

General Education Course Information Sheet

Please submit this sheet for each proposed course

Department & Course Number Sociology 98T
 Course Title Masters of Our Universe: Gatekeepers and Brokers in Our Everyday Lives
 Indicate if Seminar and/or Writing II course Seminar

1 Check the recommended GE foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) for this course

Foundations of the Arts and Humanities

- Literary and Cultural Analysis _____
- Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis _____
- Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice _____

Foundations of Society and Culture

- Historical Analysis X
- Social Analysis X

Foundations of Scientific Inquiry

- Physical Science _____
With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more) _____
- Life Science _____
With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more) _____

2. Briefly describe the rationale for assignment to foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) chosen.

In this class, we will discuss how gatekeeper and brokers (entities that help people efficiently access their desired services and information) facilitate and constrain our everyday behavior. Not only will we learn how to identify who these gatekeeper and brokers are in a wide variety of social realms (e.g., Hollywood, education, and the World Wide Web), but we will also discuss how these gatekeepers and brokers become trusted entities in our daily access of information and resources.

3. List faculty member(s) who will serve as instructor (give academic rank):

Kevin Shih, Teaching Fellow; Rebecca Emigh, Faculty Mentor

Do you intend to use graduate student instructors (TAs) in this course? Yes _____ No X

If yes, please indicate the number of TAs _____

4. Indicate when do you anticipate teaching this course:

2017-2018 Fall Enrollment _____ Winter Enrollment _____ Spring Enrollment X

5. GE Course Units

Is this an **existing** course that has been modified for inclusion in the new GE? Yes ___ No X

If yes, provide a brief explanation of what has changed. _____

Present Number of Units: _____ Proposed Number of Units: 5

6. Please present concise arguments for the GE principles applicable to this course.

❑ General Knowledge	In addition to examining who the gatekeepers and brokers are in a wide variety of social realms and identifying the various benefits these brokers receive, we will also use theories from sociology, education, and management to better understand how gatekeepers and brokers affect people’s everyday social lives.
❑ Integrative Learning	We will discuss a variety of sociological theories that explain why brokers are in beneficial social positions, and how brokers can secure their beneficial position. These theories will inform our understanding of how various gatekeeper and brokers in different empirical contexts come to be.
❑ Ethical Implications	Since brokers can be inherently untrustworthy (like Google and Facebook), a huge focus of this class is to identify how they can be untrustworthy, and how one should combat and address these issues when engaging with these brokers.
❑ Cultural Diversity	In our discussion of brokers online (1/3 of the class), we will discuss how the American context is different from the Chinese context.
❑ Critical Thinking	During the seminar, students will be required to critically assess how the sociological theories on brokerage could be used to understand the brokers and gatekeepers in a variety of empirical contexts.
❑ Rhetorical Effectiveness	Students will be giving presentations on regular basis throughout the quarter. They also have regular written assignments (along with a final paper), in which they will need to successfully engage with the assigned readings and course materials.
❑ Problem-solving	For the final research paper, students are asked to use the theories discussed in class to a social realm of their choosing. They will need to use what they learned to explain how a broker became a trusted utility in their respective social realms.
❑ Library & Information Literacy	For the final research paper, students will be required to search, select, organize and manage information collected from academic sources and the mainstream media.

(A) STUDENT CONTACT PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)

1. Lecture:	<u>1</u>	(hours)
2. Discussion Section:	<u>2</u>	(hours)
3. Labs:	<u>N/A</u>	(hours)
4. Experiential (service learning, internships, other):	<u>N/A</u>	(hours)
5. Field Trips:	<u>N/A</u>	(hours)
(A) TOTAL Student Contact Per Week	3	(HOURS)

(B) OUT-OF-CLASS HOURS PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)

1. General Review & Preparation:	<u>1</u>	(hours)
2. Reading	<u>3</u>	(hours)
3. Group Projects:	<u>1</u>	(hours)
4. Preparation for Quizzes & Exams:	<u>2</u>	(hours)
5. Information Literacy Exercises:	<u> </u>	(hours)
6. Written Assignments:	<u>3</u>	(hours)
7. Research Activity:	<u>3</u>	(hours)
(B) TOTAL Out-of-class time per week	13	(HOURS)
GRAND TOTAL (A) + (B) must equal at least 15 hours/week	16	(HOURS)

Masters of Our Universe: Gatekeepers and Brokers in Our Everyday Lives

Instructor: Kevin J. Shih

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Mailbox: Haines 264

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Last updated: July 1st, 2017

Overview

Why do people do the things they do? How do people do the things they do? These are two very important questions that concern sociologists. In this seminar, I argue that gatekeepers and brokers are two kinds of actors/organizations that have enormous power in not only dictating what we can do in our daily lives, but also how we carry on our everyday behaviors.

