

## A. CANVAS:

Explore the course Canvas site. If you have not already done so:

1. **set up your profile on Canvas.** You only have to do it once, and it applies to all of your courses. Be sure to include a photo, avatar, or other image that will represent you to me.

## B. ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS INTRO:

1. Read Chapter 1 of the text – Networks, Crowds and Markets: Reasoning about a highly connected world by David Easley and Jon Kleinberg. The text is available in the Resources module of the course Canvas site or downloadable online at <http://www.cs.cornell.edu/home/kleinber/networks-book/>
2. Listen to the presentation for this week: Online\_Social\_Networks.mp4
  - a. The associated PPTX file is also posted on Canvas.
3. Check out the Wikipedia site, which has a list with nearly 200 social networking sites: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_social\\_networking\\_websites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites)

## C. DISCUSSION:

1. **Post a discussion comment in the Introductions discussion.** This does NOT count toward this week's regular discussion requirement.
  - a. Introduce yourself briefly -- anything you wish to share.
  - b. Discuss your online social network use.
2. **Post another discussion comment** ( a meaningful response to an existing discussion topic ) **or start a new discussion.** Discussion board participation accounts for 6% of your final course grade. You will receive .5 point for each week with at least 1 meaningful posts (up to 12 weeks and 6 points max), 0 points for each week without.

## D. GOING VIRAL – PART I:

This is about the effects that social media had on the case of Alfie Evans, a little boy from Merseyside England, who had a degenerative brain condition and had been in a semi-vegetative state for more than a year before his doctors decided to withdraw life support. Alfie's parents lost all legal challenges, and the boy had his life support withdrawn on Monday April 23, 2018 and died on April 28. If you are unfamiliar with the case, you can read a summary on Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfie\\_Evans\\_case](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfie_Evans_case)

This was a heartbreaking situation regardless of anyone's personal feelings about the many factors involved in the boy's treatment and the decision to discontinue life support. We are not going to address the pros or cons of how this was handled. This assignment is only

about the social media involvement by so many people around the world, and its effects on the case.

Tasks:

- Read these articles that are provided on the Canvas site.
  - "How Facebook's fake news fix made the Alfie Evans story go viral"
  - "Here's How Facebook Groups Made Alfie Evans the Biggest Story On the Internet"
- **Write a 200-word minimum summary** of the social media involvement in the Alfie Evans case. This should be a factual summary, not your opinions

Facebook decided to tweak its news-feed algorithm:

"The update will prioritize posts that trigger 'conversations and meaningful interactions between people'. But how will this actually change what you see when you scroll down your feed? Essentially, it means you will see more posts from people that Facebook considers to be your friends and family, and less from public pages and publishers." (Wired magazine)

**Answer the following 4 questions briefly** (you may express your opinions here), using complete sentences:

D.1. What do you consider some of the positive effects of the viral social media involvement in the Alfie Evans case?

D.2. What do you consider some of the negative effects of the viral social media involvement in the Alfie Evans case?

D.3. The Facebook news-feed algorithm tweak is being credited (blamed?) for the Alfie Evans case going so viral. Do you think Facebook could have anticipated this effect?

D.4. Do you have any thoughts on how this might have been handled differently? [ no right or wrong answers here, I just want to hear your thoughts ]

## **E. GOING VIRAL – PART II:**

In June 2020, the Trump campaign planned a rally in Tulsa, OK. In the days leading up to the event, the campaign claimed they had received 1 million ticket requests, yet only around 6,200 people showed up at the 19,000 seat arena. There were a lot of stories about the reasons for this disparity. The article provided, "Did TikTokers and K-pop fans foil Trump's Tulsa rally? It's complicated." does a pretty good job of sorting out what may or may not have happened. Regardless of the actual details of the events that shaped that rally day, it was impressive to see young people using social media as such an effective organizing tool. And it will be interesting to see whether there will be more instances like this in the future.

Tasks: Read the article: "Did TikTokers and K-pop fans foil Trump's Tulsa rally? It's complicated." **and answer the 4 questions below:**

E.1. Mary Jo Laupp has been nicknamed the "TikTok Grandma", Describe her role in the TikTok/K-Pop fan response to the Tulsa rally.

The article states:

'As the story spread throughout social media, it became slightly twisted — like a message at the end of a game of telephone. The common refrain shifted from “TikTokers and K-pop fans lead Trump to overestimate his crowd” to “TikTokers and K-pop fans are the reason fewer than 6,200 people showed up to the event.” The former assertion is almost certainly true to some degree, but the latter is not only unlikely but probably false.'

E.2. Explain why the author feels that the first part -- “TikTokers and K-pop fans lead Trump to overestimate his crowd” -- is true to some degree.

E.3. Explain why the author feels that the second part -- “TikTokers and K-pop fans are the reason fewer than 6,200 people showed up to the event.” -- is probably false.

E.4. Describe two other explanations that the author puts forth for why so few of the "expected" attendees showed up.

**Written Assignments:** Written work should be submitted in .pdf or Word format, in a document ***labeled with your last name***, eg: Dugas\_HW3.pdf. You may include legible hand-drawn diagrams in your document, but ***all other text must be typed***.

All written work must use complete sentences and proper grammar. Written work will be screened for plagiarism; plagiarism will result in a zero grade and possible reporting to the administration. Be sure you understand plagiarism and reference citation. Quoted material will not be counted toward word count requirements. If you need help with writing, Stevens has a Writing and Communications Center that – despite its misleading URL – is available for both undergraduate and graduate students: [The WCC site is also reachable through MyStevens] <https://www.stevens.edu/academics/undergraduate-studies/writing-communications-center>.