# Rapport Building Strategies to Improve Retention and Success in Online Classes: The Effects of Video Presence of Instructor and Peers in Online Classes

*Saemyi Park* **Political Science, UW-Stevens Point**

One common problem in online classes is that students fail and drop out at rates far higher than face-to-face students. Previous studies show limited human connection in online learning leads to lower student success (Glazier 2016). Because online classes tend to attract older, nontraditional, and female students with more family obligations (Johnson 2019), identifying effective retention strategies for online classes is important to address the gap in student success.

This study investigates the effects of building rapport between faculty and students and among students to improve retention and success in online learning experiences. Based on the Social Presence Theory, a semester-long experiment will be conducted in two online sections of an introductory political science class to see whether video presence of the instructor and peers affect students' satisfaction and achievement. Analysis of student surveys, open-ended feedback, and focus group interviews demonstrates the effects of rapport-building teaching strategies in online classes.