Gatekeepers and brokers are actors that efficiently connect people to their desired services and information in everyday life. Not only do gatekeepers and brokers have the power to dictate the content we find in our newspapers and on our televisions, but they also have tremendous power in facilitating our ability to find job opportunities and academic success. The power of gatekeepers and brokers is even more prominent in the context of the 21st century. With the rise of the Internet and other communication technologies, more and more of our access to information and resources is being mediated and constrained by actors that control these technologies, regardless of whether it's just you sending a message to your grandma or if it's you shopping for a new pair of boots.

In this seminar, we will identify gatekeepers and brokers in our lives to better understand how these actors are affecting our daily behavior. In addition to exploring how gatekeepers and brokers affect our behavior in a wide range of social contexts, including education, work, news media, Hollywood, and other entertainment industries, we will discuss the importance of gatekeepers and brokers on the World Wide Web. This seminar will address the following questions:

- What are gatekeepers and brokers? How are these two actors different?
- Who are the gatekeepers and brokers in our everyday lives?
- How do these actors/organizations become gatekeepers and brokers?
- How do these gatekeepers and brokers affect our daily behaviors?
- More specifically, how do gatekeepers and brokers affect our access to information and resources?

The seminar would be divided into three sections:

For the first three weeks, we'll develop a sociological toolkit that would help us better understand the social world around us. We'll explore what sociologists mean by gatekeepers and brokers. In addition to a brief introduction to network analysis (i.e., framing the social world around us into sets of social relationships), we'll abstractly discuss what it means for an actor to be a gatekeeper and/or broker. Furthermore, we'll explore the advantages an actor gets for being a gatekeeper and/or broker, while also discussing possible ways an actor can settle into this advantageous position.

From Week 4 to Week 6, we will examine how this sociological toolkit is operationalized by other sociologists. We will look at various aspects of social life where we encounter gatekeepers and/or brokers. Sociologists have identified the importance of gatekeepers and brokers in education, work, news media, Hollywood and various entertainment industries. By reading these analyses, we will explore the different ways sociologists

have studied and understood the importance of gatekeepers and brokers in these different aspects of social life.

From Week 7 to Week 9, we will turn our attention to the World Wide Web, an aspect of everyday life that is relatively understudied by sociologists (for now). During this last section of the seminar, the assigned readings are mostly from popular press accounts of companies and industries on the World Wide Web. It will be our job as a class to apply the sociological concepts we have previously fleshed out to discuss the gatekeepers and brokers in this digital context. Additionally, we will articulate the advantages these gatekeepers and brokers have, while also exploring how these actors become gatekeepers and brokers. These three weeks will also serve as an opportunity to historically explore how the World Wide Web has evolved to what it is today.

Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand how network analysis could be used to understand social behavior in everyday life.
2. Critically read academic literature, and extrapolate its main arguments.
3. Apply sociological concepts (e.g., gatekeepers and brokers) to understand how certain actors and organizations in positions of power mediate our everyday knowledge and experiences.
4. Develop a historical understanding of how the way we access the World Wide Web has changed over time.
5. Articulate a convincing argument, utilizing evidence from secondary sources.

Requirements & Grading

Active class participation: 10%

To receive full participation credit, students are expected to show up on class on time, read the assigned course materials before each session, and actively participate in class discussion.

In regards to **lateness**: you are allowed to be late (i.e., show up to class after 10 minutes of the starting time) for one discussion section. The second time you are 10 minutes late, you will not receive credit for that week's discussion section.

In regards to **missing class**: you are allowed to miss one class, as long as you email me before the start of the class you are going to miss.

