

# IS 536: Information Society

## Spring 2006

Meets Wednesdays, 6:30-9:10, CA116 & DE

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### Course Description

The purpose of this course is to present competing theoretical positions and definitions regarding the existence and importance of the Information Society. The course will present a historical evolution of the Information Society and the Information Economy. Selected key contributors of information society thinking will be discussed. Issues of globalization will be addressed including critical perspectives of economic, social, political, and cultural aspects of the Information Society.

### Objectives of the course

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Critique the literature and issues of the information society
- 2) Define competing perspectives of the existence of the information society
- 3) Identify, describe, and critique criteria used to measure the information society
- 4) Identify the key issues regarding globalization

### Texts and Readings

#### Required Text:

Webster, F. (2002). *Theories of the Information Society*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. London: Routledge.

#### Additional Required Readings (Selected Pages on Electronic Reserve at Hodges)

**(subject to additions and/or deletions):**

Beniger, J.R. (1986). *The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Castells, M. (2001). *The Internet Galaxy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Dearnley, J. and Feather, J. (2001). *The Wired World: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of the Information Society*. London: Library Association Publishing, 2001.

Dordick, H.S. & Wang, G. (1993). *The Information Society: A Retrospective View*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Gonzalez-Manet, E. (1988). *The Hidden War of Information*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Masuda, Y. (1980). *The Information Society as Post-Industrial Society*. Washington, D.C.: World Future Society.

Mosco, V. and Wasco, J. (1988). *The Political Economy of Information*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Muddiman, D. (2003). "World Gone Wrong? Alternative Conceptions of the Information Society." Hornby, S. and Clarke, Z. (Eds.), *Challenge and Change in the Information Society*. London: Facet Publishing, 2003, 42-59.

Nora, S. and Minc. A. (1980). *The Computerization of Society: A Report to the President of France*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Salvaggio, J.L. (1989). *The Information Society: Economic, Social, and Structural Issues*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Stiglitz, J.E. (2003). *Globalization and Its Discontents*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

### **Assignments and Grading**

The final course grade will be based on three required components: 1) class participation and discussion (15%), 2) presentation of a class topic (30%), and 3) a major paper (55%).

### **Penalty for Late Work**

Late papers will be penalized by ½ letter grade per working day unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. The final paper must be turned in no later than class time on April 26. There will be no exceptions to this unless arrangements have been made in advance with the instructor.

### **Incompletes**

Incompletes are solely at the discretion of the instructor and will only be considered when a substantial portion of the work for the course has been satisfactorily completed.

### **Course Requirements**

There will be three requirements for the course. The final course grade will be based on: 1) class participation and discussion (15%), 2) presentation of a class topic (30%), and 3) a major paper (55%).

### **Class Participation/Discussion (15%)**

As a seminar, student participation is vital to the success of the class. Participation in the discussion of issues raised in class is expected. Questions are encouraged, and other opportunities for discussion will be presented in class. In addition, a discussion board will be available on the IS 536 Blackboard site. Students are encouraged to submit questions regarding the assigned readings or assignments to their peers on this site. Some students may feel comfortable contributing in one way rather than the other. The class participation grade will be based on the quality rather than quantity of contribution, regardless of the medium of communication chosen.

### **Topic Presentation (30%)**

Due to the extensive nature of the topic and the material available, it is possible to cover more material by assigning teams the responsibility for presenting a unique topic. This also allows for a wider range of perspectives to be introduced. Students will work in teams to lead a class on a particular topic regarding the Information Society. Each team is required to prepare a formal presentation of their topic and should prepare questions to lead discussion or a class activity relevant to the topic.

A handout should also be prepared that outlines the major points of their selected topic. Each team should also prepare a small group activity for the class that is related to their topic.

The topic and dates for each are on the calendar and is repeated here.

Wednesday, February 15      Post-Industrial Society  
Student Presenters:

February 22                      Post-Fordism and Globalization  
Student Presenters:

March 1                              The Surveillance Society  
Student Presenters:

March 8                              The Public Sphere  
Student Presenters:

March 15                            Postmodernism  
Student Presenters:

March 29                            Critical Analysis of the Information Society  
Student Presenters:

### **Major Paper (55%)**

Students will be required to develop a critical analysis of information society criteria. The introduction should include a summary of the student's understanding of the competing theoretical perspectives surrounding the notion of an information society. The student should then develop and present their own idea of what constitutes an information

society. Next, the student should build a set of criteria by which we define an information society based on their stated definition of an information society. The criteria should also be described in terms that can be used to evaluate whether a nation-state can be called an information society.

The paper is divided into specific steps to be turned in throughout the course to keep students up-to-date. Each step has an assigned weight by which it will be graded.

#### Proposal/Outline (5%)

The first step of the paper is to submit a brief proposal/outline of the paper. This should be approximately 1-2 pages in length. Due February 1.

#### Annotated Bibliography (15%)

An annotated bibliography covering the materials included for the paper. Each annotation should be approximately 1 page in length for each citation to be included in the paper. Annotations should focus on how the citation contributed to your understanding of the topic. Although there are no suggested number of references to include, please remember that this is the major paper of the course and should be well-researched and documented. Due March 15.

#### Final Paper (25%)

The final paper should be approximately 20 pages in length. Due April 19.

