Learning Outcomes

Most individuals, organizations, and governments are quick to adopt new technologies, but rarely take the time to consider how that technology is shaping their behaviors and, conversely, how users shape the development of future technologies.

Successful completion of this course will give you the conceptual tools necessary to understand the social, political, and economic factors associated with a networked society. Issues will range from the theoretical (what is information and how do humans construct it?), to the cultural (how newer communication technologies are different from earlier distance-shrinking and knowledge-building technologies such as telephones), to the technical (what are the basic architectures of computing networks?).

As a core course in the BSIS, this class will also provide you a knowledge-based foundation for future courses in information, technology, and policy.

After successfully completing this course you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of fundamental concepts and ideas around the rise of the information society.
- Demonstrate critical thinking in evaluating causal arguments regarding the relationship between technology and society, including analyzing major assertions, background assumptions, and explanatory evidence.
- Explain how information & communication technologies (ICTs) shape national and global events.
- Use information technologies to conduct research and to communicate effectively about ICTs.
- Articulate how the historical events leading to the information society have shaped our modern-day use of ICTs.
- Articulate ways technology use can be problematic, and how to harness technology for positive change.
- Work collaboratively to create and disseminate information content broadly.

Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland’s policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit [www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html](http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html) for the Office of Undergraduate Studies’ full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.
Activities and Learning Assessments

Your final grade will be based on the following components (full details will be available on ELMS).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Assessments</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Points Each</th>
<th>Category Total</th>
<th>Category Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion Prompts:</strong> Conversations with entire class or subsets of class about course content (prompts in modules)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Quizzes:</strong> Quizzes to assess comprehension of content presented in modules</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactive Learning &amp; Reflection Assignments (ILRAs):</strong> Activities with short writing assignments</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exams</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Memes &amp; Virality Project</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lectures</strong></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points:</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Discussion Prompts (10% total/1% each) and Lectures (10% total/1% each).** In a class that meets in person, I take attendance and host discussions—in an online only environment I post lectures and discussion prompts for students to engage in. To receive credit for these discussions, you need to 1) engage with the prompt and 2) respond at least one time to classmates’ posts, though more than once is highly encouraged. At times, you might be broken into smaller groups so the discussion threads stay manageable. To receive credit for lectures you need to watch them (I can view this in ELMS Canvas) and submit 3 things learned.

- **Content Quizzes (15% total/3% each; multiple dates).** To help you evaluate how well you comprehend assigned readings and materials, some modules will have a quiz to assess knowledge. These quizzes are open note but will be timed, so you should not take them if you have not been paying attention to the readings or course content. You may use external resources (readings, lecture slides, notes, Web, etc.) during any quiz, but all answers must be in your own words, no working with any other humans.

- **Interactive Learning & Reflection Assignments (ILRAs; 20% total/4% each; multiple dates).** There will be five assignments (approximately one every few weeks) that will ask you to complete a “real world” activity, then (1) write a 300-600 word reflection on the experience and sometimes (2) comment on your peers’ activities (in your pre-assigned discussion groups).

- **Memes & Virality Project (15%, multiple dates).** When this class meets in person, we do this assignment as a group activity, but for the online version, we’re going to have it be an individual assignment with fewer parts, while maintaining the flavor of the original. For this project, you will consider what makes content go viral or not, try it out yourself, then create an infographic that helps explain virality to a public audience.

  o **Part 1 (5%):** Propose the content you will disseminate in hopes of going viral. Submit your proposed content and justification (i.e., why you think it will work) via ELMS.

  o **Part 1a (2.5%).** Give and get peer feedback on project ideas.

  o **Part 2 (5-point penalty for not completing):** Disseminate content and take whatever steps you’d like to try to get it to go viral.

  o **Part 3 (7.5%) Use your case to build an informative infographic.** See ELMS for examples of infographics from prior semesters. Your content should be front and center in this infographic.

