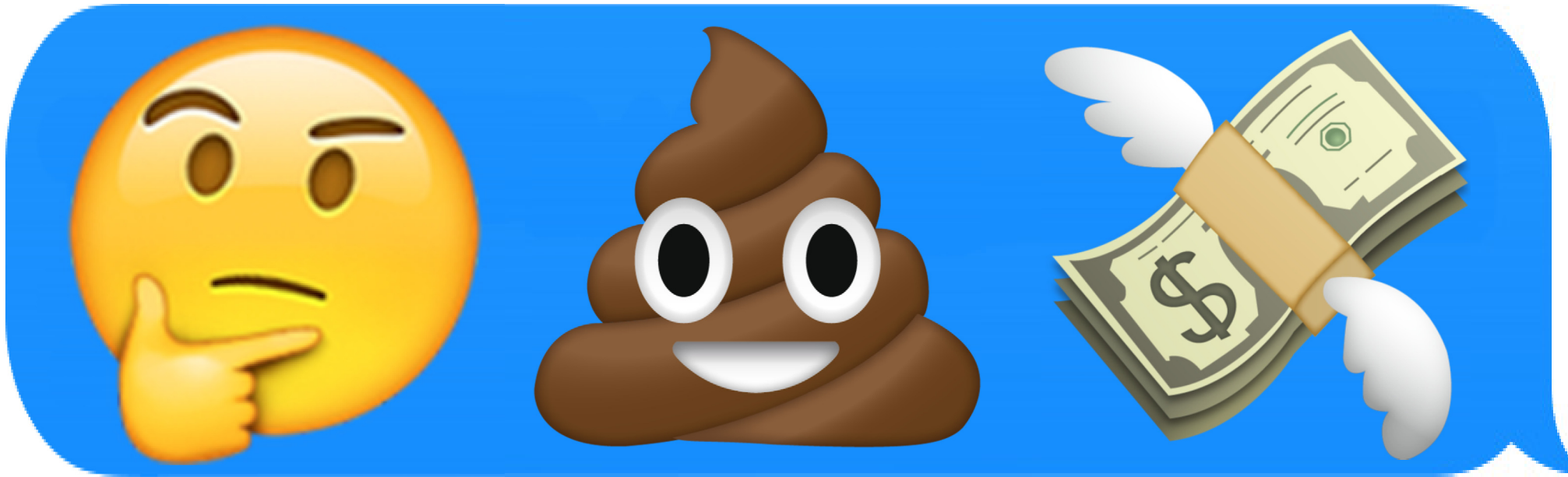


Tuesday, April 4, 4:30pm | CHAT Seminar Room, 48 Professors Row

Beyond the Conservatism of Emoji

Luke Stark Dartmouth College



Emoticons, emoji, Facebook stickers, animated GIFs of adorable cats: we use them all to express our social and emotional selves daily, with barely a second thought. But what if these seemingly banal digital objects tell a global story of toil, loss, revolt, and world domination, one that's still unfolding as you type? Rooted in the rise of the "smiley" face in the second half of the 20th century, the emoji as a cultural form emerged out of corporate strategies, copyright claims, and standards disputes. Seemingly trivial, file formats for emotional expression like emoji and animated GIFs represent the creative power of affective labor and the limits of a digital life in the thrall of market logic. In this talk, Luke Stark (Dartmouth College) explores the history of emoticons, emoji, and animated GIFs; how their uses have evolved as a microcosm of the history of social media; and how these formats represent emotional data of enormous interest to businesses in the digital economy. Plus he'll unspool tales of duelling fonts, plucky GIF artists and an all-emoji version of the greatest American novel ever written - all while sticking (almost) to 140 characters or less.