Course Description

“Frankenstein, Robocop, Big Data” is a course about memory. This course will consider the relative frailty of human memory in comparison to the unforgthing nature of digital storage. Humans forget; computers do not.

The course will begin by considering the relationship between memory and human identity. In many ways, we are who we are because we remember who we are day to day.

*However, human memory is fragile. We forget things; we misremember events.*

By contrast, any and all online activity leaves a trace that can be collected to form a version of the user. This version is not identical to the human user and yet is often a frighteningly accurate image of the user whose behaviors may be tracked and predicted.

Importantly, this digital version of the user is produced by a form of memory (or more precisely a storage of information) that does not forget. You may not remember “liking” that photo on Facebook at 3 am, but Facebook does.

**Required Texts** (please purchase these editions)

Texts are available at the UW Bookstore or at a bookstore of your choosing. Other materials will be available on our Learn@UW site.

- John Brunner *The Shockwave Rider* (Del Rey) ISBN: 978-0345467171

* Dollhouse Season 1 (available to watch on Netflix or on DVD for about $15)

Films to be watched outside of class:
Please Note: The readings, films, and television shows for this course discuss and depict sexual activity and violence (including the threat or suggestion of sexual violence).

Course Requirements
• One 3 page essay (15%)
• One 5 page essay (20%)
• Social Media Audit/Exploration of Facebook Archive, 500 words (20%)
• Final Exam (25%)
• Attendance, active participation, and short papers (20%)

All work must be submitted to achieve a passing grade.

Policies
• Attendance at all classes is expected. You may miss three classes. After these absences your final grade may be lowered by one half letter grade for each additional absence.
• Students are expected to be punctual. Excessive tardiness (over ten minutes) will be treated as a half-absence.
• Consistent preparation of readings and assignments and active participation is expected.
• MLA Paper formatting guidelines must be followed.
  (Please visit: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/675/1/ for further information)
• One full letter grade will be deducted per day for late papers.
• Please bring your books or readings to every class meeting.
• Please turn off or silence cell phones. Ringing phones will not be tolerated, nor will text messaging.
• Students are asked to review and abide by the University’s code on plagiarism.

Community in the Classroom
Community in the classroom, including the respect for the opinions of others, is crucial in our academic environment. A successful educational experience requires mutual respect on the part of the student and the instructor. While it is likely that you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in the classroom, it is imperative that courteous responses and behavior toward another be expressed. Disruptive behaviors such as persistent ringing of cell phones or beepers, inappropriate challenges to the professor’s authority, excessive tardiness or leaving class early, making offensive remarks, missing deadlines, prolonged chatting, reading newspapers during class, sleeping, talking out of turn, dominating discussion, shuffling backpacks and notebooks, and overt inattentiveness will not be tolerated.
Class Participation Self-Evaluation
Class participation is a key part of our course and a significant part of your final grade. I encourage you to continue to evaluate your participation in class over the course of the semester using this rubric (which is similar to how your participation will be graded):

Did I thoughtfully respond at least once to a question during lecture or discussion section this week?
(Yes-2.5 points, Somewhat-1 point, No-0 points)

Did I provide at least two meaningful and constructive responses to other students' comments in lecture or discussion section?
(Yes-2.5 points, Somewhat-1 point, No-0 points)

Did I complete the reading for class thoughtfully and attentively?
(Yes-2.5 points, Somewhat-1 point, No-0 points)

Did I pay attention to face to face discussions and lectures?
(Yes-2.5 points, Somewhat-1 point, No-0 points)

If your score is lower than 7.5, then your participation may not meet course expectations and your participation grade may be affected. (Adapted from Patti Shank, The Online Learning Book)

Laptops in the Classroom
By the nature of this course much of what we will be doing will draw on digital resources and materials circulated electronically. Laptop computers (and similar devices) will, of course, be useful for these purposes. Laptop use is therefore permitted in the classroom; however, I encourage students to make judicious and limited use of laptops and other similar devices in class.

Guidelines for E-mail
I encourage you to contact me via e-mail if you have any questions pertaining to the assignments or would like to make an appointment to meet with me. However, please remember that an e-mail to a professor is not a casual e-mail.

Contact and Accommodations
I encourage you to ask me and your TAs for assistance or advice throughout the semester. I remind students who are registered with the McBurney Center to inform me of the accommodations to which they are entitled. The McBurney Center URL: http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/

Writing Center
I strongly encourage you to make use of the Writing Center. Here, you will find resources and guidance from excellently trained writing tutors. The main location is in
Helen C. White Hall and there are seven satellite locations across campus. For more information, or to make an appointment, visit: http://www.writing.wisc.edu/

**Academic dishonesty**
Please visit http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html for university policies regarding scholastic dishonesty, which includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to the student, etc.

