

Political Science 3390 – The Politics of AI

Course Title:	The Politics of AI
Day:	Thursdays
Instructor:	Dan Bousfield
Office Hours:	Wednesday 11:00am-1:00pm via zoom - link in Brightspace
Email:	dbousfie@uwo.ca
Telephone:	289-620-6665 text only
Lectures	See your timetable

Prerequisite(s):

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Introduction:

This course examines the intersection of technology with political dynamics, focusing on critical areas such as ethics in AI, algorithmic bias, data manipulation, online activism, big data, gender, race and identity online, digital security, environmental tech, labor in the digital economy, genetics and digital health, privacy vs. surveillance, hybrid warfare, and digital diplomacy. It seeks to understand how these technological aspects impact policy, democracy, and societal norms. Through this lens, the course offers insights into the evolving role of AI in shaping public policy, ethical considerations, and regulatory responses.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the relevant actors involved in the development, governance, and regulation of key political technologies.
2. Evaluate significant events or issues related to the impact of technology on politics.
3. Gain historical context on technological innovations and their subsequent regulation.
4. Analyze the impact of technology on public policy, focusing on ethical considerations and regulatory responses to digital challenges.
5. Critically evaluate the role of AI tools, such as large language models (LLMs), in academic and professional contexts.
6. Develop and justify frameworks for the ethical and effective integration of LLMs in writing and research.
7. Design and apply self-assessment rubrics to academic work, ensuring accountability and alignment between planning and execution.
8. Engage with academic literature to inform decisions about the use and assessment of AI tools in research and writing.

Course Materials

All readings are available on-line, on the university online library reserve, or through the library search.

AI tools <https://ai.uwo.ca/>

Methods of Evaluation

Option 1	Option 2
Weekly Participation 25%	Weekly Participation 25%
Term Assignment 25% - Primarily due by the end of week 7. Sign up by the end of week 3 (requires documentation for academic consideration).	Term Assignment 25% - Primarily due by the end of week 7. Sign up by the end of week 3 (requires documentation for academic consideration).
Essay or Policy Analysis 35% - Due at the end of Week 10 (Nov 26, 2025, 11:59 PM).	Summative Assignment 10% – Due at the end of Week 12 (December 10, 2025, 11:59 PM). Minimum 2500 words required.
Exam 15% - Online or in-person exam during exam period	Exam 40% – In person examination only

For all written work in this course:

This course requires a minimum of 2500 words of academic prose to meet university requirements for 3000-level half courses.

Paragraph structure

Basic paragraph structure is an important part of writing. Failure to use basic paragraph structure will result in repetitive, unstructured, illogical arguments. Paragraphs help to structure our thought, our ability to make claims and provide a framework for writing. The topic sentence and concluding sentence of each paragraph should be in your own voice (no direct references, quotations or citations). A basic paragraph structure should follow this template:

- Topic/introduction, in one or two sentences and has an argumentative sentence that avoids description, and has a clear political thesis
- Major point with factual evidence, one or two sentences (one sentence with **relevant** academic citation and one sentence explaining the relevance in your own words, demonstrating individual voice and reflection)
- Major point with factual evidence, one or two sentences (one sentence with **relevant** academic citation and one sentence explaining the relevance in your own words, demonstrating individual voice and reflection)
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- Summarizing sentence of overall significance to the overarching thesis of the paper and
- Concluding sentence which restates topic sentence and bridges to next paragraph.

Failure to use basic paragraph structure throughout your work will result in the inability to receive full marks.

These paragraph formatting requirements are not arbitrary. There is a specific reason that I want you to use peer-reviewed academic sources, a MINIMUM of THREE DIFFERENT ACADEMIC SOURCES per paragraph. WHY?

- First, the difference between opinion and argument is the provision of evidence.
- Second, for an academic argument to have veracity, it needs to have an arm's length perspective, it needs to draw on peer-reviewed sources because individual interpretation is prone to error.
- Next, if we have more than one academic source per paragraph if one of those sources is weak or questionable the other two will supplement it.
- Moreover, multiple sources prevent summary or representation of someone else's ideas as your own, if you must interpret multiple data sources.
- Finally, academic sources have explanatory frameworks that link them to underlying theoretical concepts and ideas. News sources, data points, and journalism provide evidence without analysis, academic work provides analysis with evidence. If you don't have that consistently throughout your writing, you are going to run into problems of the veracity of your claims because they lack substantiation.

If any of your sentences, paragraphs, or quotations lack a specific foundation, you will not receive credit for those submissions.

Lack of data is a lack of foundation. In the era of LLMs, inaccurate citations will be treated as no citation at all. LLMs routinely summarize sources without accessing the underlying data. **Failure to directly quote sources with quotation marks followed by an explanation in your own words will constitute a lack of sufficient citation. Paraphrasing is no longer sufficient justification for including a citation;** you must use specific and precise language, including nouns (specific people, places, and things), as generalized summaries of sources are often hallucinated, inaccurate, and incomplete when suggested by LLMs.

Weasel words—vague or evasive language that obscures meaning—undermine thesis-driven political arguments by avoiding clear claims and weakening the connection between evidence and position. As Theodore Roosevelt warned in 1916, they drain content from statements like a weasel empties an egg: the form remains, but the substance is gone. In political science, precision matters. Ambiguity dilutes argument.

Why are weasel words proliferating?

- LLMs avoid strong claims to minimize liability, leading to weasel words.
- They replicate academic tone through pattern-matching, not reasoning, producing vague phrasing.
- They favor generalizations to ensure broad applicability and avoid exclusion.
- They use soft language to evade controversy or implied stance.
- Their training data overrepresents cautious, formulaic academic prose.
- They default to description over argument due to lack of critical capacity.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

This policy does not apply to requests for Academic Consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person.

The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All Academic Consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

Term Assignment

When a student mistakenly submits their one allowed Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** for the assessments listed above or those in the **Coursework with Assessment Flexibility** section below, the request cannot be recalled and reapplied. This privilege is forfeited.

Coursework with Assessment Flexibility

By policy, instructors may deny Academic Consideration requests for the following assessments with built-in flexibility.

Flexible Completion assignments:

Weekly participation. This course has 12 weekly participation assignments, and the 10 quizzes with the highest marks are counted towards your final grade. Should extenuating circumstances arise, students do not need to request Academic Consideration for the first 2 missed weekly participations. Academic consideration requests will be denied for the first 2 missed weekly participation assignments.

Religious Accommodation

When conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request an accommodation for their absence in writing to the course instructor and/or the Academic Advising office of their Faculty of Registration. This notice should be made as early as possible but not later than two weeks prior to the writing or the examination (or one week prior to the writing of the test).

