Digital Sociology: Living in- and offline

Introduction

Digital Sociology introduces sociological theories and methods to understand digital technologies and their relation to social interaction and transactions. We define the digital world in terms of relevant technologies of the Internet, social media, global outsourcing, digital communities, media, social networks and popular cultures. This course aims to provide insights into the linkages between society, information and digital technology. Grounded mainly in the field of sociology, the course will examine the ways that information and digital technologies are penetrating everyday life at the level of groups, communities and institutions. The production, consumption, circulation and regulation of content embedded in digital technological products will be explored. I will invite faculty from other pillars and hold guest lectures on digital innovation and social behavior. Engineering and design students will benefit from understanding how digital products and services become agents of cultural and social transformation.

Learning Objectives
- To demonstrate empirical ideas about the relationship between digital technologies and social interactions at the interpersonal, organizational and global levels.
- To relate digital technology to broader conceptual and theoretical concerns that joins the biographies of individuals to historical, national and global issues.
- To conduct independent research and writing on the ways in which digital technologies are part of and transforming social relations.

Measurable Outcomes
- Apply the concept of 'sociological imagination' through analyzing and evaluating the impact of digital technologies on individuals and societies.
- Describe the concepts of 'social networks', 'virtual identity', and the 'presentation of everyday life'.
- Compare and contrast the characteristics of online and offline communities at various scales (i.e. interpersonal, organizational and global scales).
- Evaluate how digital technologies bring about social transformations at diverse levels (i.e. interpersonal, organizational and global scales).
- Evaluate how qualitative research methods can be implemented to explore the relationship between social problems and digital technologies (i.e. the organization of work, gender relations, globalization and inequality and etc.)

Assignments

Students will have to complete each of the following required assignments:
Please note that all assignments should be typed and formatted in font size 12 Arial or Times New Roman. You are expected to cite and reference according to APA. See Purdue Owl for their citation and referencing guide.
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

While the Internet is a rich source of information, you may avoid using information from random websites.

Please ensure that you check your grammar and spelling thoroughly. All assignments must be uploaded into Turnitin in Edimension and a hard copy to your instructor. Late assignments will be penalized. Please ensure you check the matching index on Turnitin. It should be below 10%.

Week 6-Please submit a printed copy to me during lecture and submit the same to Turnitiin earlier

Individual Assignment

Make notes of your Internet usage for 2 weeks (from Week 2 till Week 4). You first need to write how often, how long, and when you are using the Internet and what Internet activities you are doing (self-ethnography). Then write a short essay (1000 words) to analyze your daily use of the Internet on any or all smart devices and computers. You can use the following topic as a guide. Is there a distinction between online and offline in your everyday activities? Do you agree or disagree with the idea that the distinction between the real and virtual is breaking down?

There is a no restriction in terms of style, but you can follow a standard essay format of an introduction, main body and conclusion. **You are to cite relevant sociological readings in your essay. These can be from any of the readings or from the lectures. You are required to cite and provide references of all materials. Use APA format found on the Purdue Owl Website.**

Week 10

Group Assignment – (group presentation via a YouTube video or PowerPoint presentation). Do not violate any privacy or other laws.

This assignment is to be completed in groups of three or four students. Your instructor will assign you groups.

Choose any of the following: Wikipedia, Facebook/Instagram/Twitter or Location based Dating Apps, Examples of topics are as follows.

Making friends, finding relationships and jobs, finding information on any of the above social media sites.

The data you collect should answer the following questions.

- Why are certain forms of social media more popular in Singapore then others?
- What are some of the positive and negative impacts of social media on the youth?
- Why is sociology useful in understanding the impact of social media?

The deliverables are as follows.

- A group presentation filmed and uploaded into a private YouTube Channel for 15 minutes of your findings-all members must present. You may do this in Ted Style or a group discussion as you wish. Or the presentation can be via PowerPoint. Note the class will decide the mode of presentation and all groups must comply. A one page description of each team member's contributions to the project.

Resources

Pew Research Centre –Internet Project
http://www.pewinternet.org/
Twitter Guide for Researchers (LSE)
http://www.lse.ac.uk/newsAndMedia/news/archives/2011/10/twitter_guide.aspx
The Essential Guide to Doing Research
http://www.uk.sagepub.com/resources/oleary/oleary.htm

Any of the readings from Edimension, library or other resources such as Google Scholar

Week 13 – Submit hard and soft copy (Turnitin) latest by Sunday 5pm on Edimension

Final Essay Questions

This is a Sociological research paper where you will be expected to use at least 4 -5 valid academic sources (no Wikipedia or random internet sites). The paper should contain an introduction, research methodology section, literature review, findings and conclusion. The word count is 1500-2000 excluding references.

