Bachelor Digital Society

Find another programme

First year courses

Bachelor Digital Society year 1

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Surveillance Society

Full course description

In this lecture series, we explore questions related to surveillance society and investigate whether and how a digital society is always a surveillance society. You study the main theories of surveillance, the main forms of surveillance (sous-, co-veillance and self-surveillance) and learn to evaluate surveillance phenomena and narratives, linking it to values such as privacy and transparency. The course runs over the entire year, and analyses through lectures and workshops surveillance in the different domains touched upon in other first year courses: society, politics, ethics, culture. In the second part you will also learn about surveillance in the global and non-Western contexts, as well as about concrete case studies, such as facial recognition or surveillance in health.

Course objectives

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

- identify the main concepts of and approaches to surveillance;
- analyse and evaluate surveillance practices through values such as privacy and transparency;
- identify and evaluate dominant narratives that frame and justify surveillance practices;
- analyse and evaluate the consequences of technological developments for surveillance and related notions such as sousveillance, co-veillance, and self-surveillance;
- understand examples of surveillance practices in their relevant political, legal and cultural contexts.

Prerequisites

none/not applicable

Recommended reading

- Lyon, D. (2018). *The Culture of Surveillance: Watching as a Way of Life*. Polity Press.

DSO1000
Period 1
4 Sep 2023

Bachelor Digital Society

5 Jul 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
6.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinators:

- M.R.P. Simons
- B. Isabella
- R. Gianni
- K. Wenz

Teaching methods:
Lecture(s)
Assessment methods:
Written exam
Keywords:
surveillance; disciplinary society; society of control; privacy; transparency ; surveillance narratives; surveillance capitalism
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Mentor Scheme

Full course description

The Mentor Programme in year 1 serves to help you to tackle academic challenges during your studies in the first year. Transition from secondary school to university is never easy. Many students will experience a period during which their study does not work out the way they expected, which often occurs in the first year. The Mentor Programme has been designed with this in mind and is aimed at easing transition to university and helping you to 'survive' your first year. The core component of the Mentor Programme is the student-mentor relationship. You are assigned to a mentor and a mentor group. You will have group meetings and individual meetings with your mentor. Meetings centre on your study expectations and your experiences.

The goal of the Mentor Programme is twofold. 1) First, it aims to assist you in becoming a successful student. To become a successful student you need to become engaged in your own academic development; to become what is often termed a "self-regulated learner". 2) Second, the programme offers you a social and academic community of peers in which you can exchange experiences, reflect on successes, challenges, opportunities and problems and learn from each other.

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.

Bachelor Digital Society

Prerequisites

none

Recommended reading

- The final qualifications of the Bachelor Digital Society
- UM webpages on the Bachelor Programme Digital Society
- Moust, J.H.C., Bouhuijs, P.A.J. & Schmidt, H.G. (2007). Introduction to Problem-based Learning. A Guide for Students. Groningen/Houten: Noordhoff.
- Burns, T., & Sinfield, S. (2012). Essential study skills. The complete guide to success at university. (3rd ed.). London: SAGE.
- Cottrell, S. (2013). The study skills handbook. (4th ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

DSO1500
Period 1
4 Sep 2023
5 Jul 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
1.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinators:

- B.C. Zwegers
- C.W. van Leeuwen
- R.L.A. Widdershoven
- M.W. Wijermars
- C.L.B. Stein

Teaching methods:
PBL, Coaching
Assessment methods:
Portfolio
Keywords:
study skills, time management, PBL, reflection skills, self-regulated learning
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

What is (a) Digital Society?

Full course description

This course introduces you to some of the core themes of the BA Digital Society and provides a basic understanding of how developments in digital technologies and societal trends are inter-related. We pay particular attention to the relationship between technology and society, questioning whether technology is neutral and whether it always leads to social progress. We examine topics such as the digital divide, big data, e-waste, digital activism, and digitisation of cultural heritage 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, produce an annotated bibliography based on these summaries, and produce a visualisation of how they link to key concepts from the course.

Prerequisites

none/not applicable

Recommended reading

Lindgren, S. (2021). *Digital Media and Society 2nd edition*. Sage.

DSO1001
Period 1
4 Sep 2023
27 Oct 2023
Print course description
ECTS credits:
8.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinators:

- S.M.E. Wyatt
- P. du Plessis
- B. Isabella

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

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 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* as well as how to write for an online audience. 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';
- Use blog writing to effectively communicate and reflect upon your practice';
- Use the content management system (CMS) platform 'WordPress' to design your own online presence and demonstrate a basic understanding of CMS functions for website development.
- Develop skills in designing user-friendly online presences.

Prerequisites

None

Recommended reading

Aresta, M., Pedro, L., Santos, C. & Moreira, A. (2015). Portraying the self in online contexts: context-driven and user-driven online identity profiles, Contemporary Social Science, 10(1), 70-85 https://doi.org/10.1080/21582041.2014.980840

Cotter, K. (2019). Playing the visibility game: How digital influencers and algorithms negotiate influence on Instagram. New Media & Society, 21(4), 895–913. https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.unimaas.nl/10.1177/1461444818815684

Kirkup, G. (2010). Academic blogging: academic practice and academic identity. London Review of

Bachelor Digital Society

Education, 8(1), 75-84

Scolere, L., Pruchniewska, U., & Duffy, B. E. (2018). Constructing the platform-specific self-brand: The labor of social media promotion. Social Media+Society, 4(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118784768

Walker, R. J. (2013). *Blogging*. Polity Press.

Whitmer, J. M. (2019). You are your brand: Self-branding and the marketization of self. Sociology Compass, 13(3), e12662. https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12662

DSO1502
Period 1
4 Sep 2023
27 Oct 2023
Print course description
ECTS credits:
4.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- K. Papadopoulos

Teaching methods:
PBL, Work in subgroups, Skills
Assessment methods:
Assignment, Final take home exam
Keywords:
online presence, digital identity, authenticity, digital remains, Portfolio, blogging, design, WordPress
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Digitalisation and Politics

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. You will learn to analyse the new possibilities and constraints that digitalisation presents for politicians, citizens and corporations in terms of political power, participation, equality and inclusivity.

