple, logistical questions or clarifications. Please allow 24 hours for a reply. If you need help understanding the reading or you want your instructor to read a draft, you need to go to office hours.

**Classroom environment:** You're expected to respond respectfully to your classmates and instructor at all times. Please turn off your cell phones to avoid interruptions.

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**Statement of Academic Integrity:** You are expected to do your own work. According to the *UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship* (<http://senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm>), you “are expected to complete the course in compliance with the instructor’s standards” and shall not “engage in any activity that involves attempting to receive a grade by means other than honest effort.” The policy provides examples of prohibited behaviors, but they are examples only. If you have any questions about how to complete this particular course with integrity, please ask the instructor. According to the policy, you are not allowed to do the following: “procure, provide, or accept any unauthorized material that contains questions or answers to any examination or assignment to be given at a subsequent time”; “complete, in part or in total, any examination or assignment for another person”; have any course work “be completed, in part or in total, for” yourself by someone else; “plagiarize or copy the work of another person and submit it as [your] own work”; “employ aids excluded by the instructor in undertaking course work or in completing any exam or assignment”; “alter graded class assignments or examinations and then resubmit them for regrading”; or “submit substantially the same material in more than one course without prior authorization.”

**Turnitin.com:** By enrolling in this Warren College Writing Program course, you agree to submit all of your final graded assignments to the Internet plagiarism detection service called Turnitin.com. Turnitin uses technology to compare your submitted papers against everything available on the Internet and in its database. Every student paper ever submitted to Turnitin is maintained in its database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. Each paper must be submitted in two formats: 1) in electronic format to Turnitin and 2) in hard copy format to the instructor. The paper you submit electronically to Turnitin must be an exact electronic copy of the paper you submit to the course instructor. Failure to do so will result in an F for the course grade. You need to submit only the **final** version of your three graded assignments to Turnitin, not your drafts. For more information on Turnitin, go to Turnitin.com or our website.

## Warren Writing Evaluation Standards

- An “A” essay demonstrates **excellent** work. It has something to say and says it well. It develops its argument clearly and consistently, demonstrating a complex understanding of the assignment, and does so using varied sentence structure. It often rises above other essays with particular instances of creative or analytical sophistication. There may be only minor and/or occasional grammatical errors.

- A “B” essay demonstrates **good** work. It establishes a clear claim and pursues it consistently, demonstrating a good understanding of the assignment. There may be some mechanical difficulties, but not so many as to impair the clear development of the main argument. While a “B” essay is in many ways successful, it lacks the originality and/or sophistication of an “A” essay.

- A “C” essay demonstrates **adequate** work. It establishes an adequate grasp of the assignment and argues a central claim. In addition, the argument may rely on unsupported generalizations or insufficiently developed ideas. It may also contain grammatical errors.

- Work that earns a grade of “D” or “F” is often characterized by the following problems: it fails to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the assignment; it fails to articulate an adequate argument; and/or it contains significant grammatical problems.

## Grading Policy

- Assignments 1E, 2D, and 3E will each receive a letter grade. These grades will be used to determine the final course grade. Assignment 1E is worth 25 percent; assignment 2D is worth 30 percent; and assignment 3E is worth 45 percent.

- To be eligible to receive a grade on each of the graded assignments, a student must complete (on time) all of the preceding assignments. For example, to receive a grade on Assignment 1E, the student must complete Assignments 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D.

## Evaluation of Papers

The following questions will be considered when papers are evaluated and graded. All questions may not be relevant to each assignment.

- Does the paper respond to the various parts of the prompt?
- Does the paper make an argument?
- Is the main claim or main conclusion clear and plausible? Is it stated and contextualized effectively?
- Is there sufficient and relevant evidence to ground the main claim?
- Does the paper effectively select and use material from the course readings to support and validate the analysis? Does it summarize, paraphrase, and quote effectively?
- Does the paper use all relevant details from the readings both to support the claim and to provide a context for the case being made? Does it ignore material that should be taken into account?
- Does the paper demonstrate an awareness of how the argument being proposed fits into the larger set of claims made about the topic in our course readings?
- Does the paper work through the complexities of the material (as opposed to oversimplifying or overgeneralizing)?
- Is the paper well organized?
- Does it cite material from the sources using MLA documentation style?
- Are there sentence structure problems or grammatical errors that interfere with the meaning?

