

Introduction to Internet Studies (4 ECTs)

NB! Heads up! This file can be accessed by all lecturers and students of this course. Students, don't let yourself be disturbed by some admin-comments. Transparent teaching!

Introduction to Internet Studies (4 ECTs), SVUH.00.141

Syllabus for the 2021/2022 spring semester course

When and where? Mondays from 10.15 until 11.45, usually in Zoom e-learning environment (at least we begin the semester online because of...y'know).

Who? Lecturers: Maria Murumaa-Mengel + Elizabeth Losh, Andra Siibak, Maria Kristiina Prass, Heidi Ann Erbsen and Tayfun Kasapoglu. Course assistant Kadi Raal (all things homework-y and simple organizational matters should be directed to her, raalkadi1@gmail.com). All general questions about the course should be directed to Maria (maria.murumaa@ut.ee), all questions about specific tasks should be directed to the respective lecturer.

What and why? The aim of this course is to introduce students to the theoretical and empirical concepts used in what is sometimes referred to as "internet studies". The course will cover some of the central interdisciplinary problems and phenomena that are connected to information society with the aim of introducing the basic frameworks that are applicable in analysis of contemporary media processes and issues. Defining information society, introducing the field of internet studies and giving a "roadmap" of specific terms and concepts used on this field will help the students in their further interest in specific topics. The course has a special emphasis on media and communication studies, but is heavily influenced by semiotics, economics, sociology, political science, information sciences, education, psychology and legal frameworks.

After completing this course, the student:

- is familiar with more common theories and everyday concepts of information society, both on macro and micro level;
- is familiar with the vocabulary on related topics;
- has the skills to seek additional information related to the information society concepts;
- is able to discuss and critically analyze some of the contemporary issues of the information society.

Course outline (can be subject to changes! Assigned roles in the comments point to who is in charge of the grading of this task):

Date	Lecturer	Topic	What do you have to do, points earned
07.02	Murumaa-Mengel	Overview of the topics and individual or group tasks. Mapping the expectations and discussing the details of this course.	Participation 1p
11.02		Independent work via Moodle	Written analysis of AoIR conference programs, see detailed instructions in Moodle, 3p
14.02	Siibak	Introductory session: what are "internet studies" and information society? Overview of the key concepts and terms.	Participation 1p
21.02	Kasapoglu	Algorithms and AI	Participation 1p
27.02		Independent film watching (or attending MMM's watch party on 26.02 from 13.00-15.00 at Lossi 36-204, if you plan to attend, let me know in advance via Moodle)	Find a way to watch "Coded Bias" documentary on Netflix (or somewhere else). Take notes! Hand in your "dirty/rough notes" in Moodle, 2p
28.02	Murumaa-Mengel	Discussions about current situation	Participation 1p (everybody gets a point, despite fact of participation)
04.03		In groups, TikTok and YouTube cultures.	In groups of 2-3 people: Pick a YT/TT genre, do a quick introduction on that genre, present/introduce/illustrate it on ONE SLIDE here , 4p OR intervene (instructions in class)

			to information disorders, spreading of mis/dis/malinfo on TT and YT, screenshot it. Don't get into flame wars! Keep a cool head and offer rebuttals based on actual sources.
07.03	Murumaa-Mengel	TikTok and YouTube cultures and genres.	Participation 1p (everybody gets a point, despite fact of participation)
11.03		Topical reading: Radicalization, deradicalization in online spaces	Reading assignment: Mehmet F. Bastug, Aziz Douai & Davut Akca (2020) Exploring the "Demand Side" of Online Radicalization: Evidence from the Canadian Context, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 43:7, 616-63, task in Moodle, 2p
14.03	Prass	Radicalization, deradicalization in online spaces	Participation 1p (everybody gets a point, despite fact of participation)
18.03		Topical reading: digital vigilantism	Reading assignment: Loveluck, B. (2019). The many shades of digital vigilantism. A typology of online self-justice. Global Crime, 1-29, task in Moodle, 2p
21.03	Murumaa-Mengel	Online-activism and resistance. Shaming and "cancelling" people and organizations.	Participation 1p, (everybody gets a point, despite fact of participation)
28.03	Murumaa-Mengel	Information disorders and info wars.	Participation 1p, (everybody gets a point, despite fact of participation)
01.04		Topical viewing: Self-presentation in online settings.	Assigned viewing: "Cultures of Internet Celebrity on Youtube – Crystal Abidin (keynote).", task in Moodle, 2p
04.04	Murumaa-Mengel	Self-presentation in online settings. Genres of self presentation. Curated, commodified and datafied self.	Participation 1p, from here on <u>actual</u> participation points again
08.04		Fans, followers, anti-fans	Prep-assignment: instructions in Moodle, 3p

