INSC 351: Race, Gender, and Information Technology
Section 001
Fall 2015

Instructor: Frank Aviles

Time: Online Asynchronous

Office Location Communication Building 1345 Circle Park Drive, Suite 432A

Knoxville, TN 37996-0341

Office: Email faviles@vols.utk.edu

Work Phone 619-677-7276

Office Hours Office hours are by appointment. The best way to contact me is by email, which I check daily.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will examine how gender and race affect, and are affected by, information technologies. To do this, we will consider the digital divide, what role technology plays in our lives, the messages we receive and transmit through the media, and technology as it relates to health, work, socioeconomic status, education, art, and cultures. Throughout the course, we will be looking at the assumptions behind the idea that technology improves all of our lives. Is this true? Is it true for some of us but not for all of us? What impact do the design, availability, accessibility and uses of technology have on our understanding of the world? We will address these questions and more.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

1. Define and understand concepts of information and knowledge
2. Define race and gender as it relates to information and technology
3. Explain the concept of the digital divide and give specific examples of how it impacts various members of society

4. Evaluate common sources of information in relation to gender, race, and ethnicity.
5. Write on a topic related to a field of interest and gender, race, and technology.
6. Identify specific ways technology impacts our lives as it relates to race and gender.
7. Develop a website as it relates gender, race and information technology
8. Engage in discussions about the impact of race and gender as it relates to information technology.

ABOUT THE COURSE:

INSC 351 is delivered as an asynchronous online course, which means that each student will access each week's pre-recorded class sessions at a time of his or her choosing, during the course of that week. This course will generally have one recorded class session a week of no more than 75 minutes, which will be made available to you.

UT School of Information Sciences (SIS) offers online courses for undergraduate classes, in order to help students cope with balancing their busy schedules of classes, homework, jobs, and extracurricular activities. In addition, online courses prepare students for future experiences in the 21st century workplace, in which online learn-on-demand courses are often used for continuing education, advanced certification, and professional development courses. By taking this class, you will be gaining both greater flexibility in managing your time, and valuable experience with this alternative learning environment. UT SIS has successfully used distance education to deliver graduate classes for many years, and began offering undergraduate online courses in Fall 2009. It is important to recognize that taking an asynchronous online course is different from a traditional class, or even a synchronous DE class, where everyone attends online at the same time. There are a few simple guidelines to follow (listed below), which will ensure that you have a successful experience. I promise you that I will uphold my responsibility to provide

you with the same high level of support, access, and communication that you would want to have in a traditional classroom setting.

The course is structured to make it a rewarding learning experience that will also have meaning for you both for your subsequent education, and in your future professional life. In some aspects, your part of the bargain is the same as it would be for a traditional class. I expect you to demonstrate critical thinking skills as well as commitment and involvement with our online discussions and your assignments. Learning is not a passive process; it is about a student's actively engaging the material through reading, thinking, discussing (online), questioning, practicing skills, and ultimately understanding. Bring your best efforts, a positive outlook, energy, and curiosity to each of the class sessions. Together we can make the class as interesting, relevant, and exciting as possible.

ONLINE COURSE SUCCESS GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS:

Accept that you must be more self-reliant in an online class: Although students are always responsible for knowing everything in the syllabus and complying with the requirements of a course, this is especially true for an online course. Students are expected to show self-initiative, to make good time management decisions, and to be especially proactive in contacting the instructor when they are having problems, or don't understand something.

Keep up with the weekly schedule outlined below: Enjoy attending class at 2am in your pajamas, or from a location half way across the world, if you wish, but don't abuse the schedule flexibility by falling behind, just because the class doesn't meet at the same times each week. THIS IS A FRIENDLY REMINDER FOR YOU TO AVOID PUTTING OFF VIEWING THE CLASSES AND ALLOWING THE ATTENDANCE AND ASSIGNMENTS TO PILE UP. JUMP IN AND ENJOY THIS LEARNING OPPORTUNITY! LET'S MAKE THIS A JOYFUL EXPERIENCE.

Put extra effort into all opportunities for interaction with your classmates and instructor: We will be using the online blog tool, and other electronic means to interact as a class. Many students are very comfortable with interacting through electronic media like Facebook, but whether you are or not, believe me- we can have meaningful discussions, and question and answer sessions, even though we will not be together at the same time, as long as you do your part to participate.

CONTACTING ME

I'm here to help – so always feel free to ask questions. For an online class, it is especially important that you contact me if you need help, or clarification about the course material or assignments. E-mail is the best way to contact me; I check mine regularly.