Course objectives

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

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding about the effects of digitalisation on key political

institutions 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;
- Evaluate ethical and societal consequences of digitalisation in politics for different people and (economic) groups in society.
- Write well-structured paragraphs and develop a simple argumentation.

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
30 Oct 2023
22 Dec 2023
Print course description
ECTS credits:
8.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- M.W. Wijermars

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s)
Assessment methods:
Written exam
Keywords:
Digitalisation, democracy, power, Politics, Platform economy
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

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 focus of the course is on computing and the main purpose 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, and the history and key characteristics of computer systems. We will also discuss algorithms in depth, and learn, how to create, visualize and program them. Finally, we will develop a perspective on digital literacy and explore the way current debates are governed by these technologies.

Bachelor Digital Society

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 digitisation processes in terms of their various components.
- Understand the role of computing in forming digital identities and literacy.

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
30 Oct 2023
22 Dec 2023
Print course description
ECTS credits:
4.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- J. Roosen

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

What is Research?

Full course description

During this course, you will learn about the nature of academic research, especially about how to turn a general area of interest into a researchable question. You will further develop your skills in researching and writing. Particularly, you will learn to craft two key elements of an academic research paper: the introduction and the literature review section. These academic research skills

are crucial for the whole programme. For example, being able to summarise someone else's academic argument, referencing it correctly, and relating this argument to your own research question are key skills for a university student. In this course, you will put some of these skills together by writing the beginning of a full academic paper.

Course objectives

The objective of this course is to learn about research by doing research

We will practice analysing and writing:
- an introduction to a research paper
- a literature review section for a research paper

In the process of doing this, you will improve your skills in:

1. formulating a research question
2. Searching for sources in a systematic way
3. Building on other scholars' research by correctly paraphrasing and citing
4. Evaluating sources of information for your research
5. Using correct referencing in your writing (according to American Psychological Association, APA7).

Prerequisites

none/not applicable

Recommended reading

Booth, W.C., Colomb, G.G., & Williams (2016). The craft of research (3th ed.). The University of Chicago Press

DSO1504
Period 3
8 Jan 2024
2 Feb 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
5.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- F.C. Lysen

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s), Skills
Assessment methods:
Final paper
Keywords:
writing, research questions, referencing, systematic search

Bachelor Digital Society

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 various information and communication 'revolutions' since the late Middle Ages

-Explain the origins and consequences of technological change in these 'revolutions'

-Apply knowledge of the past to new and emerging situations in the digital present, taking into account assumptions, promises and fears surrounding technological innovation

-Articulate the above mentioned definitions, explanations, and critiques in an academic review paper

Prerequisites

none/not applicable

Recommended reading

Kovarik, B. (2016). Revolutions in communication: Media history from Gutenberg to the digital age (2nd edition). Bloomsbury.

Winston, B. (1998). Media Technology and Society: A History : from the Telegraph to the Internet. Psychology Press.

DSO1003
Period 4
5 Feb 2024
5 Apr 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
8.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

Bachelor Digital Society

- J. Roosen

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 are trained to use (digital) primary sources in a critical and responsible way. Building on period 3 course 'What is research?', we will explore how digitization changes how we find, select, and use primary sources. We also consider their potential and limitations by practicing 'source criticism'--an approach to assess a source's reliability, background and perspective. Working on topics that are central to the parallel content course, 'ICT Revolutions' (namely, the so-called "Computer Revolution"), this skills course focuses on three types of primary digital material: text, structured (numerical) data, and audio-visual material. Through hands-on, in-class assignments, you will learn to find, select, evaluate and interpret your own primary source material, which is an essential part of any academic analysis. The course will make extensive use of resources and databases offered by the University Library.

Course objectives

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

- Define and describe key concepts relevant to (digital) source criticism and interpretation.
- Identify relevant digital source types and collections, and assess their potential and limitations.
- Prepare various data sources for analysis and perform basic analyses with dedicated software such as Atlas.ti.
- Develop and argument insights on the relationship between social change and digitalisation based on source evidence and analysis.

Prerequisites

none

Recommended reading

Owens, T., Padilla, T. (2020). Digital sources and digital archives: historical evidence in the digital age. International Journal of Digital Humanities. DOI:10.1007/s42803-020-00028-7

DSO1505
Period 4
5 Feb 2024

Bachelor Digital Society

5 Apr 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
4.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- J.L.M. Bruyninckx

Teaching methods:
Lecture(s), Assignment(s), Skills
Assessment methods:
Assignment, Portfolio
Keywords:
Primary sources, data, text, audio-visual, qualitative analysis, source criticism, digitisation processes
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Digital Cultures

Full course description

In this course, you 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. Drawing on concepts and methods from philosophy, anthropology, and cultural and media studies, you will investigate topics such as AI 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,

  robots and AI, authenticity and intimacy, 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;

- Answer a research question on the topic of digitalisation of culture and develop a coherent argumentation.

Prerequisites

none/not applicable

Recommended reading

Jordan, J. (2016). Robots. Cambrdige, MA: The MIT Press.

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

Verbeeck, P.P. (2006). Materializing Morality: Design ethics and technological mediation. Science, Technology & Human Values, 31(3), 361-380.

DSO1004
Period 5
8 Apr 2024
7 Jun 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
8.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinators:

- C.J. van Leeuwen
- A.F. Kelly

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s), Training(s)
Assessment methods:
Final paper
Keywords:
Digital cultures; sense-making; technological mediation; identity and intimacy; digital arts and authenticities; argumentation skills
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Introduction to Digital Technologies II

Full course description

This course builds on ‘Introduction to Digital Technologies I’ (DSO1503), and extends its perspective to include the basics of computer-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 how networking works 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 reflecting on key computer networking oncepts, move to reviewing the development of the internet and World Wide Web. You will learn about the different Web generations, social media and social networking, crowdsourcing, cyber security and cyber-attacks.

