SOC484A: SOCIOLOGY OF THE NEW MEDIA

Course Instructor Name	**Jillet Sarah Sam**
Course TA	**Navneet Dubey; Dimpi Sonowal**
Course Timings	**Lecture: MWF 5-6 pm**
Course Space	**L-15**
Credits	**9**
Course Description	

This course will enable students to develop a holistic approach to the new media as a socially embedded phenomenon. It will enable them to understand the range of social structures, practices and interactions within which such media are embedded. This course will historically contextualize the new media through a sociological analysis of continuities and discontinuities with preceding media and communication technologies. Further, students will be introduced to various sociological perspectives through which the new media are analyzed. The course will enable students to consider whether and how the new media influences the social organization of value, work, identities and relationships.

Primary Texts

*Flew, Terry and Richard Smith. 2014. *New Media: An Introduction*. Ontario: Oxford University Press. Second Canadian ed.
*Lupton, Deborah. 2014. *Digital Sociology*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
*Orton-Johnson, Kate and Nick Prior. 2013. *Digital Sociology: Critical Perspectives.* Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
*Marres, Noortje. 2017. *Digital Sociology: The Reinvention of Social Research*. Polity Press: Cambridge and Massachusetts.

Secondary Texts

Course Contents

Week 1&2 (Aug 1, 4, 6, 8, 9*)**
- **Topic: What is Sociology? What is the New Media?**
Required Reading: Lecture
- Mills, C Wright. 1959. "Sociological Imagination: The Promise",
  http://sites.middlebury.edu/utopias/files/2013/02/The-Promise.pdf
- Berger, Peter L. 1963, "Sociology as an individual pastime" (Chapter 1) in *An Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective.* Anchor Books: New York (p 1-24)
- Lupton, Chapter 1 ("Introduction: Life is Digital")
- Marres, Noortje. 2017. Ch 1. "What is digital sociology?" in *Digital Sociology: The Reinvention of Social Research*. Polity Press: Cambridge and Massachusetts.

- **Topic 1: Introduction and Historical Context**
Required Reading: Lecture
- Flew and Smith: Ch 1 (Introduction to New Media), Ch 2 (The History of New Media) and Ch 4 (Mobile New Media)

- Lupton, Chapter 1 ("Introduction: Life is Digital")
- Zuboff, Shoshana. 2019. Introduction (Ch 1) "Home or Exile in the Digital Future" in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: the Fight for the Future at the New Frontier of Power*. Profile Books: London (p3-26)

Week 3 (Aug 11,13)
- **Topic 1: Introduction and Historical Context**
  Required Reading: Lecture
- Flew and Smith: Ch 1 (Introduction to New Media), Ch 2 (The History of New Media) and Ch 4 (Mobile New Media)
- Lupton, Chapter 1 ("Introduction: Life is Digital")
- Zuboff, Shoshana. 2019. Introduction (Ch 1) "Home or Exile in the Digital Future" in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: the Fight for the Future at the New Frontier of Power*. Profile Books: London (p3-26)

- **Topic 2: Studying Technology**
  Required Reading: Lecture
- Flew and Smith. Ch 3 (Approaches to New Media)
- Marres, Noortje. 2017. Ch 2. "What makes digital technology social?" in *Digital Sociology: The Reinvention of Social Research*. Polity Press: Cambridge and Massachusetts.
- Sassen, S. (2002). Towards a sociology of information technology. *Current Sociology*, 50(3), 365-388.

Friday SE: Davis, Jenny L. and James B. Chouinard. 2017. "Theorizing Affordances: From Request to Refuse." *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*. 0(0): 1-8

Week 4 (Aug 18, 20, 22, Aug 23**)
- **Topic: Digital Infrastructures**
  Required Reading: Lecture
- Murphy, D. (2023). From Indy to ubiquity: Minecraft as platform and infrastructure. *New Media & Society*, 14614448221144989.
- Plantin, JC and A Punathambekar. 2019. Digital media infrastructures: pipes, platforms, and politics. *Media, Culture and Society*. 41(2): 163-174
- Gillespie, M., Osseiran, S., & Cheesman, M. (2018). Syrian refugees and the digital passage to Europe: Smartphone infrastructures and affordances. *Social media+ society*, *4*(1), 2056305118764440.
- Horst HA (2013) The infrastructures of mobile media: towards a future research agenda. *Mobile Media & Communication* 1(1): 147–152.
- Star SL (1999) The ethnography of infrastructure. American Behavioral Scientist 43(3): 377–391
- Vertesi J (2014) Seamful spaces: heterogeneous infrastructures in interaction. *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 39(2): 264–284.
- Marres, Noortje. 2017. Ch 1. "What is digital sociology?" in *Digital Sociology: The Reinvention of Social Research*. Polity Press: Cambridge and Massachusetts.

