I. Course Overview and Objectives

We live in an information-rich world. We have easy access to the Internet, which allows us to access and spread information across much of the globe almost instantaneously. We have easy access to Global Positioning System (GPS), which allows us to navigate the world based on our precise location. Governments, corporations, health care providers, insurers, employers, and others can (and often do) create relational databases that allow them to understand how we act, work, play, travel, learn, spend, and socialize. We can communicate in a variety of media, about a variety of subjects, with a variety of people, and for a variety of purposes (work, leisure, education, economic, political, criminal, tortious). Machines grow increasingly “intelligent” and can do more and more work that humans used to do. We often hear that such ready access and easy communication are the foundation of our current “information society.” The implication is that information proliferation, ease of access, use, control, and ownership are an inevitable and fundamental feature of our world.

But...so what?

Well, several things. This vast array of ICTs has, and will continue to have, profound implications for humans’ well-being. Ways in which ICTs are deployed affect how people exercise fundamental rights, such as free expression (for good and ill). Information and related technologies alter the way democracies function. Information technologies make tenuous long-valued goods, such as privacy. They alters conceptions of ownership and property, and much more. In other words, information and ICTs affect things of value, and they are therefore morally important. The aim of this course is examine ways in which information and information technologies function in society and to critically evaluate moral, democratic, and legal questions that arise at the intersection of information and society.

With that in mind, there are three key objectives for this course.

1. Understand important social, legal, and historical contexts of information technologies.
2. Critically evaluate important moral, political, legal, and social questions that arise in the context of information technologies.
3. Develop students’ abilities to research, articulate, and discuss complex issues and arguments surrounding important social, moral, political, and legal questions as the pertain to information and information technologies.

Moreover, this is a Communications B requirement-fulfilling course. One of the most important skills you can have is the ability to communicate ideas orally and in writing. It is important as a facet of actually understanding complex ideas—the ability to communicate ideas is closely related to one’s understanding of those ideas. It is important professionally; research demonstrates again and again that the ability to communicate effectively is important to any employer and organization, and it is a skill that many professionals lack. If you can communicate effectively your opportunities as a professional and as a participant in civic life will be much, much greater.
II. Required Texts
There are two required books for this class, available from the UW Bookstore and from other retailers:


Other required readings and course materials will be available via Learn@UW.

In addition, you will be required to acquire (either by library loan or purchase) a book for the book review project. You will decide on that book based on research during the semester. I will provide more guidance on that project in the book review assignment description.

Finally, the other instructors and I will frequently share news items and other readings with you via Learn@UW. These will help form the background material for lecture and discussion, and you should follow that news feed closely.

III. Assignments, Evaluation, and Grading
Your final grade will be based on a combination of papers, presentations, exams, and participation, as outlined below.

Participation (20%)
A key component of this course is your regular, active, and thoughtful participation in discussion sections and in lecture. Though we will not take attendance during our large lecture meeting, we will take attendance during discussion. Moreover, you will be graded on quality of contributions during both lecture and discussion.

Stories Pertaining to the Information Society (SPINs) (20%)
Four times during the semester you will be required to find a recent news story about an information society issue, trend, case, technology, law, practice, or related matter, prepare a summary of the story and its relation to course content in a paper of one page or less, completed by the start of your discussion section that week. The news story must have been published no more than 7 days before the presentation. In addition, you will give a 2-minute presentation, timed strictly describing the story and relating it to one course theme. You will turn the SPINs into a dropbox on Learn@UW; in addition, you will hand to me a printout of the story and a short memo describing the story and its relevance. Presentation weeks will be assigned at random.

SPINs will be graded on:

- Creativity and novelty (does it replicate lots of what other students have done? Is it merely a front-page story in national newspapers?)
- Terse, accurate representation of the story.
- Clear articulation of how the story is related to the course content (do you pick out a conceptual framework, law, case, technology, or issue that directly relates to your story?)

Your grade is based on whether your SPIN is a (1) creative, novel story that you (2) clearly, tersely, and accurately represent, and (3) neatly and plausibly relate to course content.

Applying Course Themes (ACTs) (20%)
Four times during the semester, there will be a short writing assignment that asks you to relate course readings to novel situations. These will be take-home, open-book, and open-note, but very short and pointed.
Paper 1 (10%)
Your first paper will consider a new technology in light of theoretical considerations we consider in the first part of the course. I will distribute a document outlining in more detail the specifics of paper one via Learn@UW. The paper will be completed in stages:

- Proposal: Due in discussion section of week 3.
- Initial draft: Due week 4 in Learn@UW dropbox and in paper copy in class.
- Paper 1 rewrite: Due week 6 in Learn@UW dropbox and in paper copy in class.

