

IS 536: Information Society

Spring 2008 Meets

Wednesdays, 6:30-9:10, BEC116 & DE

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin J. Bates

Office: 333 Communications Bldg.

Phone: 974-4013

Email: bjbates@utk.edu

Office Hours: 2-4 TR, 4-6 W & By appointment

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. (2006). *Theories of the Information Society*. 3rd Ed. London: Routledge.

Additional Required Readings

Selected chapters on Electronic Reserve at Hodges and/or available on Blackboard course website.

(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.

Benkler, Yoachai. (2007). *The Wealth of Networks*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.

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 several required components: 1) class participation and discussion (15%), 2) group presentation of a class topic (25%), and 3) a major paper (35%) and several short papers (25% combined).

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, several discussion boards will be available on the IS 536 Blackboard site. Students are encouraged to submit interesting materials or sites they run across, ideas or comments, and/or questions regarding the assigned readings or assignments. 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 (25%)

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 particular 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 theory or approach 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 6	Technological Determinism
Wednesday, February 13 Student Presenters:	Post-Industrial Society
February 20 Student Presenters:	Post-Fordism and Globalization
February 27 Student Presenters:	The Surveillance Society
March Student Presenters:	The Public Sphere Student Presenters:
March 12 Student Presenters:	Postmodernism
March 29 Student Presenters:	Critical Analysis of the Information Society

Short Papers (25%)

1. What's an Information Society? (5%)

For this paper, I want you to think about what the concept of Information Society means to you, and what you've read about it, and what you hope to come out of this class understanding about it.. Write a short (2-5) page paper outlining these thoughts. While I don't want you doing special research for this, do feel free to mention any particular books that you've read that may have shaped your thoughts. Due 14 January 2008 – send as email attachment in MSWord, rtf, or pdf formatted file to the professor.

2. Book Review (Theory) (10%)

Find a book that addresses a more theoretical issue relating to the idea of an Information Society. Read it, and write a book review. The review should adequately describe the main points of the book, but also comment on its quality and how it fits in, or adds to, the general literature in the area. (3-7 pages)

3. Book Review (Practice) (10%)

Find a book that addresses a practical or professional issue facing LIS (or other relevant professions) that is likely to emerge in an Information Society. The review should adequately describe the main points of the book, but also comment on its quality and how it fits in, or adds to, the general literature in the area. (3-7 pages) The book reviews should be completed by April 1. Reviews should be posted to the course Blackboard website in the appropriate discussion area. One of these may be a book by one of the theorists covered in a discussion group.

Major Paper (35%)

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

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. I'd like a preliminary proposal by 30 January (to get you started thinking about it). Topics can be shifted/changed afterwards..

Annotated Bibliography (10%)

An annotated bibliography covering the materials included for the paper. Each annotation should be one to two paragraphs in length and should focus on how the citation contributed to your understanding of the topic and your paper (rather than just summarizing the piece). I'm looking for a good mix of 8-15 sources at this point. Due March 26.

Final Paper (25%)

The final paper should be approximately 20-25 pages in length. Due April 23.

Presentation

Students will prepare a 10-12 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. Presentations will be scheduled on April 23 and/or 30.

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.

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 23. 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.

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 (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 16, please have read the three readings (Webster, Dearnley, Beninger) prior to the class meeting that day. NOTE: This is an early version and subject to change

January 9

Introduction/Overview of course
Readings:

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

January 16

The Notion of an Information Society
Readings:
Chapter 1; Beniger, Chapter 1; Masuda, Chapters 3 and 4

Bates (Conceptualizing), Dearnley and Feather

January 23

History and Criteria of the Information Society
Readings:
Chapter 3; Schement in Salvaggio, Chapter 4

Dordick and Wang, Chapter 3; Bates in Salvaggio,

January 30

The Information Economy
Readings:
Varian (website)
DUE: Major Paper Proposal/Outline

Dordick and Wang, Chapter 2; Masuda, Chapter 9;

February 6

Technological Determinism & the Internet as
Foundation
Readings:

Webster, Chapter 5; Castells, Chapter 1

February 13

Post-Industrial Society
Readings:
Presenters:
Sources:

Webster, Chapter 3 Student

Bell, Introduction and Chapter 1

February 20

Post-Fordism and Globalization
Readings:
Presenters:
Sources:

Webster, Chapter 4 Student

Kumar, Chapter 3

February 27

The Surveillance Society
Readings:
Presenters:
Sources:

Webster, Chapter 8 Student

Salvaggio, Chapter 8; Giddens, TBA

March 5

The Public Sphere

Readings:

Webster, Chapter 7 Student

Presenters:

Sources:

Habermas, TBA

March 12

Postmodernism

Readings:

Webster, Chapter 9

Student Presenters:

Sources:

Lyotard, Introduction, Sections 1 and 2 Harvey,
Chapters 1-2 DUE: Annotated Bibliography

March 22

SPRING BREAK (no class)

March 26

Critical Analysis of the Information Society

Readings:

International Perspectives

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 2

Globalization Revisited

Readings:

Stiglitz, Chapter 9

April 9

Review and Wrap Up

Readings:

Webster, Chapter 10

Beniger, Chapter 10

Nora and Minc, Chapter 10

April 16

April 23 & April 30

Presentations