First year courses

Bachelor Digital Society year 1

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Diagnostic Test: English Language

Full course description

This course introduces you to some of the core themes of the BA and provides a basic understanding of how developments in digital technologies and societal trends are inter-related. Through readings from the social sciences and the humanities, you will be introduced to the notion of a digital society. Is there such a thing as a digital society or might there be many? Together with other students, you will discuss where the notion originates from, why it has become popular and what it means to live in a digital society. To understand these, you will learn to link contemporary and historical examples of digital trends to academic readings and theories.

Course objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

Demonstrate understanding of how social and technological developments are interrelated in digital societies;

Define and describe key terms relevant to studying digital society, such as digitalization, digital society and datafication;

Demonstrate and apply knowledge on reading and processing academic literature from a variety of (interdisciplinary) perspectives;

Summarize key academic texts discussed in this course and produce an annotated bibliography based on these summaries.

Prerequisites

none/not applicable

Recommended reading

Lindgren, S. (2017). Digital Media and Society. London, UK: Sage.

DSO1501
Period 1
2 Sep 2019
6 Sep 2019

Bachelor Digital Society

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:
0.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- N.P. Wylie

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s)
Assessment methods:
Final paper
Keywords:
digital society; technological determinism; technological imaginaries; cultural heritage; inequality
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Mentor Scheme

Full course description

The objective of the mentor scheme is to facilitate personal student-staff contact to answer academic questions. During the first year, the mentor scheme aims to help you become accustomed to university life, cope with new challenges, and navigate the BA Digital Society and the Faculty. The focus is on PBL and developing good study skills. Every student will be assigned a mentor and will be part of a small mentor group with other students that meets regularly throughout the year.

Course objectives

By participating in the mentor scheme, you will:

- Develop skills for making the transition from secondary school to university;
- Improve your study skills;
- Learn about how universities work;
- Learn from the experiences of other students and staff.

Prerequisites

Recommended reading

van Til, C., & van der Heijden, F. (2010). *PBL study skills. An overview.* Maastricht, NL: Maastricht University. (can be found through the UM Student Portal)

DSO1500
Period 1

Bachelor Digital Society

2 Sep 2019
5 Jun 2020
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
1.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- [J.L. Weusten](#)

Teaching methods:
PBL, Coaching
Assessment methods:
Portfolio
Keywords:
study skills, time management, PBL
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Surveillance Society

Full course description

In this course, we will explore questions related to surveillance society and investigate if and why privacy still matters in the digital world. You study the effects of surveillance on social behaviour, culture and self-understanding, and on rules and regulations of digital platforms and policies. The course runs over the entire year, and analyses privacy and surveillance in the different domains touched upon in other first year courses: society, politics, culture and the global context. You will also learn about surveillance and privacy in non-Western contexts.

Course objectives

At the end of the course, you will be able to:

- identify different concepts of and approaches to privacy and surveillance;
- explain examples of privacy violations and surveillance practices in their relevant political, legal and cultural contexts (e.g. related to social media, search engines, apps);
- apply your knowledge about privacy and surveillance to concrete debates and developments in society and identify underlying surveillance narratives;
- analyze and evaluate the consequences of technological developments for privacy and surveillance;
- collaborate (and reflect on collaboration) with a team from different backgrounds (and ideally different cultures) over an extended period of 1 full semester both orally in small group meetings and in collaborative writing;
- formulate a research problem arising from digitalization in the areas of privacy and surveillance, and identify appropriate sources and articulate results.