11.04	Murumaa-Mengel	Users as audiences. Producers, prosumers, fans and followers, anti-fans and haters.	Participation 1p
15.04		Gaming, Culture, Gender	Choose one: 1. Assigned reading + viewing (materials in Moodle). Prepare for class by reading assigned literature and viewing the video material. Based on these materials: 1. compile a thorough summary. 2. Ask good questions, as with other texts. 6p 2. Walk a mile...task. Play minimum of 6 hours as someone explicitly from the opposite gender. Reflect. Thorough instructions available in Moodle. 6p
18.04	Murumaa-Mengel	Gaming Culture, Gender in Online Settings.	Participation 1p
25.04	Erbsen	Education and social media	Participation 1p
02.05	Murumaa-Mengel	Future jobs, non-human actors in information society	Participation 1p
09.05	Losh	GUEST - Elizabeth Losh! Do some background search on her, see what she has worked on :)	Participation 1p
15.05		Longer task - social media disconnection exercise, can be carried out earlier. Around this time slot is the absolute latest you can do this	Social Media Disconnection Diary. 5-day break from social media and personal diary about this experience. Study Diary tool in Moodle, 20p
16.05	Murumaa-Mengel	Disconnection from information society. The Slow Movement vs acceleration of social time.	Participation 1p
20.05		Group assignment approaching: final video	Group assignment: In self-selected groups of 2-4 people prepare a well-executed video presentation. Make a max 5 minute YouTube video (or a series of TikToks) about a specific topic that sparked your interest in this course. 20p
23.05	Murumaa-	Presentations, course wrap-up	Participation 1p

	Mengel		
13.06	Murumaa-Mengel	VOLUNTARY EXTRA SEMINAR: Intimacy, sex and porn in online settings.	

In addition to participation and smaller prep-work points, there are two “bigger” tasks and a 5p bonus task:

1. **Social media disconnection diary.** Max 20 points. Deadline 15.05.2022. Estimated time for writing task: 10-15 hours. Individual assignment. Stop using social media (mainly focusing on the use of SNS) for five consecutive days. For real. Keep a diary. You can use your devices for the truly unavoidable but steer clear of Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Tumblr, Tinder, even YouTube and blogs, etc. Keep a diary of your “trials and tribulations”. The diary is accessible only to you and the lecturers of that course (Õpipäevik tool in Moodle). If you want to go totally off-the-grid, we accept this assignment to be handed in on paper, written by hand. We encourage you to interpret this exercise freely, you do not have to follow the instructions on the dot. One suggested structure you can (but do not have to!!!) follow - for each day (you can make several entries per day) try to give:
 - A general description of your day and in which are your daily rituals and routines (you had to make adjustments to due to the abstinence of social media)
 - What functions does social media carry for you? Has something replaced the role of social media?
 - What were the positive sides of this day? What did you win/gain?
 - What were the negative aspects of this day? What did you miss?
 - How did the absence of social media make you feel at different points?
 - How did this day and this experiment influence your social/informational/private/professional relationships and needs?
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2. **Final group assignment:** Max 20 points. Deadline 20.05.2022. Group assignment. Estimated time for that task: 10-15 hours. In self-selected groups of 2-4 people put together a well-executed video presentation. Make a max 5 minute YouTube video (or a series of TikToks) about a specific topic that sparked your interest in this course. Read

a bit more about the topic and YT/TT genres, teach us some new interesting things with this material. Here's the catch - the video(s) has to make use and follow the structure and storytelling techniques of specific genres of YouTube/TikTok. Make AV content that you would be proud to show outside the class as well. This takes planning and time for recording and editing. The final video should be of good quality (keep audio in mind as well) and recognizable by genre, so do the background-research (read: watch a looooot of YT videos/TikToks). Post a separate thread in Moodle and be sure that all the members of your group write as a reply, what was their role in this work. We can grade you that way.

3. To earn **bonus points** (5p each, one go per person)! With youthful platforms and youth culture, there tends to be a general (older generation's) approach that it's just frivolous tomfoolery, pointless horseplay. Have you heard something like this: "What are you kids doing on that Tok Tok there? Damn, get a job! Read a book instead of clowning around there!" or "You don't even know what's going on in the world! Dancing around on your RedTubes and whatnots!" Here, you have a chance to prove these caricaturistic stereotypical old geezers wrong! TikTok is full of awesome content, find it! Every week we have a specific topic planned, find TikTok content that is smart, well-executed and allows us to learn something new about the world. Fill out the wiki in Moodle by writing your name in between the date and the topic. One name per topic!

By the end of the course you will be graded (A, B, C, D, E, F). The person from the class who has managed to collect the most points will set a standard for the whole course - their points will be taken as the max needed to get an A. Course design foresees that max is 80 points, without the bonus points (thus 80-75p A; 74-70p B; 69-65 C; 64-60 D; 59-55 E; 54-...p F).

All the home assignments need to be completed by 31st of May, the absolute latest. If your work is late, you will unfortunately lose points and will not get feedback.

6 ECTs = 156 hours of work, rough estimations of points and planned designated time usage for students:

Task	Points	Estimated time
Synchronous participation. Actively take part of the lectures and seminars (audio+video+text).	16x1p	32h
Reading/viewing materials and asking questions about them (3 tasks)	3x2p	2-3h per task
Analysis of AoIR conference topics	3p	3-4h
“Coded Bias” viewing + rough notes	2p	3h
YT/TT genres: one-slide-presentation	4p	4-5h
Read+write+summarize OR walk-a-mile task	6p	7-8h
Fan-task	3p	3h
Social media disconnection task	20p	10-15h
Final video	20p	10-15h
Reading time and summaries of books	20p	52h
Total max	100p	146h + additional time