## Writing Assignments

### Assignment #1

**1A.** In your own words, briefly summarize the main conclusions made by Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler in Chapters 1, 2, and 4 of *Connected*. Describe what kinds of evidence they use to support their conclusions. Use Anthony Weston's book to help you, especially Chapters 1 and 2. **2 pages; 1 copy.**

**1B.** Explain the main conclusion reached by Malcolm Gladwell. Then describe how he argues for a policy change based on evidence. What is the problem he identifies? In what context does he describe it? What solutions does he propose? How does he use evidence to support his proposal? Characterize the kinds and range of sources he uses. Use Chapter 4 of Weston's book to help you. **2 pages; 1 copy.**

**1C.** Propose a possible claim for Assignment 1D. As Weston suggests, "Make a definite claim or proposal." Use his explanation of Rule #35 (page 60) to help you. Make sure your claim responds to the prompt. Consider the steps you have to take if you want to make a good case for that claim. **1-2 sentences (e-mail to instructor by 5 p.m. on the day before it is due in class).**

**1D.** In *Connected*, Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler argue that understanding the structure and function of social networks is crucial for understanding individual and collective human behavior. They also stress the importance of considering our psychological and cultural identities for the healthy functioning of social networks and institutions. Think about a policy or program at UCSD that you think would benefit from an understanding of social networks and how they affect individual and collective human behavior. Make an argument that suggests a specific policy or program change. Discuss how an understanding of social networks and their influence on individual and collective identities has implications for the changes you argue for. Use Chapters 7 and 8 of Weston's book to help you. You must refer to a specific policy or program and use *Connected* to make and support your argument. **4-5 pages.**

**1<sup>st</sup> workshop day: 1 copy/2 students make 16 copies.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> workshop day: 3 copies.**

**1E.** Revise Assignment 1D for a grade (25 percent of the final grade). **4-5 pages; 1 copy.**

## Assignment #2

**2A.** Summarize the argument Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler make in Chapter 7 of *Connected*. Explain their main conclusions and how they reach them. Explain what key premises they are arguing for and what key premises they are arguing against. Describe how they support their conclusions. Use Anthony Weston's book to help you, especially Chapters 1 and 2. **2 pages; 1 copy.**

**2B.** Summarize the arguments that Steven Pinker and Leon Eisenberg each make by explaining their main conclusions and how they reach them. Explain what key premises they are arguing for and what key premises they are arguing against. Discuss what you think Pinker might say about Eisenberg's argument. Use Weston's book to help you, especially Chapters 1 and 2. **2-3 pages; 1 copy.**

**2C.** In Chapter 7 of *Connected*, Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler lay out an argument for the premise that "the human brain seems to be built for social networks" (243). They argue that our tendency and ability to form social networks is built into our genes—it is, they explain, "in our nature." At the end of the chapter, they conclude, "Our connections—partly shaped by our genes but also profoundly influenced by our culture and our environment—are made and remade every day. We choose our friends, develop cultural norms about social order, make and obey rules about whom we can date or marry, enforce ideas about reciprocity, and react to events affecting people around us, in part because we are equipped with empathy" (251-2). Think about how they argue for this view. What premises do they use to build their argument? What evidence do they use, and how do they use it?

In his article "Why Nature and Nurture Won't Go Away," Steven Pinker argues that understanding human behavior (and the human brain) is a complex undertaking that will undoubtedly involve complex explanations. He critiques arguments that dismiss the nature-nurture distinction, arguing that they make the same mistake of oversimplification that they accuse their opponents of making. Most of the essay is a critique of various tenets held by holistic interactionists. His critique gives us some insight into how he views arguments that engage with the nature-nurture debate.

How might Pinker assess the argument Christakis and Fowler make in Chapter 7 of *Connected*? How would he assess their main conclusions, supporting premises, and use of evidence? Argue for your view of Pinker's assessment using evidence from both texts to support your argument. While your paper should include a concise summary of each author's position, most of your paper should consist of your own analysis.

**4-5 pages; 1 copy (due at conference).**

**2D.** Revise Assignment 2C for a grade (30 percent of the final grade). **4-5 pages; 1 copy.**

### Assignment #3

**3A.** In one or two sentences and in your own words, summarize the main conclusions made by John Palfrey and Urs Gasser, Craig Watkins, and Naomi Baron. Your summaries should accurately represent the complexities of each of their positions. Describe how they each support their conclusions with evidence. Use Weston's book to help you, especially Chapters 1 and 2. **2-3 pages; 1 copy.**

**3B.** Propose a possible claim for Assignment 3D. As Weston suggests, "Make a definite claim or proposal." Use his explanation of Rule #35 (page 60) to help you. Make sure your claim responds to the prompt. **1-2 sentences (e-mail to instructor by 5 p.m. on the day before it is due in class).**

**3C.** Using Weston's Rule #36 (pages 60-62), summarize and outline your argument. Consider the steps you have to take if you want to make a good case for your proposed claim. Then, provide an explanation of how you will argue for your claim. Explain the reasons you will use to argue for your claim. Think about the terms you need to define. Use Weston's Appendix II on definitions to help you decide what role definitions should play in your argument. **2 pages; 4 copies.**

**3D.** One of the key benefits of modern communication technologies is that they allow individuals a role in shaping their identities. Individuals can pursue their interests, connect with others who share these interests, and do so without the traditional cultural and social barriers that accompany geographical barriers. As a consequence, individuals bear the burden of a more central role in developing responsible, mature behavior.