Please visit the Diversity Calendars posted on our university's EDID website for the recognized religious holidays: <https://www.edi.uwo.ca>

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Academic Policies- The website for Registrar Services is <https://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>.

In accordance with policy, https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Weekly Participation – (Weekly submissions)

Weekly Assignments – Base submission is pass/fail 70% (17.5 of 25)

Students **must** complete a minimum of **two engagement options weekly** (Monday 12:01 am - Sunday 11:59 pm) to fulfill participation requirements. Quizzes can be completed each week for one participation mark. The remaining forms of participation can only be done twice each during the entire course (i.e. you can only do 2 tiktoks per semester). You can collaborate with peers on submissions, but they must be submitted individually. You must adopt 5 different forms of participation throughout the course to build your portfolio and prevent rote production of participation. A total of 10 weeks of participation is required, allowing students to skip 2 weeks (e.g., weeks 1 and 12). Completing 10 weeks fulfills the full 70%. If you are submitting the same assignment for a second time, make sure to address 'What did I do differently this week?'

Weekly Engagement Options (a minimum of two options required per week):

1. Brightspace Lesson Quiz Completion: Complete the 2 lesson quizzes in the 'Tests & Quizzes' section. These quizzes are pass/fail; only completion is counted, not quiz score. Each quiz counts for one participation mark. In class exercises will also count for one participation mark.

2. Written Responses (250 words per lesson): A reflective analysis engaging with lesson ideas and concepts from lectures, readings, or both. This is not a summary but a critical engagement that links material to current international issues. Proper essay paragraph structure and in-text citations are required where applicable. You must reference the course readings at least three times per week to get maximum grades. Submissions not meeting these standards are ineligible for full credit. Each written response counts for one participation mark. See detailed criteria below.
3. Video Responses: A short (TikTok-style) video exploring a key academic issue from each lesson's content, suitable for a general audience. Videos must reference at least one academic, peer-reviewed source from our reading list and can be uploaded to Brightspace each week (or linked if hosted elsewhere). Public posting is not required. Each video counts for one participation mark.
4. Other forms of participation from this list: <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/Assessment-AI-Strategies> excluding: True/False Questions, Quiz, Exams and Tests, Fill-in-the-Blank Questions, Close Reading with Questions, Diagram or Image-Based Questions, Summary. If you have any questions please contact the instructor about the viability of your participation.

Sample weekly participation submission:

Submit

Text submission

Text Submission

Paragraph B I U A Text alignment: Left, Center, Right, Justify. List: Bulleted, Numbered. Indent: 0.5, 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0. Font size: 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 24, 36, 48, 72, 96, 144, 192, 288, 384, 512, 768, 1024, 1280, 1536, 2048, 3072, 4096, 5120, 6144, 7168, 8192, 9216, 10240, 11264, 12288, 13312, 14336, 15360, 16384, 17408, 18432, 19456, 20480, 21504, 22528, 23552, 24576, 25600, 26624, 27648, 28672, 29696, 30720, 31744, 32768, 33792, 34816, 35840, 36864, 37888, 38912, 39936, 40960, 41984, 43008, 44032, 45056, 46080, 47104, 48128, 49152, 50176, 51200, 52224, 53248, 54272, 55296, 56320, 57344, 58368, 59392, 60416, 61440, 62464, 63488, 64512, 65536, 66560, 67584, 68608, 69632, 70656, 71680, 72704, 73728, 74752, 75776, 76800, 77824, 78848, 79872, 80896, 81920, 82944, 83968, 84992, 86016, 87040, 88064, 89088, 90112, 91136, 92160, 93184, 94208, 95232, 96256, 97280, 98304, 99328, 100352, 101376, 102400, 103424, 104448, 105472, 106496, 107520, 108544, 109568, 110592, 111616, 112640, 113664, 114688, 115712, 116736, 117760, 118784, 119808, 120832, 121856, 122880, 123904, 124928, 125952, 126976, 128000, 129024, 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classes considered to earn the full 5% bonus. You can check your participation through the link in Brightspace weekly. You cannot receive more than 100% on the final exam.

Term Assignment: (requires documentation for an academic consideration)

Option 1 – Paired Debate

Students must sign up on the link in OWL by the end of week 3 for the debate or essay proposal or they forfeit their grade.

In teams of two ONLY, students should pick a specific issue to the politics of AI related to their area of interest in Week one. The debate should outline the key issues from two opposing sides and points of contention and present each side coherently and convincingly to the class.

The debate should likely be framed in ethical or regulatory responses to contemporary issues in the politics of AI. The responses should try to take two different sides. MAXIMUM 5 MINUTES.

The presentation should highlight:

1. Key actors involved
2. Relevant context or history related to the issue
3. Claims and evidence put forward on both side
4. Likely or actual outcome of the issue and the trajectory of the relations moving forward

Students will need to upload their presentation in an accessible and clear format (such as a series of tiktoks back and forth, youtube, etc) for each week they sign up. Students must present on the week they sign up or else they forfeit their grade. Students are encouraged to think creatively about how they will present the debate and presentations may take alternative formats as long as they accomplish the requirements outlined above. In order to receive an individual mark, students must upload a short (200 word) summary of their role in the debate preparation and execution, assessing their groups' strengths and weaknesses in OWL under 'Assignments'. All written work must use proper essay paragraph structure and conform to the 'criteria for the evaluation of written assignments' below or it cannot achieve full grades.

Option 2 - Media Assessment

Due at the end of Week 7. This assignment will critically engage with a movie or documentary that deals with AI, technology and politics. A list of acceptable material is available on the course webpage, and all media must have sufficient levels of academic-based argumentation from our class to warrant its use. All media assessments must have prior approval of the instructor and must be signed up on the course website at least 2 weeks before it is handed in. The media assessment must critically engage with the content of the movie for its use in our understand of the course material, as well as base arguments in academic research and debates. You should assess the media for its arguments about technology, and the viability of the arguments given the academic debates on the issue. The assignment should be a minimum of 1000 words, in proper essay format (with title page and bibliography) and have a minimum of 4 academic sources, drawing primarily from course readings. All written work must use proper essay paragraph structure and conform to the 'criteria for the evaluation of written assignments' in the course syllabus or it cannot achieve full grades.

Option 3: LLM assignment

Proposal for Final Paper Format and Rubric Development

Students will research and propose the format for their final essay or policy analysis on AI regulation or politics, with a focus on the acceptable integration of large language models (LLMs). The proposal must include a detailed rubric for assessing the final paper and an explanation of how it will be applied.

