

Indiana University, Bloomington
School of Informatics and Computing, INFO I-202

Summer 2016

Introduction to Social Informatics

Instructor
Dongoh Park, Hee Rin Lee



Course Description

Social informatics refers to an interdisciplinary body of research dedicated to studying the design, uses, and effects of information technologies. Rather than trace the “social impact” of these technologies, social informatics seeks to understand how social contexts shape the form and character of technology. Conversely, it also studies how technology influences society, affects power relations, and restructures social and organizational networks. In the course, we will be developing our understanding of these issues by engaging critically with various debated topics relating to information and communication technologies (ICTs).

This course asks students to go beyond the “technical” aspects of ICTs and consider the social relations that are an integral part of designing and adopting a technological system. It also challenges students to think critically about technological change and acquire a more sophisticated understanding of the political, economic, and social considerations that underlie technological development.

Instructors

Dongoh Park,

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Hee Rin Lee,

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Associate Instructor

Paula Mate,

Ph.D. Candidate in Informatics (pmate@indiana.edu)

Lecture Schedule

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

10:00am-12:15pm (Informatics West 107)

Note

Office hours are by appointment unless otherwise specified in the lecture. This syllabus is subject to change, with sufficient notice, as the semester progresses. The most current version will always be available on Canvas.

Textbook

All readings will be made available online via Canvas.
(SU16-BL-INFO-I202-5804)

Course Introduction

Social informatics is an interdisciplinary field of research dedicated to studying the design, uses, and effects of information technologies. Rather than trace the “social impact” of these technologies, social informatics seeks to understand how social contexts shape the form and character of technology. Conversely, it also studies how technology influences society, affects power relations, and restructures social and organizational networks.

In this course, we will be developing our understanding of these issues by engaging critically with various debated topics relating to information and communication technologies (ICTs). This course asks students to go beyond the “merely technical” aspects of ICTs and consider the social relations that are an integral part of designing and adopting a technology or technological system. It also challenges students to think critically about technological change and acquire a more sophisticated understanding of the political, economic, and social considerations that underlie technological development.

Course Objectives

By the completion of the course, students will:

1. Understand that the design, use, and application of information technology is a social and a technical process.
2. Be able to apply a range of frameworks that describe how technologies operate in society.
3. Be able to analyze contemporary sociotechnical issues from multiple perspectives.
4. Be able to locate primary and secondary sources of information on social informatics topics, summarize their content, critically engage with the arguments presented therein, and use them as evidence to create their own arguments.

This class will involve numerous writing assignments geared at developing students' ability to articulate their own arguments, grapple with nuanced questions, and examine the points of view of others as well as their own perspectives.

Student Conduct, Rights and Responsibilities

All students are expected to submit their own original work. Plagiarism constitutes using others' ideas, words or images without properly giving credit to those sources. If you turn in any work with your name affixed to it, I assume that work is your own and that all sources are indicated and documented in the text (with quotations and/or citations).

We will respond to acts of academic misconduct according to university policy concerning plagiarism; sanctions for plagiarism can include a grade of F for the assignment in question and/or for the course and must include a report to the Dean of Students Office. For more information on our expectations for student conduct please refer to the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct, which can be found at:

<http://studentcode.iu.edu/responsibilities/academic-misconduct.html>

Grading

Final grades will be calculated according to the following:

- 40% Homework assignments
- 25% Participation
- 15% Mid-term
- 20% Final Assignment

Student participation grades will be based on attendance and active engagement in discussion section, attendance and active engagement in lecture, and the completion of weekly reading annotation assignments. Students will also have the opportunity to complete occasional extra credit assignments during the course of the semester. If you want to contest any of your grades, you must do so in person with the instructor assigned to your discussion section. If you cannot reach a resolution, you should meet in person with the professor assigned to your lecture. *The instructors reserve the right to LOWER your grade if we think we were too generous the first time.*

