

**Digital Society
INFO 2001**

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Office hours:	
Course website	Brightspace
Class:	

Pre-Requisites for Course

None

Learning Objectives

Digital technologies (Facebook, Twitter, mobile phones) have become normalized and are an integral part of many people's everyday lives. This course introduces the societal dimensions of today's information-rich environment. Society is being transformed, with information and information technology at the center, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain. Students will investigate various platforms and the social implications these have on the free-flow of information, privacy and ethical aspects of knowledge production.

It will consider

- The history and current trends of information and knowledge production
- Issues related to control versus the free flow of information
- The ethical and privacy aspects of information management
- Consider our own digital identities and how our digital selves intersect with, conflict with, or are synonymous with our embodied selves.
- Discover the ways different individuals (with varied bodies, contexts, cultures) experience the digital in different ways.

By the end of the course, the student should be able to

- Explain the place of information networks
- Reflect on the nature, structure, and significance of information systems
- Demonstrate the importance of information in decision making, planning and risk management

Approach Taken

This course is fully online. Instruction in this course will include video lectures, cases, and discussion boards. This course takes an experiential approach to learning, which means that students will be encouraged to use and reflect on their use of networking technologies to help them research and understand the subject matter of the course.

Learning Materials

Provided on the Brightspace site

ADD/DROP dates

Winter Term: Last day to add/drop classes – January 14
 Last day to drop without a “W” – January 28
 Last day to drop with a “W” – March 7

Method of Evaluation

Assignment	Due date	Value
Google Reflection		20%
Knowledge Production Reflection		25%
Online Identities Reflection		25%
Discussion posts		20%
Class participation		10%
Total		100%

Google Reflection (20%) – Due January 21st

Students will reflect on the debates presented in the first week of class.

Knowledge production reflection (25%) – Due Feb 18th

Students will analyze a method of information sharing and reflect how knowledge is created through different types of media (print, online and video)

Online identities reflection (25%) – Due March 31st

Students will submit a reflection of their online identities versus their embodied identities

Discussion posts (20%) - Weekly

Because this is an online class, your participation on the discussion board and your contribution of ideas, examples, and insights are important in making the class successful and valuable. For this reason, your participation is expected and will be evaluated on discussions related to the weekly topic. You will be expected to make **4 posts** on the discussion board on **4 different topics**. You can choose any topics, you will be graded on your knowledge, insights and relevance of your posts. It is ok to have opinions that differ from those of your classmates, the reading’s authors, and the instructor, however, any assertions you make must be backed up with evidence.

Participation (10%) – Weekly

Students will be graded on their engagement with the course materials.

Ground rules

Late Work

Written assignments are due on the date indicated. An assignment received after the due date will be considered late. Late papers will be penalized 5 points per day. Assignments more than five days late will not be accepted. Missing assignments will receive a mark of zero.

Back-up Copies

Keep a copy of every assignment you submit.

Grammar and Expression

Correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar are expected and contribute to a satisfactory (C) paper. Papers with severe errors of expression will fail. You may visit the Writing Workshop for extra help.

Other

Certificates of illness:

Medical notes must be submitted to the instructor, 4th floor, room 4013 of the Kenneth C. Rowe Management Building. Please refer to the university's academic regulation [16.8](#) for more information.

Students requiring accommodations

Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers experienced related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic protected under Canadian human rights legislation.

Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams should make their request to the Student Accessibility Centre prior to or at the outset of the regular academic year. Please visit the [website](#) for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation form.

A note taker may be required as part of a student's accommodation. There is an honorarium of \$75/course/term (with some exceptions). If you are interested, please contact the Student Accessibility Centre at 902-494-2836 for more information or send an email to notetaking@dal.ca.

Please note that your classroom may contain specialized accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom, untouched, so that students who require their usage will be able to fully participate in the class.

Standard Citation Style

The School of Information Management uses APA as its standard citation style (unless otherwise indicated by your professor). Please use APA style in your assignments to briefly identify (cite) other people's ideas and information and to indicate the sources of these citations in the References list at the end of your assignment.