Required Proposal Components:

1. Acceptable Use of LLMs:

- Define the role of LLMs in the writing process, specifying which aspects (e.g., research, drafting, editing) may involve AI-generated content.
- Determine how much "human in the loop" involvement is required and justify this balance using at least three course readings.
- Address ethical considerations, including issues like originality, academic integrity, and critical thinking.

2. Assessment Rubric:

- Create a clear and detailed rubric for evaluating the final essay, including measurable categories such as originality, critical engagement with course readings, clarity and coherence of argument, transparency in LLM usage, and adherence to ethical guidelines.
- Define weightings for each category (e.g., originality 30%, critical engagement 25%, transparency 20%, etc.).
- Include specific descriptors for performance levels (e.g., excellent, satisfactory, needs improvement), and what would be necessary for each grading criteria.

3. Justification and Deployment:

- Explain how the rubric will be applied to assess the final paper and why it is an effective tool for measuring academic performance in the context of LLM integration.
- Justify the rubric's design with evidence from at least three course readings.
- The proposal should be 1000-1250 words, written in essay format, with proper citations and a bibliography. **Due at the end of Week 7.**

Option 4: Community Engaged Learning

A few students will have the option of participating in a Community Engaged Learning (CEL) opportunity with an offsite organization involved in politics of AI issues. Students must submit an application in-class for the opportunity to participate and will be graded on their completion of the online-check in with the student success center, their successful completion of their placement and a short (750 word) reflective summary that links their work with the CEL to class content. The reflection is just about how you felt about it in the beginning, middle and end and how your expectations changed over time. I am looking for reflection, if you can link to course themes that would be great, but I am really assessing reflection in general. It shouldn't be too long - I feel the CEL placement is the bulk of the work, it is really just an expanded version of the logs with some reflection on what happened, how your expectations changed and what you would say to someone who wanted to do it next year (i.e. 4-5 double spaced pages). All written work must use proper essay paragraph structure and conform to the 'criteria for the evaluation of written assignments' below or it cannot achieve full grades.

Option 5: not encouraged - Essay Proposal

Students must sign up for the essay proposal by the end of Week 3 on the link in Brightspace or they forfeit their grade.

Students will produce a 1000–1250-word description, excluding references (250 words per page), of the area of interest for their study, due by the end of Week 7. The assignment should highlight the area of interest of your research; the relevant ethical, social, political, or economic implications of AI; the analytical framework or method that you will analyze as most fruitful; as well as a list of potential sources that are directly relevant to your area of interest (potential issues, gaps, or problems with this list can be addressed in the assignment). The assignment must be in proper formal essay format (no bullet points, short form, or colloquial language), should use subheadings to identify key issues, use proper citation, and should NOT INCLUDE ANY FORM OF ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY. Dictionaries, encyclopedias, and Wikipedia should not be used, and use of web material is subject to instructor's prior approval.

All written work must use proper essay paragraph structure and conform to the 'criteria for the evaluation of written assignments' below or it cannot achieve full grades. A basic structure for the assignment would be:

1. Title that clearly answers the question for your topic. List of approved topics is available in Brightspace.
2. The assignment should highlight the area of interest of your research; the relevant ethical, social, political, or economic implications of AI; and how your essay will answer the assigned question from the approved essay topic list.
3. A clear and explicit explanatory response to the question based on your topic (i.e., your thesis). You must explain the implications of AI governance, regulation, or its societal impacts in the context of your topic. Pre-approved questions are here; they must be answered to complete the assignment.
4. Three key distinct arguments with evidence in support of the thesis. You must follow the paragraph structure and citation format in the course outline. The essay topics should deal with some aspect of AI governance, a specific case study (either historical or ongoing), and a clear perspective in the essay on why the topic matters given class discussion.
5. The paper MUST reference at least three of the specific theoretical frameworks, governance models, or ethical considerations discussed throughout the course. Failure to cite a minimum of three course-related sources will result in a failure to achieve full grades. Substantive engagement with the course materials is also required; a failure to integrate the course readings will limit your ability to get full grades.
6. A complete list of all sources used in the paper (i.e., your bibliography) as well as accurately and properly cited academic material throughout. This may include non-academic sources, but there must be a minimum of 4 academic, peer-reviewed sources (and they should cover at least three different themes in your work), with an emphasis on course material.
7. All written work must use proper essay paragraph structure and conform to the 'criteria for the evaluation of written assignments' below or it cannot achieve full grades.

Essay, Policy Analysis OR LLM assignment (part 2) (If Chosen)

35% of Final Grade – Major Essay or Policy Analysis Due in OWL at the end of **Week 10**. The instructor may require that 10% of randomly selected students will have to meet to discuss their paper after completion to ensure there has been no improper LLM use.

Option One: Traditional Essay or Policy Analysis

The final draft of the paper should be 8 pages (2000 words) in length (excluding the bibliography) and must be presented in proper scholarly format. Students will write a major research paper (based primarily on academic sources) on a topic of their choice, to be arrived at in consultation with the instructor. Essay topics should be chosen by Week 6. The essay will choose a pre-approved topic and explicitly address an ethical, social, or regulatory challenge related to AI using a specific theoretical framework or approach discussed in the course. The assignment must be in proper formal essay format (no bullet points, short form, or colloquial language; can use subheadings to identify sections; use proper citation; and should NOT INCLUDE ANY FORM OF ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY). Dictionaries, encyclopedias, and Wikipedia should not be used, and use of web material is subject to the instructor's prior approval. A basic structure for the essay will include:

- **Title, topic, and thesis question or area of interest for potential research.** Preapproved topics and approaches are here.
- **A framework for analysis related to the ethical, social, or regulatory challenge.** The framework will provide the explanatory foundation of the thesis.
- **Three key distinct arguments with evidence in support of the thesis.** Follow the paragraph structure in the course outline. The data should primarily come from course readings, the pre-approved suggested readings, and the suggested texts. Students must engage with at least four course texts to complete the assignment, and the majority of academic sources (50% + 1) should come from the required and optional readings in the course outline.
- **A conclusion that mirrors your title, topic, and thesis question.** Rewrite your introduction after you have written your conclusion. Your conclusion should provide the clear foundation that you have established throughout the essay to demonstrate the validity of your thesis. Therefore, your thesis and conclusion should match one another. Failure to have consistent argumentation will result in the inability to achieve full grades.
- **Properly cited research.** In-text citation is preferred (author-date system, as outlined below in 'guidelines for success in class'). There should be no proxy URLs (<https://www.lib.uwo.ca/>), no search URLs (<http://search.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/>), or Dropbox URLs (<https://www.dropbox.com/>). Citations need to be consistently formatted, readily available, in English, with precise page numbers (no

inclusion of p.23-44 or consistent citation across pages, i.e., p.118-119). Lack of data is a lack of foundation. In the era of LLMs, inaccurate citations will be treated as no citation at all. LLMs routinely summarize sources without accessing the underlying data. Failure to directly quote sources with quotation marks followed by an explanation in your own words will constitute a lack of sufficient citation. Paraphrasing is no longer sufficient justification for including a citation; you must use specific and precise language, including nouns (specific people, places, and things), as generalized summaries of sources are often hallucinated, inaccurate, and incomplete when suggested by LLMs.

