



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 are newer communication technologies 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 (ICT's) 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 ICT's.
- Articulate ways technology use can be problematic, and how to harness technology for positive change.
- Work collaboratively to create and disseminate information content broadly.

Kelly M. Hoffman, MLS

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she / her / hers

Class Meets

Monday/Wednesday/Friday

11:00 – 11:50am

HBK #0115

Office Hours

HBK #4105-K

M/W/F 10:00-11:00am*

(* generally, but please check my weekly calendar on ELMS or email me)

or by appointment

Prerequisites

N/A

Course Communication

- Time-sensitive announcements will be posted on ELMS and e-mailed to the class listserv.
- Contact me via ELMS or by e-mail (include "INST 201" in the subject).
- I will endeavor to reply to e-mails within 48 hours (not counting weekends).
- I will not respond to e-mails between 6pm and 9am.

Required Resources

Course website: elms.umd.edu



You may use the free mobile/web version of Turning Point, or you may optionally use a physical “clicker.” Either way, you must register for a (free) license through UMD if you have not done so for a previous class. You can download an app for iOS/Android or use a browser-based version.

TurningPoint Visit the Students section of clickers.umd.edu for details.

There are no required textbooks for this class. All learning materials will be provided on the course ELMS page.

All students must obtain at least 30 index cards for the class, as a single index card will be your ‘exit ticket’ for many lectures. Bring at least one index card to every class session.

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 for the Office of Undergraduate Studies’ full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

Activities, Learning Assessments, & Expectations for Students

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

Learning Assessments	#	Points Each	Category Total	Category Weight
Content Quizzes (QUIZ): pre-class quizzes submitted on ELMS (top 10 grades)	15	10	100	10%
In Class Activities (CLASS): in-class “clicker” quizzes, activities, and exit tickets (top 30 grades)	~40	~3	100	10%
Interactive Learning & Reflection Assignments (ILRA): activities with short writing assignments	5	70	350	35%
Exams (EXAM)	2	100-150	250	25%
Viral Content Project (VIRAL): Multi-part viral content project completed as a group.	1	200	200	20%
Extra Credit (EXTRA)	???	???	???	???
Total Points:			1000	100%

- **Content Quizzes (10%; usually due Sundays at 11:59pm).** To help you evaluate how well you comprehend the assigned reading each week, quizzes on ELMS will be due before the start of each week that has new readings. There will be 15 quizzes worth 10 points each; your lowest five grades will be dropped. The quizzes may contain multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answers, or other question types.

Content quizzes are **open book**, which means you may refer to the readings while you take the quiz (but you may **not** discuss the questions with another classmate until you have both completed the quiz).

- **In-Class Activities (10%; multiple dates).** We will have activities in most class sessions to reinforce class content, each worth 3-4 points. There will be somewhere around 40 in-class activities; only 30 scores will contribute to your final grade. There will be four types of in-class activities:
 - **Clicker questions** will be graded as pass/fail (you participated/didn't participate), with occasional extra points for correct answers
 - Some **small group activities or discussions** will involve creating a document or product to be turned in at the end of class.
 - You will be given 5 minutes at the end of some class sessions to write a response to a question or prompt on index cards, which will serve as **exit tickets**.
 - If you miss an in-class activity, you will be able to respond to a related prompt provided on the last slide of the day's slide deck **until the end of the day** for full credit, and for half credit thereafter.
- **Interactive Learning & Reflection Assignments (35%; multiple dates).** These five assignments (worth 70 points each) will consist of a "real world" activity, combined with a reflection on the experience.
 - **ILRA-1: Information Scavenger Hunt (02/10).** Find information-related items on the UMD campus.
 - **ILRA-2: A Day Without Data (02/24).** Spend a day without connecting to the internet—no wifi, no texting, no online games!
 - **ILRA-3: Experiences with Online Harassment (04/07):** Write a reflection based on our readings and discussion, your own experiences, and the results of your survey and interviews.
 - **ILRA-4: Cybermatics (04/21):** This ILRA will be about either Privacy or Security, depending on availability of guest speakers.
 - **ILRA-5: Dystopian Futures (05/05):** Watch an episode of Black Mirror that is not so far off from the current day.
- **Viral Content Project (20%, multiple dates).** Understanding how information is created, distributed, and consumed is a critical component of nearly any job in the information sector. In your future classes and careers, you'll likely be creating and consuming content, searching for and sharing information, and trying to predict what will happen tomorrow. These activities require you to understand your audience and tailor your information practices to them. For this project, you will form teams of **3-4 people**. The goal of this assignment is to create a piece of **original** content that goes viral. How do we measure virality? Quite simply, virality is about exposure. Most sites have metrics built into them to measure virality, but one component of this project is to create content where spread can be easily captured. Note that there will be an individual peer review component of the group project to address social loafing—group members who do not pull their weight may receive a different grade than the rest of the group.
 - **VC-0: Team Assignment Requests. (Optional, 02/15)** — **IF** you want to be on a team with a specific person or people (your team may have up to 4 members), you must let me know by this date. If you do not have a teammate request, don't worry — you'll be assigned to a team randomly.
 - **VC-1: Team Contract. (25 pts, 03/08)** – A successful team agrees on expectations at the start of a project. You will complete a "team contract" in which you each commit to communication and participation standards. **NOTE:** Although this is a group assignment, for this item you must **each** upload a copy of the same contract to show me you have all agreed.
 - **VC-2: Viral Content Proposal (50 pts, 03/29)** – Your team will develop two potential pieces of viral content and a dissemination plan and present them in a short paper.
 - **VC-3: Proposal Peer Review (10 pts, 04/04)** – Individually (not as a group) you will review another team's meme proposal and provide them with constructive feedback.
 - **VC-4: Final Meme (10 pts, 04/10)** — Your group's final meme must be ready by this date. You may begin promoting the meme.
 - **VC-5: Project Reflection and Presentation (100 pts, multiple dates)**