For more information on APA style, consult Dalhousie Library website at <https://libraries.dal.ca/help/style-guides.html> or consult the [Frequently Asked Questions about APA](#)

Academic Integrity

In general:

The commitment of the Faculty of Management is to graduate future leaders of business, government and civil society who manage with integrity and get things done. This is non-negotiable in our community and it starts with your first class at Dalhousie University. So, when you submit any work for evaluation in this course or any other, please ensure that you are familiar with your obligations under the Faculty of Management's Academic Integrity Policies and that you understand where to go for help and advice in living up to our standards. You should be familiar with the Faculty of Management Professor and Student Contract on Academic Integrity, and it is your responsibility to ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

Dalhousie offers many ways to learn about academic writing and presentations so that all members of the University community may acknowledge the intellectual property of others. Knowing how to find, evaluate, select, synthesize and cite information for use in assignments is called being “information literate”. Information literacy is taught by Dalhousie University Librarians in classes and through Dalhousie Libraries’ online [Citing & Writing](#) tutorials.

Do not plagiarize any materials for this course. For further guidance on what constitutes plagiarism, how to avoid it, and proper methods for attributing sources, please consult the University Secretariat’s [Academic Integrity](#) page.

Please note that Dalhousie subscribes to a plagiarism detection software that checks for originality in submitted papers. Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a very serious academic offence that may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie, there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course; students should read the Policy on [Intellectual Honesty](#) contained in the Calendar.

Furthermore, the University’s Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student assignments be submitted in both written and computer readable format, e.g.: a text file or as an email attachment, and to submit any paper to a check such as that performed by the plagiarism detection software. As a student in this class, you are to keep an electronic copy of any paper you submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy on demand. Use of third-party originality checking software does not preclude instructor use of alternate means to identify lapses in originality and attribution. The result of such assessment may be used as evidence in any disciplinary action taken by the Senate.

Finally:

If you suspect cheating by colleagues or lapses in standards by a professor, you may use the confidential email: managementintegrity@dal.ca which is read only by the Assistant Academic Integrity Officer.

Faculty of Management clarification on plagiarism versus collaboration:

There are many forms of plagiarism, for instance, copying on exams and assignments. There is a clear line between group work on assignments when explicitly authorised by the professor and copying solutions from others. It is permissible to work on assignments with your friends but only when the professor gives you permission in the specific context of the assignment. University rules clearly stipulate that all assignments should be undertaken individually unless specifically authorised.

Specific examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Copying a computer file from another student, and using it as a template for your own solution**
- **Copying text written by another student**
- **Submitting the work of someone else, including that of a tutor as your own**

An example of acceptable collaboration includes the following:

- **When authorised by the professor, discussing the issues and underlying factors of a case with fellow students, and then each of the students writing up their submissions individually, from start to finish.**

Course Schedule

Note: all readings are available through the open web or via libraries.dal.ca. If the link doesn't work here, it's available in the appropriate week through brightspace.

Week 1	Introduction
Jan 5, 2021	Clay Shirky, " Does the Internet Make You Smarter " Nicholas Carr, " Is Google Making Us Stupid? "
Section 1 – Fake News, Junk Science & their repercussions	
Week 2	Fake News
Jan 12, 2021	Wardle - Fake news. It's complicated. Graham - Some Real News About Fake News Notley & Dezuanni - 3 ways to help children think critically about the news Keane - Post-truth politics and why the antidote isn't simply 'fact-checking' and truth
Week 3	Junk Science - Guest Lecturer – Dr. Melissa Rothfus
Jan 19, 2021	Alex Gillis – The Rise of Junk Science Alan Chambers - How I became easy prey to a predatory publisher Joseph Stromberg - I Sold My Undergraduate Thesis to a Print Content Farm Menczer & Hui Anti-vaxxers appear to be losing ground in the online vaccine debate
Google reflection (10%) – Due January 21st	
Week 4	Repercussions
Jan 26, 2021	Graham & Keller - Bushfires, bots and arson claims: Australia flung in the global disinformation spotlight Greene - COVID-19: the first study to look at whether fake news actually changes people's behaviour Jane Roberts – Sketchy Coronavirus Survival Guides are Booming on Amazon Haiqing Yu - The coronavirus and Chinese social media: finger-pointing in the post-truth era
Week 5	Networked logic
Feb 2, 2021	Zeynep Tufekci, " We're building a dystopia just to make people click on ads " Dorothy Kim, " The Rules of Twitter " Howard Rheingold, " Smart Mobs " Wadhwa - Lessons From Crowdsourcing the Boston Bombing