- **Exams (30% total, multiple dates).** There are three exams and each exam is worth 10% of your grade and must be taken before the end of the day on the specified Friday to receive credit, unless arrangements are made before the exam with me. Once you begin the exam, you’ll have anywhere from 60-120 minutes to complete the entire exam. Exams comprise a mix of all course content; open from 8am-midnight.

  o **Exams like quizzes are also open book/open note.** You are bound by the UMD honor code and will be asked to sign off to confirm you have not cheated during the exam. This includes directly talking with other students about the questions. You may use external resources (readings, lecture slides, notes, Web, etc.) during any exam, but all answers must be in your own words.
Grades

Grades are not given, but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course. If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you would like to review any of your grades (including the exams), or have questions about how something was scored, please email me your concerns or questions. I am happy to discuss your grades with you, and if I have made a mistake I will immediately correct it. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing and within one week of receiving the grade.

Final letter grades are assigned based on the total points earned. To be fair to everyone I have to establish clear, consistent standards, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same as making the cut (89.99 vs. 90.00). It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others. I do not round grades up. I will not respond to email requests for a grade bump at the end of the semester. The cutoffs are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Grade Cutoffs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ 97.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 94.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 90.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Late Assignments

A late penalty will be applied to any assignment that is submitted late (starting one minute beyond the due date and time).

Late assignments will be graded according to the following formula:

$$[\text{grade on assignment}] \times 0.9^{[\text{number of days late}]}$$

For example, if you turn in a 10-point assignment 1 day late, and earned a 100% on that assignment, your final grade for that assignment would be $(1.00)(0.9^1)$, or 90%. If you turned in the same assignment 3 days late, and earned an 80%, your grade would be $(0.80)(0.9^3)$, or 58%. Therefore, although your grade will take a serious hit if the assignment is late, in this class it is always better to turn in an assignment late than to not do it at all. Note that late assignments may not be graded quickly.

Please prepare in advance so that you will not encounter technical difficulties that will result in your work receiving a late penalty. Technical difficulties are not an excuse for late assignments — if you are having trouble submitting an assignment on Canvas, e-mail it to me before the deadline to avoid a penalty. If you have a conflict with the due date, assignments can always be submitted early. Generally speaking, illnesses are not an excuse for late assignments because you will receive the assignments at least one week before they are due.

If you know you will not be able to meet an assignment deadline, contact me before the due date to explain why you will need to submit the assignment late; these will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
Exam Policy

If you need to miss any of the three scheduled Friday exams because of outside circumstances (e.g., a religious holiday, military duties, work/athletic team travel), you must email me by Wednesday, February 13th to reschedule your exam time. If you are sick on an exam day, you must provide me with a doctor’s note to be excused (see the UMD policies on absences) and should email me before the exam time to let me know you’re sick. If you miss an exam due to other circumstances, you will not be able to make up the exam.

Collaboration, Class Discussions, and Academic Integrity in INST 201

All of the individually graded assessments must be completed independently. You are welcome (and highly encouraged) to study and discuss the course material with your peers, but providing or receiving quiz/exam answers or letting someone else contribute to your writing assignment constitutes academic dishonesty. Penalties for academic dishonesty can include a 0 on the assignment or an automatic failure and “XP” on your transcript. Class discussions require effort—you must read the document titled “Guidelines for Online Discussions” on ELMS.

Content Quizzes are open-book. This means that you may consult the readings or your notes (but not another person) as you take the quiz. Exams function the same exact way as quizzes.

Accommodations

Students with disabilities should inform me of their needs at the beginning of the semester. Please also contact the Disability Support Services (301-314-7682 or http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS). DSS will make arrangements with you and me to determine and implement appropriate academic accommodations. Inclusion is one of the iSchool’s core values, and I have attempted to make all materials and assignments accessible to people with varying abilities. However, if there is something else I can do to make the class more accessible please schedule a time to talk with me. This will benefit not only yourself but also my future students.

Get Some Help!

You are expected to take personal responsibility for you own learning. This includes acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. Everyone can benefit from some expert guidance on time management, note taking, and exam preparation, so I encourage you to consider visiting http://ter.ps/learn to schedule an appointment with an academic coach. Sharpen your communication skills (and improve your grade) by visiting http://ter.ps/writing and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. Finally, if you just need someone to talk to, visit http://www.counseling.umd.edu.