**Reading and Assignment Schedule**
*Please note, readings and assignments are due on the day listed.*
*(for example, you should come to class on February 3 having read the assigned pages from Locke)*

**Week 1 Introduction**
1/20 First Day– Introduction
   Donald Davidson “Knowing One’s Own Mind” (1987)

**Week 2 Classical Conceptions of Memory**
1/25 From *Theories of Memory* (2007) [Learn@UW]:
   Plato *Theaetetus* and *Phaedrus*, excerpts
   Aristotle *De Memoria et Reminiscentia*, excerpts

1/27 From *Theories of Memory* (2007) [Learn@UW]:
   Cicero *De Oratore*, excerpts
   Cicero *Ad Herennium*, excerpts

**Week 3 Medieval and Early Modern Conceptions of Memory**
2/1 From *Theories of Memory* (2007) [Learn@UW]:
   Mary J. Carruthers *The Book of Memory*, excerpts
   Francis A. Yates *The Art of Memory*, excerpts

2/3 John Locke *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) Book II Ch. I, Ch X, Ch XXVII [Learn@UW]

**Week 4 Subjectivity and Humans as Machines? (pt. 1)**
2/8 Nick Mansfield “Introduction” from *Subjectivity* (2000) [Learn@UW]

2/10 La Mettrie *Man a Machine*, excerpts (1748) [Learn@UW]

**Week 5 Frankenstein**
2/15 Mary Shelley *Frankenstein* (1818) [Bookstore] p. 5-43

2/17 *Frankenstein* p. 44-90
Week 6 Frankenstein continued
2/22 Frankenstein p. 93-151

2/24 Frankenstein p. 152-188

Week 7 Memory and Inscription
2/29 Frankenstein p. 189-225

3/2 Israel Zangwill “The Memory Clearing House” (1892) [Learn@UW]
** First Essay Due in Section This Week **

Week 8 Machines as Humans?
3/7 Sigmund Freud “A Note Upon the Mystic Writing Pad” (1925) [Learn@UW]

   Read: Ian Bogost “Metaphorism” from Alien Phenomenology (2012) [Learn@UW]

(Begin watching Dollhouse for next week)

Week 9 Memory and the Posthuman
3/14 Philip K. Dick “We Can Remember it for you Wholesale” (1966) [Learn@UW]

3/16 Watch: Doll House Season 1 (2009)
   Read: N. Katherine Hayles “Toward Embodied Virtuality” from How We Became Posthuman (1999) [Learn@UW]
   Guest Lecturer: Mattie Burkert

3/21 Spring Break
3/23 Spring Break

Week 10 Surveillance and the Subject
3/28 Michel Foucault Discipline and Punish (1975), excerpts [Learn@UW]

3/30 No Class

Week 11 The NSA, Social Media, and You
4/4 Watch: United States of Secrets Pt 1 (2014) (114 min) [Learn@UW]

4/6 Watch: United States of Secrets Pt 2 [Learn@UW]
   Read: Blown to Bits Ch. 4 [Learn@UW]
   Julia Angwin Dragnet Nation (2014) Ch.6 [Learn@UW]
** Social Media/Facebook Archive Audit Due in Section this Week **
Week 12 Predicting the Future/Resistance is Futile?

4/11 Philip K. Dick “The Minority Report” (1956) [Learn@UW]

4/13 Rita Raley “Dataveillance and Countervaillance” (2012) [Learn@UW]
“One Woman’s Attempt to Hide Her Pregnancy from Big Data” (2014)
“Attempts to stay anonymous on the web will only put the NSA on your trail” (2014) [Learn@UW]

Week 13 Networked Subjects

4/20 The Shockwave Rider Book 2

Week 14 “The Plug-in Lifestyle”/ “The Right to Be Forgotten”
4/25 The Shockwave Rider Book 3

4/27 “Factsheet on ‘The Right to Be Forgotten’ Ruling” [Learn@UW]
“’Right to Be Forgotten’ Online Could Spread” [Learn@UW]

Week 15 Robocop, rebooted
5/2 Watch: Robocop (2014)

5/4 Course Wrap Up
** Final Essay Due in Section this Week **

Final Exam Wednesday, May 11 12:25 – 2:25 PM