	Investigation Johnston & Keyzer - Trial by social media: why we need to properly educate juries
Section 2 – Fundamental changes in approaches to information	
Week 6	Privacy
Feb 9, 2021	Fowler - There’s no escape from Facebook, even if you don’t use it NPR, “Do You Read Terms Of Service Contracts? Not Many Do, Research Shows” Inside Edition, “Social Experiment Proves That No One Really Reads Terms and Conditions” Terms of Service; Didn’t Read Digital Privacy Module Stommel & Morris, “A Guide for Resisting Edtech: the Case Against Turnitin” Canada's laws need updating to protect against abuse from surveillance tech
Week 7	How we consume texts
Feb 16, 2021	Clark - NFTs, explained Mod - “Books in the Age of the iPad” Tien - Audiobook Anxiety and What Constitutes ‘Real’ Reading Vanerchuck - How To Tell A Story On Social Media
Knowledge production reflection (15%) – Due Feb 21st	
Week 8 – Break Week	
Section 3 – Online identities	
Week 9	Online Identities
March 2, 2021	Herrman - You Anon Baggini -Ted Talk: <i>Is there a real you?</i> Boer “The Construction of an Online Identity” Benjamin, Podcast: “The New Jim Code? Race and Discriminatory Design” Battan, “The Rise of the ‘Getting Real’ Post on Instagram”
Week 10	Who Belongs in Online Communities
March 9, 2021	Bassett - The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Online Communities New York Times #Gamergate Retrospective Anita Sarkeesian, “Body Language & the Male Gaze” Social media platforms 'benefit from the intersections of racism and

	capitalism'
Week 11	AI, Race, Algorithms and Bias
March 16, 2021	Rebecca Heilweil, Why algorithms can be racist and sexist Stephen Buranyi, Rise of the racist robots – how AI is learning all our worst impulses Heidi Ledford, Millions of black people affected by racial bias in health-care algorithms Oscar Schwartz, In 2016, Microsoft’s Racist Chatbot Revealed the Dangers of Online Conversation
Week 12	Dark Web
March 23, 2021	Daniel Miessler, “The Internet, the Deep Web, the Dark Web” Juan Sanchez and Garth Griffin, “Who’s Afraid of the Dark? Hype Versus Reality on the Dark Web” Kris Shaffer, “Visualizing the network that connects mainstream and extremist news” Demboski - Far-Right Extremist Use of Bitcoin and Dark Web Platforms: The Dark Network Links of tPP Cases
Week 13	Tying it all together
March 30	No Readings
Online identities reflection (15%) – Due March 31st	

Grade Scale and Definitions

Grade	Grade Point Value		Definition	
A+	4.30	90-100	Excellent	Considerable evidence of original thinking; demonstrated outstanding capacity to analyze and synthesize; outstanding grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
A	4.00	85-89		
A-	3.70	80-84		
B+	3.30	77-79	Good	Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.
B	3.00	73-76		
B-	2.70	70-72		
C+	2.30	65-69	Satisfactory	Evidence of some understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems; benefitting from his/her university experience.
C	2.00	60-64		
C-	1.70	55-59		
D	1.00	50-54	Marginal Pass	Evidence of minimally acceptable familiarity with subject matter, critical and analytical skills (except in programs where a minimum grade of "C" or "C+" is required).
F	0.00	0-49	Inadequate	Insufficient evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytical skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.

INC	0.00	Incomplete
W	Neutral and no credit obtained	Withdrew after deadline
ILL	Neutral and no credit obtained	Compassionate reasons, illness
P	Neutral	Pass
TR	Neutral	Transfer credit on admission
Pending (PND)	Neutral	Grade not reported