Everything is free because you have already paid for it, and everyone needs help… all you have to do is ask for it.

Names/Pronouns and Self Identifications

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit trans.umd.edu to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.
Students in Need

Students encountering psychological problems that hamper their course work are referred to the Counseling Center (301-314-7651 or http://www.counseling.umd.edu) for expert help. For more information on UMD’s Student Services, see http://www.studentaffairs.umd.edu/student-life

If you or someone you know feels unsafe, the university has resources (see list below). Read more about hate-based crimes here: https://ocrsm.umd.edu/files/Hate_Bias_FAQs_final.pdf

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Counseling Center</td>
<td>301-314-7651</td>
<td><a href="http://www.counseling.umd.edu">www.counseling.umd.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Health Center and Mental Health Services</td>
<td>301-314-8180</td>
<td><a href="http://www.health.umd.edu">www.health.umd.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland Chaplains</td>
<td></td>
<td>thestamp.umd.edu/memorial_chapel/chaplains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct</td>
<td>301-405-1142</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ocrsm.umd.edu">www.ocrsm.umd.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tips for a Successful Semester

1. Come to class (online discussions/lectures) prepared. This includes completing any assignments and readings before class and/or discussions. This also includes preparing effectively for the exams.
2. Take the content quizzes seriously. Take watching and responding to the lectures seriously. Alone, each of these types of assignments aren’t worth many points but the missed points really do start to add up if you fail to complete them and the quizzes and lectures contain most of the content and are excellent practice for the exams in this course.
3. Struggling to keep up with all the reading? Check out How to Read a Book, which provides highly useful advice on reading quickly without losing comprehension.
4. Struggling with classes in general? Talk to me, friends, family, and/or the counseling center. I will work with you to help you succeed. I’d much rather hear from you earlier rather than later. For example, it’s better to email me ahead of the time (days, a week—not minutes or hours) something is due to tell me you are sick, have a personal emergency, etc., rather than waiting until the last minute or until after an assignment is due.
5. Engage in class discussions. Ask questions. Share your opinions. Be open to others’ viewpoints, even if they’re different than your own. While I rarely post on discussion boards, these are spaces and places for you to interact with your peers on all the topics assigned in class.
6. Have a question? Email me anytime. Make sure to include the course number (INST201) in the subject line to ensure I see it. I will respond within 48 hours (not counting weekends). Do not email me multiple times if I have not responded and fewer than 48 hours have passed. After that time, please send me a reminder email, as I am just as human as you and sometimes something will slip through my radar or attention.
7. Know your rights as an undergraduate student at UMD: University of Maryland Policies for Undergraduate Students
8. Have fun!
# SCHEDULE OF CONTENT

