



Data and the City
URB 305
Winter 2017
Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:50-2:55 pm

Faculty: Jim Thatcher (he/him)
Office: PNK 213
Office Hours: **Tuesdays 3-5 pm and *by appointment***
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Data, in all of its various appellations and forms – big, small, raw, cooked – has come to be a core process through which urban communities and environments are constituted, understood, and transformed. Even as corporations and governments invest billions of dollars to create ‘sensor grids’ and ‘smart cities,’ questions emerge over who is and is not represented in these data sets and what that means for the everyday lives of those who live within these putatively safe, efficient, and ‘smart’ worlds.

This class prepares students not only to understand how, why, and where data are being used to shape urban life, but also to critically engage with the motivations and actors *behind* the public face of urban data. Over the course of the quarter, students will read and discuss a variety of cutting-edge topics with regards to data, such as ‘data divides,’ ‘smart cities,’ ‘sensor networks,’ and ‘critical data studies.’ By completion of the course, students will have a firm understanding of where and how data centers are interfacing with cities and those who live within them as well as how to leverage such systems towards community beneficence. As an educational outcome of the course, students will either produce a research paper on data’s interface with the city (in its many forms) or they may survey existing and potential data sources relevant to a chosen community and develop a professional document that proposes and outlines an achievable action plan leveraging said data in a meaningful way.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who complete this course will:

- Be able to read, summarize, and present professional and academic writing
- Gain an ability to ask critically informed questions about the intersection of individual, society, and technology as it plays out through data and in urban spaces

- Be able to formulate theoretically informed questions and be able to conceptualize empirical projects that test those questions
 - Design original research related to data and urban environments
 - Have a strong historical and contemporary understanding of the ways in which data is generated and captured in urban settings
 - Be able to articulate how data has come to intersect and transduce urban space and be able to articulate what this means for contemporary society
 - Understand the variegated role that data places across different urban environments around the world
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TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

The course will be based upon lectures, guest speakers, in-class exercises, labs, student presentations, and a final project. Grades will be based on preparation, participation, presentations, labs, and final projects.

CANVAS AND UWT EMAIL REQUIRED

Canvas and your UW email account will be used extensively for communication, announcements, assignments, lecture notes, exchange of ideas, and feedback. Check your UW email and the Canvas workspace daily for updates. All written assignments will be typed, double-spaced, APA citation style and submitted electronically in a WORD compatible format via Canvas.

CLASSROOM PRINCIPLES

This course will cover a variety of difficulty topics in a limited amount of time. As such, students are expected to come to class prepared and to actively participate in class. Working with technology, it is impossible to fully resist periodically checking email or other outside communications; however, please be respectful of others. Loud typing or browsing of distracting websites (lots of images/videos) will not be tolerated.

Late assignments will be marked down. While attendance is not mandatory, if you are going to miss extended class time, please let me know beforehand. Ask other students for missed notes and check Canvas for lecture slides.

READINGS

- Articles will be distributed via Canvas
 - Additionally, the course relies on two texts:
 - *The City of Tomorrow* by Carlo Ratti and Matthew Claudel
 - *Black Box Society* by Frank Pasquale
 - Both are available through the University bookstore and online retailers
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ASSIGNMENTS

- Reading discussion (10% of course grade)
- Short Reading responses (10% of course grade)
- Long Reading responses (20% of course grade)
- Discussion Leading (30% of course grade)
- Final project (30% of course grade)

Participation: Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to actively participate in class exercises and discussions. This means coming to class prepared and having completed any reading or other assignments.

More information on the University of Washington's grading policies can be found here: http://www.washington.edu/students/gencat/front/Grading_Sys.html

READING RESPONSES:

Short Reading Responses: Students are expected to submit **five (5)** short reading responses throughout the course of the quarter. These responses are to be between 150-250 words and will be turned in on Canvas. Each response is worth 2% of the final course grade.

Long Reading Responses: Students will submit **two (2)** longer responses between 400-500 words in length. These responses will be turned in on Canvas and each response is worth 10% of the final course grade.

Responses should **not summarize** the readings, but rather contextualize, engage, and respond to them. For example, students should try to tie the readings to other readings and/or circumstances in Tacoma or to experiences in their daily lives. Students are encouraged to find points of contention with the readings and explore areas they find particularly persuasive or not.

Reading responses are to be submitted on Canvas each Wednesday by 9 p.m.

When you submit your responses, simply mark if it is a long or short response in the document.

FINAL PROJECT: *DUE 3/14/2017*

The final project is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their command of the material presented in the class. Working individually, students will develop a proposal for an empirical, urban research project. This will feature an abstract, a brief literature review of existing research, and a clear statement of the problem to be investigated and the potential methods to be used to do so. In total, the project will be **five to six pages long**.

Students are encouraged to begin thinking about their project ***as soon as possible***. Meeting with the instructor during office hours to discuss the project is also encouraged.

Additional details on the Final Project, such as proposals, will be discussed in class over the course of the quarter.

LEADING DISCUSSION:

Once during the quarter, working in groups, students will lead the Thursday discussion class.

Students will be expected to prepare a short summary of the readings, to tie these readings to previous presentations, and to guide the class as we discuss related topics.

Each group of students will meet with the instructor ***before*** they are to lead discussion to go over their material and clarify any remaining questions.

Students will select their chosen week during the first week of class.

Formatting: Papers must be typed in 11-12-point font, and double spaced with standard margins. References are to be properly cited following the APA system.

Plagiarism: using another's words or ideas without proper citation, is a conduct violation. Ignorance of proper documentation procedures is the usual cause of plagiarism, although it does not excuse the act. Students are responsible for learning how and when to document and attribute resources used in written or oral presentations. For more information, please refer to the Academic Honesty: Cheating and Plagiarism document

adapted by the Nursing Program at UW Tacoma:

http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/nursing/current_students/honesty.cfm

Extra-credit opportunities, such as attending specific research lectures or other activities on Campus, may be announced during the quarter.

