Instructor: Andrea Stevenson Won, aswon@stanford.edu.

Course Description:
Digital media allows ordinary people to document, publicize and reinvent themselves in ways previously only available to the elite. In the first half of this course, we will examine how Westerners have represented themselves as individuals. We will focus on photography, as indicative of a shift in prevalence of self-representation to the masses. In the second half of the course, we will examine how the ways in which individuals are represented may affect their understanding of themselves. Students will experiment with self-representation in different media, including creating virtual representations (avatars) of themselves to be inhabited in immersive virtual reality in the Virtual Human Interaction Lab. In the process, they will learn how the shared digital world shadows, interprets and sometimes overwrites the physical world and day-to day life.

Class Meetings:
Each meeting will consist of 50% lecture and 50% discussion. Class participation will comprise 30% of the final grade. Weekly readings are to be completed before class, and a paper or electronic version of the readings under discussion should be available for reference and notation. All students are expected to participate in discussions. Although laptops are permitted, inattentive or discourteous behavior will be noticed and penalized. In the interests of fostering open discussion, students are asked to be tolerant and considerate of others’ viewpoints.

Suggested class size:
This class is designed as a seminar, with a suggested class size of 10-20 students.

Readings: All relevant class information will be posted on the course web page, which may be accessed in Coursework. This includes the most recent syllabus, PDFs of the weekly readings, and any relevant links.

Course requirements:
Students will be required to participate in class discussions, which will account for 30% of the final grade. Students will also submit relevant examples of weekly topics for an additional 20% of the final grade. Should a student’s example be used in class, he or she will receive a 1% extra credit “bump” to his or her final grade (for example, from 89% to 90%). The appropriateness and relevance of these examples will be decided at the instructor’s sole discretion. A response paper of approximately 1000 words relating a weekly topic to current media will comprise 25% of the final grade. A final exam consisting of two short essay questions will account for 25%.
Class Schedule

Week 1. Scene-setting

Tuesday- Introduction & course overview. Students are asked to prepare a representation of themselves that has been previously posted online; for class viewing.

Thursday- Front and profile photographs for avatar generation taken.


Week 2. Portraiture and photography

Tuesday- Portraits


Thursday- Photography and popular photography


Week 3. Beauty

Tuesday- Self-presentation: how?


http://www.wikihow.com/Take-Flattering-Photos-of-Yourself

Thursday- Self-presentation: why?


Week 4. Reputation

Tuesday- Disguising the self


Thursday- Protecting the self- first response paper due

http://mashable.com/2012/04/08/employer-facebook-password/
**Week 5. Avatars**

*Tuesday- Virtual Human Interaction Lab visit; participants will inhabit their own avatar and write a response paper*


*Thursday- Effects of Virtual Life*


**Week 6. Health**

*Tuesday- Monitoring the self*


*Thursday- Modifying the self*


**Week 7. Cyborgs**

*Tuesday- Telepresence*


*Thursday- Augmented reality* (Google Glass will be out by then, so readings TBA).

**Week 8. Review**

Participants will vote (at the end of week 7) on which topic to revisit in greater depth.

*Thursday- Final exam*