Friday SE: McDonald, T., & Guo, Y. (2021). "What would happen if you can't see your money?': Visibility and the emergent infrastructures of digital money storage in China." *New Media & Society*, 23(4), 715-731.

Week 5 (Aug 25, 27, 29)
- **Mediated Selves and Relationships**

Required Reading: Lecture
- Orton-Johnson and Prior. Part 1, Ch 1 (Personal Relationships, Intimacy and the Self in a Mediated and Global Digital Age)
- Miller, Daniel. 2017. "Ideology of Friendship in the Era of Facebook." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*. 7(1): 377-395
- Hobbs, M., Owen, S., & Gerber, L. (2017). Liquid love? Dating apps, sex, relationships and the digital transformation of intimacy. *Journal of Sociology*, *53*(2), 271-284.

Friday SE: Advani, R. 2022. Brothers, friends, and enemies: averting intimacy on Facebook in western India. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute*. 28(3): 938-955

Week 6 (September 1, 3)
- **Do Communities matter now?**

Required Reading: Lecture
- Orton-Johnson and Prior. Part 2, Ch 5 (Rethinking Community in the Digital Age)
- Miller, Daniel et al 2016. "Individualism" in *How the World Changed Social Media*. UCL Press: London pp 181-193

Week 6 (September 8, 10, 12) (WILL THIS COME POST MID-TERM???)
- **Mediated Networks**

Required Reading: Lecture
- Flew and Smith. Ch 5 (Social Networks and Participatory Culture)
- Orton-Johnson and Prior. Part 4, Ch 11 (Imagining Networks: The Sociology of Connection in the Digital Age)

Friday SE: Murthy, Dhiraj and Sanjay Sharma 2018. "Visualizing YouTube's comment space: online hostility as a networked phenomena" *New Media and Society*. 0(00): 1-23

SEPTEMBER 16 - 22 : MID SEMESTER EXAM

Week 8 (September 24, 26)
- **Values and Economies in Digital Societies**

Required Reading: Lecture
- Flew and Smith. Ch 8 (The Global Knowledge Economy)
- Orton-Johnson and Prior. Part 3, Ch 9 (Digital Fields, Networks and Capital: Sociology beyond Structures and Fluids)
- Lupton p 20-23 and 27-31
- Miller, Daniel et al 2016. "Work and Commerce" in How the World Changed Social Media. UCL Press: London pp 85-100
- Leaver, T., Highfield, T., & Abidin, C. (2020). Instagram: Visual social media cultures. John Wiley & Sons. Chapter 4.

Friday SE: Agarwal, Anuja. 2015. Cyber-matchmaking among Indians: Re-arranging marriage and doing 'kin work'. *South Asian Popular Culture*. 13(1): 15-30

Monday SE: Jayadeva, Sazana. 2020. "Keep calm and apply to Germany: how online communities mediate transnational student mobility from India to Germany" Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies. 46 (11): 2240-2257

SEPTEMBER 27- OCTOBER 5: MID SEMESTER BREAK

Week 9 (October 6, 8, 10)
- **Values and Economies: Work and Platforms**
Required Reading: Lecture
  - J. van Dijk (2018), *The Platform Society: Public Values in a Connective World*, Oxford University Press.
  - Wood, A. J., Graham, M., Lehdonvirta, V., & Hjorth, I. (2019). Networked but commodified: The (dis) embeddedness of digital labour in the gig economy. *Sociology*, *53*(5), 931-950.