**NOTE:** These are a preliminary listing of readings. These may change and the final set of assigned readings, podcasts, and/or videos will be those listed in the modules.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODULE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>REQUIRED READINGS/AUDIO/VIDEO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 1/28 – 2/3 | Course Intro, What do I do with a degree in InfoSci? How to succeed in the course | • Read and Review Syllabus, Rubrics, and Guidelines  
• Review InfoSci Career Resources ([School website](#))  
• **DUE:** Discussion Prompt #1: Introduce yourself to the class; Lectures ([on ELMS](#)); Syllabus Quiz (Quiz #1) |
| 2 2/4 – 2/10 | Information Systems, Information Seeking, and the Internet | • Lester & Koehler, Chapter 2 ([on ELMS](#))  
• *How Did the Printing Press Change History?,* Wishnia ([on ELMS](#))  
• Chapter 12 (The Legacy of the Telegraph) in *The Victorian Internet* by Standage ([on ELMS](#))  
• How the Internet Was Invented, Part 1 ([video](#)) and Part 2 ([video](#))  
• Terry Gross interview with Andrew Blum ([audio](#))  
• **DUE:** Lectures ([on ELMS](#)); Discussion Prompt #2; ILRA #1 |
| 3 2/11 – 2/17 | Information Literacy: Literacy in the Digital Age and Fake News | • Did Media Literacy Backfire? ([Data & Society](#))  
• Fake News Is Not the Only Problem ([Data & Society](#))  
• The Fallacy of the ‘Digital Native’: Why Young People Need to Develop their Digital Skills ([ECDL](#))  
• How to Spot Fake News ([IFLA](#)); Spot Fake News ([Common Sense](#))  
• How to Choose Your News ([Damon Brown for TED-Ed](#))  
• The CRAAP Test Worksheet ([on ELMS](#))  
• **DUE:** Lectures ([on ELMS](#)); Discussion Prompt #3; Content Quiz #2 |
| 4 2/18 – 2/24 | Information Needs, Information Seeking Behavior, Information Economics, and Accessibility | • The Hyperconnected Economy: How the growing interconnectedness of society is changing the landscape for business ([The Economist](#))  
• The Long Tail ([Wired](#))  
• Information Economics and the Internet, by Coeira ([on ELMS](#))  
• The Revolution Will Be Driverless: Autonomous Cars ([audio](#))  
• **DUE:** Lectures ([on ELMS](#)); Discussion Prompt #4; ILRA #2 |
| 5 2/25 – 3/3 | Information Organization and Information Overload | • Looking for Information by Don Case ([on ELMS](#))  
• Metadata? Thesauri? Taxonomies? Topic Maps! ([on ELMS](#))  
• *Too Many Choices: A Problem That Can Paralyze* ([NY Times](#))  
• Attached to Technology and Paying a Price ([NY Times](#))  
• **DUE:** Lectures ([on ELMS](#)); Discussion Prompt #5; Exam #1 online Friday 3/1 |
| 6 3/4 – 3/10 | Social Media and Mobile Media | • Social Media Use in 2018 ([Pew Internet Project](#))  
• Confirmed: Echo chambers exist on social media. So what do we do about them? ([Washington Post](#))  
• Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation? ([The Atlantic](#))  
• A sociology of the smartphone ([Longreads](#))  
• **DUE:** Lectures ([on ELMS](#)); Discussion Prompt #6; Quiz #3 |
• Response to Turkle ([Made in America](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• Note to Self Podcast: The Case for Infomagical ([audio](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• Attached to Technology and Paying a Price ([NY Times](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• Clay Shirky’s TED Talk ([video](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• **DUE:** Lectures ([on ELMS](https://www.nytimes.com/)); ILRA #3; Midterm: Exam #2 online Friday 3/15 |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/16 – 3/24</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td>• No Work is Assigned or Due. Enjoy the Break!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8 3/25 – 3/31 | Memes, Virality, and Breaking the Internet: Content Consumers as Content Creators | • “The Viral Dream” Chapter in Terms of Service ([on ELMS](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• Article: *Ice Bucket Challenge Funds ALS Breakthrough, Proves Skeptics Wrong*  
• Article: *Yes, Those Ice Buckets Raised Millions, But There Was No ALS ‘Breakthrough’*  
• How ‘Pepe the Frog’ went from harmless to hate symbol ([LA Times](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• Why that video went viral ([New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• **DUE:** Lectures ([on ELMS](https://www.nytimes.com/)); Discussion Prompt #7: Submit Meme & Virality Project Ideas and Peer Feedback on Project Ideas |