Group reading presentations: 20%

From Week 4 to Week 9, students would be assigned to groups of 2 or 3, and each group would be responsible for giving a presentation of that week's readings.

Reading assignments: 35%

Every week, I will post the discussion questions before discussion section, if you show me at the beginning of class (within the first 10 minutes of discussion section) that you have written notes/answers (with page numbers from the readings) for these discussion questions, you will receive credit for that week's reading assignments. Bonus points would be rewarded if the student is able to apply the sociological concepts we discussed from Week 1 and Week 3 in the memo.

Final research paper and presentation: 35%

Each student is responsible for a final research paper, in which the student will identify a gatekeeper and/or broker that has not been discussed in the class. In this paper, the student needs to discuss how the gatekeeper and/or broker affect the behaviors of the individuals that rely on her service. Furthermore, the student needs to discuss how the actor could have become a gatekeeper and/or broker, and describe the benefits the actor has by acquiring this position.

To receive full credit, the student needs to author a short literature review, in which the student reviews at least five academic papers that speak to the gatekeeper/broker she has identified. The student also needs to utilize evidence from multiple secondary sources (e.g., news media, books) to buttress her arguments. The final research paper should be between 3000 and 3750 words (12-15 pages) and is due on Friday of Week 10. An outline for the paper is due on Week 7. Students are also responsible for a 10-minute presentation of their final paper in Week 10.

More detailed paper instructions would be available at the end of Week 2. For additional help on the final paper, you are encouraged to visit these following resources on campus:

The Student Writing Center

The Student Writing Center offers UCLA Undergraduates one-on-one sessions on their writing. The Center is staffed by peer learning facilitators (PLFs), undergraduates who are trained to help at any stage in the writing process and with writing assignments from across the curriculum. PLFs tailor the appointments to the concerns of each writer. Fifty minute, one-on-one scheduled appointments are offered in-person and online. Shorter, drop-in appointments are also available on a first-come, first-served basis. To schedule an appointment, visit <http://www.wp.ucla.edu>. UCLA's Student Writing Center is located in A61 Humanities. Telephone: 310-206- 1320. Email: wcenter@ucla.edu. Hours: Monday to Thursday, 10 am to 6 pm; Friday, 10 am to 3 pm.

Writing Success Program

Located in the Student Activities Center (SAC), Room 105. Additional writing resources and support is provided on their blog: <http://www.wspucla.wordpress.com>

Late papers

If you turn in your final paper late, without prior permission or an extraordinarily good excuse, you will lose marks: 5 points out of 100 for each day later. I will not accept the final more than 7 days after the due date.

Academic Integrity

As with all UCLA courses, students are expected to maintain UCLA standards of academic integrity. Violations of these standards include cheating and plagiarizing (from books, online materials or another student). Any evidence of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade in the class and a referral to the UCLA Dean of Students. To help you understand what exactly plagiarism entails and how to avoid it please check out the library's guide (<http://guides.library.ucla.edu/citing>). If you have questions about specific assignments please ask me.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you wish to request an accommodation due to a disability, please contact the Center for Accessible Education as soon as possible at A255 Murphy Hall, (310) 825-1501 / TDD: (310) 206-6083. Website: <http://www.cae.ucla.edu/>.

Office Hours & Emails

My office hours are on Tuesdays from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm in Haines A55. I encourage you all to stop by my office hours if you have any questions regarding the course. For those who cannot make it to office hours, appointments can be arranged via email.

If you have any questions, concerns, and/or comments about the class please do not hesitate to email me. I will do my best to respond in a timely fashion to all emails. You can expect a response within *24 hour on weekdays*. If I do not respond *within 48 hours* please email me again. However, I do not check my emails during the weekend. So if you sent me an email on a Saturday, the earliest I can respond to the email would be Monday morning.

Schedule and Readings

Please read the required readings before the date for which they are listed.

Week 1 Introduction: Let's start with music (and an intro to networks)

Easley, David and Jon Kleinberg. 2010. *Networks, Crowds, and Markets: Reasoning About a Highly Connected World*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Kornhaber, Spencer. 2015. "The Golden Age of Online Music Is Over (and Another Is Beginning)." *The Atlantic*.

