INF STD 20 – Digital Cultures  
Summer 2016  
Thursday 1:00-3:50pm  
GSEIS 111  
Instructors: Stacy Wood  
Email: stacyewood@g.ucla.edu  
Office hours: Tuesdays 10:00-12:00pm

Course Description

This course is a cross-disciplinary and intensive exploration of the social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, and structural aspects of information and media technologies. We touch on issues in the study of digital media, librarianship, communications, computer science, sociology, and anthropology in this class. It satisfies an undergraduate General Education requirement, and serves as a survey of important interdisciplinary material that constitutes “information studies”.

Textbook and Readings

Readings will be available via the course web site (CCLE). I will demonstrate this in class (ccle.ucla.edu): This site will be available until the end of the quarter, so please download/access what you need before then.

Course Objectives

- To develop an understanding of how global organizations, cultures, and institutions create, utilize, and are affected by internet and technology-disseminated information
- To study the relationship between social media and economics/politics/culture/identity
- To explore the linkages between traditional institutions and classifiers of information (libraries/archives/museums) and the decentralized networks of the Internet, yet to also look at how power, profit, and value is emerging around the Internet.
- To study contemporary social and cultural issues and develop an informational fluency (including intellectual property rights, information literacy, surveillance, information ethics, the power of classification, etc.)

Outcomes

On completion of this course, you will be able to:

• Understand (and articulate on multiple levels) the historical and contemporary issues that relate information (and information technologies) to society, economy, culture, politics, and media.
• Speak and reflect fluently on some of the most convergent and transformative phenomena that are affecting national and transnational entities today(!)
• Apply this knowledge to almost any profession or future that you choose – as information is interwoven deeply with multiple sectors of society.

Methods

You will be encouraged to learn through a combination of the following methods:

• presenting and analytically interpreting the required readings (not just summary and not tangents);
• actively leading and involving yourself in discussions of the readings and lectures;
• inspiring your fellow students and professor with new ideas, questions, and issues that creatively emerge
understanding that information retrieval is not just about Google, a database, or Facebook – but instead an embodiment of certain social and cultural agendas,

- Based on an understanding of society and culture, you will be able to reflect on the systems, algorithms, new modes of media production, social movements, etc. that are impacting our lives
- Write compelling weekly response papers (2 total)
- Write a group midterm paper and take an exciting final exam

This course is intended to mix lectures with participatory and discussion-oriented sessions, and expects both verbal and written input, as well as individual and group work. So please anticipate that you will be called upon to be an important input to the discussions we hold each week. For this reason, your active attendance is critical to our success. You will follow the UCLA Honor Code by signing the role sheet each class at the outset. If you arrive late, you will have to sign the role sheet after class on your way out.

1. **Individual Response Papers and Presentations DUE at class in print (20% of grade):** I ask for you to put your heart into doing these readings and to write 2-3 full page length papers (1.5 spaced, 12 point font) each week for two weeks of your choice related to the readings. These are due at the beginning of class, in a printout form. If they are not presented to me as a printout (no matter if they are emailed) then they will not be considered submitted.

   If they are presented at all late (after the start of class), they will be downgraded accordingly (10% per date of tardiness). For these two weeks, you may be asked to present the perspective and paper for a few minutes to the class. Be prepared accordingly since I may call on you. These response papers are due at the beginning of the class meetings, and you will present a few thoughts as part of our in-class discussion the day you hand in the paper. Do not try to touch on all the readings in your paper – it’s not possible. Just focus it on a theme you are engaged in and write your reactions and reference readings with this goal. The key with writing a successful paper is not to just re-write the readings but instead critically analyze them by referencing other readings, experiences you have had and so on. It is important to draw across multiple readings when formulating your argument. Systematically articulate a thesis, advance it with evidence from the readings, and present compelling conclusions.

2. **IIQ: Important/Interesting/Question and ANSWERS! (10%)**

   The class will be divided into two groups on the first day, depending on your assigned group you will post either a question or an answer on either Tuesday or Thursday.

   For the IIQ you will choose one of the assigned readings and make a note of 2 important things, 2 interesting things, and 1 question that you found or that occurred to you while doing the reading. You will post your IIQ in the Discussion section of CCLE so that your colleagues who are responsible for answering can respond to your ideas. If it is your day to answer you will simply respond to one of your colleagues’ questions. These responses should be 250-500 words and should draw on evidence from the reading as well as providing analysis.

