School of Communications, University of Hawaii at Manoa
COM633: Information and Communication Technologies
Fall 2014
Course Syllabus

Course Information

Meetings: Wednesday, 12:00-2:30pm, Saunders 242
Instructor: Wayne Buente
Office hours: Mondays, 9-11am or by appointment
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(808) 956-3360 (phone)

Course description:

The objective of this course is to help you think critically and constructively about information and communication technologies (ICTs) and its relationship to society at large. More specifically, we will examine ICTs from a sociotechnical perspective. This perspective provides us with an intellectual tool that acknowledges that technology is embedded in a complex set of other technologies, physical surroundings, people, procedures, etc. that together make up the socio-technical system.

We will explore the ways in which a wide range of academics, activists and policy-makers talk about the nature and uses of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in a number of settings. We will focus on developing tools to critique these perspectives and propose alternatives. The first part of the course will examine a series of concepts and analytical devices to make sense of the empirical case studies and related research that will comprise the second part of the course. In addition, we will examine the development of computerization movements. Computerization movements are “a type of movement that focuses on computer-based systems as the core technologies, which their advocates claim will be instruments to bring about a new social order” (Elliott and Kraemer, 2008, p. 3). The knowledge and insights developed in this seminar will help you throughout your professional, personal, and civic lives.

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Analyze the complex relationships among ICTs, people, and institutions in any social setting.
- Identify and critique popular discourse regarding IT.
- Apply analytical tools learned in this class to solve a variety of practical challenges involving ICTs.

In addition, this course directly addresses the following student learning outcomes (SLOs) for the Communication MA Program:

SL01. Demonstrate subject mastery in areas of communication relevant to personal research interests.

SLOS2. Identify research questions on a contemporary issue in communication, and perform a critical, written analysis of the relevant literature.

Readings:

Readings will be provided through Laulima. We will read a few chapters from the following titles.


**Course assignments:**

Readings will typically be assigned for each class period and the latest information about readings will be listed in Laulima. Please come prepared. Class discussions are important especially for small class sizes. Your grade will be based upon the following:

- Critical summaries of reading (4 total) 15%
- Review of professional sources 15%
- Midterm 20%
- Final presentation 10%
- Final project Paper 30%
- Class Participation 10%

**Evaluation:**


**Grading Criteria**

These grading standards establish four major criteria for evaluation at each grade level: rhetorical situation, reasoning and content, organization and expression. Since papers may have some characteristics of "B" and others of "C," the final grade depends on the weight the instructor gives to each criterion. A paper grossly inadequate in one area may still receive a very low grade even if it successfully meets the other criteria. A brief summary of the grading criteria is provided below. Please consult the grading criteria in Appendix C for a more detailed explanation.

The "A" Paper: An "A" paper is clear and consistent and the content is appropriate for the assignment. It also demonstrates clear organization and expression.

The "B" Paper: The "B" paper shows an awareness of the audience and purpose. Its content is reasonably well developed with adequate evidence. The organization is clear and expression is competent.

The "C" Paper: The "C" paper has a clear purpose but lacks originality in topic selection. The content is adequately developed and supported with valid reasoning. Organization is clear with mechanical but appropriate transitions. The paper also demonstrates mastery of most conventions of edited English.

The "D" Paper: The "D" paper has an unclear purpose and an inappropriate topic for its intended audience. The content is inadequately developed and evidence is insufficient. The paper also shows flawed reasoning. Organization is deficient and the paper exhibits poor grammar.

The "F" Paper: The "F" paper has no clear purpose or remotely appropriate for its intended audience. The content is not developed nor adequately supported. The paper has no organization and serious errors with English comprehension.

**Attendance:**

I expect you to be at all class sessions. Excessive absences that are not excused will lower your final grade.

**Course Schedule (Please note that this is a tentative reading list):**

**Week 1 (08/27): Introduction**
Introduction to the course and expectations

**Week 2 (09/03): Technological Determinism and other discourses on ICTs**

Chapter 2


**Week 3 (09/10): Technological Determinism**

Introduction

Chapters 10 and 11


**Review of Professional Sources assignment available in Laulima**

**Week 4 (09/17): Social Shaping and SCOT approaches**


**Week 5 (09/24): Computerization Movements, Social Informatics, and Sociotechnical perspectives**

**Class presentations for Review of Professional Sources**


**Week 6 (10/01): Social Informatics and Sociotechnical Concerns**

**Class presentations for Review of Professional Sources**


**Week 7 (10/08): Native American and Indigenous Cultures**


**Week 8 (10/15): Law, Order, and ICTs**


**Week 9 (10/22): Algorithms and Big Data**


**Week 10 (10/29): Rural Life and ICTs**


**Week 11 (11/05): No class**

**Week 12 (11/12): Wikipedia as Sociotechnical System**


Chapter 7 in

Week 13 (11/19): Sociotechnical research among different groups


Week 14 (11/26): Thanksgiving

Week 15 (12/03): TBD


Week 16 (12/10): Final Paper Presentations