#### Presentation (10%)

Students will prepare a 15-20 minute formal presentation of their paper. The presentation should include powerpoint slides to accompany the oral presentation. An additional 10 minutes will be allowed after the presentation for questions and answers. Due April 19 or 26.

### **Expectations Regarding the Presentation of the Class Topic and the Major Paper**

Oral presentations are a part of nearly all jobs in LIS today. As such, students are encouraged to develop these skills at SIS. For this course, presentations will be evaluated on the basis of several qualities. The first addresses the selection and organization of the content. Is the content appropriate for the assignment and to the level of the audience? Does it flow smoothly and make sense, etc.? The second element of the presentation regards the delivery of the content. Is the presentation well-timed and delivered at an even pace? Students should not plan to read their report but to explain what each slide means, not just what it says. Finally, the presentation may include visuals and/or handouts that will be evaluated. Are the materials appropriate and well-organized? Are they helpful? An example of a helpful handout or visual would be a possible list of definitions with which your audience may not be familiar.

### **Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to work on their own unless otherwise assigned. Any incidence of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, providing or accepting unauthorized help) will not be tolerated and will be addressed according to procedures outlined in *Hilltopics*. The policy strictly states, "The responsibility for learning is an individual

matter. Study, preparation and presentation should involve at all times the student's own work, unless it has been clearly specified that work is to be a team effort. Academic honesty requires that all work presented be the student's own work, not only on tests, but in themes, papers, homework, and class presentation..." (Hilltopics 2002-2003 Student Handbook, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, p.29).

### **Special Needs**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the Office of Disability Service at 191 Hoskins Library or at 865-974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

### **Class Attendance Policy**

Class attendance is highly recommended given the short duration of this course, but attendance per se does not directly affect a student's grade.

### **Class Cancellations**

Should it be necessary to cancel a class meeting, every effort will be taken to do so in advance. Please check the Blackboard site (online.utk.edu) for messages regarding class cancellations.

### **Language**

It is recommended that both instructor and students should strive for gender-neutral and culturally-sensitive language in both written and oral speech. For example, "humanity" or "people" is preferred over "man" or "mankind." This reflects the concern for the inclusion of all peoples within this class and our community. In addition, any derogatory comments based on racial, ethnic, religious, sexual or other categories should be avoided with the exception of being used within the context of analysis. Please strive for awareness and sensitivity in your course assignments in this regard.

There are several resources that are available to help guide you in the use of appropriate language. If you have any questions about the use of a particular term, these sites can help:

<http://www.asterisks.com/free.html> (an online editing and translation service)

Schwartz, Marilyn. Guidelines for Bias-Free Writing. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995.

[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/general/gl\\_nonsex.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/general/gl_nonsex.html) (Online Writing Lab at Purdue University)

### **Calendar**

NOTE: Please have the assigned readings completed for the class date on which they are listed on the calendar. For example, on Wednesday January 18, please have read the three readings (Webster, Dearnly, Beninger) prior to the class meeting that day.

NOTE: This is an early version and subject to change

**January 11**

Introduction/Overview of course  
Readings:

What is the information society?  
Webster, Chapters 1 and 2

**January 18**

The Notion of an Information Society  
Readings:

Dearnley and Feather, Chapter 1  
Beniger, Chapter 1; Masuda, Chapters 3 and 4

**January 25**

History and Criteria of the Information Society  
Readings:

Dordick and Wang, Chapter 3;  
Bates in Salvaggio, Chapter 3  
Schement in Salvaggio, Chapter 4

**February 1**

The Information Economy  
Readings:

Dordick and Wang, Chapter 2  
Masuda, Chapter 9; Varian (to be determined)

DUE: Major Paper Proposal/Outline

**February 8**

Technological Determinism & the Internet as Foundation  
Readings:

Webster, Chapter 5; Castells, Chapter 1

**February 15**

Post-Industrial Society  
Readings:  
Student Presenters:  
Sources:

Webster, Chapter 3

Bell, Introduction and Chapter 1

**February 22**

Post-Fordism and Globalization  
Readings:  
Student Presenters:  
Sources:

Webster, Chapter 4

Kumar, Chapter 3

**March 1**

The Surveillance Society  
Readings:  
Student Presenters:  
Sources:

Webster, Chapter 8

Salvaggio, Chapter 8; Giddens, TBA

**March 8**

The Public Sphere

Readings:  
Student Presenters:  
Sources:

Webster, Chapter 7

Habermas, TBA

**March 15**

Postmodernism

Readings:  
Student Presenters:  
Sources:

Webster, Chapter 9

Lyotard, Introduction, Sections 1 and 2  
Harvey, Chapters 1-2

DUE: Annotated Bibliography

**March 22**

SPRING BREAK (no class)

**March 29**

Critical Analysis of the Information Society International Perspectives

Readings:  
Webster, Chapter 6  
Dearnley and Feather, Chapter 5  
Muddiman in Hornby and Clarke, Chapter 3

Student Presenters:

Sources:  
Gonzalez-Manet, Chapters 4 and 8  
Schiller, TBA

**April 5**

Globalization Revisited

Readings:  
Stiglitz, Chapter 9

**April 12**

Review and Wrap Up

Readings:  
Webster, Chapter 10  
Beniger, Chapter 10  
Nora and Minc, Chapter 10

**April 19**

Presentations

DUE: Final Paper

**April 26**

Presentations