You have been selected as an orientation leader for UCSD's incoming freshman class. The dean of students has asked you to make a presentation to new students on responsible use of social networking tools. The dean wants your presentation to serve as an example of a strong academic argument that demonstrates an awareness of the complex and elusive nature of social networks and their effects on individual and collective human behavior.

Use Chapters 7 and 8 and Appendix II of Weston's book to help you construct your argument. To make your case, consider the following questions: What are the benefits and potentially negative consequences of using social networking tools? What constitutes "responsible" and "irresponsible" use of mobile and online networking devices? What role does the individual play in developing responsible, mature behavior? Does how we use social networking tools reflect or shape our identity (including our personality, character, values)? Remember to anticipate counterarguments and consider alternatives to your position. You also should work through the complexities of understanding social networks and their effects on the "self." You must use *Connected* and at least three other readings to make and support your case. **5-6 pages.**

**1<sup>st</sup> workshop day: 1 copy/2 students make 16 copies.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> workshop day: 3 copies.**

**3E.** Revise Assignment 3D for a grade (45 percent of the final grade). **5-6 pages; 1 copy.**

## Class Schedule

	Day	Date	Assignment Due	In Class
<b>Week 1</b>	Monday	Jan. 3		Introductions, discuss syllabus, discuss concepts from Weston, Ch. 1 and 2, discuss Klass article
	Wednesday	Jan. 5	<b>Reading:</b> <i>Connected</i> , Ch. 1, 2, 4 <b>Writing:</b> 1A	Discuss <i>Connected</i> Workshop 1A
<b>Week 2</b>	Monday	Jan. 10	<b>Reading:</b> Gladwell; Weston, Ch. 1, 2, 4 <b>Writing:</b> 1B	Discuss Gladwell Discuss Weston Workshop 1B
	Wednesday	Jan. 12	<b>Writing:</b> 1C (e-mail to instructor by 5 p.m. on Jan. 11)	All-class claims workshop
<b>Week 3</b>	Monday	Jan. 17		Martin Luther King Day – No Class
	Wednesday	Jan. 19	<b>Reading:</b> Weston, Ch. 7, 8 <b>Writing:</b> 1D	All-class workshop of 2 1D papers Discuss Weston
<b>Week 4</b>	Monday	Jan. 24	Bring 3 copies of 1D	Small-group workshop of 1D
	Wednesday	Jan. 26	<b>Writing:</b> 1E	View and discuss “The Social Brain”
<b>Week 5</b>	Monday	Jan. 31	<b>Reading:</b> <i>Connected</i> , Ch. 7; Weston, Ch. 3 and Appendix I - II <b>Writing:</b> 2A	Discuss <i>Connected</i> Discuss Weston Workshop 2A
	Wednesday	Feb. 2	<b>Reading:</b> Pinker; Eisenberg <b>Writing:</b> 2B	Discuss Pinker and Eisenberg Introduce Assignment 2C
<b>Week 6</b>	Monday	Feb. 7	<b>Writing:</b> 2C (due at conference)	Conferences: Students will meet individually with instructor to discuss 2C. Attendance is mandatory. Bring your folder with all completed work. No class.
	Wednesday	Feb. 9		Conferences continue—No class
<b>Week 7</b>	Monday	Feb. 14	<b>Reading:</b> Latour; <i>Connected</i> , Ch. 8 <b>Writing:</b> 2D	Discuss Latour and <i>Connected</i> , Ch. 8 Review Weston Introduce Assignment 3
	Wednesday	Feb. 16	<b>Reading:</b> Palfrey and Gasser; Watkins; Baron <b>Writing:</b> 3A	Discuss Palfrey and Gasser, Watkins, Baron Workshop 3A
<b>Week 8</b>	Monday	Feb. 21		Presidents’ Day – No Class
	Wednesday	Feb. 23	<b>Writing:</b> 3B (e-mail to instructor by 5 p.m. on Feb. 22)	All-class claims workshop
<b>Week 9</b>	Monday	Feb. 28	<b>Writing:</b> 3C	Review Weston Small-group workshop of 3C
	Wednesday	Mar. 2	<b>Writing:</b> 3D	All-class workshop of 3D
<b>Week 10</b>	Monday	Mar. 7	Bring 3 copies of 3D	Small-group workshop of 3D
	Wednesday	Mar. 9	<b>Writing:</b> 3E (Bring your complete portfolio with all assignments. Include one copy of each with instructor comments. Print and include e-mailed comments. Label and order assignments.)	Final discussion Course evaluations