**SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHICAL, HISTORICAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES**

**MODULE DESCRIPTION – YEAR 2023-24**

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| **MODULE CODE AND TITLE** | **CS220-5-FY - Navigating the Digital World** | | |
| **MODULE TERM** | Full Year | **CREDITS** | 30 |

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| **CONTACTS** | **NAME** | **EMAIL** |
| **Module Director:**  Krisztian Hofstadter | [k.hofstadter@essex.ac.uk](mailto:k.hofstadter@essex.ac.uk) |
| **General/Admin:** Kathryn Gorden | [isugadmin@essex.ac.uk](mailto:isugadmin@essex.ac.uk) |

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| **ASSESSMENT BREAKDOWN** |  |  |  |
| **ASSESSMENT TYPE** | **% Of Overall Module** | **Deadline Week** | **Deadline Date** |
| Digital Portfolio | 50% | 16 | Thursday, 18 January 2024 |
| Assignment (3000 words) | 50% | 30 | Wednesday, 24 April 2024 |

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| **LISTEN AGAIN AVAILABILITY** | Listen Again is available for the lecture, seminar and workshop sessions. |

Module available to:

* Study Abroad students
* Auditing students
* Outside option students

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9. **MODULE OUTLINE**

What does it mean to be a "digital citizen"? As increasing portions of our personal and professional lives are played out online, acquiring the ability to effectively use digital interfaces and think critically about them is an ever more urgent task, as well as a topic of fierce debate. While some allege that digital technologies are a root cause of a "post-fact" era filled with "fake news" that limits our worldview, others see in them the key to unlocking social change and bringing people together in new ways and across geographical boundaries.   
  
The digital revolution is constantly reshaping our world in a myriad of ways: from surveillance laws to social mobilisation; from innovative business models to open access information; from warfare strategy to medical treatment. Not only this, the way we construct our individual identities, build communities, protect human rights, and promote the humanities is increasingly mediated through online platforms, and contingent on the uneven access that global communities have to technology.  
  
This module is designed to provide you with the practical skills required to navigate the increasingly digital world we live in, and to open up an important critical, interdisciplinary space; you will be encouraged to consider its legal, ethical, social, political, creative and economic implications.   
  
Some of the key questions we will be addressing are:

* How are digital technologies transforming society?
* To what extent do digital technologies curb or enhance our rights and freedom?
* What digital skills are needed for the knowledge economy and a democratic society?
* How can we build and use our online identities?
* How might we use digital technologies as creative and engaging forms of communication?

**Autumn term specification:**

The Module Director leads two-hour sessions in weeks 2–7, 9–11. Each session provides training in a specific topic such as digital identities, e-safety (e.g. password management, safe browsing), web design and hosting (with Markdown language and GitHub Pages), multimedia production (e.g. audio, still and moving images, screencasts), project management and research methods (e.g. good keywords, intelligent search strategies, effective note-taking, reference management, writing skills with AI tools, the importance of feedback (i.e. testing) as well as publishing and disseminating recontextualized scripts for a wide reach. Throughout the term, you will build a digital portfolio including (1) a static website, (2) a self- and peer-assessment file and (3) a succinct portfolio overview. This year, you are asked to build a simple website and publish content on it that critically **reflects on** **one specific connection between** **digital identities and existential risks** (e.g., AI safety, climate change, physical disasters, bio- and nuclear weapons). By your deadline, you will need to submit a file on FASER that has a URL to your digital portfolio.

**Spring term specification:**

The Module Director organizes two-hour sessions for weeks 16–20 and 22–25. Each session consists of a one-hour lecture plus a one-hour seminar for discussion. The lectures are given by different experts on a specific topic linked to the module (e.g., digital heritage, social networks, gender inequality, video games and cybercrime). Throughout the term, you will be asked **to choose a research question** from a given list (see below) **and answer it** in written form (i.e., in an essay). By your deadline, you will need to submit your essay using an accessible PDF file on FASER.

While the autumn term focuses on providing you with methods (tools) to enhance your research skills, the spring term focuses on inspiring you with a variety of module related theoretical work (lectures) and opportunities to discuss these works (seminars).

1. **AIMS**

**The aims of this module are:**

* To acquire specific skills in the use of digital tools and online platforms.
* To introduce selected debates surrounding the development and use of digital technologies.
* To gain a critical understanding of the ethical, technical and social dimensions in the development and use of digital technologies.

1. **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**By the end of this module the student should have:**

* A deeper understanding of digital literacies, as well as the confidence and ability to use a broad range of digital technologies.
* The ability to discuss the material covered on the module and to demonstrate this competence through coursework, seminar discussions and the creation of a digital portfolio.
* A good understanding of the topics and debates that are central to the digital world.
* Confidence in using a number of specialised terms and terminology on digital technologies.
* The ability to distinguish elements of continuity and disjuncture in the development of digital technologies.
* An understanding of the impacts of digital technologies on society and human life.

