

# Tweeting Adam Smith

Erin George  
Hood College

## Do you recommend Twitter for future classes?

Yes (7) – 63.6%  
No (1) – 9%  
No Opinion (3) – 27.3%

### Background

Twitter use in college courses:

- Student Tweet questions during class (Novak and Cowling 2011, Bodnar et al. 2013)
- Instructor share information outside of class using Twitter (Wood 2017, Kassens 2014)
- Students share relevant materials outside of class using Twitter (Kassens-Noor 2011)

### Research Questions

- Can Twitter be used to increase student interest in a course?
- Does Tweeting increase student retention of information?

### Assignment

For each thinker, compose a tweet or series of tweets that conveys the main idea(s) of the author. You may either write the tweet in your own style or in the style of your author.

Write a short (1-2 paragraph) summary of your tweet and how it relates to the reading. All tweets should include the class hashtag (#hidrg).

#### Rubric:

- 1 point – completed tweet and summary
- 1 point – quality of hashtags (relevant, informative, logical)
- 1 point – quality of analysis (interesting, insightful commentary grounded in the readings)
- 1 point – quality of the writing (summary free from grammatical errors)

### Methodology

Students were assigned half of the authors to Tweet. The control group is therefore the students who did not Tweet an author. Administered a pop quiz on the last day of the semester to gauge student retention. Also administered surveys to elicit student feedback.

#### Tweeting Assignments:

Smith (4 Tweets) or Marx (4 Tweets)  
Malthus (2 Tweets) or Ricardo (1 Tweet)  
Keynes (2 Tweets) or Veblen (1 Tweet)