- **A title page** with your name, a title for your paper that reflects the thesis and topic of your paper, the date of submission, and the course number on it. If you cannot clearly and simply identify the title and topic of your paper, it is often an indicator of a lack of focus.
- Papers submitted before the deadline can revise and resubmit the assignment. For details on revision and resubmission, see the 'revise and resubmit' tab in Brightspace.
- The Department's rules regarding plagiarism and the submission of similar essays to two or more different instructors are appended to this course outline and should be noted. (See 'Criteria for Evaluation of Written Assignments' below). Students must submit their papers through OWL, and all papers may be processed by Turnitin. Papers submitted after deadlines (including excused late papers) will be marked, but comments will not be provided.

Option Two: AI Policy Analysis or Essay and Rubric Implementation

(Available only to students who completed the LLM Term Proposal Assignment)

Students will write a full policy analysis or essay on a topic related to AI regulation or politics, adhering strictly to the format, LLM usage guidelines, and assessment rubric outlined in their proposal.

Requirements:

- **Adherence to Proposed Format:** Students must follow the LLM integration process specified in their proposal and document its usage (e.g., annotated drafts, reflective notes, or appendices demonstrating AI input and human intervention).
- **Topic Scope:** Engage critically with a policy or regulatory issue related to AI, incorporating at least six academic sources, including three from course readings.
- **Rubric Implementation:**
 - Submit the final paper with the rubric from the proposal applied as a self-assessment.
 - Include a reflective commentary (500-750 words) explaining how the essay meets the rubric criteria and how LLM integration enhanced or constrained the writing process.
 - The instructor will use the same rubric for grading, ensuring consistency.
- **Length:** Approximately 2000 words, excluding the reflective commentary and appendices.
- **Late Penalty:** A penalty of 5% per day (to a maximum of 5 days) will apply to late submissions unless an extension is arranged in advance. Late submissions (even excused) may not receive detailed feedback.

Final paper requirements

The final draft of the paper should be 8 pages (2000 words) in length (excluding the bibliography) and must be presented in proper scholarly format. See the *Criteria for Evaluation of Written Assignments* and the *Essay Evaluation Checklist* for a detailed description of the essay requirements. All written work must use proper essay paragraph structure and conform to the 'criteria for the evaluation of written assignments' below or it cannot achieve full grades.

The Department's rules regarding plagiarism and the submission of similar essays to two or more different instructors are appended to this course outline and should be noted. (See 'Criteria for Evaluation of Written Assignments' below). Students must submit their papers through OWL and all papers may be processed by turnitin. Papers submitted after deadlines (including excused late papers) will be marked, but comments will not be provided.

Summative Assignment 10% (if chosen)

Due at the end of Week 11. Minimum 2500 words required. The summative assignment is only available to students who have completed a minimum of 2000 words of weekly responses throughout the course. If chosen, students must also write the 40% in person final exam. The summative assessment follows the guidelines of the weekly participation final calculation. It must include every weekly participation submission as well as a short 250-500 word reflective summary demonstrating clear engagement with course materials throughout the course as well as reflection and development of critical thinking throughout the course. It is not available to students who complete less than 2000 words of written work in their weekly participation.

Final Exam

15 or 40 % of final course grade. To be scheduled during the exam period.

The final exam will be cumulative (i.e., will be based on the material covered in lectures, assigned readings, and discussions throughout the whole of the course). The exam may include both a short answer/identification component and questions requiring longer, essay-style responses. A choice of answers and an exam preparation guide may be given. The examination requires a breadth of use of the course readings, examination answers that reference one or two readings fail to demonstrate breadth and cannot achieve full marks regardless of any other criteria. All written work must use proper essay paragraph structure and conform to the 'criteria for the evaluation of written assignments' below or it cannot achieve full grades.

Zoom Etiquette

1. Please pay attention to video, microphone and screensharing settings. Keep chat rooms and images appropriate for an academic setting. Any inappropriate actions, imagery, discussion or chat messages may result in your removal from the meeting at my discretion. Audio recordings may be available as an alternative to synchronous discussion.
2. Please test all WIFI, video and audio before the meetings. Zoom buttons for raising your hand, responding yes and no, asking host to adjust speed, requesting a break and more.
3. Please be conscious of your speaking time and that of others, if you are continuing in a manner that is not fair to your peers, I reserve the right to intervene and put us back on a more focused discussion.

Recording synchronous content (office hours or other meetings)

Any remote learning sessions for this course **may** be recorded. The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings may be used for educational purposes related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals participating in the course for their private or group study purposes. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings. Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor.

Meeting the Requirements of the Assignment:

All written work must be submitted on time, must be of the appropriate length, must use the required number and type of resources, and, most importantly, must address the issues or questions posed in the assignment. All work must have sufficient academic content and sources related to our course or else it cannot receive full marks.

Non-medical and medical accommodation

Non-medical absences from class, late essays or assignments, will be subject to a 10% penalty per day (weekends included). All assignments must be completed to receive course credit. Further information is found in the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>).

Accommodation for medical illness of work worth less than 10% of the total course grade will require medical documentation. If documentation is required for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, then such documentation must be submitted directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office and not to the instructor. Only the Dean's office can determine if accommodation is warranted.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

"All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

Guidelines for Success in Class

Since there seldom are definitive answers to the questions we will be asking about the politics of AI, and much of what you will learn in this course will be enhanced by the ideas and perspectives of your

colleagues. But for this to work, everyone must participate fully and constructively. Be mindful of the following points, and you will be successful:

- o Come to all classes having read the assigned readings for that week and prepared to participate in discussion. It is useful to remember that some week's readings may be more comfortable relevant to your research interests than others and focusing on readings that are most salient to your interests will ensure maximum usefulness in the course.
- o Participate in discussions, but do not over-participate. Everyone must be given an opportunity to take part in discussions. Constructive participation involves the raising of *relevant* points and ideas. Online participation will be considered as well in participation marks.
- o Demonstrate respect for the ideas presented by others at all times. This is essential to open discussion and the free exchange of ideas. This does not mean that you must agree with others. Informal debate will teach you even more about your own position while simultaneously exposing you to different viewpoints. Make use of such opportunities, but no disrespectful behavior will be tolerated.