Paper 2 (10%)
Your second paper will critically examine a new ICT, a new use of an ICT, or an information law, practice, or policy of your choosing, based on your own research and on materials covered in class. This can be related to free expression, leaking, surveillance, privacy, intellectual property, automation, or labor. I will distribute a document outlining in more detail the specifics of paper two via Learn@UW. Like paper 1, it will be completed in stages:

- Proposal: Due in discussion section of week 7.
- Initial draft for peer review: Due week 8 in Learn@UW dropbox.
- Peer review of others’ initial drafts: Due in discussion section in week 9.
- Second paper rewrite: Due week 11 in Learn@UW dropbox.

Book review (20%)
Your third big assignment is a critical book review that will include both a presentation and a paper. I will distribute a document outlining in more detail the specifics of paper two via Learn@UW.

- Book presentation in “Ignite” format: In discussion sections weeks 13 and 14.
- Final, critical book review due December 17 at 11:59pm, in Learn@UW dropbox.

Grade Scale

A  94 and above
AB  89-93
B   84-88
BC  79-83
C   70-78
D   60-69
F   59 and below

I round to the nearest whole point (hence, 93.5 is rounded to 94 and 93.49 is rounded to 93).

IV. Course Management

Schedule and Due Dates
The exam, papers, critical book review, and presentation dates are fixed; I only allow for paper extensions and exam rescheduling for extraordinary and university-approved excuses. The reading schedule, however, is subject to slight changes. I will announce changes in class and on the course Learn@UW page.

The penalty for late work is 5% of assignment points per day late.
Students with Disabilities
It is my intention to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. To request academic accommodations, you must register as soon as possible with McBurney Disability Resource Center (1305 Linden Drive; 263-2741; www.mcburney.wisc.edu.)

Religious Observance
Any student for whom religious observances conflict with class attendances or mandatory academic requirements should let me know within the first two week of class in order that we can make appropriate arrangements for make-up work.

Disruptions
Please avoid disruptions (arriving late, talking in class, texting, reading non-course materials, or packing to leave before the period ends), and please turn off cell phones. I don’t grade attendance. Thus, if you’d rather be doing something other than coming to class, you’re free to do so.

Contacting the Instructor
I will be in my office during office hours (unless I post a note in advance on Learn@UW) and you can just drop by. Otherwise, email is the best way to communicate with me. Allow me a day to respond, though I’ll generally respond more quickly than that. Please put “LIS 210” and a brief description in the subject line. I get a lot of email, and that will make it easier to see.

Your TAs will have their own communications preferences and office hours, which they will announce during discussion sections.

V. Academic Integrity

Quizzes and Examinations: Read this Closely
Food and beverages are prohibited in the classroom during the tests. Students must remove caps, hats, and sunglasses. The examinations will begin promptly at the beginning of the period and end when the proctor calls time. Students must cease writing the moment the proctor calls time. After the proctor calls time, students receive no extra time to finish writing. Students who arrive late receive no extra time.

Academic Misconduct: Read this Closely
The overwhelming majority of students are hard working and honest about their schoolwork. The instructor has great respect for the effort students put into preparing for this course.

Unfortunately, there are occasional instances of academic misconduct ("cheating").

Part of the value of a degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison lies in the standards of academic honesty and integrity maintained by the campus. To avoid academic misconduct, it is important that students understand how academic misconduct is defined in this course and the expectations the instructor has of each student.

Students have the right to expect that they and other students will be graded fairly, and students have rights of due process should they be accused of misconduct. Students also have an obligation to conduct their academic work with honesty and integrity according to University standards. Therefore, it is important that students:

- become familiar with the rules of academic misconduct;
- ask the instructor if you are unsure what behaviors constitute academic misconduct in a specific class or assignment;
- let your instructors know if you think you see incidents of misconduct;
- be aware that helping someone else to cheat is a violation of the rules and may result in misconduct charges against you.

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The examinations are closed book. Students must remove and stow away everything from the desk, seat, floor, and area around them. Students must turn off and store cell phones and other electronic devices. If anyone sees papers, notes, readings (or any other materials), a cell phone, or any electronic/communicative device within a student’s reach or area during the examination, then the instructor will assume that the student is cheating, and she will engage the academic misconduct process. Put another way: papers, notes, readings (or any other materials), a cell phone, or any electronic or communicative device within a student’s reach or area during the examination is \textit{prima facie} evidence of academic misconduct.

Before the examination, students will be required to certify that they have not engaged in academic misconduct while preparing for or during the course of a graded exercise.

**Academic Misconduct: What to Do if You See Someone Cheating**

Honest students are rightfully distressed when they see cheating occur. Students may sometimes see behaviors that the instructor does not notice. Cheating threatens the integrity of the classroom, and cheating can affect the grade distribution scale.