Assignment Submission

Homework assignments should be submitted via Canvas by noon on the day they are due, unless otherwise specified. **Late homework will be penalized by 10% per day**, with a two-day grace period. Assignments that are more than two days late will not be accepted. Students who are absent on either the day assignments are assigned or the day assignments are due are still expected to turn their assignments in on time. Proper documentation may excuse an absence, but does not excuse the student's responsibility to turn assignments in on time.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken at each meeting. **All students will have one discretionary absence** that they can use during the semester. Students using a discretionary absence will not need to present documentation to support the absence, such as a doctor's note. Students who need to miss more than one class should inform their AI beforehand to avoid being penalized. **Attendance in mandatory on exam day.** Students needing to miss an exam because of a serious illness or a personal tragedy will need to receive advance approval and provide supporting documentation if requested. Students are responsible for submitting assignments on time, regardless of whether they are present on the day of class.

Religious and Civic Observations

In accordance with the Office of the Dean of the Faculties, any student who wishes to receive an excused absence from class must submit a request form available from the Dean of the Faculties for each day to be absent. This form must be presented to a course instructor by the end of the second week of this semester. A separate form must be submitted for each day of class you will be missing. The form must be signed by an instructor, a copy made, and the original returned to the student. Information about the policy on religious observation can be found at the following web site: <http://enrollmentbulletin.indiana.edu/pages/relo.php?Term=3>

Email Etiquette

Please give us at least 24 hours to reply to your emails, and we will do the same for you. Please put the course number in the Subject line and remember to sign your email with your name. We expect the language and structure of your emails to be professional. This includes punctuation, salutations/signature, etc.

Students with Special Needs

Please discuss any accommodations you may need with the instructor. Please visit <https://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/disability-services-students/> and fill out the forms, requesting that memos be sent to one of the instructors from the Office of Disability Services for Students regarding your testing/classroom modifications.

W 1

W1D1 Introduction to Social Informatics Assignments

June 21
(Tue) No readings (yay!)

W1D2 What is Social Informatics

June 22
(Wed) **Sawyer, Steve.** "Social Informatics: Overview, Principles and Opportunities." *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 31, no. 5 (June 1, 2005): 9–12. **Distributed:**
Assignment 1

W1D3 Evocate Object

June 23
(Thu) **Madrigal, Alexis C.** "[Why People Really Love Technology: An Interview with Genevieve Bell.](#)" *The Atlantic*, November 28, 2012. **Due:**
Assignment 1
Gathman, E. Cabell Hankinson. "Cell Phones." In *The Inner History of Devices*, edited by Sherry Turkle, 41–48. The MIT Press, 2008. **Distributed:**
Assignment 2

W 2

W2D1 Why Technologies Fail? Politics of Technology

June 28
(Tue) **Orlikowski, Wanda J.** "Learning from Notes: Organizational Issues in Groupware Implementation." In *Proceedings of the 1992 ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work*, 362–69. CSCW '92.
Winner, Langdon. "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" *Daedalus* 109, no. 1 (January 1, 1980): 121–36.

W2D2 Technological Determinism and Social Construction

June 29
(Wed) **Nye, David E.** *Technology Matters: Questions to Live with*. The MIT Press, 2007. [Ch. 1 and 2] **Due:**
Assignment 2
Martin, Wendy. "The Social and Cultural Shaping of Educational Technology: Toward a Social Constructivist Framework." *AI & SOCIETY* 13, no. 4 (December 1999): 402–20.

W2D3 Infrastructure

June 30
(Thu) **Edwards, Paul N., Matthew S. Mayernik, Archer L. Batcheller, Geoffrey C. Bowker, and Christine L. Borgman.** "Science Friction: Data, Metadata, and Collaboration." *Social Studies of Science* 41, no. 5 (October 1, 2011): 667–90.
Star, S.L., and K. Ruhleder. "Steps Toward an Ecology of Infrastructure: Design and Access for Large Information Spaces." *Information Systems Research* 7, no. 1 (1996): 111.

