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 challenge presented by postmodernism, sociology of knowledge, and social studies of technology for information and social computing fields will also be discussed, and the impact of new social networking technologies will be addressed.

Learning Outcomes
On completion of this module students should be able to:
• Discuss and evaluate 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;
• Discuss the relation between postmodernism, sociology of knowledge, and information and social computing fields
• Evaluate the impact of new social networking technologies 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:
(1) changed modes of information production and consumption (electronic publishing, access to information, selling commodities/culture, role of institution such as libraries, the professions, universities and the impact of wikis, open source and collaborative information flows);
(2) impact of new technologies on local communities (residents groups, local voluntary groups, local politics);
(3) communities of interest (illness, sports, voluntary work, leisure, political action groups, social movements);
(4) social media and social groups: combining online/offline (second and third level student, immigrant groups)
(5) social media and migration: transnational links and global diasporas (including Irish abroad)
(6) the online self (privacy, presentation of self, online versus offline personhood)

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 should be submitted in hardcopy; electronic submission via Blackboard dropbox can be used as evidence of submission time, but not as a replacement for hard copy.

Examination: 60%, end of Semester Exam

Module Schedule and Required Reading

Texts


most readings available in the short loan collection, UCD Library

Week 1: Overview


**Weeks 2-3:**

**Postmodernism**


**additional readings**


**Social studies of science and technology**


**additional readings:**


**Sociology of Knowledge**


additional readings:


**Week 4: Global Culture**


additional readings:


**Week 5: 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 6: Global Diversity: Transnationalism and Migration


additional readings

Week 7: Politics and New Technologies


additional readings:

Weeks 8-12: seminar presentations