COURSE COMMUNICATIONS

To take this course, you must have access to a computer with high speed Internet access, and you must use a UTK email account. You may use your own personal computer, or you may use the computers available in the various campus libraries or computer labs. If you are using your personal computer, be sure that you are running the latest version of Java by going to java.com and using the update button; this is free to do and will make sure that the applications run effectively for you.

Whether you are an experienced online student, or you have never had an online class before (here or elsewhere), be assured that you will be able to easily and conveniently access the course sessions, and any tech glitches that may pop up can be successfully solved. I will provide specific access instructions when the first class is released, but in general, to "attend" class sessions you can simply log into Blackboard (Online@UT), go to the 351course site, then select BBC from the Course Tools, and then pick the class recording you want to attend.

I have also included a "lectures" button in the course menu bar that will take you to

the same place. Each lecture will be labeled with the topic and Week 1, Week 2, etc. The session will be available as an audio recording, illustrated by the PowerPoint slides or other visual aids. The recorded class sessions can be accessed online, or downloaded to your personal computer, so you can attend class even when you aren't actually online. This is true whether you use a PC or Mac platform.

The Blackboard Learn (Online @ UT) program will also be used for many course management tasks. We will use interaction tools such as the blog tool. PowerPoint presentations from the class sessions will be posted under the Course Materials button in the navigation bar on the left side of the page, and the Assignments and the Tests buttons will allow access to detailed information about assignments or exams. Blackboard is available at http://online.utk.edu.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Do all assigned reading prior to attending each class session.** The lecture will assume that you know the information that is in the readings, and will build upon it.

- **Complete all assignments** and submit them on time, using the format and procedure specified by the instructor.

- **Check your e-mail regularly and respond in a timely manner**. I will use email to return assignments, make reminders, solicit student input, and make clarifications. Blackboard will also be used for announcements and the discussion board, blogs, and other interactive activities.

- **Email Communication:** All emails to the instructor should be sent with "INSC 351 in the subject heading, for example, "INSC 351: Problems with Blackboard." It is your responsibility to respond to my emails in a timely manner. You will start off with 30 points toward your grade in email communication. If you respond to my emails in a timely manner you will receive full credit for email communication at

the end of the semester; otherwise, points will be deducted the email communication points/grade. Consider this easy grade points earned toward your final grade with proper care to communication. More details will be provided on Blackboard.

- **Attend 2 brief face-to-face meeting with the instructor during the semester**. These meetings can take place either during my scheduled office hours, or if necessary they can be scheduled at another time at our mutual convenience.

- **Participate actively in the class by giving your best effort to the interactive activities** using the blog tool. In addition, treat your colleagues with courtesy and respect by reading and reflecting on their online comments, and responding to them appropriately.

- **Timely online attendance is required**. The course schedule below lists which class sessions you should complete at your convenience during each week. It is essential that you keep up by attending the sessions in the proper week, so that you can complete assignments as scheduled. Blackboard provides statistics about whether or not a student has "attended" a recorded class session, which allows me to "take roll" just as I would in a traditional class.

Required Readings:
There is no required text, but each week there will be a few required articles and websites for you to read and explore as well as links to videos for viewing. It is important that you come to each class prepared, because we will address further the content examined in the readings, and it will be an integral component for understanding your assignments. (Also - the majority of them are really interesting!

STUDENT EVALUATION (SEE THE CLASS SCHEDULE FOR ALL DUE DATES)

Evaluation is based on performance for each of the responsibilities listed above. The final grade is based on the following assignments; you must complete them to earn a grade in this class.

Item	% of total grade	Total Points Possible
2 Face-to-Face Meetings	2%	20 (10 each)
Email communication	3%	30
Attendance & participation	10%	100
15 Reflection posts	15%	150 (10 each)
Race & IT Autobiographies	15%	150 (75 each)
Technology & Gender Interviews	15%	150 (75 each)
Google Docs, Google Site, Tumblr	10%	100
Create Content for Web Pages	15%	150
Final Project	15%	150
TOTAL	100%	1000

Grading Scale:

A	94-100% of possible points
A-	88-93
B+	85-87
B	82-84
B-	78-81
C+	75-77
C	72-74
C-	68-71

D	58-67
F	58 or below

Weekly Discussion Posts:

Each week students will write responses to questions posed by the instructor in reference to the readings and videos.

Race and IT Autobiographies:

At the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester you will be writing an Autobiography. The **Race Autobiography** will help participants develop a fuller understanding of personal racial identity development and experiences linked to race.

The **IT Autobiography** will reflect any new thoughts or ideas you have had since starting the class. (This **IT Autobiography** will be private, not posted to the discussion board; however, your reflection will be posted to the discussion.) More details about this assignment will be posted on Blackboard.