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 OSI model layers and the four TCP/IP model layers;
- Summarize the historical development and usage of computer networking and the World Wide Web;
- 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
8 Apr 2024
7 Jun 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
4.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinators:

- M.B. Archer
- A.E.M. Wils

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s)
Assessment methods:
Written exam
Keywords:
Networking, OSI and TCP/IP models, open system interconnection, ARPANET, the internet, the World Wide Web and its different generations, the social web, crowdsourcing, Social media, network security
Second year courses

Bachelor Digital Society year 2

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Mentor Scheme

Full course description

The Mentor Programme in the second year continues to help you to become a successful student. In the first year, the focus was on how you study. In the second year, the focus rather is on what you (want to) study and how this relates to your individual plans and goals. Through individual meetings with your mentor and through plenary information sessions, we support you in making key choices in your second and third year, in light of what you want to achieve in and after your study.

Course objectives

At the end of this course, you will:

1. Have more insight in what your goals and plans are for the second and third year of the bachelor.
2. Have improved your reflection skills, as well as the capacity “to set goals, plan a course of action, select appropriate strategies, self-monitor, and self-evaluate” (English & Kitsantas, 2013, p. 129).
3. Have made key choices for your second and third year, in light of what you want to achieve in and after your study (regarding for example a semester abroad, minor programmes, internships etc) .

Prerequisites

You need have received a positive BSA for the first year.

Recommended reading

Course catalogue for the second and third year of your bachelor.

DSO2501
Period 1
4 Sep 2023
5 Jul 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
1.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinators:

- B.C. Zwegers
- C.W. van Leeuwen
- R.L.A. Widdershoven

Bachelor Digital Society

- M.W. Wijermars
- C.L.B. Stein

Teaching methods:
Coaching, Assignment(s)
Assessment methods:
Participation, Assignment
Keywords:
goal setting, study skills, reflection skills, making choices for the second and third year of your study.
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Making Knowledge

Full course description

Climate denialism, flat earthers, the anti-vaxx movement: we live in a world where “scientific facts” are increasingly doubted. But what makes a fact, and what makes you doubt it? And how has fact-making and doubting changed with digitalisation? In this course, you will look at the ways that knowledge and doubt are made and represented in the past and present.

Course objectives

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

- Explain the ways that knowledge and doubt are made and how they have changed.
- Differentiate between the geographical, sociological, chronological aspects of making knowledge and doubt.
- Analyse how digitalisation has influenced these aspects and ways of making knowledge and doubt.
- Evaluate your explanations of knowledge- and doubt-making and improve upon them.

Prerequisites

None

Recommended reading

Burke, P. (2012). A Social History of Knowledge II: From the Encyclopédie to Wikipedia. Polity Press.

Meyer, E. T., & Schroeder, R. (2015). Knowledge Machines: Digital Transformations of the Sciences and Humanities. MIT Press.

DSO2001
Period 1
4 Sep 2023
27 Oct 2023
Print course description
ECTS credits:

Bachelor Digital Society

7.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- M.S. Schleper

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s)
Assessment methods:
Presentation and paper
Keywords:
History, knowledge, doubt, Science, Museums, journalism, Digitalisation
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Quantitative Data Analysis

Full course description

In this course you will be introduced to the methods and instruments used by researchers and professionals when designing and analyzing quantitative data in the Humanities and Social Sciences. You will gain skills and knowledge in a range of data analysis methods and visualization techniques to enable you to study cross-sectional, longitudinal and stacked data structures, analyze them employing univariate, bivariate and multivariate techniques, and use these skills to describe data and to draw inferences about society and the ways digital technologies are used, created, and influence our daily lives. This course will prepare you to carry out independent quantitative research. You will have plenty of hands-on experience working individually and within small working groups to conduct small scale, quantitative research projects, analyze the data collected, and present your findings.

Course objectives

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

- Understand the main concepts and building blocks in quantitative research methodology and probability theory;
- Interpret quantitative data analysis results and understand the limitations of statistical testing and how particular tests are used on certain types of data;
- Choose, conduct and implement adequate univariate, bivariate and multivariate statistical analyses using R to test theoretically informed research questions;
- Effectively communicate data analysis and interpretation using statistical tests, tables, graphics and other visuals.

Prerequisites

Note that it is very important that you complete this course successfully before you start DSO2003 Working with Big Data.

Recommended reading

Agresti, A. (2018). *Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences* (Fifth edition). Harlow: Pearson.

DSO2502
Period 1
4 Sep 2023
27 Oct 2023
Print course description
ECTS credits:
6.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- E.V. Sapir

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s), Skills
Assessment methods:
Written exam
Keywords:
statistics, descriptive, inferential, central tendency and dispersion, tables and graphs, Probability, hypotheses testing, measures of association, regression analysis
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Artificial Society

Full course description

The course Artificial Society will train students in addressing contemporary discussions on how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is embedded in society. The course starts from the acknowledgement that current debates about AI are predicated on earlier experiences, and on academic and societal discussions. The hopes and concerns of AI have varied over time and this matters for current debates. In this course we follow eight decades of AI, roughly attributed to the following seven themes:

Themes of Artificial Society:

1950s/60s: computers taking over manual labour
1970s: computers taking over intellectual labour
1980s: limitations of AI
1990s: new ideas on intelligence
2000s utopias of AI
2010s: algorithms & datafication
2020s: contemporary societal and ethical issues

While the themes, of course, are not neatly limited to one particular decade, they characterise the discussion on the societal ramifications of AI in a particular era. It helps students to grasp current debates when they recognise the longer context of the themes.

In this course we will follow the seven themes subsequently. In each theme, we will explore (i) the academic and societal debate at that time (ii) the technical progress at that time (iii) the state of philosophical reflection at that time. Together, the themes provide a good introduction into what AI in society could mean.