Students should feel free to discuss their concerns and observations with the instructor. He will want to know about these concerns or observations, and he will decide whether or not to take action in or to take steps to prevent cheating in the future. The instructor may ask you if you would be willing to testify at a hearing (although you will not be forced to do so). If you still have concerns after talking with the instructor, you may consult with your Academic Dean or with staff in Student Advocacy and Judicial Affairs.

Students may help other students by warning them that cheating is a violation of the UW System Administrative Code and may result in severe consequences. The instructor and the University do impose disciplinary sanctions upon students that commit academic misconduct. The instructor vigorously pursues all academic misconduct cases.

The rules about academic misconduct are located here: http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html.

**VI. Course Agenda and Readings**

**Week 1: September 6-8**

**Introduction, Conceptions of Technology**

- Syllabus
- Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid”?
- Barbour, “Ethics in an Age of Technology” ch. 1

Optional:

- Langdon Winner, "Do artifacts have politics?" (1986) in Donald MacKenzie and Judy Wajcman, eds., The social shaping of technology, 2nd ed. (1999).

**Week 2: September 13-15**

**Values in Technology**

- Spinello, “The Internet and Ethical Values”
- Wu, The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires (excerpts)
- Edmonds, pp. __
Week 3: September 20-22
Free Expression in an Internet Age

- Warburton, *Free Speech*, Chapters 1&2
- Lang, “Blocked and Based by Social Media: When is it Censorship?”
- McFarquhar, “A Powerful Russian Weapon: The Spread of False Stories”

Optional:

Week 4: September 27-29
Expression and Offense

- Warburton, Ch. 3 “Taking Offense”
- Feinberg, “The Offense Principle”
- Chen, “The Laborers Who Keep Dick Pics and Beheadings out of Your Facebook Feed”

Optional:

Week 5: October 4-6
Speech, Harrassment, and Hate Crimes in Cyberspace

- Warburton Chapter 5
- Danielle Citron, *Hate Crimes in Cyberspace* (excerpts)
- Gardiner et al, “The dark side of Guardian Comments”
- Hess, “Why Women Aren’t Welcome on the Internet”
- Bakasubramani, “Revenge Porn Prosecution Stumbles in New York”

Week 6: October 11-13
Wikileaks, Whistleblowing, Speech, and Security

- Hood, “From FOI World to Wikileaks World: A New Chapter in the Transparency Story?”
- Bok, “Whistleblowing and Professional Responsibility”
- The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, *The Panama Papers*

Watch: CitizenFour
Week 7: October 18-20
Leaks, Security, and Surveillance

- Waldron, “The Image of Balance”
- Edmonds, pp. __
- Becker, Erlanger, and Schmitt, “How Russia Often Benefits When Julian Assange Reveals the West’s Secrets”
- Maass, “How Laura Poitras Helped Snowden Spill His Secrets”

Optional
- Stack, Cumming-Bruce, and Kruhly, “Julian Assange: A Legal History”

Week 8: October 25-27
Privacy, Data, and Surveillance in a Digital Age

- Rubel and Jones, “Student Data and Learning Analytics: An Information Ethics Perspective”
- Satter and Michael, “Private Lives are Exposed as WikiLeaks Spills Its Secrets”
- Google, Search removal request under data protection law in Europe (“Right to be Forgotten Form”)

Week 9: November 1-3
Privacy, Data, and Surveillance in a Digital Age

- Swire, “The Golden Age of Surveillance”
- Stevenson and Goldstein, “At World’s Largest Hedge Fund, Sex, Fear and Video Surveillance”
- Balko, “Surprise! NSA data will soon routinely be used for domestic policing that has nothing to do with terrorism”
- Smith, “An iPhone Is an Extension of the Mind”

Week 10: November 8-10
Ownership in an Information Age

- Spinello, “Intellectual Property in Cyberspace”
- Vaidhyanathan, “Copyrights and Copywrongs” (excerpts)
- Pierson v. Post

Week 11: November 15-17
Ownership in an Information Age

- Luttwak, “Hidden assets, hidden costs”
- Farrell, “Why U.S. taxpayers may pay most of the bill for Apple’s $14.5 billion tax judgment”

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Week 12: November 22
Drones, Robots, and Automation: Information technologies at work and war
  • Edmonds, pp. __
  • MIT Media Lab, “Moral Machines”

No Discussion section: Happy Thanksgiving!

Week 13: November 29 – December 1
Drones, Robots, and Automation, continued
  • Nagel, “Really good at killing”
  • Waldron, “Neutral Principles and Drones”

Week 14: December 6-8
Drones, Robots, and Automation, continued
  • Topol, “Attack of the Killer Robots”
  • Human Rights Watch, “Killer Robots and the Concept of Meaningful Human Control”
  • McCarthy, “What does Dallas’s ‘bomb robot’ mean for the future of policing?”

Week 15: December 13-15
Review and summary, student presentations

Exam week: December 17
Due: Critical book review, in Learn@UW dropbox.