Criteria for the evaluation of written assignments

Paragraph structure

Basic paragraph structure is an important part of writing. Failure to use basic paragraph structure will result in repetitive, unstructured, illogical arguments. Paragraphs help to structure our thought, our ability to make claims and provide a framework for writing. The topic sentence and concluding sentence of a paragraph should be in your own voice (no direct references). A basic paragraph structure should follow this template:

Topic sentence one or two lines

Major point with evidence one or two lines

Major point with evidence one or two lines

Major point with evidence one or two lines

Summarizing sentence of overall significance to the overarching thesis of the paper

Concluding sentence which restates topic sentence and bridges to next paragraph.

Failure to use basic paragraph structure throughout your work will result in the inability to receive full marks.

Quotations

Quotations longer than 4 lines should be indented. Try to avoid quotations longer than 4 lines. Assume that I do not read an indented 4-line quotation and make sure the sentence immediately following the quotation summarizes its significance to your argument in your own words. Never include quotations or sources in your introduction or conclusion, your introduction and conclusion should outline the paper structure in your own words.

Citations and Bibliography

We will use the author date system. It keeps footnotes and endnotes to a minimum.

- Text references will be short with the Surname, Date and page number (i.e. Žižek 2002: 342).
- Use this formatting everywhere, including sources from our reading list and in the response papers and any written work.
- Works by the same author in the same year should be cited as Žižek 2002a, Žižek2002b, etc.

- Et al. can be used by sources with three or more authors. The full list must be in the bibliography.
- If you have more than one source in the same sentence you just include them with a semi-colon in chronological order i.e (Žižek 2002: 345; D'Amelio 2018: 212; Swift 2020: 445)

Bibliography

A bibliography must be included in all written work, it should include the complete details of the work and included an 'Accessed' date if it is an online source.

Sample bibliography

Bastos, Marco T., and Dan Mercea. "The Brexit botnet and user-generated hyperpartisan news." *Social Science Computer Review* 37.1 (2019): 38-54.

Dobber, T., R. F. Fahy, and FJ Zuiderveen Borgesius. "The regulation of online political micro-targeting in Europe." *Internet Policy Review* 8.4 (2019): 4.

Grieder, William. "How the swindlers of Silicon Valley avoid paying taxes." *The Nation*, October 17, 2017, <https://www.thenation.com/article/how-the-swindlers-of-silicon-valley-avoid-paying-taxes/>. Accessed August 1, 2020.

Gill, Stephen. "Transnational class formations, European crisis and the silent revolution." *Critical Sociology* 43.4-5 (2017): 641.

Analytical Content and Paragraph structure:

Higher grades will be given to work that demonstrates the ability to interpret, critically assess and develop insights of the material. To determine whether or not your argument is analytical, ask yourself "Am I demonstrating to the reader my insights in an academic way?" If you are simply summarizing or describing in detail phenomena, your work is unlikely to have high analytical content.

Helpful signs you are not developing analytical content: Excessive quotes; beginning or ending a paragraph with a quote; short (fewer than 4 sentences) paragraphs; no sources in a long paragraph; lack of similar argument in introduction and conclusion.

Development of an Argument:

Higher grades will be given to work that has a clearly stated argument and a set of logically developed and reasonably comprehensive points in support of that argument. Academic arguments need not be personal (though in certain instances they can be – check with the instructor), rather they demonstrate the logical progression of the position you are developing. The key here is to attempt to convince your reader of the soundness or feasibility of your argument. Nuanced arguments recognize obvious criticisms and seek to address them logically. Consistency of an argument throughout a paper is important.

Helpful signs your argument may be in trouble: Using the same author or quote more than a few times in successive paragraphs; your introduction and conclusion are not similar; you introduce material in the introduction and the conclusion that cannot be found elsewhere; you have quotes in your conclusion; your attempt to address obvious criticisms contradicts your thesis, you adopt multiple theoretical frameworks; you cannot find any sources that agree with your central claims.

Grammar, Spelling, and Style:

Higher grades will be given to written work that is grammatically correct and is clearly and accurately written, while lower grades will be given to work that is difficult to read or understand due to excessive grammatical and/or spelling errors.

While different approaches work for different people, it is recommended that you try the following every time you have a written assignment: after completing your assignment, put it away for a while (ideally, for a few days); when you pick it up again, read it carefully, slowly, and aloud (when we are familiar with a paper we tend to skim it during proof-reading, thereby missing errors – so make sure you are reading it word for word). Mistakes in grammar may not always look wrong, but they usually sound wrong. If you need some help with writing style or grammar, there are many resources available on campus.

General

All students must complete all course requirements. Failure to do so (e.g., by not handing-in an assignment or by missing an examination without due cause) will subject the student to the appropriate University regulations. Students must also keep a duplicate copy of their assignments.

Policy on communication

I strive to be accessible and responsive to student inquiries. However, repeated or persistent e-mails/texts/phone calls will overload my capacity to respond to all students equally. As such, I reserve the right to answer initial questions but forego multiple responses or inquires for a 24hour cool-down period. I also may take longer to respond to communications during non-working hours, holidays, and weekends. I appreciate your understanding in this matter.

Late Assignments - Formal Guidelines

Late papers will be accepted but will be subject to a late penalty of 10 per cent per day to a maximum of 5 days, after which they will not be accepted and a mark of 0 will be recorded. In the interest of fairness to all students, there will be no exceptions to this unless you have arranged in advance for an extension. All extensions must be arranged in advance of the day on which a paper is due. **Papers submitted after deadlines (including excused late papers) will be marked, but comments will not be provided.**

Policy on Children in the classroom¹

“It is my belief that if we want women in academia, that we should also expect children to be present in some form. Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is thus, a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to student, staff and faculty parents.

All exclusively breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary to support the breastfeeding relationship. Because not all women can pump sufficient milk, and not all babies will take a bottle reliably, I never want students to feel like they have to choose between feeding their baby and continuing their education. You and your nursing baby are welcome in class anytime.

For older children and babies, I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home with a child and leaving him or her with someone you or the child does not feel comfortable with. While this is not meant

¹ Policy taken from Dr Cheyney with permission.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20210413194856/https://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/childcare/family-friendly-syllabi-examples>

to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.

I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.

In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met. Non-parents in the class, please reserve seats near the door for your parenting classmates.