The following are suggested topics. You may come up with your own questions to be approved by your instructor by **Week 11**. There are some sample questions that you may also use.

Sample Questions
- How do social networking and social media websites depict and shape gender relations online and offline?
- Would you leave social media? Provide a sociological analysis of why one might leave social media.
- Which social theories would you consider in analyzing hackers and hacking? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of these theories?
- You may choose a book such as the New Digital Age by Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen and write a critique of that book.

Suggested Topics (you may suggest other ones)
- Digital innovation and its impact on everyday life
- The power of the Internet on social movements
- Gender relations and online gaming
- Digital technology, knowledge and ownership/censorship/surveillance
- The Internet of everything

Resources
- Sociology essay guide from UC Berkeley
  http://sociology.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/documents/student_services/writing_guide/Writing%20for%20Sociology%20Guide%20Second%20Edition.pdf
- UNC Sociology Writing Center
  http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/sociology/
- American Sociological Association Research
  http://www.asanet.org/research/research.cfm
- Google Scholar
- SUTD Library EResources (ask a librarian to help you); Articles on Edimension

Grading
The course will be letter-graded (A, B, C, D). The percentage of each assignment towards the overall grade is:

Class participation – 20% (only three absences allowed for valid reasons. More absences may result in a C or below grade)
Mid-term assignment – 30%
Group presentation/video– 20%
Final paper -30%

The class participation component of the course is very important. It includes taking part in class discussions, giving presentations, leading discussions, completing in-class and out-of-class exercises, and attendance. Every student is expected to have completed readings prior to class and actively participate in class discussions. It is a requisite of the course that all participant students conduct actual research and bring this experience to class. Thus, students are expected to work both individually and collectively during recitations and outside of class hours as well. There will be in class exercises for active and participatory learning.

Academic Integrity
Students are expected to produce their own work, whether individually or in groups. Do not copy work from your friends, the Internet or other published sources without proper citations. This is plagiarism and if a student is found to be doing so, he or she will be subject to disciplinary measures including potentially failing the course.

Plagiarism is the use of some one's intellectual work without acknowledgement. It is a serious offense. It is the policy of the university that students who plagiarize will receive an F grade in the subject, and that the instructor will forward the case to the Committee on Discipline. Full acknowledgement for all information obtained from sources outside the classroom must be clearly stated in an appropriate format for all written work submitted and in all oral presentations, including images or texts in other media and for materials collected online. All ideas, arguments, and direct phrasings taken from some one's work must be identified and properly cited. Quotations from other sources must be clearly marked as distinct from the student's own work. Do note that for example direct quotes require quotation marks (or presented as a block quote) with author, date and page number). Do not overuse quotes and paraphrases of another people's work. For further guidance on the proper forms of attribution, consult me your HASS faculty member. You should also read the SUTD Academic Integrity Policy on the university's website.

Instructor
You may contact the instructor by e-mail, meet her during office hours, or by appointment at the discretion of the instructor. Office hours are typically before and after each cohort session to suit the student's schedules.

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Detailed Outline of the Subject
Readings/Links posted in Edimension

Week 1
Introduction

What is digital + sociology? How is the course structured? How to approach your assignments?

Required Reading

Lupton, D. (2014). "Digital Sociology: Beyond the Digital to the Sociological.' (Paper available in Edimension)

Bauchspies W., J. Crossaint, S. Restiwo 2006. Introduction, *In Science, Technology and Society: A Sociological Approach*, pp. 1-18. (Chapter available in Edimension)

Mills, C. W. 2000. The promise, in *Sociological Imagination*, pp. 1-24 (Available online in Google books and SUTD Ebooks).

Recommended Reading (highly recommended)

Schmidt, E., Jared C. 2013. *The New Digital Age*: *Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business*, pp. 3-11. (Chapter available in Edimension)

McCarthy, Helen, Paul Miller, Paul Skidmore (eds) 2004. Buchanan, Mark, "The science of inequality" *in Network Logic: Who Governs in an Interconnected World*. Pp. 103-113. http://www.demos.co.uk/files/networklogic.pdf

Week 2
Theorizing the Digital Age and Networked Society

How do sociological inquiries approach the digital world? This topic will introduce students to key concepts and theories of digital sociology.

