

## I202 Introduction to Social Informatics Fall 2006

**Instructor:** Prof. Eden Medina

**Office:** Eigenmann 1035

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**Lectures:** MW 2:30-3:20 plus discussion sections (BH 228).

**Sections:** R 11:15-12:05 (I 107); R 1:25-2:15 (I 105); or F 12:20-1:10 (WH 002).

**Office Hours:** M 3:30-4:30; W 11-12; or by appointment

### **Assistant Instructor(s):**

Kristin Hanks [khanks@indiana.edu](mailto:khanks@indiana.edu)

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Shruti Ramalingam [sramalin@indiana.edu](mailto:sramalin@indiana.edu)

**Textbook:** Readings will be distributed in class or made available via oncourse.

Students are strongly encouraged to buy Mike Daisy, *21 Dog Years: A Cube Dweller's Tale*, Free Press, 2003. This book is available at the IU bookstore and amazon.com.

### **Course Description:**

I202 introduces the social and behavioral foundations of Informatics. Theoretical approaches to how technology is used from psychological and socio-technical perspectives. Examples of how current and emerging technologies such as games, email, and electronic commerce are affecting daily lives, social relations, work, and leisure time.

### **Introduction**

Social informatics refers to an interdisciplinary body of research dedicated to studying the design, uses, and effects of information technologies. Rather than trace the "social impact" of these technologies, social informatics seeks to understand how social contexts shape the form and character of technology. Conversely, it also studies how technology influences society, affects power relations, and restructures social and organizational networks.

This course asks students to go beyond the "technical" aspects of IT and consider the social relations that are an integral part of designing and adopting a technology or technological system. It also challenges students to think critically about technological change and acquire a more sophisticated understanding of the political, economic, and social considerations that underlie technological development.

### **Objectives**

By the completion of the course, students will:

- 1) Understand that the design, use, and application of information technology is a social AND a technical process.

- 2) Recognize socio-technical networks and understand how they function.
- 3) Be able to locate sources of information on social informatics topics, determine their credibility, summarize their content, and critique the arguments presented therein.
- 4) Identify key questions and findings in the social informatics literature.
- 5) Bring these class objectives to bear on their own experiences as informatics students.

### **Student Conduct, Rights and Responsibilities**

Please refer to <http://dsa.indiana.edu/Code/index.html>

All students are expected to submit their own original work.

### **Grading**

Class participation (10%)

Homework (30%)

Midterm (20%)

Final project (40%)

Students will also have the opportunity to complete several extra credit assignments during the course of the semester.

### **Topics**

#### **Week #1 Introduction**

Aug 28 Introduction to Social Informatics

**Reading:** Be prepared to discuss the following article in class on 8/30. Steve Sawyer, "Social Informatics: Overview, Principles and Opportunities," *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, June/July 2005 (oncourse).

Aug 30 Technological Determinism

Discussion: Introduction and discussion of class themes.

**Homework:** Assignment #1.

**Reading:** Donald Mackenzie, "The Social Shaping of Technology," *Major Problems in the History of American Technology*, Merritt Roe Smith and Greg Clancey, eds., pp. 13-15 (oncourse). For class discussion 9/4.

Bruno Latour, "The Proliferation of Hybrids," *Major Problems in the History of American Technology*, Merritt Roe Smith and Greg Clancey, eds., pp. 21-25 (oncourse). For class discussion 9/6.

## **Week #2 Frameworks for Technological Change**

Sept. 4 Social Construction of Technology

Sept. 6 Socio-Technical Networks

Discussion: Student presentations of assignment #1.

**Reading:** Rob Kling, "Hopes and Horrors: Technological Utopianism and Anti-Utopianism in Narratives of Computerization" in *Computerization and Controversy*. Available at [www.slis.indiana.edu/faculty/kling/cc/2-HOPE4.html](http://www.slis.indiana.edu/faculty/kling/cc/2-HOPE4.html) and via oncourse. Be prepared to discuss the article in class 9/11 and 9/13.

## **Week #3 Imaging Technology, Imagining Society**

Sept. 11 Utopias and Dystopias, Guest speaker Prof. Larry Yaeger

Sept. 13 Utopias and Dystopias, Guest speaker Prof. Larry Yaeger

Discussion: Discuss themes presented in class.

**Homework:** Assignment #2.

**Reading:** Langdon Winner, "Mythinformation," *The Whale and the Reactor*. For class discussion 9/20 (oncourse).

## **Week #4 The Information Revolution**

Sept. 18 Skills: Critical Reading and Writing.

Sept. 20 The Information Revolution?

Discussion: Visit to the IU Library. Discussion sections will be held in Instruction Cluster #1 of the Information Commons, Wells Library, West Tower, First Floor.