3. **Oral Presentations (15%):** Each of you will give one 10-15 minute presentation during the quarter for the entire class. These will happen on the week you sign up for. In case you have slides, You MUST come early to class and put your presentation on the class computer. Otherwise, you will have to present without any slides.

   How many students and who/each week is to be determined, but we will figure this out in the first class meeting via a sign up sheet. Please do not forget the date you will be presenting. I will of course be more lenient for those of you who present earlier in the class. For these presentations it is not necessary for you to have a powerpoint/keynote file.

4. **Class Attendance and Participation (15%):** I will take role and you must sign in if you attend as per the honor code. Your active and creative participation (not gratuitous) is an important part of your grade.

5. **Exam (40%):** Finally, there will be an in-class final exam (open book, Not open computer, essay question-based) on the university scheduled date and time. The grade you receive for this exam will
account for 40% of your final grade, and will be awarded on the basis of your demonstrated ability to answer questions directly, reference class readings, address issues critically, and express your thoughts precisely. You are required to attend and take the exam on the date decided upon, or will receive a ‘0’ for the final exam grade.

All grading decisions are final and non-negotiable, and I would be happy to update you on your progress upon request.

**Schedule**

Some of these readings may change slightly during the course of the quarter so please be prepared for these changes.

Many of these readings will be available by the CCLE site. If you cannot access a reading first check with other students and if they also have the same problem let me know via email. If there are problems with the site, please call 310-825-1911

Meeting 1: Tuesday, January 6
Introduction to the course.
- Personal introductions. Overview of the course syllabus. Explanation of expectations for assignment. Demonstrating CCLE site.
- What is information studies? Relationship to other disciplines. Opportunities and challenges of interdisciplinarity. What is information?

Meeting 2: Thursday, January 8
Key words: futurism, pastness, instantiation, utopia, and dystopia around networks, media, information (and society)
Digital Detox Assignment!!!
Readings
- Borges, Jorge Luis. (1941) Library of Babel

Meeting 3: Tuesday, January 13
Key words: information, institutions (libraries, archives, museums), public v. private
Readings

Meeting 4: Thursday, January 15
Key words: centralization v. networks, authority, Fordism v. Post-Fordism, information economies, citizen science, crowd funding
Readings

Meeting 5: Tuesday, January 20
Key words: literacy, literacies, convergence culture, boundary objects
Readings

Meeting 6: Thursday, January 22
Key words: networks, globalization, labor
Readings
http://www.wired.com/2014/10/content-moderation/

Meeting 7: Tuesday, January 27
Key words: networks, globalization, slactivism, activisms
Readings
Srinivasan, Ramesh. "Bridges Between Digital and Cultural Worlds in Revolutionary Egypt."
Jenkins, Henry. "Fan Activism ad Participatory Politic: The Case of the Harry Potter Alliance."

Meeting 8: Thursday, January 29
Key words: mediation, identity, communities, avatars, anonymity, publics
Readings
Taylor, Yvette. "Queer youth, Faicebook and faith: Facebook methodologies and online identities." New Media and Society November 2014 16: 1138-1153

Meeting 9: Tuesday, February 3
Key words digital divides
Readings

Meeting 10: Thursday, February 5
Key words: Hackers and leakers
Readings
Bazelon, Emily. "When the Law is Worse Than the Crime."

Meeting 11: Tuesday, February 10
Key words: information ethics, access, misinformation
Readings
Burbules, Nicholas C. "Paradoxes of the Web: The ethical dimensions of credibility. Library Trends, no. 4: 441-453.

Meeting 12: Thursday, February 12
Key words: temporality, spatiality, relationality, phenomenology
Virilio, Paul. "Speed, Information and Cyber Alarm!"

Meeting 13: Tuesday, February 17
Key words: digitization, copyright, ownership

Meeting 14: Thursday, February 19
Key words: repatriation, digital diaspora, communities
Readings

Meeting 15: Tuesday, February 24
Key words: alternative use, hacking, resistant use

Meeting 16: Thursday, February 26
Key words: design and rhetoric, information visualization
Readings
Drucker, Johanna. "Humanities Approaches to Graphical Display"

Meeting 17: Tuesday, March 3
Key words: surveillance, privacy, big data, encryption
Readings
Gitelman, Lisa. "Introduction." Raw Data is an Oxymoron.
*View Terms and Conditions - hosted by UCLA library

Meeting 18: Thursday, March 5
Key words: algorithms, search engines, power

Meeting 19: Tuesday, March 10
REVIEW FOR FINAL

Meeting 20: Thursday, March 12
FINAL