- **A: Project Reflection (05/01)** — Your group will compose a brief reflection paper discussing the success or failure of your meme.
- **B: Debrief Powerpoint (05/01) & Presentation (05/03)** — Your team will give a short (5 minute max) presentation to the class.
- **VC-6: Individual Team Evaluation (5 pts/10 pt penalty for not completing, 05/13)** — You will have a chance to reflect on your team members' performance in the group as well as your own.
- **Midterm Exam (10%, 03/13)** The midterm will cover class content from Weeks 1 through 8. It will consist of multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions worth a total of 100 points.
- **Final Exam (15%, TBA)**. The final exam will cover all class content, with an emphasis on content from Weeks 9 through 15. It will consist of multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions worth a total of 150 points. **Note: The official exam schedule has not been released; the preliminary schedule shows our final at 8:00am on Saturday, May 18. This may change.**
- **Extra Credit Activities.** Extra credit activities of varying point values **may** become available.

Grades

Grades are earned, not given. 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, **wait 24 hours**, then please email me or schedule a time for us to meet in my office via [Calbird](#). 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 this as making the cut (89.99 ≠ 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:

Final Grade Cutoffs									
+	97.00%	+	87.00%	+	77.00%	+	67.00%		
A	94.00%	B	84.00%	C	74.00%	D	64.00%	F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%	-	60.00%		

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, capped at a 50% penalty on the original grade after one week:

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

1 day late = 90% of original grade

2 days late = 81% of original grade

3 days late = 72% of original grade

4 days late = 66% of original grade

5 days late = 59% of original grade

6 days late = 53% of original grade

7 days late = 50% of original grade

More than 7 days late = 25% of original grade

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. Note that **in-class activities cannot be made up past 11:59pm on the day of class** (see Activities and Learning Assessment section for more details); however, only 30 will count toward your final grade, giving you some lee-way for missed classes.

Note: Exams are not included in the missed deadlines policy. See next section.

Exam Policy

You must review the [UMD policies on missed assignments](#) **before the drop / add period ends (February 8)** and contact me if you will need to miss an exam because of an excused absence. If you miss an exam due to other circumstances (e.g., oversleeping), you will not be able to make up the exam.

Collaboration, Group Work, 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 “XF” on your transcript. Review the [UMD Academic Integrity policies](#) for more information. When in doubt, **ask me before submitting the assignment** (there’s no penalty for unsubmitted work so it can’t hurt).

For the group project assignments, you may and should collaborate with members of your group (but not other groups).

The Content Quizzes (CQ) are open-book. This means that you may consult the readings or your notes (but not another person) as you take the quiz. **Exams (EX) are closed-book.**

Accommodations

Students with disabilities should inform me of their needs at the beginning of the semester. Please also contact the Accessibility and Disability Service (301-314-7682 or <https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/>). ADS 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 diverse abilities. However, if there is something else I can do to make the class more accessible please schedule a time to come talk to me. This will benefit not only yourself but also my future students.

Get Some Help!

You are expected to take personal responsibility for your 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

Name	Phone	Website
University Counseling Center	301-314-7651	www.counseling.umd.edu
University Health Center and Mental Health Services	301-314-8180	www.health.umd.edu
University of Maryland Chaplains		thestamp.umd.edu/memorial_chapel/chaplains
Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct	301-405-1142	www.ocrsm.umd.edu

Tips for a Successful Semester

(Adapted from *Dr. Vitak's Tips for a Successful Semester* by Jessica Vitak.)

1. Come to class prepared. This includes completing any assignments and readings **before** class.
2. Take the content quizzes seriously. They aren't worth many points, but they are excellent practice for the exams and can help you identify areas you need to study more.
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.
5. Engage in class discussions. Ask questions. Share your opinions. Be open to others' viewpoints, even if they're different than your own.
6. Have a question outside of class? Email me anytime. Make sure to include the course number (INST201) in the subject line to ensure I see it. I will try to 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, do send me a reminder email.
7. Visit me during office hours to talk about course content or anything else on your mind.
8. Know your rights as an undergraduate student at UMD: [University of Maryland Policies for Undergraduate Students](#)
9. Have fun!

Tips From Former INST 201 Students

I asked my students from a previous semester to give advice to future INST 201 students—you! Here's what they said.

1. "Procrastinating on assignments will only bring out your worst work." - H.K.
2. "The exams are straightforward; you just have to pay attention." - J.Y.
3. "Attending the class and listening to the professor should reduce your efforts for the exams by half." - S.D.
4. "Do the ILRAs on time and spend the extra five minutes ensuring you met all the requirements." - E.A.
5. "Do the readings—most of the time they're actually interesting." - M.G.
6. "Getting to know your fellow classmates can make you more comfortable in the class." - B.R.
7. "You learn a lot more during the discussions in class than just reading slides." - J.K.
8. "Take advantage of the open note and untimed quizzes. Look at the questions before reading the material, so you know what to be looking for." - A.O.
9. "Show up to class. Class time is not as terrible compared to many other classes." - A.W.
10. "Don't leave the quiz until one hour before the deadline. I did. It's stressful, haha." - S.M.

And one bonus tip...

11. "Show Ms. Hoffman that you like cats. I don't think this will help you succeed, but it also cannot hurt." - S.K.