| 9 4/1 – 7 | Online Communities, Online Harassment, VR/AR, and Quantified Self | • Ch. 4 Baym’s Personal Connections in the Digital Age ([on ELMS](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• Vitak et al. (2017): Identifying Women’s Experiences With and Strategies for Mitigating Negative Effects of Online Harassment ([on ELMS](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• The Rise and Fall of Virtual Reality ([The Verge](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• Why ‘Pokémon GO’ Is The World’s Most Important Game ([Forbes](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• Gary Wolf: The Quantified Self ([TED Talk](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• There’s No Such Thing as Innocuous Personal Data ([Slate](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• Fighting online trolls with bots ([The Conversation](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• **RECOMMENDED READING:** The Virtual Community, Chapter 3 (Howard Rheingold) ([on ELMS](https://www.nytimes.com/))  
• **DUE:** Lectures ([on ELMS](https://www.nytimes.com/)); ILRA #4; Content Quiz #4 |
<p>| 10 4/8 – 4/14 | Project Due | • <strong>DUE:</strong> Meme &amp; Virality Project Due Wednesday, 4/10; Final Posting on separate/additional Meme and Virality Discussion Prompt #7 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Privacy, Security, and Surveillance</td>
<td>- Google's Cerf Says “Privacy May Be an Anomaly.” Historically, He’s Right (<a href="https://techcrunch.com">TechCrunch</a>)&lt;br&gt;- Securing Your Digital Life Like a Normal Person (<a href="https://medium.com">Medium</a>)&lt;br&gt;- Maybe Better If You Don’t Read This Story on Public WiFi (<a href="https://medium.com">Medium</a>)&lt;br&gt;- The Internet of Things: Roadmap to a Connected World (<a href="https://mitpress.mit.edu/technology-review">MIT Technology Review</a>)&lt;br&gt;- The $11 Trillion Internet Of Things, Big Data And Pattern Of Life&lt;br&gt;- Analytics (<a href="https://www.forbes.com">Forbes</a>)&lt;br&gt;- Jennifer Golbeck: Your social media “likes” expose more than you think (<a href="https://www.ted.com">TED talk</a>)&lt;br&gt;- The Most Wanted Man in the World (<a href="https://www.wired.com">WIRED</a>)&lt;br&gt;- How the NSA Spying Programs Have Changed Since Snowden (<a href="https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/">PBS Frontline</a>)&lt;br&gt;- Watch the Full Episode: 'State of Surveillance' with Edward Snowden and Shane Smith (<a href="https://www.vice.com">VICE</a>)&lt;br&gt;- DUE: Lectures (<a href="https://www.elms.edu">on ELMS</a>); Discussion #8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Utopia or Dystopia?: Big Data, Ethics, Algorithms, and Artificial Intelligence</td>
<td>- Crash Course Computer Science: Machine learning &amp; artificial intelligence (<a href="https://www.youtube.com">YouTube</a>)&lt;br&gt;- Can We Trust the Numbers? (<a href="https://www.npr.org">NPR/TED</a>)&lt;br&gt;  - Cathy O’Neil and Joy Buolamwini, 0:00-23:00&lt;br&gt;  - Anne Milgram, 40:00-50:00&lt;br&gt;- Algorithmic Accountability Reporting: On the Investigation of Black Boxes, Tow Center for Digital Journalism (<a href="https://www.elms.edu">on ELMS</a>)&lt;br&gt;- The Humans Working Behind the AI Curtain (<a href="https://hbr.org">Harvard Business Review</a>)&lt;br&gt;- The Moral Bias Behind Your Search Results (<a href="https://www.ted.com">TED Talk</a>)&lt;br&gt;- Tech’s Ethical ‘Dark Side’: Harvard, Stanford, and Others Want to Address It (<a href="https://www.nytimes.com">NY Times</a>)&lt;br&gt;- The Real Name Fallacy (<a href="https://www.coralproject.org">Coral Project</a>)&lt;br&gt;- Big Data Research Creates Ethical Concerns (<a href="https://www.readorlisten.com">read or listen</a>)&lt;br&gt;- Perspectives on Big Data, Ethics, and Society (<a href="https://www.elms.edu">on ELMS</a>)&lt;br&gt;- DUE: Lectures (<a href="https://www.elms.edu">on ELMS</a>); Discussion #9; ILRA #5; Quiz #5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>ICTs for Political and Social Change</td>
<td>- Gladwell, &quot;Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted&quot; (<a href="https://www.elms.edu">on ELMS</a>)&lt;br&gt;- Taking power through technology in the Arab Spring (<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com">Al Jazeera</a>)&lt;br&gt;- Beyond the Hashtags, #BLM: read intro and conclusion (<a href="https://www.elms.edu">on ELMS</a>)&lt;br&gt;- DUE: Lectures (<a href="https://www.elms.edu">on ELMS</a>); Discussion Prompt #10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Study for Final Exam and Final Exam</td>
<td>- Final: Exam #3 online Friday 5/17</td>
</tr>
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