Friday SE: Schwartz, David B. 2018. "Embedded in the Crowd: Creative Freelancers, Crowdsourced Work, and Occupational Community" *Work and Occupations*. 45(3): 247-282

Week 10 (October 13, 15, 17)
- **Values and Economies: Entrepreneurship and the Platform Economy**
Required Reading: Lecture
  - J. van Dijk (2018), *The Platform Society: Public Values in a Connective World*, Oxford University Press.

Friday SE: Zhang, L. 2023, "The Platformization of Family Production: Reinventing Rural Familism and Governance for the E- Commerce Era" (Chapter 4) in The Labour of Reinvention: Entrepreneurship in the New Chinese Digital Economy. Columbia University Press: New York (p 103-137)

Week 11 (October 22, 24)
- **Values and Economies: Platform Markets**
Required Reading: Lecture
  - Athique, A. and V Parthsarathi. 2020. *Platform Capitalism in India*. Palgrave Macmillan. Introduction and Ch 1.
  - Narayanan, D. 2023. Monopolization and competition under platform capitalism: Analyzing transformations in the computing industry. New Media and Society. 25(2): 287-306

Friday SE: Parthasarathy, V and S Agarwal. "Platformisation of Matchmaking: Reconfiguring Social Economies in India" Chapter 4 in Bouquillion, P., Ithurbide, C and Mattelart, T. eds *Digital Platforms and the Global South Reconfiguring Power Relations in the Cultural Industries.*

Week 12 (October 27, 29, 31, Nov 1***)
- **Values and Economies: AI**

Required Reading: Lecture
- N. Agar (2019), *How to Be Human in the Digital Economy*, The MIT Press.

Friday SE: Borch, C. and BH Min. 2022. Machine learning and social action in markets: From first- to second-generation automated trading. *Economy and Society*.

Week 13 (November 3, 7, Nov 8**)
- **Digital Money and Finance**
Required Reading: Lecture
- Sen, A., Lindquist, J., and Marie Kolling. (2020) *Who's Cashing In? Contemporary Perspectives on New Monies and Global Cashlessness*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn.

Friday SE: Hayes, AS. 2021. The active construction of passive investors: roboadvisors and algorithmic 'low-finance', *Socio-Economic Review*, 19(1): 83–110

Week 14 (Nov 10, 12, 14)
- **Digital Money and Finance**
Required Reading: Lecture
- Sen, A., Lindquist, J., and Marie Kolling. (2020) *Who's Cashing In? Contemporary Perspectives on New Monies and Global Cashlessness*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn.

Monday SE: TBA

Nov 17-26: FINAL EXAMS

*Gazetted Holidays: Alternatives TBA
**Saturdays on which Friday schedule is to be followed
***Saturdays on which Monday schedule is to be followed

Assessment and Evaluation

The evaluation scheme will be as indicated below. The percentages shown denote the contribution of that activity towards the final grade.

- Attendance: On Acadly. Contributes to 5% of your grade
- Lecture participation: Class participation contributes to 10% of your grade. Among other things, this will be gauged on the basis of participation in in-class exercises and class presentations.
- Weekly reflections: To be submitted in-person, on-paper every Friday. Will account for 5% of your grade.
- Quizzes: 1 short multiple-choice/fill in the blanks quiz every Friday. It will collectively contribute to 20% of your grade. (syllabus: whatever was covered in class during the previous week)
- Mid-term exam: Contributes to 30% of your grade.
- Final Exam: Contributes to 30% of your grade.

The course follows Continuous Cumulative Evaluation: you are going to be assessed on your understanding of concepts on a regular basis. At the very minimum, this means that you will need to study for this course on a regular basis to pass the course.

Contact
In case you wish to clarify or discuss something related to class, please approach me after the lecture sessions. Alternatively, you can send an email at jssam@iitk.ac.in to schedule an appointment to meet with me. If you send me an email on a weekday, you should expect to hear back within 24 hours. If you do so on a weekend, you should expect to hear back from me on Monday.
Expectations regarding classroom behavior
Class will start on time, so please make sure you get there before the door is locked. This classroom is a space where students often argue and through discussion develop different ideas. So it is expected that you will engage in classroom discussions in a respectful manner. Please treat your classmates, tutor and instructor with the same courtesy and respect that you think you deserve.