Prerequisites

none/not applicable

Bachelor Digital Society

Recommended reading

- Lyon, D. (2018). *The Culture of Surveillance: Watching as a Way of Life.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Solove, D. (2008). *Understanding Privacy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

DSO1000
Period 1
2 Sep 2019
5 Jun 2020
Print course description
ECTS credits:
6.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- K. Gabriels

Assessment methods:
Presentation and paper
Keywords:
surveillance; privacy; big data; sousveillance; panopticon
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Making Your Own Online Presence

Full course description

In today's digital society, your online presence is a key part of your public identity. As soon as you search the Web, post on social media, sign up for a service, and blog about a recent experience, you start shaping your online identity and establishing a digital footprint that becomes your online personal brand. This skills training course introduces you to the basics of analysing, reflecting on, and managing your digital identity. You will explore the benefits and downsides of having an online presence and you will develop skills, knowledge, and strategies for curating it. For example, you will analyse your 'digital self' by investigating how much information is publicly accessible. Based on this, we will discuss ways to shape your online identity and develop a professional presence. You will do this by learning how to design and structure an online portfolio using the blogging platform *WordPress*. During the course, we will discuss both design and content aspects, including navigation, searchability, multimedia, and the integration of social media presences. The design and the content of the blog will be used as the basis for the assessment of this course. This blog will also be used throughout the BA programme since blog posts will be assigned on topics covered during the various courses. After completing the programme, you will have developed your own professional online profile which can be used when you apply for jobs or for further studies.

Course objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of how identities are constructed online;
- Be able to reflect on and manage your 'digital self';

Bachelor Digital Society

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of content management systems for website development;
- Apply blogging software WordPress in order to design your own online profile;
- Develop skills in designing user-friendly online presences.

Prerequisites

None

Recommended reading

- Dijck, J. van (2013). *"You have one identity": Performing the self on Facebook and LinkedIn.*, *Media, Culture & Society*, 35(2), 199–215. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443712468605
- Marshall, K. (2015, January 5). *How to curate your digital identity as an academic. The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-to-Curate-Your-Digital/151001

What is (a) Digital Society?

Full course description

This course introduces you to some of the core themes of the BA and provides a basic understanding of how developments in digital technologies and societal trends are inter-related. Through readings from the social sciences and the humanities, you will be introduced to the notion of a digital society. Is there such a thing as a digital society or might there be many? Together with other students, you will discuss where the notion originates from, why it has become popular and what it means to live

in a digital society. To understand these, you will learn to link contemporary and historical examples of digital trends to academic readings and theories.

Course objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of how social and technological developments are interrelated in digital societies;
- Define and describe key terms relevant to studying digital society, such as digitalization, digital society and datafication;
- Demonstrate and apply knowledge on reading and processing academic literature from a variety of (interdisciplinary) perspectives;
- Summarize key academic texts discussed in this course and produce an annotated bibliography based on these summaries.

Prerequisites

none/not applicable

Recommended reading

Lindgren, S. (2017). *Digital Media and Society*. London, UK: Sage.

DSO1001
Period 1
2 Sep 2019
25 Oct 2019
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
8.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- S.M.E. Wyatt

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s)
Assessment methods:
Final paper
Keywords:
digital society; technological determinism; technological imaginaries; cultural heritage; inequality
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Digitalisation and Politics

Bachelor Digital Society

Full course description

Students in this course ask how digitalisation affects politics and if digitalisation enhances or undermines the quality of democracy. The course draws on political philosophy, comparative politics and political economy. In this course, you analyse the new possibilities and limitations that digitalisation presents for politicians, citizens and corporations in terms of political power, participation, equality and inclusivity, and explore what new checks and balances are required for politics in the digital age.

Course objectives

You will learn how digitalisation affects politics and, in particular, whether digitalisation is enhancing or undermining the quality of democracy. More precisely, after completing this course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding about the effects of digitalisation on key political concepts and practices;
- Analyse the relationship between digital developments and transformations in political behaviour, political participation and public control over the public domain;
- Formulate arguments in favour and against the effects of digitalisation on democracy in a debate setting;
- Evaluate ethical and societal consequences of digitalisation in politics for different people and groups in society.

