

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department:	Communication and the Arts
Programme:	Study Abroad
FHEQ Level:	4
Course Title:	Digital Society
Course Code:	COMM SOCL 4601
Total Hours:	120
Timetabled Hours:	45
Guided Learning Hours:	0
Independent Learning Hours:	75
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

Course Description:

This course introduces students to critical studies of the digital society, and how it effects institutions, media, and audiences socially, culturally, globally, and politically. It explores the history of 'the information revolution', and how contemporary digital technologies, the internet, and social media are changing identities, relationships, and practices at both micro- and macro- levels. Through engaging with key debates within digital society (e.g. selfhood and social media, participatory culture, sharing economy, surveillance, truth of online information and democracy), students will develop critical understanding of the relationship between digital technologies and society, and reflect on their own use of digital media. It is highly recommended that students have access to the use of a laptop and a smartphone for the duration of the course.

Prerequisites:

None

Students will not be able to take the four-credit version of this course if they had previously taken this three-credit course.

Aims and Objectives:

The aim of this course is to introduce students to key issues in our digital society and to have them reflect on their own positions, practices, and assumptions within this context. They will be encouraged to place digital technologies in a historical context and identify ways in which it has impacted social, political, economic and psychological practices.

Programme Outcomes:

A4I

B4I

C4I

D4I

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification. This is located at the archive maintained by Registry and found at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a broad understanding of key concepts, issues, and authors in the area of digital society, particularly as it relates to identities, relationships, social practices and institutions.
2. Identify key debates in the area of digitalization of society, outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments.
3. Demonstrate digital fluency through critical reflection of representations and practices on digital platforms, including their own engagement with the media.

Indicative Content:

- Technology and Society (Theories of Technology, Technological Determinism, Media as Social Practices).
- Theories of the Digital Society: Information Society, Networked Society, New Media.
- Information Revolution, Web 2.0, and Apps.
- Changing Self: Presentation on and offline, quantified self, mobility
- Media and the Internet: Changes to audiences, media, producers, and advertising.
- Labour and the Digital Technologies: Economy of 'producers', sharing economy, participatory culture.
- Politics of Social Media: Social movements, surveillance, privacy, online discourse, and democracy.
- Memory, Remembering, and Rights to be Forgotten.

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

This course will use a combination of interactive lectures, fieldtrips, online exercises, and in-class activities. While class will meet every week in the lecture room, at times we will also use the computer lab. Blackboard will be a central tool of the course to explore course content and contribute to activities. Students are expected to engage in active learning, which requires independent work, and participation in-class activities and online environments. To achieve the learning outcomes, students will need to read assigned articles, critically engage with the lectures, and contribute to activities and exercises.

Indicative Text(s):

- Athique, A. (2013) *Digital Media and Society: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Boyd, D. (2014) *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Castells, M. (2024) *Advanced introduction to digital society*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Fuchs, C. (2024) *Social Media: a critical introduction*. 4th edn. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Grant, I. H., Dovey, J., Kelly, K., Lister, M. and Giddings, S. (2008) *New Media: A Critical Introduction*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Jones, R. H. and Hafner, C. A. (2021) *Understanding Digital Literacies: A Practical Introduction*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Lindgren, S. (2022) *Digital Media and Society*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.
- Orton-Johnson, K. (2024) *Digital culture and society*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Websites

- Digital Human (podcast). Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01n7094> (Accessed November 2024).
- Henry Jenkins, Confessions of an Aca-Fan. Available at: <http://henryjenkins.org/> (Accessed November 2024).
- Notes to Self: The Privacy Paradox (podcast). Available at: <https://project.wnyc.org/privacy-paradox> (Accessed November 2024).
- The Beginner's Guide to Creating a Podcast according to the Pros. Available at: <https://mashable.com/2014/12/18/podcast-beginner-tips/?europe=true> (Accessed November 2024).

See syllabus for complete reading list.

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
First Edition	Nov 2024	