Finally, I understand that often the largest barrier to completing your coursework once you become a parent is the tiredness many parents feel in the evening once children have finally gone to sleep. The struggles of balancing school, childcare and often another job are exhausting! I hope that you will feel comfortable disclosing your student-parent status to me. This is the first step in my being able to accommodate any special needs that arise. While I maintain the same high expectations for all student in my classes regardless of parenting status, I am happy to problem solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for school-parenting balance. Thank you for the diversity you bring to our classroom!"

Policy on non-service animals in the classroom

Western University established a [Pets and Therapy Animals policy in May 2020](#) that limits the presence of pets in campus buildings. Service and therapy animals are permitted inside all Western locations, in accordance with accessibility policies, however animals for companionship are not allowed.

Religious/Cultural Observance

Persons who have religious or cultural observances that coincide with this class should let the instructor know in writing (by e-mail for example) by Week 4. I strongly encourage you to honor your cultural and religious holidays! However, if I do not hear from you by Week 4, I will assume that you plan to attend all class meetings.

Point of View

The readings, class lectures, and my comments in class will suggest a particular point of view. This perspective is my own and does not have to be yours! I encourage you to disagree with the ideas in the readings and lectures as well as the perspectives of your colleagues in the course. Please express yourself! A significant part of a university education is learning about the complexity of various issues; therefore, it is important that we listen and respect one another but we do not have to agree. A richer discussion will occur when a variety of perspectives are presented in class for discussion.

Academic Sources

A key aspect of the university experience is developing your ability to assess the validity of sources. Academic sources such as those found on Google Scholar should be your primary source of arguments, ideas and claims made in the course. While it may be appropriate to provide anecdotal, non-academic, news, theories from outside the academy as data points, all arguments must be situated in triangulated academic research. By triangulation (you may see a Δ on your assignments) this is the idea that academic peer review provides a foundation for the veracity of the claims being made. If you rely too heavily on one source (i.e. that more than 3 footnotes in a row are from the same source) you may be

veering towards summary or plagiarism of that source as it lacks proper verification from other academics who agree with those assessments. Moreover, most sources have implicit or explicit frameworks, understandings, biases which you may not be able to assess without triangulation. While there is no explicit number of sources required on assignments, you will be unable to achieve full marks if you do not have academic arguments with academic sources. This is a standard expectation of all assignments in this class.

Discussion Guidelines²

In our structured and unstructured discussions and dialogues, we also will have many opportunities to explore some challenging, high-stakes issues and increase our understandings of different perspectives. Our conversations may not always be easy; we sometimes will make mistakes in our speaking and our listening; sometimes we will need patience or courage or imagination or any number of qualities in combination to engage our texts, our classmates, and our own ideas and experiences. Always we will need respect for others. Thus, an important secondary aim of our course necessarily will be for us to increase our facility with the sometimes-difficult conversations that arise inside issues of social inequality as we deepen our understandings of multiple perspectives – whatever our backgrounds, experiences, or positions.

Policy on the use of LLMs (AI, ChatGPT, Bard, etc) in the classroom ³

Unless otherwise noted during class activities, you may only use ChatGPT or any other Generative technology to *aid* or *nuance* your thinking, communication, and learning; but not to *replace* or *subvert* it. See the table below for some examples of allowable and non-allowable uses of Generative technology in this class (NOTE: This is not an exhaustive list of examples). Generative technology may be used to assist in assessment throughout the course, if you wish to opt out of the use of generative technology, please let me know.

How generative technology may be used in assessment:

1. Pre-assessment - to provide structural or overall feedback before beginning any grading.
2. Applying rubric - using the rubric from the course outline to apply to submitted assignments to assess the degree of compliance before or during completing any grading.
3. During assessment - to double-check the veracity of claims being made about your submission during the assessment of your material.
4. Post assessment - to find additional examples or instances in your submissions to assist in providing feedback.
5. Refining assessment - suggesting forms of constructive criticism, actionable items, and overarching themes or issues to assist in your assessment.
6. Checking for unauthorized AI use, following University guidelines (and those attached below).

How generative technology will NOT be used in assessment:

No grades will be assigned solely with generative technology at any point in this course. Assessment will always be done by the instructor/graders in accordance with the course outlines, because of the unpredictability and unreliability of current generative technology. No personal or individual identifiers will ever be included in the assessment of material by any generative technology.

² From U-M Faculty Member Alisse Portnoy, English.

Example of an Allowable Use	Why is this Allowed?	Things to Keep in Mind
Prompting Generative technology to generate ideas for a class project.	This might enhance your thinking by exposing you to other ideas than you might come up with on your own.	It is important to start with brainstorming your own ideas first (to aid your creative thinking), rather than letting Generative technology do that initial work for you. Also, beware that Generative technology might introduce biases (tends towards liberal consensus) into the topic when prompted to generate ideas.
Using Generative technology for writing support (e.g., to improve writing quality, clarity, and expression).	Generative technology writing technologies, like ChatGPT, can provide ideas for how to revise a sentence or word, begin a paragraph, or express your thinking more clearly. Used in this way, Generative technology might support the development of your communication skills.	Make sure to get your thoughts written down first rather than asking Generative technology to write the first draft. Writing and thinking are interconnected processes, if you prompt Generative technology to write the first draft for you, you are not actively engaging in thinking about the material. NOTE: We also have a wonderful Writing Center on campus that provides writing support!
Using Generative technology as a study or assignment aid .	Generative technology can offer study tips, provide example text/quiz practice questions, design a personalized study guide, design flashcards, give directions for how to complete an assignment, create learning simulations and interactive scenarios to help you think more deeply about the class content, and provide a rubric so you can self-assess your own work.	Generative technology tools are known for making up information and presenting biased output. Make sure to double-check the accuracy, credibility, and reliability of any AI-generated information that you use to support your studying or assignment completion.
Prompting Generative technology to help make information easier to understand (e.g., explaining technical or academic jargon, providing concrete examples of an abstract idea).	Generative technology could potentially be used in ways that reduce cognitive load (see Cognitive Load Theory), such as breaking material into smaller chunks, summarizing and simplifying material, providing an outline of an article to support pre-reading, translating text into your native language, making content more accessible, scaffolding learning, and providing concrete examples.	If Generative technology are used in ways that reduce germane load (the cognitive effort required to make connections between new information and prior knowledge) it can negatively impact learning. For example, if you ask a Generative technology technology to automatically summarize a complex academic article instead of reading and summarizing it yourself, you will miss out on the opportunity to fully engage with, and critically examine, the author's ideas (read: No One is Talking About AI's Impact on Reading). This is a critical skill for college, the workplace, and engaged citizenship!
Using AI and Generative technology	Generative technology can be used to make learning more accessible and digitally accessible for	If you have a self-identified or registered disability, consider how Generative technology