Course objectives

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

Recognise and characterise the interdisciplinary questions (historical, political, philosophical, cultural, sociological, technical) pertaining to the role of AI in societal developments. [2.1]

Follow an author's argument and indicate how it resonates with older discussions [2.2]

Recognise and situate arguments in broader debates and critically engage with them. [2.3]

Compare, contrast, and assess arguments on AI and society. [2.4]

Build an argument in relevant debates on AI and society, including the use of pertinent examples to clarify theoretical positions. [2.5]

Prerequisites

None

Recommended reading

The course material will consist of a reader that will be made available through KeyLinks.

DSO2002
Period 2
30 Oct 2023
22 Dec 2023
Print course description
ECTS credits:
7.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- K. Gabriels

Teaching methods:
Lecture(s), PBL
Assessment methods:
Written exam
Keywords:
Artificial intelligence (AI), intelligence, job automation, AI utopia/dystopia, dataism, Singularity
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Bachelor Digital Society

Working with Big Data

Full course description

This course offers an extensive and systematic introduction to the tools and analytical methods analysts use when analysing big data and specifically social media data. During the course, you will develop both the technical-computational skills that are in high demand across a range of research organisations and industries, as well as the necessary critical skills in computational thinking, algorithm design, big data fundamentals, and data-driven analysis. You will have plenty of opportunities to apply and explore your new learning through case studies. During this course we will go through identifying data sources and collecting/scraping social media data to suit our research purposes, pre-processing the data and transforming it from text to quantitative data, which lends itself to statistical analysis. You will also learn how to analyse these data by employing statistical tools and automatic content analytical methods, to address meaningful, theoretically informed, empirical research questions and extracting meaningful insights, patterns, trends and correlations from Big Data. These skills are in high demand in civil service agencies, research communities and the labour market, as a tool that can help reach better policy and business decisions.

DSO2008
Period 2
30 Oct 2023
22 Dec 2023
Print course description
ECTS credits:
6.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- E.V. Sapir

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Critical Making

Full course description

We engage with the world in two ways: by thinking and by making. However, these are typically considered separately, especially in academic contexts, thus creating an artificial distinction between conceptual and material exploration. But, can the act of making help us think critically, develop arguments, and achieve value? Ratto and Hockema first used the term ‘critical making’ to reflect on the ‘socio-technical environment’ and the fact that ‘materially-engaged activities provide cognitive resources for thinking’. By taking this course you will learn how making in different physical and digital forms can enhance your thinking, help you formulate arguments, and answer research questions. By taking a project-based approach, this course will provide you with skills and competencies that will enable you to work in teams, follow robust approaches to carry out projects from start to finish, and reflect on the products of your work.

Course objectives

● Develop a critical understanding of maker culture, its current cultural and social context and its role in the 21st century knowledge production.

● Apply the concept of critical making to reflect on and analyze the value of physical and digital designs as well as your own practice.

● Use design thinking as a method to respond to problems and create (digital) solutions.

● Conceptualize and make physical and digital objects collaboratively and reflect critically on your making process and its outputs.

Prerequisites

None

Recommended reading

Hertz, G. (n.d). What is Critical Making? https://current.ecuad.ca/what-is-critical-making

Ratto, M. & Hertz, G. (2019). Critical Making and Interdisciplinary Learning: Making as a Bridge Between Art, Science, Engineering, and Social Interventions. In Bogers, L. & Chiappini, L. (eds), The Critical Makers Reader: (Un) learning Technology (pp. 18-28.). Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. https://networkcultures.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/CriticalMakersReader.pdf

Resch, G., Southwick, D., Record, I., Ratto, M., & Sayers, J. (2018). Thinking as handwork: critical making with humanistic concerns. In Sayers, J. (ed), Making Things and Drawing Boundaries. Experiments in the Digital Humanities (pp. 149-61). University of Minnesota Press. https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled-aa1769f2-6c55-485a-81af-ea82cce86966/section/4b5fd8b4-2a39-4d7a-a563-3e611da220f0

DSO2508
Period 3
8 Jan 2024
2 Feb 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
5.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- K. Papadopoulos

Teaching methods:
Assignment(s), Lecture(s), PBL, Presentation(s), Research, Skills, Training(s), Work in subgroups
Assessment methods:
Assessment, Presentation, Presentation and paper
Keywords:
Maker Culture, Critical making, Design Thinking, prototyping, human-centred design, design sprint

The 'Good Life'

Full course description

The focus of this course lies on how (digital) technologies can influence the good life and related notions such as quality of life, happiness, and well-being. We will investigate how the idea of a good life is visible already in the way societies are organized – think for instance of the welfare state - and taken into account by policy makers. The guiding concern is: to what extent can (digital) technologies contribute to or negatively impact the good life?

We will introduce the topic by looking at how different disciplines (philosophy, psychology, cultural and media studies, social sciences, history, political economy) have approached the good life, and we will critically investigate how and where these theories overlap and deviate.

We will introduce the topic first by looking back to Aristotle's writings in his Nicomachean ethics and the recent academic debate on virtue ethics before we then discuss and apply Aristotle's ideas to contemporary examples and the societal and academic debates around them. We will investigate the use of technologies to quantify and qualify the self (e.g. apps that measure our heartbeat and fitness), eHealth in general and questions that relate to it as e.g. who is responsible for health? Is it the user? Is it the welfare state? We will look at the use of robots (care robots and sex robots) and how we relate to them. When we think about technologies and the good life, we also need to investigate design and ask whether we can engineer the good life.

Course objectives

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

- understand academic theories concerning the good life (well-being; happiness; quality of life) from different disciplines (philosophy, psychology, cultural and media studies, social sciences, history, political economy).
- apply these theories to (digital) technology and, vice versa, being able to relate examples and case studies of technologies to theories, concepts, debates, and authors.
- build and problematize arguments regarding social, ethical, philosophical, political implications of (digital) technologies (these implications might problematize the good life:students can think of possible solutions to overcome problems).
- understand and critique the tension between individual and community values in engineering, technology, and the 'good life'.