1. **TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS**

**Autumn Term:** One introductory lecture in week 2, and two-hour lab sessions in weeks 3–7 and 9–11.

**Spring Term:** One-hour lecture plus one-hour seminar in weeks 16–20 and 22–25.

Weeks 8 and 23 are Reading Weeks.

1. **READING**

The full reading list is available on Talis.  
  
<https://rl.talis.com/3/essex/lists/C1156A49-571C-FE3A-544C-6396C8B97AD8.html?lang=en-GB&login=1>

1. **ASSESSMENT & SUBMISSION**

**Anonymous marking**

The School operates anonymous marking for the majority of modules. For the spring term assignment, please do not include your name in the title, header/footer or file name of your submission. Use your **Student Registration Number.** Unfortunately, it might not be possible to anonymize the marking of the digital portfolio in the autumn term, as your website might include links to your social media accounts (e.g. LinkedIn, ResearchGate, Twitter).

**Submission of Coursework**

Coursework must be uploaded and submitted to FASER, the University’s Online Coursework Submission system available at <http://faser.essex.ac.uk/>.

The files you submit need to include your **Student** **Registration Number** (the 7-digit number on your student card) **and your module code.**

For the autumn term, you only have to upload one file; the checklist file of your digital portfolio. (Don’t upload your portfolio.)

For the spring term, you have to upload two files; the essay in PDF format including a word count and the Essay Cover Sheet as an additional document. Copies of the cover sheet can be found on Moodle.

*(Examples will be provided and explained in class.)*

**The deadline for online submissions is 12 noon on the date stipulated**.

We strongly recommend that you do this earlier to avoid any last-minute issues. You must ensure that you are familiar with this process well in advance of the deadline. Guidance on how to upload your work is available on the FASER website through the submission system.

When submitting your coursework, please make sure:

1. that your **Student** **Registration Number** (the 7-digit number on your student card), the **module code** and **coursework title** is clearly set out at the top of the first page (NO NAME).
2. that you include a completed **‘digital portfolio checklist’** on your first page (from your Autumn term module).

***(An example of the file to be submitted will be provided on Moodle and explained in class.)***

No extensions will be granted. Students who fail to submit their coursework by the stipulated deadline will receive a mark of zero unless they are able to submit a valid claim for late submission.

**Returning of marks and feedback**

Students should receive their mark and feedback for coursework within 20 working days of the submission deadline. Return dates are listed on FASER.

If you submit your work late, you will not receive your mark and feedback within 20 days of the original deadline.

1. **ASSIGNMENT DETAILS AND QUESTIONS**

**Digital Portfolio (autumn term)**

A template for your digital portfolio will be provided in Week 3.

Your portfolio will be public and hosted in a GitHub repository. (We will set this up together in class.) Your repository will have to contain the following elements:

1. **a website** (worth 80% of your overall mark). A simple website on which you will critically reflect on your chosen connection between **digital identities and existential risks**. It can have one or several web pages. To communicate your research findings, you should consider the use of not only text but also figures (e.g., graphs, photos), embedded audio and audio-video assets (e.g., podcasts, screencasts).

1. **self- and peer-assessment** (worth 10% of your overall mark). This assessment uses a marking rubric to help streamline your progress. Before you submit your work, you will need to evaluate your portfolio and give feedback on one of your classmates' portfolios.
2. **portfolio overview** (worth 10% of your overall mark). This overview has two main parts: (1) a succinct outline of your portfolio and (2) a chronological list of completed tasks (log).

**Assignment (spring term)**

The list of research questions you must choose from for your essay:

* How does social media impact self-representation and identity?
* What is the importance of social networks?
* Are digital technologies a threat to democracy?
* To what extent do hackers represent a threat and/or an opportunity for democracy?
* What is the relationship between open science and the democratisation of e-knowledge?
* How is AI impacting education?
* Why does the digital world need to be gendered?
* To what extent is online surveillance a ‘necessary evil’?
* How can we use digital technologies to protect and promote human rights and justice?
* What are the legal and political aspects of cybercrime?

Other research questions are possible, however will need to be discussed with the Module Director.

1. **GENERAL INFORMATION**

* **Guidance on COVID-19:** [**https://www.essex.ac.uk/covid-19**](https://www.essex.ac.uk/covid-19)
* **Module credits:** You must take 120 credits in a year
* **Module codes explained**: FY = Full Year, AU = Autumn Term, SP = Spring Term
* **Late Submission/Extenuating Circumstances Information:** [**https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/exams-and-coursework/late-submission-of-coursework**](https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/exams-and-coursework/late-submission-of-coursework)
* **Marking Criteria:** can be found on Moodle - Information for Current Students
* **Support relating to disability, health or personal issues:** We would like to encourage you to contact the Student Services Hub, either by email [**askthehub@essex.ac.uk**](mailto:askthehub@essex.ac.uk)or by telephoning 01206 87 4000