



Introduction to Information Science

INST 301

Fall 2018

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

Ryan O'Grady

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he/his/him

Class Meets

Online only

Fall Session 2018

August 27-

December 10

Office Hours

Always reachable via email

Course Communication

- Time-sensitive announcements will be posted on ELMS.
- Contact me via ELMS or by e-mail (include "INST 301" in the subject).
- I will reply to e-mails within 48 hours (not counting weekends). Generally I will reply much quicker than this, but wait 48 hours before re-sending me an email.

Grades

I will grade each assignment within 7 days. Generally I will grade them much quicker.

Activities and Learning Assessments

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
Discussion Prompts: Conversations with entire class or subsets of class about course content (prompts in modules)	15	1	15	15%
Content Quizzes (CQ): Quizzes to assess comprehension of content presented in modules	5	4	20	20%
Interactive Learning & Reflection Assignments (ILRA): Activities with short writing assignments	5	4	20	20%
Exams (EX)	3	10	30	30%
Memes & Virality Project	1	15	15	15%
Total Points:			100	100%

- **Discussion Prompts (10% total/1% each; approximately one per week).** In an in-class lecture, I often have students break into groups to discuss topics or have prompts for class discussions; while we can't do that "live" in an online class, I will have a number of discussion prompts throughout the semester 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.
- **Content Quizzes (20% total/4% each; multiple dates).** To help you evaluate how well you comprehend the assigned readings and lectures, each module will have a quiz to assess your knowledge. These quizzes will be 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. If more than 5 quizzes are offered, only the highest 5 grades will count.
- **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 300-400 word reflection on the experience and (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.
 - **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.
 - **Part 1a (2.5%). Get feedback from peers on your idea.**
 - **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.
 - **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, including a midterm and final. Exams are 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 have 90 minutes to complete the entire exam. Exams comprise a mix of all course content.
 - **Exams like quizzes are also open book/open note.** However, you are still bound by the UMD honor code and will be asked to sign off on the honor code to confirm you have not cheated during the exam. This includes directly talking with other students about the questions.

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:

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

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

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 a scheduled Friday exam because of outside circumstances (e.g., a religious holiday, military duties, work/athletic team travel), you must email me by **Monday, September 10** 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 (e.g., oversleeping), you will not be able to make up the exam.

Collaboration, Group Work, and Academic Integrity in INST 301

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.

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 are the same.**

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 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](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

1. Come to class (online discussions) prepared. This includes completing any assignments and readings *before* class. This also includes preparing effectively for the exams.
2. Take the content quizzes seriously. They aren't worth many points but they are excellent practice for the exams.
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? Email me anytime. Make sure to include the course number (INST301) 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.
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.

MODULE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READINGS/AUDIO/VIDEO
1 8/27 – 9/2	Course Introduction, Important Info, What do I do with a degree in InfoSci? How to succeed in the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • Lester & Koehler, Chapter 2 (on ELMS) • Review InfoSci Career Resources (iSchool website) • DUE: Discussion Prompt #1: Introduce yourself to the class
2 9/3 – 9/9	A brief history of ICTs (From the Printing Press to the Internet)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How Did the Printing Press Change History?</i>, Wishnia (on ELMS) • Chapter 12 (The Legacy of the Telegraph) in <i>The Victorian Internet</i> by Standage (on ELMS) • How the Internet Was Invented, Part 1 (video) and Part 2 (video) • Terry Gross interview with Andrew Blum (audio) • DUE: Discussion Prompt #2; ILRA #1
3 9/10 – 9/16	Information Literacy: Literacy in the Digital Age and Fake News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: Discussion Prompt #3; Content Quiz #1
4 9/17 – 9/23	Information Needs, Information Seeking, and Information Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) • DUE: Discussion Prompt #4; ILRA #2
5 9/24 – 9/30	Information Organization and Information Overload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking for Information by Don Case (on ELMS) • Metadata? Thesauri? Taxonomies? Topic Maps! Making Sense of it all (on ELMS) • <i>Too Many Choices: A Problem That Can Paralyze</i> (NY Times) • <i>Attached to Technology and Paying a Price</i> (NY Times) • DUE: Discussion Prompt #5; Exam #1
6 10/1 – 10/7	Social and Mobile Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: Discussion Prompt #6; Content Quiz #2