is recommended due to different abilities .	differently abled individuals (e.g., transcripts of recorded audio, closed captions for videos, alt text to describe images for blind/visually impaired individuals, interpretations of complex visual data).	tools might aid your thinking, communication, and learning.
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Example of a Non-Allowable Use	Why is this NOT Allowed?
Prompting a Generative technology technology to respond to a discussion forum prompt for you.	Discussion prompts are meant to incorporate your voice and your thoughts. Participating in discussions is about building community and relationships as well as actively engaging in your own thinking and learning to communicate with others. Using Generative technology for this activity subverts both the social and learning goals of the activity.
Using a Generative technology technology (e.g., Slidesgo) to design a class presentation for you.	Designing a presentation requires you to actively engage in thinking and learning about the material and consider how best to communicate that information to an audience. Prompting Generative technology to do this work for you subverts your learning and the opportunity to develop your creative communication skills.
Modifying AI-generated work slightly to make it appear as if you created it .	Making minor adjustments to AI-generated work only supports surface-level learning, rather than deep learning (learn more), because the focus is on minor adjustments rather than truly understanding the material.
Prompting Generative technology to analyze data for you and submitting the data analysis as your own.	Research has shown that using Generative technology to provide solutions for you (or in this case, provide data analysis output for you) prevents you from actively engaging with, and learning, the material (read: Generative AI Can Harm Learning). Using Generative technology in this way subverts your learning. Additionally, Generative technology tools are not calculators or math machines, they are predictability machines (they guess which words go together to make the most plausible human-sounding response).
Copying AI-generated text word for word into your written work but citing it as written by AI .	Please read " The Case For Not Citing Chatbots As Information Sources " and " Generative AI Has an Intellectual Property Problem " and, instead, find an original source to cite. When you put in the effort to find an original source to cite, you are deepening your thinking and learning about that topic, and you are giving credit to human authors/artists.

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). Any assignment that is found to have used generative AI tools in unauthorized ways can result in: a failure to receive full grades, the need to resubmit the assignment, need to orally present the assignment in office hours, or a failure to complete the requirements of the course. When in doubt about permitted usage, please ask for clarification.

Reading Schedule

Week 1: Tech Roots and Routes

Required:

- Edgerton, David. The shock of the old: Technology and global history since 1900. Profile books, 2011. Ch 1.
- Haraway, Donna. "'a cyborg manifesto'(1985)." Cultural theory: An anthology (2010): 454.
- Townes, Miles. "The spread of TCP/IP: How the Internet became the Internet." Millennium 41.1 (2012): 43-64.

Suggested:

Cordeschi, Roberto. "Cybernetics." The Blackwell guide to the philosophy of computing and information (2004): 186-196.

Faulkner, Wendy. "The technology question in feminism: A view from feminist technology studies." Women's studies international forum. Vol. 24. No. 1. Pergamon, 2001.

Latour, Bruno. "Technology is society made durable." The sociological review 38.S1 (1990): 103-131.

Oudshoorn, Nelly, and Trevor Pinch. How users matter: the co-construction of users and technology (inside technology). MIT Press, 2003.

Sekula, Allan. "The body and the archive." October 39 (1986): 3-64.

Winner, Langdon. "Do artifacts have politics?." Computer ethics. Routledge, 2017. 177-192.

Jeorges, B. (1999). "Do Politics have Artifacts?" Social Studies of Science 29(3): 411-431.

AI concept of the week: What do we mean by artificial?

<https://www.thecollector.com/automata-ai-comparison-historical-cultural-comparison/>

Week 2: Digital sovereignty and security

Required:

- Mueller, Milton L. "Against sovereignty in cyberspace." International studies review 22.4 (2020): 779-801.
- Nye, Joseph S. Cyber power. Cambridge: Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2010.
- Norris, Pippa. Digital divide: Civic engagement, information poverty, and the Internet worldwide. Cambridge University Press, 2001. Ch 1.
- Suzor, Nicolas P. Lawless: The secret rules that govern our digital lives. Cambridge University Press, 2019. Ch 2 and 4.

Suggested:

Carr, Madeline. "Public-private partnerships in national cyber-security strategies." *International Affairs* 92.1 (2016): 43-62.

Deibert, Ronald J. "Black code: Censorship, surveillance, and the militarisation of cyberspace." *Millennium* 32.3 (2003): 501-530.

Hansen, Lene, and Helen Nissenbaum. "Digital disaster, cyber security, and the Copenhagen School." *International studies quarterly* 53.4 (2009): 1155-1175.

Herod, Andrew. *Scale*. Routledge, 2010. Ch 1.

Stalder, Felix. *Manuel Castells: The theory of the network*

AI concept of the week: What do we mean by intelligence?

https://youtu.be/3PlpCD_hO-g?si=zOQPi_91bAY4ymda

Broussard, Meredith. *Artificial unintelligence: How computers misunderstand the world*. mit Press, 2018.

Week 3: Regulation and Governance

Required:

- Noble, Safiya Umoja. "Algorithms of oppression." *Algorithms of oppression*. New York university press, 2018. Intro and Ch 1.
- Gorwa, Robert. "What is platform governance?." *Information, communication & society* 22.6 (2019): 854-871.
- Mellamphy, Nandita Biswas. "Humans 'in the Loop'? Human-Centrism, Posthumanism, and AI." *Nature and Culture* 16.1 (2021): 11-27.
- Neff, Gina. *The political economy of digital health*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Suggested:

Ardia, David S. "Free speech savior or shield for scoundrels: an empirical study of intermediary immunity under Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act." *Loy. LAL Rev.* 43 (2009): 373.

Eubanks, Virginia. *Automating inequality: How high-tech tools profile, police, and punish the poor*. St. Martin's Press, 2018.

Rosen, Jeffrey. "The right to be forgotten." *Stan. L. Rev. Online* 64 (2011): 88.

Costanza-Chock, Sasha. *Design justice: Community-led practices to build the worlds we need*. The MIT Press, 2020.

Roberts, Margaret. *Censored: distraction and diversion inside China's Great Firewall*. Princeton University Press, 2018.

Gillespie, Tarleton. "The politics of 'platforms'." *New media & society* 12.3 (2010): 347-364.

Van Dijck, José, Thomas Poell, and Martijn De Waal. *The platform society: Public values in a connective world*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Benjamin, Ruha. "Race after technology." *Social Theory Re-Wired*. Routledge, 2023. 405-415.

AI concept of the week: what is a transformer?