Gender and Technology Interviews:

You will conduct two interviews, one with a female and one with a male (Cisgender or Transgender). You will find a workplace with male and female employees in technology driven professions. For example, you can interview librarians, OIT staff, Apple Store staff, Best Buy computer staff, OR people in professions that are technology heavy. Interview participants will be asked to sign a written release form, which will be provided by instructor. The student will ask each interviewee both "IT Background" AND "Gender and IT at Work" Interview Questions. The student will take a photo of you with each person that you interviewed. The student will have a total of two photos one with a female interviewee and one with a male interviewee. The student will provide a brief profile with the following headings: 1) Gender; 2) Age Bracket; 3) Job Title; summarize the answers to the questions in two separate

paragraphs, under the headings 1) "**IT Background**" AND the 2) "**Gender and IT at Work.**" and write a reflection about what the experience was like for you and what you learned from it. Each paragraph and the reflection must each be no less than 170 words.

Google doc, Google Site, and Tumblr:

For this assignment, students will be asked to post quotes from articles on Google docs. On Google site students will be asked to post their sources and research for their final paper and website. Students will be asked to use Tumblr to send out quotes that they have gathered from the articles.

Create Content for Web Pages:

For this assignment you will create content for webpages about topics introduced to in class. We will be using the WIX which will allow you to create your own original website that reflects your experience. WIX does not require complex techy processes. I chose WIX because I wanted your experience to be simple, fun and code-free. I will be here to work with anyone who needs help on navigating this site.

Final Project:

This project will involve writing an essay in APA style. More information will be provided on Blackboard.

Course Policies

Assignment Submission

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments should be typed, double-spaced, and in a 12-point font, with reasonable margins. Please include your name, date, course number, and appropriate pagination. Submit the assignments via Blackboard, unless instructed to do otherwise.

Late Assignments

- **Late assignments are discouraged.** If you do happen to be late on assignment or realize that you are going to be late on an assignment, we will work something out, but only with earnest effort to communicate with me in a timely manner.

- Blackboard does provide the date and time for every assignment submitted and every post made on the blog.

Class Participation: Interactive Activities

In our ADE environment, class participation will occur using the interactive tools available on the Blackboard site. The Discussion Board allows both the instructor and class members to pose and answer questions, and to share thoughts or ideas with the group. Online communication and even the use of social networking applications are becoming essential parts of the professional and academic environment. Here are some ideas of how you can be involved in our online conversation:

- You can post questions to the blog based on what we have read.
- You can share items from the news or even your own experiences (both successful and frustrating) from working in organizations that relate to topics covered in class.
- You can let your colleagues know about helpful web resources that you find, that relate to topics covered in class.
- You will be asked to use the blog tool to respond to in-class activities.

This portion of your grade will be based on your *efforts to join* the interactive online conversations. If your contributions exhibit both quality of thought and frequent participation, you will earn top points for this aspect of your grade.

Academic Integrity

Please refer to *Hilltopics Student Handbook*. It can be accessed at: http://web.utk.edu/~homepage/hilltopics or a print copy obtained in Student Services or the Registrar's office.

"*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.*"

Cheating, plagiarism, providing unauthorized help and other acts of dishonesty violate the rule of academic honesty; the offender will be subject to penalties as set forth in *Hilltopics.* The instructor reserves the right to use plagiarism detection software, such as Turn It In.

CCI Diversity Statement (CCI BYLAWS, SECTION II-C)
The College of Communication and Information recognizes that a college diverse in its people, curricula, scholarship, research, and creative activities expands opportunities for intellectual inquiry and engagement, helps students develop critical thinking skills, and prepares students for social and civic responsibilities. All members of the College benefit from diversity and the quality of learning, research, scholarship and creative activities is enhanced by a climate of inclusion, understanding and appreciation of differences and the full range of human experience. As a result, the College is committed to diversity and equal opportunity and it recognizes that it must represent the diversity inherent in American society. The College is acutely aware that diversity and fairness are foundations that unite the College's faculty, staff, students, and the larger communication and information community (see http://www.cci.utk.edu/diversity-statement for CCI's full Diversity Statement).

Additionally, class rosters and University data systems are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name and gender identification. I will gladly honor your request to address you by a preferred name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Disabilities

Please contact the Office of Disability Services at 2227 Dunford Hall at 865.974.6087 (Email: ods@utk.edu) if you need course adaptations or accommodations. They will work with you to arrive at the appropriate program and register you for services. Also contact me so we can talk about solutions.

Course Schedule

A course calendar will be provided within the first two weeks of the semester. There will probably be changes and adjustments as the semester progresses, but I will give you plenty of notice if or when that happens.

- *Note: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus/schedule when necessary. Such changes will be communicated to the students as soon as possible.*
- *Note: If you notice errors in the syllabus, I would be grateful if you would call it to my attention.*