**Reading:** Simson Garfinkel, *Database Nation*, Chapter 4, 69-92 (oncourse). For class on 9/25.

John Podesta, "USA Patriot Act: The Good, the Bad, the Sunset," *Human Rights Magazine*, winter 2002, available at: <http://www.abanet.org/irr/hr/winter02/podesta.html>. For class discussion 9/27.

Center for Democracy and Technology, "What's Wrong with the Patriot Act and How to Fix it," Available at: <http://www.cdt.org/security/usapatriot/brochure.pdf>. For class discussion 9/27.

## **Week #5 Freedom, Security and the Law**

Sept. 25: Privacy

Sept. 27: Security

Discussion: Debate themes presented in class.

**Homework:** Assignment #3

**Reading:** Lawrence Lessig, *Code*, Chapter 7 What Things Regulate, pp. 85-93 (oncourse). For class discussion 10/2. Optional: Lawrence Lessig, *Code*, Chapter 1 Code is Law, (oncourse).

Langdon Winner, "Do Artifacts have Politics?," *Major Problems in the History of American Technology*, pp.7-13. For class discussion on 10/2.

### **Week #6 Social Informatics of Design**

Oct. 2 Code is Law

Oct. 4 Value-Based Design

Discussion: Debate themes presented in class.

**Homework:** Assignment #4

### **Week #7 Midterm**

Oct. 9: Review for Midterm

Oct. 11: Midterm Exam

Discussion: Submit preferred groups for the final project.

**Reading:** Deborah Johnson, *Computer Ethics*, pp. 5-24 (oncourse). For class discussion on 10/18.

### **Week #8 Ethics**

Oct. 16 Present final project

Oct. 18 Ethics

Discussion: Assign groups for final project.

**Homework:** Assignment #5

**Reading:** Lawrence Lessig, *Free Culture*, Chapter 10 Property, pp. 116-147 (oncourse). For class discussion on 10/23 and 10/25.

### **Week #9 Property**

Oct. 23: Intellectual Property I

Oct. 25: Intellectual Property II

Discussion: Groups decide on their final project topic.

**Homework:** Assign Project Proposal. *Due November 8 in class.* (Assignment #6)

**Reading:** Edward Tufte, "PowerPoint is Evil," *Wired*, September 2003. Available at [http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/11.09/ppt2\\_pr.html](http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/11.09/ppt2_pr.html). For class discussion on 10/30.

William Aspray, Frank Mayadas, and Moshe Y. Vardi, eds. *Globalization and the Offshoring of Software*, ACM Job Migration Task Force, pp. 65-68 (oncourse). For class discussion on Nov. 1.

### **Week #10 The Informatics of Work Part I**

Oct. 30: Skills: Visual Displays of Information

Nov. 1: Labor and IT (Guest lecture Kristin Hanks)

Discussion: Work on project proposal with group.

**Reading:** Mike Daisy, *21 Dog Years: A Cube Dweller's Tale*, pp. 1-57 (not available on oncourse!) For class discussion on Nov. 8.

**Homework:** Continue to work on project proposal due Nov. 8.

### **Week #11 The Informatics of Work Part II**

Nov. 6: Film "The Secrets of Silicon Valley"

Nov. 8: Workplace Culture. **PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE**

Discussion: Final project.

**Homework:** Final Project

**Reading:** Diane Vaughn, *The Challenger Launch Decision*, pp. 1-7. For class discussion on Nov. 13.

Edward Tufte, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, pp. 13-15. For class discussion on Nov. 13.

Bonnie Nardi et al., "Blogging as Social Activity, or, Would You Let 900 Million People Read Your Diary?," *CSCW '04*, pp. 222-231. For class discussion on Wednesday Nov. 15.

### **Week #12 Themes in Social Informatics**

Nov. 13: Visual Displays of Information for Decision Making (Guest lecture Shruti Ramalingam)

Nov. 15: Blogging as a Social Activity (Guest lecture Kshitij Gupta)

Discussion: Practice group presentations.

**Homework:** Final Project

**Reading:** Jack Goldsmith and Tim Wu, *Who Controls the Internet?*, pp. 29-33; 168-171 (oncourse). For class discussion on Nov. 20.

### **Week #13 The Information Society**

Nov. 20: Internet Governance

Nov. 22: Thanksgiving break. No class.

Discussion: Thanksgiving break. No class.

**Homework:** Final Project

**Reading:** TBA

### **Week #14 Final Projects**

Nov. 27 Group Project Presentations

Nov. 29 Group Project Presentations

**Homework:** Final Project

### **Week #15 Project Presentations**

Dec. 4 Group Project Presentations

Dec. 6 Group Project Presentations

**ALL FINAL PROJECTS ARE DUE FRIDAY DEC. 8. Students must bring their completed assignment to Eigenmann 1035 by 5pm. Late projects will be penalized.**