THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

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Office hours: MonThu 1-4, by appointment

BTMM 735
Thu 4:10-8:00
TUCC 205

Overview

This course will examine several theories and research related to what is commonly referred to as the Information Society. We will begin by examining many of the seminal works defining the Information Society and the processes that appear to have led to it. Because the Information Society is linked to new media technologies, we will examine how authors have treated these developments. Specifically, we will explore the economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions of new media technologies. We will end the semester with a look into the future of the Information Society and related technologies.

Required texts


Additional readings have been placed on e-reserve.

Requirements

This course is a graduate seminar, which means that participation in class discussions is expected. Come to class having read the assigned materials and having thought about relevant issues. This class meets once a week, so attendance is expected. You need to let me know in advance if you will not be there.

We will use a listserv for class related communication, to discuss papers, and other questions you may have. Your papers will also be posted on the class listserv.

Over the semester you will write three short papers and one final research paper. I will suggest a topic for the first paper. The remaining two will be of your own choice, but they must address a specific question or issue relevant to the materials covered in class. The final research paper can, but does not have to, build on one of the short papers. The short papers should be no longer than 5 pages (double-spaced). The longer paper is a research paper, approximately 15-20 pages in length, on a subject of your choice. I can help you select a suitable topic and find relevant research material. Any writing turned in for assignments must be original to this course. Sources and references need to be quoted properly – plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment and the course. Any citation format is acceptable, as long as it is used consistently.
In addition to the written assignments you will lead the class in discussion on assigned subjects and dates twice. You will be teamed up with a fellow classmate and will be expected to meet with me a week prior to your presentation to discuss your focus. You may need to read recommended or additional texts to inform your perspectives for this assignment.

Your final grade will be based on class participation (25%), the three short papers (15% each), and the final paper (30%). Class participation will be based on your general contributions to discussion, but also on your guiding the class in discussion on an assigned subject and date.

Schedule

Jan 18: Introduction to the course, general questions

Jan 25: Origins of the Information Society
- Bell / Schement & Lievrouw (e-reserve)
- Flichy / Webster (HNM)

Feb 1: Information economy transformations: micro and macro levels
- Castells, Intro, 1, 3
- Bates (e-reserve)
- Cooke / Lamberton (HNM)

Feb 8: Globalization and the information economy First short paper due
- Castells 2
- Herman & McChesney (e-reserve)
- Henten & Skouby/ Mody, Trebing & Stein/ Stein & Sinha/ Flew & Elhinney (HNM)

Feb 15: No Class – Research Day

Feb 22: Information economy and work Second short paper due
- Castells 4
- Jackson, Poole & Kuhn / Bar & Simard / Urey (e-reserve)

Mar 1: Cultural dimensions
- Castells 5
- Benjamin / Haraway / Gunkel & Gunkel (e-reserve)
- Poster (HNM)

Mar 8: Spring Break

Mar 15: Social dimensions: Community and identity
- Slate / Stone (e-reserve)
- Jankowski/ Baym / Slack & Wise (HNM)

Mar 22: Social dimensions: Utopian and dystopian visions Third short paper due
- Kling / Katz & Aspden / Kraut et al Internet Paradox studies (e-reserve)
- Rice & Haythornwaite (HNM)

Mar 29: Democracy online? The Internet and the Public Sphere
• Luke (HNM)

**Apr 5: Policy dimensions: privacy, copyright, access questions**
- Gandy e-reserve
- Castells, Conclusion
- Verhulst/Hudson/Star & Bowker/Lievrouw - HNM

**Apr 12: Literacy, human-computer interaction and integration**
- Kellner (e-reserve)
- Buckingham – HNM
- Read/skim either Laurel/Computers as Theater or Norman/Things that make us smart – buy new/used or borrow

**Apr 19: How to think about the future**
- Castells 6, 7
- Joy, Why the future doesn’t need us, Response to Why the future doesn’t need us

**Apr 26: Presentations**

**Final papers due May 3**

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**Bibliography**


