Malone & Daniels Paper Prompt

Course: ENC1939: Unfollow—Culture & Identity on the Internet
Instructor: Nico Cassanetti

Formatting Requirements: double spaced, Garamond or TNR font, MLA formatted and minimum 4 <u>full</u> pages with a complete and correct Works Cited page.

Total Points Possible: 100

Rough Draft Due Date: TBA
Final Draft Due Date: TBA

In the two articles we read this week, we learned about some important moments in the history of the internet—Gamergate and the "Unite the Right" movement that fueled the 2016 Charlottesville protests. These moments focus not on technological innovations, but on the use of these platforms to foster a deadly conversion from online hate speech and extremism to offline acts of physical and emotional violence against anyone deemed as opposition (and potentially normalizing this type of violent and bigoted behavior in society). **Drawing on Jesse Daniels's discussion of sites like 4chan, Reddit, and Twitter, and on Noreen Malone's account of the Gamergate incident, create and support an argument about the Internet's impact on civility[1].**

In addition to the aforementioned formatting criteria at the beginning of this prompt, **you MUST cite Daniels and Malone at least once and AT LEAST ONE of the secondary sources I provided in the Module**. This include:
- Any of the videos embedded in the lessons for this section
- The optional readings
- Any of the sources Daniels consulted for her essay that are listed in the **A Haven for Hate Lesson**

Other outside CREDIBLE sources permitted but not required. You should also revisit the rhetorical strategies and various handouts, rubrics and worksheets from previous weeks to help you write and revise your essay.

MORE QUESTIONS/LINES OF INQUIRY TO CONSIDER:
You are welcome to consider any of the questions below OR those in the section lessons while brainstorming your argument.
- How does the Internet seem to be changing our attitudes about people with differing backgrounds and beliefs? What is it doing to gender relations and political discourse?
- Does Malone go too far when she links Donald Trump to Gamergate and the underground world of online white nationalism? Why or why not?

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[1] Civility comes from the word *civis*, which in Latin means "citizen". In early use, the term denoted the state of being a citizen and hence good citizenship or orderly behavior. *Merriam Webster* defines civility as civilized conduct (especially courtesy or politeness) or a polite act or expression.

- Should extremists like Richard Spencer and other known white supremacists be banned from social media, or is there some value in allowing them to speak freely?

EXTENDING THE CRITICAL CONTEXT
- Research the topic of gender bias in the video game industry. What are the demographics of game designers, developers, and programmers? To what extent do male and female game developers enjoy equal wages and opportunities? How common are sexual assault and harassment among industry employees? What evidence do you see to suggest that the video game industry is changing?

- Research how social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and Reddit have responded to the growth of online extremism. What policies have these and other social media companies adopted to combat hatred on the web? What else, if anything, do you think they should be doing to curb online intolerance?

- In 2017, Harvard University rescinded the admission of at least ten students because they had posted racist, sexist, or anti-Semitic memes on social media sites. Go online to learn more about Harvard's decision and other examples of colleges monitoring or limiting student self-expression on the Internet. Did Harvard make the right decision? How involved do you think colleges should be in policing the online activities of their students?

- What is the purpose of the internet? Should it be a place where everyone can speak freely and exchange information and ideas? Or, does that kind of open forum end up privileging the loudest and most extreme voices? What changes would you like to see on the internet, and why?