Prerequisites

None

Recommended reading

We encourage students to buy the novel Machines like Me by Ian McEwan (2019) as we will repeatedly refer back to the story in the course.

Bachelor Digital Society

DSO2004
Period 4
5 Feb 2024
5 Apr 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
7.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- J. Ac

Teaching methods:
Lecture(s), PBL
Assessment methods:
Participation, Written exam
Keywords:
Good life, quantified and qualified self, robots, responsible research and innovation, design ethics, Sustainability
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Qualitative Research Methods: Foundations and Practices

Full course description

This course introduces you to qualitative research methods using a hands-on approaches. You will gain both knowledge and skills in a range of qualitative research methodologies, including ethnographic methods, such as observation and interview, case studies, discourse analysis, and focus groups, while delving into digital approaches for researching and analysing how digital technologies are used, created, and influence our daily lives. This course prepares you for independent qualitative research in the third year of your studies.

Qualitative research methodologies are interpretative and naturalistic. This means that researchers study people, events, and things in their everyday contexts, trying to interpret these in relation to the meanings assigned to them by their social, cultural, and temporal circumstances.

We go beyond the practicalities of doing interviews, observing people, organising focus groups or conducting discourse analysis on historical documents. Each method comes with its own assumptions about the objects in the world (ontology), and how people can know about what is in the world (epistemology). In addition to these philosophical questions, we also pay attention to the normative and ethical issues associated with qualitative research.

Course objectives

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

- Select and apply appropriate qualitative methods for different areas of research relating to digital societies;
- Motivate and critically evaluate qualitative methods to respond to different types of research questions;

- Implement a range of qualitative data collection methods, including interviews, observations, case studies, digital ethnography, and discourse analysis;
- Analyse, interpret, and present your findings;
- Problematise and reflect on the ethical dilemmas in qualitative research.

Prerequisites

None

Recommended reading

To be confirmed, but look again at Booth from Year 1, 'What is research?'

DSO2504
Period 4
5 Feb 2024
5 Apr 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
7.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- T.J.M.M. Frissen

Teaching methods:
Research, Skills, Lecture(s), PBL
Assessment methods:
Final paper
Keywords:
Digital methods, ethnography, discourse analysis, epistemology, research ethics
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Regulating the Digital: White Papers and Red Tape

Full course description

Facebook-founder Mark Zuckerberg famously used the motto 'move fast and break things' – a slogan in favour of disruptive innovation and minimal state interference. The tech industry is notoriously regulation averse, justifying their position by the claim that state regulation would impede innovation. Critics, however, have pointed out that governments have played a key (facilitating) role in many technological breakthroughs, including the development of the Internet. As digital technologies have become engrained in all aspects of society, governments also increasingly push back against this notion and put in place regulatory frameworks, e.g. to protect critical infrastructures or citizens' rights. At the same time, media coverage and political debates exposing the risks and vulnerabilities of digital technologies can stir anxiety among the general public and give rise to calls for increased governmental intervention. Some even posit that Internet access should be seen as a public good, thus recasting users or consumers into citizens with digital rights. While the digital is increasingly subject to regulation, the very process of regulating and governing

is transforming in parallel, for example through the adoption of algorithmic decision-making.

While the general consensus is that regulation is necessary, the extent and means by which state intervention should occur is subject to debate. To what extent can the market take care of addressing any imbalances and negative outcomes? When should the state step in to create a market in fields where none exists and competition is desired? Does it suffice to extend and apply existing legislative frameworks (e.g. competition law, protection of intellectual property rights) or should digital technologies be regulated separately? To what extent do the various policy domains in which digitalisation processes take place differ in this respect?

In this course, you will study how various manifestations of digitalisation are regulated and governed at the local, national and international levels. Throughout the course, you will be introduced to key public policy and legal concepts. You apply these concepts onto a policy area (e.g. transport, health) of your choice, while exploring if and how this area should be regulated on the basis of four key themes:

· Public vs. private sector

· Multilevel governance

· Human rights

· Public goods

In addition to sharpening your debating skills in a policy debate, you will write a final paper on a policy issue or regulatory instrument of your choice within your policy area, demonstrating your understanding of the particularities of policymaking in the digital domain. This can be, for example, the local regulation of Uber in Paris or privacy regulations in health care. Since many of the questions that arise as a result of digitalization concern transnational problems, services and/or corporations, the level at which they should be addressed is up for debate. Can the issue best be addressed by individual states, or should norms be established in international organisations? In turn, each of these levels involves its own dynamics and limitations that result from different cultural and other norms.

Course objectives

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

- Understand the theoretical aspects of studying public policy, and how the policy cycle can be applied to different domains in local, national and international policymaking;

- Apply the tools of public policy analysis to a specific initiative in a given policy domain;

- Analyse the relationship between regulation and innovation in a given policy domain;

- Reflect upon how the context and conditions of policymaking can shape policy outcomes.

