Overview

This course is designed with specific learning outcomes in mind, applicable to sociology majors and non-majors:

1. Develop a basic understanding of the social dimensions of information communication technologies.
2. Read, with substantial comprehension, current articles, reports, and academic papers related to developments in IT (information technology) and social science.
3. Extract from the readings an understanding of the social and political context surrounding digital information systems.

Week 1

Introduction

A

- A Brief History of the Internet
- Internet: The Mainstreaming of Online Life
- Morozov, Evgeny. The Wrong Way to Discuss New Technologies
- Manuell Castells. The Network Society (lecture only)

Information Overload

B

- Morozov, Evgeny. Is Smart Making Us Dumb?
Identity, Relationships, and Lifestyles

C

Exam 1 20% of final grade

Week 2

Digital Inequality

*Winner-take-all economics*

A
- Why Has Inequality Been Growing?
  - Tufekci, Zeynep. *Brogrammers*.

Digital literacy

B

C
- Boyd, Danah. *The MySpace White Flight*

*And choose one of the following:*
Exam 2 30% of final grade

Week 3

Politics and Revolution

A

• Ignatow and Schuett. Inter-organizational digital divide: Civic groups' media strategies in the Trinity River Corridor Project. First Monday.


B

• Howard, P.N., Duffy, A., Freelon, D., Hussain, M., Mari, W. & Mazaid, M. (2011). Opening Closed Regimes: What Was the Role of Social Media During the Arab Spring?

• Clay Shirsky. The Political Power of Social Media.

The News

C


Ignatow and Williams. 2011. New Media and the 'Anchor Baby' Boom.
Final Exam 40% of final grade

10% of final grade for participation/class presentation