Required Readings

Castells, M. (2010). The rise of the network society. Chapter 1. http://samples.sainsburysebooks.co.uk/9781444310146_sample_415190.pdf

DiMaggio, P., Hargittai, E., Neuman, W. R., & Robinson, J. P. (2001). Social implications of the Internet. *Annual review of sociology*, 307-336. http://homepages.abdn.ac.uk/f.guerin/pages/teaching/CS5038/lectures/abdn/society/SOCIALIMPLICATIONS.pdf

Media Sources

Mesch, G. S. (2009). The Internet and youth culture. *The Hedgehog Review*,*11*(1), 50-60. http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/archives/YouthCulture/Mesch.pdf

Video
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f42J_reRO0Q

Recommended Reading (can also be used as reference materials)

Gotved, S. (2006). Time and space in cyber social reality. *New Media & Society*, *8*(3), 467-486. http://www.andredeak.com.br/pdf/tempo_espaco_realidade_social.pdf

Webster, F., (2002)
http://www.uk.sagepub.com/mcquail6/PDF/022_ch01.pdf

Webster, F., (2006)
http://cryptome.org/2013/01/aaron-swartz/Information-Society-Theories.pdf

Week 3

Capturing Data and Experiences and Making Sense of Them

How do sociologists collect data? Can online and offline subjective and interpretive content constitute scientific evidence? This topic will introduce students to collecting primary and secondary research and in particular focus on interpretive meaning through ethnography (observations).

Required Reading

Gillespie, T et al. (2007). *Wired Shut*. MIT press (SUTD library online source). Chapter 1.

Boellstorff, T., B. Nardi, C. Pearce, and T. L. Taylor. (2012). *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method*, pp. 1-12, 65-91. (Chapter available in Edimension)

Vinck, D. (ed.) (2003). Everyday Engineering: Ethnography of Design and Innovation, pp. 1-10. (Chapter available on Edimension)

Media Sources

Video
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nV0jY5VgymI

Recommended Reading

Babbie, Earl 2013. Paradigms, methods and ethics of qualitative research in *the Practice of Social Research,* pp. 1-2, 30-55, 65-91, 323-357. Search on Google.

Wilson, B. (2006). Ethnography, the Internet, and Youth Culture: Strategies for Examining Social Resistance and" Online-Offline" Relationships. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, 307-328.
http://civicpaths.net/groupblog/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Examining-Social-Resistance-and-Online-Offline-Relationships1.pdf

Week 4
Online and Offline Identities

Does your identity matter online? This topic examines the reproduction of offline masculinities and femininities into online experiences. It explores how online experiences and technologies carry the politics of gender across space and time. We will examine gaming, dating sites etc.

Required Reading

Turkle, S. (1997). *Life on the screen: identity in the age of the Internet*, pp. 210-232. (Chapter available in Edimension)

Edwards, P. (1990). "The army and the microworld: computers and the politics of gender identity." *Signs* 16 (1), 74-101. (Available in Edimension).

Chappetta, K. C., & Barth, J. M. (2016). How gender role stereotypes affect attraction in an online dating scenario. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *63*, 738-746. (Available in Edimension).

Media Sources

Video
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OF5VVrsnpzo

Recommended Reading

Debrand, C. C., & Johnson, J. J. (2008). Gender differences in email and instant messaging: A study of undergraduate business information systems students. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, *48*(3), 20.

Week 5
Community Formation on Social Media

Why do we use Facebook and Twitter? This topic scrutinizes the complexity of urban informatics, digital spaces, communities, identities and socialization processes in the digital age. We particularly look at identity construction and mediation on social media sites.

Required Reading

Gillespie, T., Boczkowski, P. J., & Foot, K. A. (2014). *Media technologies: Essays on communication, materiality, and society*. MIT Press. Chapter 2. (Available online in SUTD library).

Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* pp. 17-76. (Chapter available in Edimension)
http://monoskop.org/images/1/19/Goffman_Erving_The_Presentation_of_Self_in_Everyday_Life.pdf

McAndrew, F., Hye S. J., (2012). "Who does what on Facebook? Age, sex and relationship status and predictors of Facebook use." *Computers in Human Behavior* (28) 2359–2365.
http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0747563212002075/1-s2.0-S0747563212002075-main.pdf?_tid=5387c9f8-2115-11e4-8c16-00000aacb35f&acdnat=1407733800_1281bb288970da884276041f9511f3d7

Media Sources

Turkle, S. (18, October 2015)
http://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/oct/18/sherry-turkle-not-anti-technology-pro-conversation

Video
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ovPGozuUOI

Recommended Reading

Turkle, S. (1996) "Sex Lies and Avatars"
http://web.mit.edu/sturkle/www/pdfsforstwebpage/ST_Sex,%20Lies,%20Avatars.pdf

Turkle, S. (1997). *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*, pp. 233- 254. (Chapter available in Edimension)

Week 6
Digital Innovations and Their Impact on Daily Life (Guest Speaker)

What is a digital product? How do new digital innovations impact our lives? This topic looks at how digital technological innovations occur and are incorporated into a society.

