Podcast Talking Points

1. What are memes?
2. Quote - “There was no ready way of deciding what counts as a meme. There was no set of criteria for determining whether or not the chosen units or “chunks” of information actually cup up culture at its natural joints. No compelling psychological evidence emerged for memes as bundles of learned information, stored as discrete units in memory, aggregated into higher-order knowledge structures, and expressed in identifiable bits of behavior.” **(Source 1)**
3. Do you agree with this? How do you define a meme?
4. Audio Clip 1
5. Memes as genetic carriers
6. This is a pretty popular analogy. Many studies compare memes to genes and Darwinism. Is this too meta or is it a good way to think about memes?
7. Quote - “But Dawkins’s proposal has an original response to the key evolutionary question: Cui bono, “Who benefits?” (Dennett 1995). The answer: not brains, individuals, or societies but memes themselves. Just as genes or viruses seek serial immortality by successively using, then discarding the individual organisms that host them, so memes seek to perpetuate themselves by nesting and nurturing in mind after mind. In the mind, a meme associates itself with other memes in a package.” **(Source 1)**
8. Audio Clip 2
9. Quote - “They sculpt our minds and cultures as they go – whatever their effect on the genes” **(Source 2)**
10. Quote - “Instead we are part of a vast evolutionary process in which memes are the evolving replicators and we are the meme machines” **(Source 2)**
11. How accurate is this analogy to memes and how memes spread?
12. A more practical view of how and why memes spread
13. What do you consider to be good tools when trying to construct a meme that spread?
14. Quote - “Memes provides some type of appeal which includes fascination to our ego, or amusement and distraction” (191) [Note: This is a really useful and interesting study overall] **(Source 3)**
15. Positive Impacts of Memes
16. Quote - “At the basis of this theoretical approach, which finds its roots in the early pioneering work of William James (1890), is a vision according to which the individual actively build their own identity and does so in a harmonious way with the context, starting from their own biological basis and through their interaction with the culture.” **(Source 4)**
17. Quote - “Memes and artifacts that are related with Flow experience and positive emotions can be maintained in the cultures and transmitted to the next generations. That is, people tend to repeat behaviors and search for those elements of culture that allow the Flow of Consciousness as a positive and meaningful experience to the Self” (12). **(Source 4)**
18. How do you engage with memes in a positive way? Can you think of ways you’ve seen this or do you always associate memes with negative/sarcastic kind of feelings?
19. Audio Clip 3
20. Negative Impacts of Memes and Caution Moving Forward
21. Quote – “However, messages could also be created for malicious purposes and if these messages become memes, these malicious messages can replicate at a rapid rate and potentially influence behavior and action in a negative manner.” **(Source 3)**
22. Quote - “Yoo usually begins her lecture with true stories about people who posted vile comments on social media. She cites public relations professional Justine Sacco who tweeted “Going to Africa. Hope I don’t get AIDS. Just kidding. I’m white!” while heading to South Africa in 2013. Sacco was immediately fired and became the target of outrage.” **(Source 5)**
23. Quote - “The advice is not to avoid social media, but to use it appropriately and always with one eye on what employers will see,” Carr said. “If you post inappropriate or inflammatory content, regardless of your security settings, it can come back on you. People have and will continue to lose jobs. Be smart and use good sense when you post.” **(Source 5)**
24. Audio Clip 4
25. Importance of being aware that by engaging in meme culture, you are influencing culture and potentially the future of a culture. Things like sharing on social media seem so normal and trivial, but there is actually a wide variety of consequences that we may not be aware of.

Audio Clips:

1. Defining memes (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLlWUlf0lY0)
2. Memes as genetic materials (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzGjEkp772s>)
3. Positive Impacts of Memes (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9u2f44VdzBs&t=46s>)
4. Caution of Importance of memes (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0swAqcMnrO0)

**Sources**

1. <https://rdcu.be/btjP5>
2. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26058899?seq=2#metadata_info_tab_contents>
3. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=hFQJBAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA188&dq=memes+positive+purposes&ots=w4VHsq6IcU&sig=n3sX7xil0aN2I0LO_4rQBm-8JMQ#v=onepage&q=memes%20positive%20purposes&f=false>
4. <https://www.degruyter.com/downloadpdf/books/9783110410242/9783110410242.1/9783110410242.1.pdf>
5. <http://libproxy.lib.unc.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/2170801911?accountid=14244>