W 3

W3D1 Invention Myth

July 5 (Tue) **Gladwell, Malcolm.** "Creation Myth." *The New Yorker*, May 16, 2011. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/05/16/creation-myth>.
Dan & Chip Heath. "The Myth About Creation Myths." *Fast Company*, March 1, 2007. <http://www.fastcompany.com/58773/myth-about-creation-myths>.

W3D2 Virtual Reality

July 6 (Wed) **Gershon, Ilana.** *The Breakup 2.0: Disconnecting over New Media*. Cornell University Press, 2011. [Introduction]
Gladwell, Malcolm. "[Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted](#)." *The New Yorker*, October 4, 2010. **Distributed: Assignment 3**
Coleman, Beth. *Hello Avatar: Rise of the Networked Generation*. Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2011. [Ch. 1]

W3D3 Mid-Term

July 7 (Thu) Quiz Style Mid-term. More details will be announced in class. In Class Exam

W 4

W4D1 Intellectual Property

July 12 (Tue) **Zachary Crockett.** "How Mickey Mouse Evades the Public Domain." *Priceonomics*, January 7, 2016. <http://priceonomics.com/how-mickey-mouse-evades-the-public-domain/>.
Lessig, Lawrence. *Free Culture: The Nature and Future of Creativity*. Penguin, 2004. [Ch. 10: Property]

W4D2 Knowledge Economy and Changing Work

July 12 (Wed) **Kantor, Jodi, and David Streitfeld.** "[Inside Amazon: Wrestling Big Ideas in a Bruising Workplace](#)." *The New York Times*, August 15, 2015. **Due: Assignment 3**
Madrigal, Alexis C. "[Not Even Silicon Valley Escapes History](#)." *The Atlantic*, July 23, 2013. H

W4D3 ICTD

July 12 (Thu) **Oxford, Adam.** "[Blogging from the Bush: How ICT-Led Development Is Working in Rural Zambia](#)." *The Guardian*, February 4, 2011. **Distributed: Assignment 4**
Heeks, Richard. "Development 2.0: The IT-Enabled Transformation of International Development." *Commun. ACM* 53, no. 4 (April 2010): 22–24.

W 5

W5D1 Open/Closed Source Software

	Stallman , Richard, and others. <i>The GNU Manifesto</i> , 1985. https://facwiki.cs.byu.edu/OSSResearch/images/7/70/Stallman_TheGNUManifesto.pdf .	
July 18 (Tue)	Raymond , Eric. "The Cathedral and the Bazaar." <i>Knowledge, Technology & Policy</i> 12, no. 3 (September 1999): 23–49.	
	Andersen-Gott , Morten, Gheorghita Ghinea, and Bendik Bygstad. "Why Do Commercial Companies Contribute to Open Source Software?" <i>International Journal of Information Management</i> 32, no. 2 (April 2012): 106–17.	

W5D2 Net Neutrality

	Wu , Tim. <i>The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires</i> . 1 edition. New York: Knopf, 2010. [Introduction]	
July 19 (Wed)	Krämer , Jan, Lukas Wiewiorra, and Christof Weinhardt. "Net Neutrality: A Progress Report." <i>Telecommunications Policy</i> 37, no. 9 (October 2013): 794–813.	Due: Assignment 4

W5D3 Social Informatics Research

July 20 (Thu)	Guide to the Final Project / Brain Storming	Distributed: Final Project
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W 6

W6D1 Robot and Society

July 26 (Tue)	Movie: Robot & Frank (2012)	In class Showing
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W6D2 Robot and Society

	Simon , Matt. " This Incredible Hospital Robot Is Saving Lives. Also, I Hate It. " <i>Wired</i> , February 10, 2015.	
July 27 (Wed)	Lee , H. R., Tan, h., and Šabanović, S. That robot is not for me: Addressing stereotypes of aging in assistive robot design. In RO-MAN, 2016 IEEE.	

W6D3 Big Finish

July 28 (Thu)	Final Paper Due at 11:59 pm	
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