

I202 Introduction to Social Informatics Fall 2011

Instructors:

Course #: 9854/4057

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Lectures: MW 1:25-2:15PM WY 005 (9854)

MW 3:35-4:25PM BH 003 (4057)

Discussions: F 11:15A-12:05P PY 113 (9856)

F 01:25P-02:15P BH 018 (9857)

R 11:15A-12:05P GY 226 (4058)

R 01:25P-02:15P WH 121 (4059)

F 12:20P-01:10P PY 115 (4060)

Office Hours: MW 2:30-3:25PM Faculty/Staff lounge Ballentine Hall (ground floor) or by appointment.

Course #: 33898

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Lectures: MW 1:25-2:15PM I130

Discussions: R 12:20-01:10PM I107 (33899)

R 02:30-03:20PM BH137 (33901)

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Textbook: All readings will be made available online via OnCourse.

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. In the course, we will be developing our understanding of these issues by engaging critically with various debated topics relating to information and communication technologies (ICTs).

This course asks students to go beyond the “technical” aspects of ICTs 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) Be able apply a range of frameworks that describe how technologies operate in society.
- 3) Be able to analyze contemporary sociotechnical issues from multiple perspectives.
- 4) Be able to locate primary and secondary sources of information on social informatics topics, summarize their content, critically engage with the arguments presented therein, and use them as evidence to create their own arguments.

This class will involve numerous writing assignments geared at developing students’ ability to articulate their own arguments, grapple with nuanced questions, and examine the points of view of others as well as their own perspectives.

Student Conduct, Rights and Responsibilities

All students are expected to submit their own original work. Plagiarism constitutes using others’ ideas, words or images without properly giving credit to those sources. If you turn in any work with your name affixed to it, I assume that work is your own and that all sources are indicated and documented in the text (with quotations and/or citations).

We will respond to acts of academic misconduct according to university policy concerning plagiarism; sanctions for plagiarism can include a grade of F for the assignment in question and/or for the course and must include a report to the Dean of Students Office.

For more information on our expectations for student conduct please refer to the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct
<http://www.iu.edu/~code/code/responsibilities/academic/index.shtml>

Grading

50% Homework
25% Participation (showing up in discussion and keeping a journal of assigned readings)
25% Final exam

Student participation grades will be based on attendance in discussion section (see below) and the completion of weekly journal assignments.

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

If you want to contest any of your grades, you must do so in person with the instructor assigned to your discussion section. If you cannot reach a resolution, you should meet in person with the professor assigned to your lecture. The instructors reserve the right to LOWER your grade if we think we were too generous the first time.

Assignment submission

Homework assignments should be submitted via OnCourse by noon on the day they are due, unless otherwise specified. Late homework will be penalized by 10% per day; after the second day, you will get a zero.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken during discussion sections. These attendance scores will make up part of your class participation grade (25%) and can have a substantial effect on your final grade for the course.

All students will have **two discretionary absences** that they can use during the semester. Students using a discretionary absence will not need to present documentation to support the absence, such as a doctor's note. **The discretionary absence policy does not apply to the final exam.** Students who need to miss more than two classes should inform their AI beforehand to avoid being penalized.

Students needing to miss the final because of a serious illness or a personal tragedy will need to receive **advance approval** and provide supporting documentation if requested.

Students are responsible for submitting assignments on time, regardless of whether they are present on the day of class. Start homework assignments early; late assignments will be penalized according to the course late policy.

Email Etiquette

Please give us up to 24 hours to reply to your emails, and we will do the same for you. Please put the course number in the Subject line and remember to sign you email with your name. We expect the language and structure of your emails to be *professional*. This includes punctuation, salutations/signature, etc.

Laptop Policy

Students may not use laptops or mobile devices in the lectures. If there is a special reason you need to use your laptop or mobile device, please talk to your instructor.

Weekly schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1	8/29	Introduction to class		Sign late policy Information Sheet
1	8/31	What is Social Informatics?	Sawyer "Social Informatics"	Assignment #1 Intro to Social Informatics (due in discussion)
2	9/5	Labor Day - No class		
2	9/7	In class activity: Technological Relationships in Your Life	Gold "How smart does your bed have to be, before you are afraid to go to sleep at night?" Bringsjord "Only a Technology Triad can Tame Terror"	
3	9/12	Evocative Objects	Gathman, "Cell Phones"; Green, "Really Thinking About Things"	
3	9/14	Technological Determinism	Nye, "Does Technology Control Us?" Baym "Technological Determinism"	
4	9/19	Social Construction of Technology	Mackenzie, "The Social Shaping of Technology" Baym "Social Construction"	Assignment #2 Evocative Object
4	9/21	Mutual Shaping (or where do we go from here)?	TBD	
5	9/26	Idea #1 Invention	Latour, <i>Science in Action</i> (excerpt) Heath and Heath "The Myth About Creation Myths"	
5	9/28	Who invented the telephone?	Mirsky, "Whose Phone is it Anyway," <i>Scientific American</i>	
6	10/3	The social construction of invention: authorship and international	Boyle "Shamans, Software, and Spleens," pp. 125-	Assignment #3 Invention Article

		inequality	128.	
6	10/5	The social construction of invention: case example intellectual property and creativity	Lessig, "Property"	
7	10/10	Idea #2 The Internet is open	Raymond "Cathedral and the Bazaar"	
7	10/12	History of openness	Errol Morris, "Did my Brother Invent E-mail"	
8	10/17 (no J)	"The cycle" of open and closed information infrastructures	Wu, <i>The Master Switch</i>	
8	10/19	The Internet and free speech	Gladwell, "Why the revolution will not be tweeted"	[Draft Assignment #4 due in discussion section; bring paper copy]
9	10/24	Idea #3 On the Internet, you have access to everything	Grayling, "The Googlization of Everything: Has Google Turned Evil?"	
9	10/26	Movie: Wikisecrets		Revised Assignment #4 Position Paper
10	10/31	Idea #4 Everyone Knows how to use Facebook (including your mother?)	Gershon, <i>Breakup 2.0</i>	
10	11/2	Employer panel		
11	11/7	Media mixes	Ito, "Technologies of the childhood imagination"	
11	11/9	Idea #5 The Knowledge Economy has Improved Work	Hughes, "The System Must Be First" Medina, "The Computer Industry"	Assignment #5 - Social Informatics in the Field
12	11/14	The Dark Side of the Knowledge Economy	Winner, "Electronic Cottage"	
12	11/16	Corporate Culture	Howard "How I escaped from Amazon.cult"	

13	11/21	Movie: Digital Nation		Assignment #6 Dialectical Journal of Movie Upload to OnCourse by 10am 11/22.
13	11/23	Thanksgiving		
14	11/28	Idea #6 Computers Increase Social Connection	Turkle, <i>Alone Together</i>	
14	11/30	Technology and Identity	Lanier, <i>You are not a Gadget</i>	
15	12/5	Wrap up		
15	12/7	In-class Final Exam		

Bibliography

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