Reading note: Assigned readings are to be completed *for the class under which they are listed*. Therefore, the readings under the January 12th class are to be completed **by the start of that class**, and so on. No preparation is expected for the first class.

ALL READINGS NOT FROM THE COURSE TEXTS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON CANVAS

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 –

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Introduction to the course and course objectives

Week 2 –

Tuesday, October 3, 2017

What the Heck is the City of Tomorrow?!

Readings: *The City of Tomorrow* Chapters 1-3 (pages 3-39)

Thursday, October 5, 2017

Discussion: What the Heck is the City of Tomorrow?!

Week 3 –

Tuesday, October 10, 2017

Data and the City in History

Readings: Downey G “Telegraph Messenger Boys”
Crawford K, Lingel J, Karppi T “Our metrics, ourselves”
Dalton C, Taylor L, Thatcher J “Critical Data Studies”

Thursday, October 12, 2017

NO CLASS

Week 4 –

Tuesday, October 17, 2017

Urban Data Sources, Urban Data Collection

Readings: *The City of Tomorrow* Chapters 4-6 (pages 43-87)

Thursday, October 19, 2017

Discussion: Urban Data Sources, Urban Data Collection

Week 5 –

Tuesday, October 24, 2017

Visualizing the City

Readings: *The City of Tomorrow* Chapters 7-9 (pages 91-130)

Thursday, October 26, 2017

Discussion: Visualizing the City

Week 6 –

Tuesday, October 31, 2017

Data Spectacles

Readings: Gregg M “Inside the Data Spectacle”
The Black Box Society Chapter 1-2 (pages 1-58)

Thursday, November 2, 2017

Discussion: Data Spectacles

Final project topic must be selected

Week 7 –

Tuesday, November 7, 2017

Algorithms, Cities, Ourselves

Readings: *The Black Box Society* Chapters 3-4 (pages 59-139)

Thursday, November 9, 2017

Discussion: Algorithms, Cities, Ourselves

Week 8 –

Tuesday, November 14, 2017

Quantified Self, City, Nation

Readings: Wilson MW “Flashing lights in the quantified self-city-nation”
SEE CANVAS FOR ADDITIONAL READINGS

Thursday, November 16, 2017

Discussion: Quantified Self, City, Nation

Week 9 –

Tuesday, November 21, 2017

Thursday, November 23, 2017

NO CLASS EITHER DATE

Week 10 –

Tuesday, November 28, 2017

Data and Money

Readings: Barta K, Neff G "Technologies for Sharing"
Cockayne D G "Affect and value in critical examinations..."
Thatcher J, O'Sullivan D, Mahmoudi D "Data Colonialism"

Thursday, November 30, 2017

Discussion: Data and Money

Week 11 –

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

What is to be done?

Readings: *The City of Tomorrow* Chapters 10-11 (pages 133-150)
The Black Box Society Chapter 6 (pages 140-221)

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Discussion: What is to be done?

THE FINAL PROJECT IS DUE BY 5 P.M. ON December 11th, 2017

INCLUSIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

In this class, we will have the chance to indicate the name that we prefer to be called and, if we choose, to identify pronouns with which we would like to be addressed. This will be done confidentially through Canvas.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Students at the University of Washington are expected to maintain the highest standards of conduct as required by state legislation. The integrity that will be required in your professional career should be practiced in your academic career. Academic misconduct is a serious offense that can have severe penalties including failing an assignment, failing the course, or dismissal from the university. Cheating includes turning in work that is not your own, using resources for exams or assignments when not permitted, or if you consult or collaborate with anyone on assignments that are meant to be completed individually.

You are guilty of plagiarism if you fail to cite the source of any idea that is not your own. Plagiarism can be avoided by using reference citations correctly. You are responsible for learning how and when to document and attribute resources used in preparing a written or oral presentation. If you have any questions, please ask me or consult the Writing Center.

E-MAIL POLICY

UW policy requires you to use a UW e-mail account for communications with professors and to ensure that messages from the course website are received. For more information on setting up a UW NetID and email account, see:
<http://www.washington.edu/computing/uwnetid>

DISABILITIES

Disability Support Services (DSS) offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through any interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DSS. If you have not yet established services through DSS, but have, or think you have a temporary or permanent disability that requires accommodations (this can include mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DSS at 253-692-4522 V/ 253-692-4413 / DSSUWT@UW.EDU

TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTER (TLC)

The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) in SNO 260 offers free academic support for students at all levels. Writing support is available at our online writing center. For math, stats and quantitative needs, assistance is available on a drop-in basis.

LIBRARY

The UWT Library has resources, services and facilities to support students at all levels of expertise. We guide students through the research process, helping them learn how to develop effective research strategies and find and evaluate appropriate resources. For assistance or to schedule an appointment, visit us at the Reference Desk in the Library, email tacref@uw.edu or phone 253-692-4442.

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS - SHAW

Confidential health services and counselors are available to help students cope with illness, health maintenance, stresses and personal issues.

CAREERS

Assistance is available in career planning and job hunting at Career Development & Education.

FINANCIAL AID

Information on tuition, financial aid and scholarships can be found online. You must make satisfactory academic progress to receive most forms of financial aid.

CAMPUS SAFETY INFORMATION

The university-wide UW Alert system sends text messages of campus closures and emergencies.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of bad weather, class may be canceled. Check the campus website or call 383-4636 to determine if campus is closed. If campus is open but conditions are bad, please check your e-mail, the course Canvas site, or call my office phone (253-692-5635) to determine if class will be held.