

Information Studies 30, UCLA
Winter, 2006
Tuesdays, 1-4:50pm
GSE&IS Room 121

Information Studies 30
Information Technology in Society¹

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While many courses are offered on technology and culture or technology and society, this is a rare course to examine information technology in society. Information technologies include the Internet, the World Wide Web, search engines (e.g., Google, Yahoo, Lycos), retrieval systems, electronic publishing, and distribution of media including newspapers, books, and music. These technologies often are used in much different ways than the designers intended. People adopt and adapt information technologies in innovative ways. As social and market mechanisms evolve with the use of these technologies, relationships between stakeholders change. While the Internet is making it easy to distribute information, it also is making it easier to regulate and to control. Issue of privacy, policy, and economics pervade any discussion of information technology and society. We will explore many of these technologies, the social, cultural, and political context in which they exist, and how social relationships are changing.

Students will read material from the fields of communication, sociology, history, and law. You will write three short papers and give a presentation at the end of the term. The course is structured as a seminar, with lecture and discussion combined. implications.

The course has no prerequisites and assumes no technical background beyond e-mail and the Web.

Office hours

Wednesdays, 3-5pm, GSE&IS 235, except week 1, when office hours will be held on Thursday from 2-3:30. Please sign up in advance, as office hours may be full. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board next to the office door.

I will gladly meet with students to discuss their papers, and will answer short questions by email (Borgman@gseis.ucla.edu)

¹ This course was first taught by Prof. Philip Agre in Spring, 2005. My syllabus is based liberally on his organization and choice of readings.

Course materials

Course readings are drawn from four required texts. The Abbate, Hughes, and Dutton books are available in paperback at the LuValle Commons bookstore; the Lessig book is available free online (Abbate, 1999; Dutton, 1999; Hughes, 2004; Lessig, 2004)

- Abbate, J. (1999). *Inventing the Internet*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.
- Dutton, W. H. (1999). *Society on the Line: Information Politics in the Digital Age*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Hughes, T. P. (2004). *Human-Built World: How to Think about Technology and Culture*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Lessig, L. (2004). *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity*. New York, Penguin. <http://www.free-culture.cc/freeculture.pdf> Visited:

Grading procedures and policy

The course will be conducted as a seminar, with discussion and lecture interspersed. Students will write three short papers, due weeks 4, 7, and 10, and give a presentation in the 10th week of class.

- 75% 3 Short papers @ 25% each
- 10% Presentation
- 15% Class participation

Readings are to be completed prior to the class meeting for the week. The grade for class participation will be based on preparation for the discussion, contributions to the discussion, and attendance.

Papers are to be handed in at the beginning of class on the date due. They are to be written in a scholarly format (double-spaced, single-sided) with references in a standard form. The APA format (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th ed. (2001). Washington: DC: American Psychological Association) is recommended but others (e.g. Modern Language Association, Chicago Manual of Style) are acceptable.

Late assignments will be marked down 2 points per day late. **No assignments will be accepted after 5pm Tuesday, March 14, without advance permission by the instructor.**

Weekly Schedule and Readings

Readings should be completed in advance of each class meeting. Be prepared to discuss the readings in class.

Week 1, January 10, Introduction and overview
Read Hughes, Chapters 1-3 (p. 1-75)

Week 2, January 17, Technology as systems, controls, and information
Read Hughes, Chapter 4 (p. 77-110), and Bibliographic essay (p. 175-203)

Week 3, January 24, Technology, Culture, and Environment
Read Hughes, Chapters 5-6 (p. 111-174)

Week 4, January 31, Origins of the Internet
Read Abbate, Chapters 1-3 (p. 1-111)
Assignment 1 due

Week 5, February 7, Emergence and evolution of the Internet
Read Abbate, Chapters 4-6 (p. 113-220)

Week 6, February 14, Information politics, interaction between technology and society.
Read Dutton, Parts I and II (p. 1-109)

Week 7, February 21, Business, management, and work.
Read Dutton, Part III, (p. 111-169).
Assignment 2 due

Week 8, February 28, Politics, governance, and education.
Read Dutton, Part IV (p. 171-223).
Read Lessig, Chapter 10 (p 116-174)

Week 9, March 7, Information policy and regulation
Read Dutton, Part V (p. 283-337)

Week 10, March 14, Class presentations
Assignment 3 due