Required Reading

The Future of Life Institutes. https://futureoflife.org

Gillespie, T., Boczkowski, P. J., & Foot, K. A. (2014). *Media technologies: Essays on communication, materiality, and society*. MIT Press. Chapter 9. (Available online in SUTD library).

Schmidt, E., and J. Cohen. (2013). *The New Digital Age: Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business,* pp. 13-31. (Chapter available in Edimension)

Media Sources

Video
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Usn4Ot1wWIM

Recommended Reading

Bauchspies, W. K., J. Croissant, S. Restivo. (2005). Science Technology and Power in The Postmodern World in *Science, Technology and Society*: *A Sociological Approach*, pp.73-101. (Chapter available in Edimension)

http://iacis.org/jcis/articles/Debrand_Johnson_2008_48_3.pdf

Week 7
Recess

Week 8
Security Versus Surveillance on the Internet: Who is Watching? (Guest Speaker)

What are key security and ethical issues in the digital age? This topic explores issues of information security, privacy, piracy, data mining, surveillance, regulation and copy right at the levels of globalized cooperative schemes and localized daily aspects of social life. Must we give up privacy in order to be protected?

Required Reading

Deibert, R. J., & Rohozinski, R. (2010). Risking security: policies and paradoxes of cyberspace security. *International Political Sociology*, *4*(1), 15-32.

Donovan, Gregory, & Katz, Cindi. 2009. "Cookie monsters: seeing young people's hacking as creative practice." *Children Youth and Environments*, *19*(1), 197–222.

Recommended Reading

Gillespie, T. et al (2007). *Wired Shut*. MIT press Chapter 4. (Available online in SUTD library).

Philip, Kavitha. 2005. "What is a technological author? The pirate function and intellectual property." *Postcolonial Studies* 8 (2) 199-218. (Available in Edimension).

Media Sources

Knight Foundation Blog
http://www.knightfoundation.org/blogs/knightblog/2013/9/17/national-security-freedom-and-privacy-looking-digital-age-answers/

Grahman, Paul: http://www.paulgraham.com/yahoo.html

Week 9
Internet of Things Guest (Guest Speaker)

Required Readings
Each student team to select an article on Internet of Things for discussion during recitation. You may choose one that is posted or bring one of your own and use Actor Network Theory to analyze that article in Edimension.

Week 10
Presentations

Week 11
Disruptive Innovation, Gig Economy, Open Source and their Impact on Capitalism

How does the Gig economy work and what are some of its effects? Guest Lecture

Readings TBA.

Required Reading
http://sociologyinfocus.com/2015/04/getting-in-cars-with-strangers-the-sociology-of-uber/

Gobble, M. M. (2015). Regulating innovation in the new economy. Research Technology Management, 58(2), 62-64
https://journalistsresource.org/studies/economics/business/airbnb-lyft-uber-bike-share-sharing-economy-research-roundup?utm_source=JR-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=JR-email

Recommended Reading

Grossman, N. & Woyke, E. (2016). *Serving workers in the gig economy: Emerging resources for the on-demand workforce*. O'Reilly.

Week 12
What Does the Future Hold for Us?

What is the Internet of everything? How do you feel about everything being controlled wirelessly or by Robots? Automation and computerization have achieved higher productivity. Will mass computerization, which the world has already seen end social inequality or cause more job losses?

Required Reading

Smit, J. P., Buekens, F., & Du Plessis, S. (2016). Cigarettes, dollars and bitcoins–an essay on the ontology of money. *Journal of Institutional Economics*, *12*(2), 327-347. (Available online in SUTD library)

Mansell, Robin. 2002. "From digital divides to digital entitlements in knowledge societies." *Current Sociology* 50 (3): 407–426. (Available in Edimension)   .

Media Sources

The Future of Work
http://www.forbes.com/sites/jacobmorgan/2014/08/22/the-future-of-work-how-millennials-are-changing-the-workplace/

Pew Research: Internet Project
http://www.pewinternet.org/topics/future-of-the-internet/

Video
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ht-bR5Nb60&list=PLnwTlgE4OP1fVVrpz_3X1rAHHaAKY6KbW

http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=50154119n

Recommended Reading

 "What is the internet of everything?"
http://www.cisco.com/web/tomorrow-starts-here/ioe/index.html?utm_content=buffer91bbf&utm_source=buffer&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Buffer

Week 13
Review of Key Theories and Topics and Writing of Final Paper

We will revisit the critical ideas and questions posited in the course and there will be a question and answer session for lessons learnt during the term. In addition, there will be a writing lab for the final term paper.

Refer to materials in page 3.

Week 14
No Exam