Week 2 Gatekeepers and Brokers: The who and the what?

Stovel, Katherine and Lynette Shaw. 2012. "Brokerage." *Annual Review of Sociology* 38(1):139–58.

Burt, Ronald S. 2007. *Brokerage and Closure: An Introduction to Social Capital*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 1.

Week 3 Gatekeepers and Brokers: The why and the who cares?

Stovel, Katherine, Benjamin Golub, and Eva M. Meyersson Milgrom. 2011. "Stabilizing Brokerage." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 108:21326–32.

Burt, Ronald S. 2007. *Brokerage and Closure: An Introduction to Social Capital*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 2.

Week 4 Education and Work

Granovetter, Mark. 1995. *Getting a Job: A Study of Contacts and Careers*. 2nd edition. Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press. Select chapters.

Rosenbaum, James E., Shazia Rafiullah Miller, and Melinda Scott Krei. 1996. "Gatekeeping in an Era of More Open Gates: High School Counselors' Views of Their Influence on Students' College Plans." *American Journal of Education* 104(4):257–79.

The College Board. 2016. "Working with Your High School Counselor for College Success." Retrieved February 7, 2016.

Pannoni, Alexandra. 2015. "3 Ways High School Counselors Can Help Students, Parents." *US News & World Report*. Retrieved February 8, 2016.

Week 5 News Media

McCombs, Maxwell and Donald Shaw. 1972. "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36:1766–87.

Clayman, Steven E. and Ann Reisner. 1998. "Gatekeeping in Action: Editorial Conferences and Assessments of Newsworthiness." *American Sociological Review* 63(2):178–99.

Friedersdorf, Conor. 2013. "Why Does the American Media Get Big Stories Wrong?" *The Atlantic*, June 3. Retrieved February 8, 2016.

Week 6 Hollywood and Entertainment

Bielby, W.T. and Bielby, D.D., 1994. "'All Hits Are Flukes': Institutionalized Decision Making and the Rhetoric of Network Prime-Time Program Development." *American Journal of Sociology*, 99(5), pp.1287-1313.

Hirsch, Paul M. 1972. "Processing Fads and Fashions: An Organization-Set Analysis of Cultural Industry Systems." *American Journal of Sociology* 77(4):639–59.

Thompson, Derek. 2013. "The Global Dominance of ESPN." *The Atlantic*, September. Retrieved February 7, 2016.

Week 7 World Wide Web 1: Internet Service Providers

Wu, Tim. 2011. *The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires*. Reprint edition. New York: Vintage. Select chapters.

Cox, Kate. 2014. "Here's What the Lack of Broadband Competition Looks Like on a Map." *Consumerist*. Retrieved February 8, 2016.

Cassidy, John. 2014. "We Need Real Competition, Not a Cable-Internet Monopoly." *The New Yorker*, February 13. Retrieved February 8, 2016.

Goel, Vindu and Mike Isaac. 2016. "Facebook Loses a Battle in India Over Its Free Basics Program." *The New York Times*, February 8. Retrieved February 18, 2016 .

FINAL PAPER OUTLINE DUE

Week 8 World Wide Web 2: Portals, Search, and Social Media

Battelle, John. 2006. *The Search: How Google and Its Rivals Rewrote the Rules of Business and Transformed Our Culture*. Reprint edition. Portfolio. Select chapters.

Auletta, Ken. 2010. *Googled: The End of the World as We Know It*. Penguin Books. Chapter 13.

Meyer, Robinson. 2017. The Rise of Progressive "Fake News." *The Atlantic*. February 3.

Waddell, Kaveh 2016. Why Google Quit China—and Why It's Heading Back. *The Atlantic*.

Week 9 World Wide Web 3: eCommerce

Bender, Andrew. 2015. "Uber's Astounding Rise: Overtaking Taxis In Key Markets." *Forbes*. April 10.

Mishel, Lawrence. 2015. "Uber Is Not the Future of Work." *The Atlantic*, November 16.

Lapowsky, Issie. 2016. "Uber and Airbnb Are Making the World Better—They Promise!" *WIRED*. Retrieved February 18, 2016 .