Prerequisites

None

Recommended reading

- Audouin, M., & Finger, M. (2018). The development of Mobility-as-a-Service in the Helsinki metropolitan area: A multi-level governance analysis. *Research in Transportation Business & Management*, *27*, 24–35. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rtbm.2018.09.001
- Berard, B. (2018). I second that emoji: The standards, structures, and social production of the emoji. *First Monday*, *23*(9). http://dx.doi.org/10.5210/fm.v23i9.9381
- Bowles, N. (2016, April 27). Uber, Google and others form self-driving car lobby to shape US policy. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/apr/26/uber-google-lyft-ford-volvo-self-driving-car-lobby
- Clarke, J. (2009). Governance puzzles. In L. Budd & L. Harris, Lisa (Eds.), *e-Governance: Managing or Governing*. *Routledge e-Business* (pp. 29–52). Routledge. http://oro.open.ac.uk/18135/2/D868E856.pdf
- Crootof, R. (2019). Regulating new weapons technology. In E. T. Jensen & R. T. P. Alcala (Eds.), *The Impact of Emerging Technologies on the Law of Armed Conflict* (pp. 3–25). Oxford University Press.
- DeNardis, L. (2014). *The global war for Internet governance*. Yale University Press (pp. 1–25).
- Dupont, B. (2017). Bots, cops, and corporations: on the limits of enforcement and the promise of polycentric regulation as a way to control large-scale cybercrime. *Crime, Law and Social Change: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *67*(1), 97–116.
- European Commission. (2020). White paper on Artificial Intelligence: A European approach to excellence and trust. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/commission-white-paper-artificial-intelligence-feb2020_en.pdf
- Gorwa, R., & Peez, A. (2019). Big tech hits the diplomatic circuit. *Berlin Policy Journal*. https://berlinpolicyjournal.com/big-tech-hits-the-diplomatic-circuit/
- Hofmann, J. (2016). Multi-stakeholderism in Internet governance: Putting a fiction into practice. *Journal of Cyber Policy*, *1*(1), 29–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/23738871.2016.1158303
- Jørgensen, R. (2018). Human rights and private actors in the online domain. In M. Land & J. Aronson (Eds.), *New Technologies for Human Rights Law and Practice* (pp. 243–269). Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781316838952.011
- Kaul, I., & Mendoza, R. U. (2003). Advancing the concept of public goods. In I. Kaul, P. Conceição, K. Le Goulven, & R. U. Mendoza (Eds.), *Providing Global Public Good: Managing Globalization* (pp. 78–111). Oxford University Press.
- Mazzucato, M. (2013). *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking public vs. private sector myths*. Anthem Press. (pp. 15–28).
- Metcalfe, P., & Dencik, L. (2019). The politics of big borders: Data (in)justice and the governance of refugees. *First Monday*, *24*(4). https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/9934/7749
- Princen, S. (2010). Agenda-setting. In E. Versluis, M. van Keulen & P. Stephenson, *Analysing the European Union Policy Process* (pp. 107–131). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Zepeda, L. M. (2002). A&M Records, Inc. v. Napster, Inc. *Berkeley Technology Law Journal*, *17*(1), 71–90.

DSO2005
Period 5
8 Apr 2024
7 Jun 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:

Bachelor Digital Society

7.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- T. Van Overbeke

Teaching methods:
Assignment(s), Lecture(s), Paper(s), PBL, Presentation(s), Research, Work in subgroups
Assessment methods:
Assignment, Final paper
Keywords:
Regulation, governance, digital technologies, Internet Governance, Disruptive innovation
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Interdisciplinary Research Design

Full course description

The aim of this course is to help students to chart a path through the broad and diverse research landscape entailed by the notion of “digital society”. It builds on earlier courses of qualitative and quantitative research methods and aims to help students understand that there is not just one right path through the thickets of topics, questions and methods. A thriving research field has many roads to research success, in particular in interdisciplinary research. Students will also learn about the importance of “failure” or achieving negative results, and the important role that this plays in the development of science.

Interdisciplinary research design brings many intertwined fundamental and practical challenges. The practical challenges are how to triangulate interesting/relevant questions, appropriate methods and available data. Yet, the challenge of ‘good’ questions, methods and data, also point to fundamental questions about knowledge production itself. The course combines lectures on the basic philosophical outlooks on science, student-led sessions about exemplary interdisciplinary research, and workshops where practical questions on data, method and questions will be addressed. During the course, students will develop a research proposal and reflect on its assumptions.

Course objectives

After this course, students will be able:

- To formulate interdisciplinary research questions relating to processes of digitalisation
- To articulate how a research proposal is related to fundamental questions about knowledge production (such as demarcation, justification, falsification, socialisation, credibility)
- To identify and justify appropriate methods for answering interdisciplinary research questions, and to recognize their limits and (ethical) implications
- To design a long-term project proposal

Prerequisites

None

Bachelor Digital Society

Recommended reading

Kumar, R. (2011). *Research Methodology: A step-by-step guide*. Sage. 3rd Edition

Other course material will be made available through Reference List.

DSO2505
Period 5
8 Apr 2024
7 Jun 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
7.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- D.A. Shanley

Teaching methods:
Lecture(s), PBL, Work in subgroups
Assessment methods:
Assignment
Keywords:
Interdisciplinary research, research methods, philosophy of science, research design, research proposal
Third year courses

Bachelor Digital Society year 3

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Mentor Scheme

Full course description

The third year mentor programme will offer plenary sessions and workshops to guide and support you through the final stages of the bachelor. Emphasis will be placed on how to prepare for the thesis (stress, motivation, time management etc.) and how to navigate your plans for the future (master applications, employability etc.).

DSO3500
Period 1
4 Sep 2023
5 Jul 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
0.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinators:

Bachelor Digital Society

- Dieteren, Eva
- B.C. Zwegers
- C.W. van Leeuwen
- R.L.A. Widdershoven
- M.W. Wijermars
- C.L.B. Stein

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Preparation for the BA DS Thesis

Full course description

During the first months of year 3, you will choose between pursuing study in another country or conducting an internship or following a minor in Maastricht. This course helps you to stay in contact with other BA Digital Society students and staff, and to prepare for the thesis which has to be completed in the final months of year 3. The purpose of this course is to help you develop your skills in coming up with research ideas, one of which may form the basis of the thesis. Ideas for research may come from the internship, minor, study abroad or from news stories relating to digital technologies. You are expected to prepare and share three research ideas, in different digital forms, such as a podcast, video or blog post. Other students and tutors will provide feedback, and by the end of the course you will prepare three abstracts of your research ideas.

Course objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of contemporary developments and debates related to ‘digital society’
- Apply knowledge from reading and processing academic literature from a variety of perspectives
- Turn observations of everyday life (from your direct experience or from the news media) into researchable questions
- Select methods appropriate to answering different research questions
- Present ideas in a concise way in different forms
- Practise giving and receiving feedback (not assessed)

Recommended reading

not applicable

DSO3501
Period 1
4 Sep 2023
22 Dec 2023
Print course description
ECTS credits:
4.0
Instruction language:
English

Bachelor Digital Society

Coordinator:

- C. Rasterhoff

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Controversies in Digital Society

Full course description

The ways in which digital technologies affect society, culture, and politics continue to change rapidly. Topics that were headline news when you started your degree might have faded from memory by the time you have reached your final year. Other topics remain salient and controversial over time.