<p>7 10/8 – 10/14</p>	<p>Positive and Negative Takes on the Information Age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sherry Turkle, <i>Stop Googling. Let's Talk</i> (NY Times) • Response to Turkle (Made in America) • Note to Self Podcast: The Case for Infomagical (audio) • Attached to Technology and Paying a Price (NY Times) • Clay Shirky's TED Talk (video) • DUE: Discussion Prompt #7; ILRA #3
<p>8 10/15 – 10/21</p>	<p>Midterm (Exam #2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DUE: Discussion Prompt #8; Exam #2; Submit Meme & Virality Project Ideas
<p>9 10/22 – 10/28</p>	<p>Memes, Virality, and Breaking the Internet: Content Consumers as Content Creators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Viral Dream” Chapter in Terms of Service (on ELMS) • 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) • Why that video went viral (New York Times) • DUE: Discussion Prompt #9; Submit Meme & Virality Project Peer Feedback
<p>10 10/29 – 11/4</p>	<p>Online Communities, Online Harassment, VR/AR, and Quantified Self</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 4 Baym's Personal Connections in the Digital Age (on ELMS) • Vitak et al. (2017): Identifying Women's Experiences With and Strategies for Mitigating Negative Effects of Online Harassment (on ELMS) • The Rise and Fall of Virtual Reality (The Verge) • Why 'Pokémon GO' Is The World's Most Important Game (Forbes) • Gary Wolf: The Quantified Self (TED Talk) • There's No Such Thing as Innocuous Personal Data (Slate) • Fighting online trolls with bots (The Conversation) • RECOMMENDED READING: The Virtual Community, Chapter 3 (Howard Rheingold) (on ELMS) • DUE: Discussion Prompt #10; ILRA #4; Content Quiz #3
<p>11 11/5 – 11/11</p>	<p>Project Due</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DUE: Discussion Prompt #11; Meme & Virality Project

<p style="text-align: center;">12 11/12 – 11/18</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Privacy, Security, and Surveillance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google’s Cerf Says “Privacy May Be An Anomaly.” Historically, He’s Right (TechCrunch) • Securing Your Digital Life Like a Normal Person (Medium) • Maybe Better If You Don’t Read This Story on Public WiFi (Medium) • The Internet of Things: Roadmap to a Connected World (MIT Technology Review) • The \$11 Trillion Internet Of Things, Big Data And Pattern Of Life • Analytics (Forbes) • Jennifer Golbeck: Your social media “likes” expose more than you think (TED talk) • The Most Wanted Man in the World (WIRED) • How the NSA Spying Programs Have Changed Since Snowden (PBS Frontline) • Watch the Full Episode: 'State of Surveillance' with Edward Snowden and Shane Smith (VICE) • DUE: Discussion Prompt #12; Content Quiz #4
<p style="text-align: center;">13 11/19 – 11/25</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Thanksgiving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DUE: Discussion Prompt #13 (Complete before 11/21)
<p style="text-align: center;">14 11/26 – 12/2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Big Data, Algorithms, and Ethics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crash Course Computer Science: Machine learning & artificial intelligence (YouTube) • Can We Trust the Numbers? (NPR/TED) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cathy O’Neil and Joy Buolamwini, 0:00-23:00 ○ Anne Milgram, 40:00-50:00 • Algorithmic Accountability Reporting: On the Investigation of Black Boxes(Tow Center for Digital Journalism) • The Humans Working Behind the AI Curtain (Harvard Business Review) • The Moral Bias Behind Your Search Results (TED Talk) • Tech’s Ethical ‘Dark Side’: Harvard, Stanford, and Others Want to Address It (NY Times) • The Real Name Fallacy (Coral Project) • Big Data Research Creates Ethical Concerns (read or listen) • Perspectives on Big Data, Ethics, and Society (on ELMS) • DUE: Discussion Prompt #14; Content Quiz #5; ILRA #5
<p style="text-align: center;">15 12/3 – 12/10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ICTs for Political Change and Final Exam (Exam #3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malcom Gladwell, "Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted" (on ELMS) • Taking power through technology in the Arab Spring (Al Jazeera) • Beyond the Hashtags report on #BLM: read intro and conclusion (on ELMS) • DUE: Discussion Prompt #15; Exam #3