

Chaire Jacques Leclercq

UCL, Louvain-la-Neuve

Digital Technology & Society

Dr. Barbara Barbosa Neves

2019

This course explores how digital technology informs everyday life, but also how society informs the design, development, and use of digital technologies. Using key concepts, theories, and methods from the Sociology of Technology field, we will examine the relationship between Information & Communication technologies (ICTs) and social dynamics. Particular attention will be given to how digital technologies present both social possibilities (e.g., broader access to information and services, social connectedness, etc.) and challenges (e.g., privacy concerns, digital divide, etc.). Students will study these tensions through the analysis of sociological studies, news, and hands-on digital engagement.

Students will have the option to be assessed either in French or English. Les étudiant·e·s pourront être évalué·e·s en français ou en anglais, selon leur préférence.

Day 1, March 11, 2019

Topics:

- I. What is technology?
- II. Do machines make history?

Readings:

Marcuse, H. (1941). Some social implications of modern technology. *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, 9(3), 414-439.

Extra (not required):

Wyatt, S. (2008). Technological determinism is dead; long live technological determinism. In E. Hackett et al. (Eds.), *The handbook of science and technology studies* (pp. 165-180). Cambridge: MIT Press.

Heilbroner, R. L. (1967). Do machines make history?. *Technology and culture*, 8(3), 335-345.

Day 2, March 12, 2019

Topics:

I. How do we theorize people + technology? Introduction to 'Social Shaping of Technology' theories.

Readings:

Mauthner, N. S., & Kazimierczak, K. A. (2018). Theoretical perspectives on technology and society: implications for understanding the relationship between ICTs and family life. In Neves, B. B. & Casimiro, C. *Connecting Families?: Information & Communication Technologies, generations, and the life course*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Extra (not required):

Pinch, T. J., & Bijker, W. E. (1984). The social construction of facts and artefacts: Or how the sociology of science and the sociology of technology might benefit each other. *Social Studies of Science*, 399-441.

Mead, G. & Neves, B. B. (2018). Recursive approaches to technology adoption, families, and the life course: actor network theory and strong structuration theory. In Neves and Casimiro, *Connecting Families? Information & Communication Technologies, Generations, and the Life Course*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Day 3, March 13, 2019

Topics:

I. To selfie or not to selfie? Self-presentation and identity

II. Does the Internet make us social, unsocial, or both?

Readings:

Dalessandro, C. (2018). Internet Intimacy: Authenticity and Longing in the Relationships of Millennial Young Adults. *Sociological Perspectives*, 0731121417753381.

Extra (not required):

Baldassar, L., Nedelcu, M., Merla, L., & Wilding, R. (2016). ICT-based co-presence in transnational families and communities: challenging the premise of face-to-face proximity in sustaining relationships. *Global Networks*, 16(2), 133-144.

Rainie, L., & Wellman, B. (2012). 'Networked Relationships' In *Networked: The new social operating system*. Boston: MIT Press.

Day 4, March 14, 2019

Topics:

The 'dark' side: digital inequalities, privacy, surveillance (and artificial intelligence)

Readings:

Agosto, D. E., & Abbas, J. (2017). "Don't be dumb—that's the rule I try to live by": A closer look at older teens' online privacy and safety attitudes. *New Media & Society*, 19(3), 347-365.

Extra (not required):

Scheerder, A., van Deursen, A., & van Dijk, J. (2017). Determinants of Internet skills, uses and outcomes. A systematic review of the second-and third-level digital divide. *Telematics and informatics*. OnlineFirst.

Neves, B. B., Waycott, J., & Malta, S. (2018). Old and afraid of new communication technologies? Reconceptualising and contesting the 'age-based digital divide'. *Journal of Sociology*, 1440783318766119.

Bauman, Z., Bigo, D., Esteves, P., Guild, E., Jabri, V., Lyon, D., & Walker, R. B. (2014). After Snowden: Rethinking the impact of surveillance. *International Political sociology*, 8(2), 121-144.

Day 5, March 15, 2019

Topics:

I. Digital Methods: from Nethnographies to Big Data

II. I made an app! Applied Sociology of Technology

Readings:

Snee, H., Hine, C., Morey, Y., Roberts, S., & Watson, H. (2016). 'Digital methods as mainstream methodology: Conclusions' In *Digital Methods for Social Science* (pp. 222-230). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Extra (not required):

Neves, B. B., Franz, R., Judges, R., Beermann, C., & Baecker, R. (2017). Can Digital Technology Enhance Social Connectedness Among Older Adults? A Feasibility Study. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 0733464817741369.

Neves, B. B., Franz, R. L., Munteanu, C., & Baecker, R. (2018). Adoption and feasibility of a communication app to enhance social connectedness amongst frail institutionalized oldest old: an embedded case study. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21(11), 1681-1699.