In this course we study processes of digitalisation that have sparked contentious debates. The course will challenge you to analyse and understand them in their full historical, social, technological, and infrastructural context, drawing on what you have learned in previous courses (e.g. Digitalisation and Politics, Surveillance Society, The Good Life, Artificial Society). You will be specifically trained in looking at these debates from different—and sometimes diametrically opposed—perspectives through in-class role plays (LARPs) focussing on three major themes. In each LARP, you will be challenged to take on the identity of different stakeholders ranging from scholars to policy makers, from critical thinkers to political activists, and from platform developers to civil society actors.

The Critical Debates in Digital Society course will develop your skills in thinking with/against different positions in contemporary topics of debate. Furthermore, it will hone your analytical reading, critical thinking and persuasive arguing skills. The multidisciplinary setup of the course will contribute to knowledge of a variety of theories and concepts from the social sciences and humanities.

DSO3001
Period 4
5 Feb 2024
5 Apr 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
9.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- M.R. Barget

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Bachelor Thesis

Full course description

The BA thesis is the final piece of work in the BA Digital Society programme, providing you with the

opportunity to demonstrate the skills and knowledge developed in the preceding two and a half years. You are expected to write a substantial thesis (9000-11,000 words) that adheres to the conventions of academic writing and to make a digital object. Making a digital object (such as a podcast, video, animation, or data visualisation) enables you to approach research questions from a practical perspective. This combination enables you to demonstrate your understanding of digital technologies and their societal impact inside-out. Ideally, the thesis project you work on also prepares you for a future job or further studies in an MA programme.

Course objectives

After completing your BA thesis, you will be able to:

- Write a substantial academic essay that draws on the knowledge and skills acquired in previous Digital Society courses;
- Develop a methodological framework and conduct independent research;
- Collect literature that is relevant to the chosen research question and use it to build a sound, written academic argument;
- Consider the possibilities and limitations of using digital objects to collect and/or analyse data.

Recommended reading

Booth, W.C., Colomb, G.G., & William J. M. (2016). The craft of research (4th ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Greetham, B. (2014). How to write your undergraduate dissertation (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Rawlins, J., & Metzger, S. (2009). The writer’s way (7th ed.). Houghton Mifflin.

DSO3900
Period 4
5 Feb 2024
21 Jun 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
17.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- M.R. Barget

Bachelor Digital Society year 3 electives unit of study

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Study Abroad

DSO9020
Year
1 Sep 2023

Bachelor Digital Society

31 Aug 2024
Period 1
4 Sep 2023
2 Feb 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
0.0
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Internship

Full course description

At the beginning of your third year, you will be able to specialise in your field of interest by choosing to study abroad at one of our more than 100 partner universities, conduct an internship (e.g. at a cultural institution, civil society organisation, media organisation) or follow a minor at FASoS, another faculty, or another Dutch university.

DSO9900
Year
1 Sep 2023
31 Aug 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
0.0
Instruction language:
English
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Literature Exam

DSO9010
Year
1 Sep 2023
31 Aug 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
3.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- T.J.M.M. Frissen

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Art, Literature and Technoscience

Full course description

This course explores how art and literature engage with contemporary challenges related to the impact of science and technology. How do different artistic media, from books and films to visual and sound art, engage with societal challenges of a technoscientific nature? What can art do in relation to our society? We will approach such questions through topical case studies on art and literature that explore important challenges of contemporary society, including the role of technology in food production, new surveillance technologies, the rise of robotics, and climate change. While the course focuses on the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, we will trace developments back from our current situation to the early twentieth century. In examining the role of art and literature in contemporary society, we will periodically return to the topics of aesthetic form, context and participation. The case studies will be analyzed with the help of concepts such as forcework, the posthuman, materialism, autonomy, visibility, and scale. The course also includes exhibition visits, presentations, as well as a festival organized by students.

Course objectives

By the end of this course you will

- have acquired understanding of artistic responses to current multifaceted societal challenges;
- be able to apply interdisciplinary concepts such as immersion, the posthuman, materialism, materialism, and scale to the analysis of these challenges;
- be able to discuss the role of art in relation to contemporary technoscientific society;
- be able to apply methods learned in the skills courses to the analysis of artworks, literary texts and artistic practices.

Prerequisites

This course is open to all students, but builds on the skills course Analysing Art (ACU1502), among others. Taking the course in combination with the skills course Analysing Arts II (ACU2508) or Interviewing (EUS3500) is recommended.

ACU2017
Period 4
5 Feb 2024
5 Apr 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
9.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- R.P.J. Hendriks

Teaching methods:
PBL, Assignment(s), Lecture(s), Working visit(s)
Assessment methods:
Final paper
Keywords:
Art and literature, technological society, societal challenges, robotics, climate change,

biotechnology, posthumanism, materialism
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Technology Assessment

Full course description

In the 1960s, Technology Assessments (TA) came into being as a way of assessing the risks of innovation and averting undesirable consequences of new technologies. In principle, TAs aim to anticipate unintended effects of new and emerging technologies. Although it is impossible to foresee every possible consequence of a given technology in advance, TAs provide insight into its potential impact and can thus help to steer its development and implementation in society.

For a long time, TAs focused on the 'hard' impacts of technology, such as quantifiable environmental harm, or health and safety risks. Yet, recently, the 'soft' impacts of new technologies - like for example on ethics or social relations - have gradually received more attention. This is why today, various forms of TA exist, such as Constructive TA (CTA) or Ethical TA (eTA). This course introduces you to such TA approaches and to important related concepts, like risk (society), hazard, uncertainty, and responsibility. You will learn to apply TA frameworks and concepts to examples and cases of your own interest. In doing so, you will ask: what are the limitations of these frameworks? Which criteria are missing? And how to deal with that?