Prerequisites

none/not applicable

Recommended reading

Sunstein, C. R. (2018). *# Republic: Divided democracy in the age of social media*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

DSO1002
Period 2
28 Oct 2019
20 Dec 2019
Print course description
ECTS credits:
8.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- T.E. Swierstra

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s)
Assessment methods:
Written exam

Introduction to Digital Technologies I

Full course description

In this course, you will learn about key concepts related to digital technologies, and about the historical development of the technologies underpinning digitalisation. The purpose of the course is to provide you with sufficient knowledge to understand technical issues you may encounter in other courses, and current trends in digital technologies. The course will start with an overview of key vocabulary related to computing, such as hardware, software, programming language, memory, storage, protocol, database. You will also learn about the digital environments crucial for your further study, including the university's virtual learning environment and library catalogue.

Course objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Describe how computer systems work;
- Identify and convert everyday problems into input a computer system can use in its work;
- Illustrate how algorithms guide the way we understand and address everyday problems;
- Break down and diagram digitization processes in terms of their various components.

Prerequisites

Note that it is very important that you complete this course successfully before you start DSO1506 Introduction to Digital Technologies 2.

Recommended reading

Englander, I. (2014). *The architecture of computer hardware, system software, and networking.* John Wiley & Sons.

DSO1503
Period 2
28 Oct 2019
20 Dec 2019
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
4.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- [E.V. Sapir](#)

Teaching methods:

Bachelor Digital Society

PBL, Lecture(s), Skills
Assessment methods:
Presentation and paper
Keywords:
Computer systems, digitization, Algorithms, functional flowcharts, programming, digital identity, digital skills, digital literacy
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

What is Research?

Full course description

You have already have been introduced to problem-based learning (PBL) in the BA DS Introduction Days and during your courses in Periods 1 and 2. In this course, you are taught to reflect more systematically on PBL, and how problem solving generates knowledge. You will begin to learn how to formulate research questions related to the rapidly changing digital environment, and how to use concepts and data to answer research questions. We will also examine the role of Wikipedia as a source of knowledge.

Course objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to do the following:

1. demonstrate your ability to formulate a research question;
2. employ online resources in academic research;
3. describe your research topic by means of an oral presentation;
4. prepare a written introduction and literature review of an academic paper;
5. appraise the research questions and oral presentations of your peers;
6. apply correctly the referencing conventions of the American Psychological Association (APA).

Prerequisites

none/not applicable

Recommended reading

Booth, W.C., Colomb, G.C., Williams, J.M., Bizup, J. & Fitzgerald, W. (2016). *The craft of research* (4th ed.). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

DSO1504
Period 3
6 Jan 2020
31 Jan 2020
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
5.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

Bachelor Digital Society

- [A. Dandashly](#)

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s), Skills
Assessment methods:
Presentation, Final paper
Keywords:
Writing, research questions, referencing, Wikipedia
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

ICT Revolutions: Continuity and Change

Full course description

The course challenges the idea that the world is experiencing a digital revolution. It systematically compares technological revolutions since the Late Middle Ages until the end of the 20th century (from the printing press to the internet) with today's digital transformation. We focus on differences and similarities between the past and the present in order to understand continuity and change. You will find out who is empowered by digital transformations, who is excluded from promises of progress and development, and whether it is possible to steer changes in information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Course objectives

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Identify and define technological revolutions;
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the origins and political, social, economic and cultural effects technological transformations since the Early Modern Period;
- Apply knowledge of the past to new and emerging situations in the digital present, taking into account assumptions, promises and fears surrounding technological innovation;
- Describe and analyze social and ethical consequences of technological developments, and what they meant for different societies in history;
- Articulate complex, interdisciplinary information and ideas about how technological transformations have made the modern world, and integrate these in a problem-oriented essay.