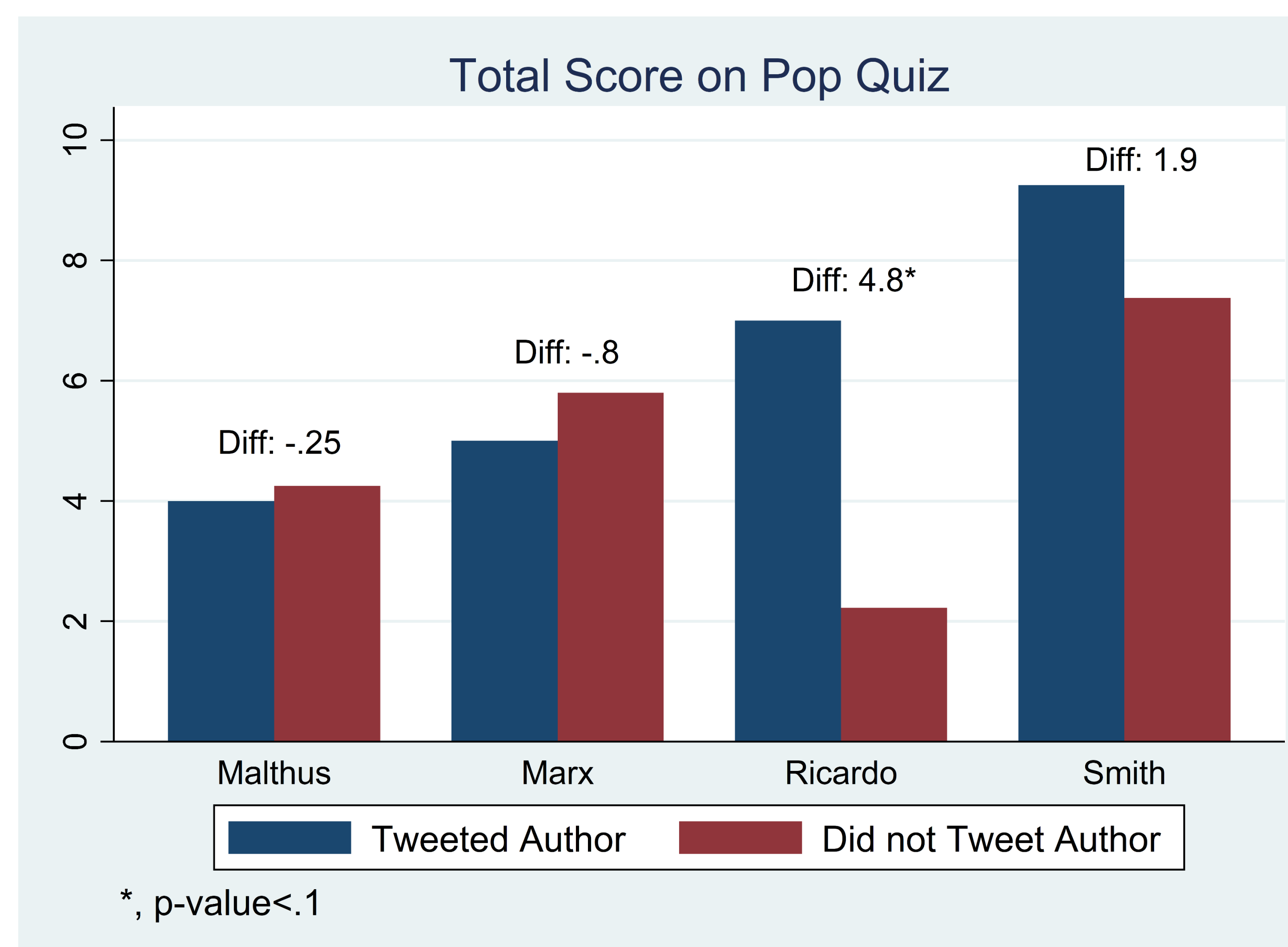
### Results

#### Did Twitter increase student interest in the course?

| Learning Outcome                             | M    | SD   | p   |
|--|------|------|-----|
| I enjoyed the Twitter Assignment             | 3.45 | 1.13 | .21 |
| Twitter assignment made class more enjoyable | 3.73 | 1.01 | .04 |
| Twitter assignment made class more engaging  | 3.64 | 0.92 | .05 |
| I spent more time reading when I tweeted     | 4.09 | 1.22 | .01 |
| I spent more time thinking when I tweeted    | 4.09 | 1.14 | .01 |
| I feel like I learned more when I tweeted    | 3.09 | 1.04 | .78 |
| I feel like I remember more when I tweeted   | 3.36 | .92  | .22 |

Note: 5 point Likert scale, 1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree  
Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha=.75$ )

#### Did Twitter increase student retention of information?



### Student Feedback

- “I liked how the assignment brought a fun way to discuss normally tasteless topics like Marx/Smith to the course”
- “Tweeting gave a little modern twist to a class about really old people”
- “It was a fun change of pace from [a] typical class”
- “I liked the challenge to post relevant content”
- “It allows others to be engaging in class that wouldn't otherwise”
- Twitter “makes the reader focus more on strong points that authors make”

### Lessons Learned

- Add a hashtag to identify the author a student is Tweeting.
- Students enjoyed Tweeting (anecdotally and in both their quantitative and qualitative responses).
- Students and I both prefer an alternative where students present their Tweets at the beginning or end of class rather than keeping Tweets anonymous.
- Space limitations on Twitter were frustrating to some students; increased character count about halfway through the semester solved this issue.
- Weak statistical tests from small sample size.
- Twitter does not seem to hurt retention, and does help make history more relatable.



Mr. AK  
@Aquinaskvus

Labor-power creates the bourgeois. Laborers sell themselves to make others rich. #sadlife #TheyDontWillinglyTho #hidrg



Das Kap City  
@ManiFedUp

"So soon as the possession of property becomes the basis of popular esteem, it becomes also a requisite to the complacency which we call self-respect." #hidrg #LoveYourself #ThingsDontBuyYouHappiness #Taoism #SimpleLife #AntiKimK #MaterialDoesntGiveYouWorth

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank Ryan Safner, Sang Kim, and Jerrold Van Winter for helpful comments.

\*TWITTER, TWEET, RETWEET and the Twitter logo are trademarks of Twitter, Inc. or its affiliates.



wearegoingtostarve  
@starvinmalthus

No permanent rise in the price of necessities happens without occasioning or having been preceded by a rise in wage #hidrg #letthemhavebread



Alex Ovechkin  
@JanetKeepYellen

If you're flat broke, at least labour will serve as an asset #HiDrG #Daskapital



F.A. Hayek  
@HayekEconomics

"The far greater part of them he must derive from the labour of other people" #teamworkmakesthedreamwork #hidrg



Keynes  
@Capitalintensiv

"if the classical theory is only applicable to the case of full employment, it is fallacious to apply it to the problems of involuntary unemployment" #hidrg #LayOffsArentOptional