The assessment of this course consists of a final, individually authored TA report, in which you will evaluate an emerging, digital technology of your choice. For this report, you will also engage in a peer-feedback session with your fellow students. This course also features a collaborative group presentation in which you will collectively assess a new technology. Last but not least, it offers several lectures from experts in the field of TA - such as scholars from the Rathenau Instituut in The Hague -, philosophy of technology, and Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI).

Course objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- *Explain* the societal importance of Technology Assessment and its approaches to technological risk and uncertainty
- *Explain* key theories, concepts, and approaches in Technology Assessment.
- *Evaluate* an emerging digital technology of your choice from a Technology Assessment perspective and *recommend* future steps for research and governance.

- *Produce* a professional report that assesses an emerging digital technology of your choice, using a technology assessment framework.

Prerequisites

None

Bachelor Digital Society

DSO3002
Period 5
8 Apr 2024
7 Jun 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
6.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- D. Petzold

Teaching methods:
Lecture(s), PBL, Work in subgroups
Assessment methods:
Final paper
Keywords:
Technology Assessment – Risk – Uncertainty - Hard and Soft Impacts - Responsible Research and Innovation – Constructive Technology Assessment – Ethical Technology Assessment
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Power and Democracy

Full course description

This course considers democracy not simply as a set of formal institutions, with voting rules, party organisation, and formal relationships between citizens and representatives. Instead, it looks at democracy as something people *do*: something enacted, contested, performed, and embodied. It also considers those actions as done *in contexts*: contexts of unequal power relations, most obviously, but also physical and mediatised contexts, colonial contexts, contexts of gender and workplace relationships. It starts by examining foundational concepts – who "the people" are and how representation works, for instance. It then examines democratic practices and different arenas of democratisation -- the public and private spheres, even knowledge and rationality – before turning to challenges to democracy from Marxist and indigenous perspectives.

Course objectives

The course's primary objective is to reconstruct the different meanings of power and democracy; develop an understanding of conceptual analysis as a method in political philosophy and history of ideas; and apply those concepts and method to contemporary problems in democratic theory and practice.

Prerequisites

None

Recommended reading

• Held, D. (2006). Models of democracy. (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press

ACU2007
Period 5
8 Apr 2024
7 Jun 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
9.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- J.R. Parkinson

Teaching methods:
PBL
Assessment methods:
Participation, Assignment, Final paper
Keywords:
political theory, Democracy, power, authority.
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Vulnerable Bodies

Full course description

In the framework of this course, vulnerable bodies are bodies that depart from the norm, especially the norm of ability and youth that we today associate with success in life. If you already have wondered why there is so little diversity in the images of corporeality that surround us or have questioned your own behavior when taking another idealistic image of yourself to post on one of your social media, this course will definitely appeal to you. The elective Vulnerable Bodies combines approaches to the topic from gender, disability, and aging studies, theories of care as well as philosophy, i.e., phenomenology and ethics. Combined, these perspectives help us understand what the relationship entails between individuals as corporeal agents and the societal structures that bind these bodies together and how exclusionary practices are based on oppressions of bodily differences.

A renewed interest in the body that has emerged within the humanities and social sciences in the past decades and that often is characterized as the material or somatic turn builds on the work of scholars such as the late Foucault, Merleau-Ponty, and Featherstone. Foucault explains how knowledge (cf. the rise of clinical medicine) about the body served to uphold various forms of power relations within society. Bodily differences and identities resulted from operations of “bio-power.” In his late work, Foucault addresses the subjectivity and personal agency of human beings to resist power dynamics by introducing concepts such as “self-care.” In Merleau-Ponty’s view, the body is our primary means of knowing the world and the condition for “lived experience.” He challenges the mind-body dualism of the western tradition and shows how we are all perceiving bodies, part and parcel of the social and material world. Featherstone connects society’s current obsession with beautiful, fit, and young bodies with consumer culture. The underlying logic of this culture is to

promise us embodied success by making smart consumer choices. This lifestyle is constantly propagated by means of the visual presence of stars, models, and celebrities and sold as the “good life.”

Taking these and other perspectives as theoretical foundation, our elective focuses on the corporeality of human existence and the consumerist society in which this corporeality is embodied. Throughout the course, we will examine literature, art, media, and other practices that challenge the hierarchal dual orderings of the body (young/old, slim/fat, able/disabled, etc.) through which oppression is realized and that encourage us to develop a nuanced understanding of what is often referred to as “body positivity.”

Course objectives

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- identify how bodies and persons are categorized as “vulnerable” in a neoliberal and consumerist context and what the consequences are of this categorization (e.g., practices of othering, such as ableism and ageism);
- understand and integrate key theoretical approaches (e.g., performativity, embodiment, representation, materiality, and care ethics) to critically engage with this categorization;
- examine the extent to which specific artistic and media practices (e.g., photographs, illness narratives, and art interventions in care settings) contribute to and/or subvert the category of vulnerable bodies by means of narrative and/or semiotic analysis and against the background of the acquired theoretical approaches;
- make reasoned judgments on creative innovations (e.g., through art, narrative, or technology) in the design of alternative “good” living practices.

Prerequisites

None

Recommended reading

There is no textbook for this course. Instead, a reader has been developed tailored to each task. This reader contains work by Chris Gilleard and Paul Higgs, Mike Featherstone, Rosemary Garland-Thomson, Joan Tronto, Ingunn Moser, Ann Basting, and many others.

ACU2019
Period 5
8 Apr 2024
7 Jun 2024
Print course description
ECTS credits:
9.0
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English
Coordinator:

- A.M.C. Swinnen

Teaching methods:

Bachelor Digital Society

PBL
Assessment methods:
Final paper
Keywords:
embodiment, corporeality, “vulnerability, ” age, Gender, disability, consumerism, lifestyle, care, Art, narratives, media, the good life