Notice of the Final Oral Examination for the Degree of Master of Arts of

MICHEAL ZIEGLER

BA (Hons.) (MacEwan University, 2018)

“Traversing the Digital World: Questing for the Socio-Political Realities of a Digital Age”

Department of Political Science

Wednesday, March 18, 2020
9:30 A.M.
David Turpin Building
Room A318

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Arthur Kroker, Department of Political Science, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Simon Glezos, Department of Political Science, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Emile Fromet de Rosnay, Department of French, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Lisa Mitchell, Department of Anthropology, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Beginning with the assumption that the/a world exists and is in-itself a real thing; I will endeavor to define such reality as it appears. A hermeneutic exploration of Heidegger and Gadamer’s understanding of the world will allow me to develop a definition of what a world is and subsequently how a digital world ought to be understood. Taking this route towards understanding a digital world will shed light on the idea that the world is a digital-nondigital blending rather than worlds that exist in disjoint domains. The world is, in reality, what Gadamer calls a fusion of horizons. From there we can understand how people have become what Sherry Turkle calls the “tale of two aesthetics,” that is, our selves appear to exist in two aesthetic domains—one self here and one self over there. With the help of Turkle, Donna Haraway, Walker Percy, and Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* (as a fictional representation of reality) this antiquated discursive world ideal will be shown to be both ineffective and incorrect. Our nondigital world self is, in reality, blended with our digital world self, i.e. they are actually one thing: existence as such. The purpose of doing this is to understand the socio-political reality of a digital-nondigital world. Digital self-existence, synonymous with self-existence in-itself, will inevitably be approached as an ersatz existence that has real implications on existence in and of itself. Our discursive realities allow governments, corporations and our own-selves to undermine and take advantage of our existence as ersatz totalities. This is brought to light in contrast to authentic existence which implies a Nietzschean-William James understanding of purity-in-being as an act of resistance to the will of technology in the form of language and digital media. This can only be done through an exegetical-dialectic involving a breadth of thinkers throughout time, while simultaneously bridging methodological frameworks in order to overcome the discursive divides of being.