IS 30070:
Cybersociety? Technology, Culture and Communication

Instructor:
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Course Objectives
The module examines anthropological perspectives on information and technology, and empirical evidence regarding the impact of new technologies on culture, community, and society. Topics will include social studies of science and technology, the sociology of information, the impact of information and communications technologies on social and cultural structures, social control of information, global culture, virtual communities, and the transformation of community. The impact of new social networking technologies on social structures and practices will be the subject of individual project research.

Learning Outcomes
On completion of this module students should be able to:

- Discuss and evaluate the empirical evidence regarding the impact of ICTs on culture and community
- Explain social studies of science and technology and its relevance in contemporary society
- Critically summarise the global culture debate and role of ICTs in globalisation;
- Evaluate the impact of new social media on individuals, organisations and society.

Assessment
Assessment for this course will be by continuous assessment and examination.

Continuous Assessment: 40%
Case Study Presentation (equivalent to 1000 words) and written submission (1,500 words)
Case studies are chosen to provide an empirical example which will can test whether new technologies are having a significant impact on social life. Presentations should examine a single instance in detail, not provide a general summary of a particular technology. Data can come from direct observation (survey, interviews, participant-observation), or from secondary sources. Possible case studies include:

- impact of new technologies on local communities:
  residents groups, local voluntary groups, local politics
- communities of interest:
  illness, sports, voluntary work, leisure, political action groups, social movements, self-help groups
- social media and social groups, combining online/offline:
  second and third level students, immigrant groups
- social media and migration:
  transnational links, global diasporas (including Irish abroad)
- changing social practices:
  doctor-patient relations; hospital social patterns, small businesses, parent-
  teacher-student patterns in secondary schools
- changing work practices:
  start-up companies, small companies, dispersed work groups

Written version of presentation due last day of instruction. Written work submitted up to one week late will lose 10% or 2 grade points; essays up to two weeks late will lose 20% or 4 grade points. Essays later than two weeks will receive no marks. Essays should be submitted in electronically (via SafeAssign in Blackboard) and in hardcopy into the School.

Examination: 60%, end of Semester Exam

Module Schedule and Required Reading

Core Texts


Additional Texts


most readings available in the short loan collection, UCD Library

**Week 1: Overview**

**Week 2:**
**Social studies of science and technology**

**additional readings:**
Sociology of knowledge


Additional readings:

Week 3: Global culture


Additional readings:

**Week 4: Communities and networks**

additional readings:
• PEW Internet & American Life Project: "The Strength of Internet Ties". Jeffrey Boase, University of Toronto; John B. Horrigan, Associate Director, Pew Internet Project; Barry Wellman, University of Toronto; Lee Rainie, Director, Pew Internet Project. January 25, 2006. [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Internet_ties.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Internet_ties.pdf)
**Week 5: Global diversity: transnationalism and migration**


*additional readings*

**Week 6: Politics and new technologies**


*additional readings:*

**Weeks 7-12: seminar presentations**