In this course we have tested four perspectives in understanding how the individual is affected by being online:

1) The instrumental approach which sees the Internet as a neutral tool that allows individuals to do things better or faster than in “Real Life” but does not change the individual in any way.

2) The utopian view which argues that life online makes individuals better by eliminating or reducing problems that trouble “Real Life.”

3) The dystopian view which critiques cyberspace for making humans worse.

4) The alternative space hypothesis which sees online life as different from real life and argues that cyberspace provides an opportunity to change individuals for the better.

Select three of the readings for the course, one of which must be from the first part of the course up to the mid-term examination. Write an essay in which you discuss how these readings fit into the four categories listed above, how each sees the effects of cyberspace on the individual. Include in your essay your view of which reading gives the best answer to the problem and your own assessment of the problem, your own view of “life on the screen.”