Prerequisites

none/not applicable

Recommended reading

Briggs, A., & Burke, P. (2009). *A social history of the media: From Gutenberg to the internet.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

DSO1003
Period 4
3 Feb 2020

Bachelor Digital Society

3 Apr 2020
ECTS credits:
8.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- [V.C. Lagendijk](#)

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s)
Assessment methods:
Final paper, Portfolio
Keywords:
History, technological revolution, modernity, Globalisation
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Using Digital Sources

Full course description

In this skills course, you will learn how to make responsible and ethical use of digital sources. Finding, selecting and using digital evidence add new layers to notions of source criticism, reliability and validity that are well-established in the humanities and the social sciences, and which you will already have encountered in Period 3, in the course, 'What is research?'. Starting from topics in the parallel content course, "ICT Revolutions", this skills course focuses on three types of primary digital material: text, structured (numerical) data, and audio-visual material. The course will make extensive use of resources at the University Library; the library staff will offer tailor-made assistance.

Course objectives

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- Identify usable digital sources and gather data;
- Compare various types of sources, and assess their reliability and validity;
- Prepare the data for analysis and apply dedicated software;
- Perform basic analyses of various data types.

Prerequisites

Recommended reading

not applicable

DSO1505

Bachelor Digital Society

Period 4
3 Feb 2020
3 Apr 2020
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
4.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- [J.L.M. Bruyninckx](#)

Teaching methods:
Lecture(s), PBL, Skills
Assessment methods:
Written exam
Keywords:
sources, data, text, audio-visual, software
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Digital Cultures

Full course description

In this course, you will explore how digital technologies interact with culture and how culture shapes digital technologies. Digital technologies draw on established ways of experiencing and acting in the world, but they also challenge these ways, and open up new ones. This course focuses on how agents make sense of their – natural, social, and subjective – worlds; how established ways of sense-making are disrupted by digitalisation; and how people are currently trying to make sense of digitalisation itself. Drawing on concepts and methods from philosophy, anthropology and cultural and media studies, you will investigate topics such as artificial intelligence and robots, digitally mediated identity and intimate relations, arts and remix culture, and the blurring of the distinction between the cultural and the natural.

Course objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Understand why people can feel threatened or excited by the cultural changes provoked by digital technologies;
- Critically reflect upon the different facets of digital culture such as the narratives about technological innovation, self and identity, community, robots and AI, nature and culture;
- Apply your understanding of digital culture and cultural changes to your own examples;
- Identify and distinguish how different actors attach different meanings to digital technologies and their expected impacts;
- Analyse the consequences of technological developments for digital cultures and critically investigate the narratives related to them;
- Formulate a feasible research question on the topic of digitalisation of culture, and develop a coherent argumentation verbally and in writing.

Bachelor Digital Society

Prerequisites

none/not applicable

Recommended reading

Miller, V. (2011). Understanding digital culture. London, UK: Sage.

Introduction to Digital Technologies II

Full course description

This course builds on 'Introduction to Digital Technologies 1', and extends this to include the basics of networking. In this course we will explore the fundamentals and historical development of computer networking. The main aim of this course is to provide you with perspectives on computer networking, and the inter-relationships between technological and economic changes on the one hand, and social changes and changes in society on the other. We will start by understanding the key concepts of computer networking, move to reviewing the development of the internet and the World Wide Web, and then to discussing social media and network security.

Course objectives

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of computer networks and the different components within them;
- Break down and illustrate the seven layers in the Open Systems Interconnection model;
- Summarize the historical development and usage of computer networking and the World Wide Web;

Bachelor Digital Society

- Classify different generations of the Web, social media and crowdsourcing, and the different types of user-generated content;
- Describe the main concepts and issues in network security, the risks and different types of cyberattacks.

Prerequisites

We strongly recommend that you have successfully completed DSO1503 Introduction to Digital Technologies 1 before starting this course. We will be building on material covered in DSO1503.

Recommended reading

Ryan, J. (2010). *A history of the internet and the digital future*. London, UK: Reaktion Books.

DSO1506
Period 5
6 Apr 2020
5 Jun 2020
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
4.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- [E.V. Sapir](#)

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s)
Assessment methods:
Written exam
Keywords:
Networking, network layers, open system interconnection, ARPANET, internet, World Wide Web, the social web, crowdsourcing, Social media, network security