Anderson, Chris. 2008. *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More*. Revised edition. New York: Hachette Books. Select chapters.

Week 10 Final Presentations

Each student is responsible for a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation on their final papers.

REMINDER: Final Papers due on Friday at 3:00PM in Haines 264



New Course Proposal

Sociology 98T Masters of Our Universe: Gatekeepers and Brokers in Our Everyday Lives

Course Number	Sociology 98T
Title	Masters of Our Universe: Gatekeepers and Brokers in Our Everyday Lives
Short Title	MASTERS OF UNIVERSE
Units	Fixed: 5
Grading Basis	Letter grade only
Instructional Format	Seminar - 3 hours per week
TIE Code	SEMT - Seminar (Topical) [T]
GE Requirement	Yes
Major or Minor Requirement	No
Requisites	Enforced: Satisfaction of entry-level Writing requirement. Freshmen and sophomores preferred.
Course Description	Seminar, three hours. Requisite: satisfaction of Entry-Level Writing requirement. Freshmen/sophomores preferred. Identification of gatekeepers and brokers in our lives to understand how they are affecting our daily behavior. Investigation of role of brokers in variety of social contexts, including education, news, Hollywood, and online. Letter grading.
Justification	Part of the series of seminars offered through the Collegium of University Teaching Fellows
Syllabus	File Shih_Syllabus.pdf was previously uploaded. You may view the file by clicking on the file name.
Supplemental Information	Instructor (Kevin Shih) UID: 003249903 Professor Rebecca Emigh is the faculty mentor for this course.
Grading Structure	Active class participation - 10% Group reading presentations - 20% Reading assignments - 35% Final research paper and presentation - 35%
Effective Date	Spring 2018
Discontinue Date	Summer 1 2018
Instructor	Name: Kevin Shih Title: Teaching Fellow
Quarters Taught	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Winter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spring <input type="checkbox"/> Summer
Department	Sociology
Contact	Name: MICHELLE CHEN E-mail: mchen@oid.ucla.edu
Routing Help	

ROUTING STATUS

Role: Registrar's Office

Status: Processing Completed

Role: Registrar's Publications Office - Livesay, Blake Cary (BLIVESAY@REGISTRAR.UCLA.EDU) - 61590

Status: Added to SRS on 8/31/2017 11:23:25 AM**Changes:** Description**Comments:** Course description edited into official version.**Role:** Registrar's Scheduling Office - Lin, Jessica (JLIN@REGISTRAR.UCLA.EDU) - 58253**Status:** Added to SRS on 8/30/2017 11:18:49 AM**Changes:** Short Title**Comments:** No Comments**Role:** FEC School Coordinator - Kikuchi, Myrna Dee Castillo (MKIKUCHI@COLLEGE.UCLA.EDU) - 45040**Status:** Approved on 8/25/2017 4:17:18 PM**Changes:** No Changes Made**Comments:** Approved by College FEC Chair, Joe Bristow. Routing to Doug Thomson in the Registrar's Office.**Role:** FEC Chair or Designee - Bristow, Joseph E (JBRISTOW@HUMNET.UCLA.EDU) - 54173**Status:** Approved on 8/20/2017 8:07:59 PM**Changes:** No Changes Made**Comments:** No Comments**Role:** FEC Chair or Designee - Kikuchi, Myrna Dee Castillo (MKIKUCHI@COLLEGE.UCLA.EDU) - 45040**Status:** Returned for Additional Info on 8/4/2017 4:41:36 PM**Changes:** No Changes Made**Comments:** Routing to Joe Bristow for FEC approval.**Role:** CUTF Coordinator - Chen, Michelle L. (MCHEN@OID.UCLA.EDU) - 53042**Status:** Approved on 7/14/2017 6:09:12 PM**Changes:** No Changes Made**Comments:** on behalf of Professor Kathleen L. Komar, Chair, CUTF Faculty Advisory Committee**Role:** Initiator/Submitter - Chen, Michelle L. (MCHEN@OID.UCLA.EDU) - 53042**Status:** Submitted on 7/14/2017 5:39:04 PM**Comments:** Initiated a New Course Proposal[Back to Course List](#)

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cims@registrar.ucla.edu or (310) 825-6704