<https://blogs.nvidia.com/blog/what-is-a-transformer-model/>

Week 4: Open versus closed source

Required:

- Nafus, Dawn. "'Patches don't have gender': What is not open in open source software." *New Media & Society* 14.4 (2012): 669-683.

- Steele, Robert David. "Open source intelligence." Handbook of intelligence studies 42.5 (2007): 129-147.
- Carlson, Matt. "The robotic reporter: Automated journalism and the redefinition of labor, compositional forms, and journalistic authority." Journalism in an Era of Big Data. Routledge, 2018. 108-123.
- Mortensen, Mette, and Christina Neumayer. "The playful politics of memes." Information, Communication & Society 24.16 (2021): 2367-2377.

Suggested:

Trittin-Ulbrich, Hannah, et al. "Exploring the dark and unexpected sides of digitalization: Toward a critical agenda." Organization 28.1 (2021): 8-25.

Ireni-Saban, Liza, and Maya Sherman. Ethical Governance of Artificial Intelligence in the Public Sector. Routledge, 2021.

AI concept of the week: what's the difference between pre-training and fine-tuning?

https://youtu.be/zjkbMFhNj_g?si=3jktl6jdm_4zCs_Q&t=895

Week 5: Social Media or Anti-Social media?

Required:

- Fuchs, Christian. "Social media: A critical introduction." Social Media (2021) ch 1. or <https://stratechery.com/2021/facebook-political-problems/>
- Bousfield, Dan. "Neoliberalism, race, and ignorance in an era of covid-19." Covid-19 and the Global Political Economy (2022): 53-67.
- Williams, James. Stand out of our light: Freedom and resistance in the attention economy. Cambridge University Press, 2018. Ch 1.
- Venturini, Tommaso. "From fake to junk news: The data politics of online virality." Data politics. Routledge, 2019. 123-144.

Suggested:

Zhang, Xichen, and Ali A. Ghorbani. "An overview of online fake news: Characterization, detection, and discussion." Information Processing & Management 57.2 (2020): 102025.

Schirch, Lisa, ed. social media impacts on conflict and democracy: The techtonic shift. Routledge, 2021.

Banet-Weiser, Sarah. Empowered: Popular feminism and popular misogyny. Duke University Press, 2018.

Anderau, Glenn. "Defining fake news." KRITERION—Journal of Philosophy 35.3 (2021): 197-215.

Persily, Nathaniel, and Joshua A. Tucker, eds. "Social media and democracy: The state of the field, prospects for reform." (2020).

Grossman, Emiliano. "Media and policy making in the digital age." Annual Review of Political Science 25 (2022): 443-461.

Grossman, Guy, Yotam Margalit, and Tamar Mitts. "How the ultrarich use media ownership as a political investment." The Journal of Politics 84.4 (2022): 1913-1931.

Napoli, Philip. Social media and the public interest: Media regulation in the disinformation age. Columbia University Press, 2019.

Curran, James, and Jean Seaton. Power without responsibility: press, broadcasting and the internet in Britain. Routledge, 2018.

AI concept of the week: what do we mean by cognitive offloading?

<https://tcet.unt.edu/cognitive-offloading-media-multitasking-and-artificial-intelligence>

Week 6: Settler Colonialism and Decolonizing Technology

Required:

- Kolopenuk, J. (2018). "'Pop-up' Métis and the Rise of Canada's Post-Indigenous Formation." *World Anthropologies*, 120(2), 333-337.
- Adams, Rachel. "Can artificial intelligence be decolonized?." *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 46.1-2 (2021): 176-197.
- Tunstall, Elizabeth Dori. *Decolonizing design: A cultural justice guidebook*. MIT Press, 2023. Ch 2.
- Alcantara, Christopher, and Caroline Dick. "Decolonization in a digital age: cryptocurrencies and indigenous self-determination in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Law and Society/La Revue Canadienne Droit et Société* 32.1 (2017): 19-35.

Suggested:

Wemigwans, J. (2019). "Decolonizing the Digital." In *"A Digital Bundle: Protecting and Promoting Indigenous Knowledge Online"* (pp. 43-69). University of Regina Press.

McMahon, R. (2014). "From Digital Divides to the First Mile: Indigenous Peoples and the Network Society in Canada." *International Journal of Communication* 8: 2002-2026.

Meighan, Paul J. "Decolonizing the digital landscape: The role of technology in Indigenous language revitalization." *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 17.3 (2021): 397-405.

Karsgaard, Carrie, and Maggie MacDonald. "Picturing the pipeline: Mapping settler colonialism on Instagram." *new media & society* 22.7 (2020): 1206-1226.

Crosby, Andrew. "The racialized logics of settler colonial policing: Indigenous 'communities of concern' and critical infrastructure in Canada." *Settler Colonial Studies* 11.4 (2021): 411-430.

AI concept of the week: what do we mean by human labelers?

<https://tribunemag.co.uk/2021/05/how-artificial-intelligence-depends-on-low-paid-workers>

Week 7: Ecological 'technofixes'

Required:

- Stoddard, Isak, et al. "Three decades of climate mitigation: why haven't we bent the global emissions curve?." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 46 (2021): 653-689.
- Wagner, Gernot, and Daniel Zizzamia. "Green moral hazards." *Ethics, Policy & Environment* 25.3 (2022): 264-280.
- Crawford, Kate. *The atlas of AI: Power, politics, and the planetary costs of artificial intelligence*. Yale University Press, 2021.
- Dauvergne, Peter. "The power of environmental norms: marine plastic pollution and the politics of microbeads." *Environmental Politics* 27.4 (2018): 579-597.

Suggested:

McLaren, Duncan, and Nils Markusson. "The co-evolution of technological promises, modelling, policies and climate change targets." *Nature Climate Change* 10.5 (2020): 392-397.

Brozović, Danilo. "Societal collapse: A literature review." *Futures* 145 (2023): 103075.

Ludwig, David, and Phil Macnaghten. "Traditional ecological knowledge in innovation governance: a framework for responsible and just innovation." *Journal of Responsible Innovation* 7.1 (2020): 26-44.

Rye, Craig D., and Tim Jackson. "A review of EROEI-dynamics energy-transition models." *Energy policy* 122 (2018): 260-272.

Parrique, Timothée, et al. "Decoupling debunked." *Evidence and arguments against green growth as a sole strategy for sustainability. A study edited by the European Environment Bureau EEB* (2019).

Wiedmann, Thomas, et al. "Scientists' warning on affluence." *Nature communications* 11.1 (2020): 3107.

Borras Jr, Saturnino M., et al. "Climate change and agrarian struggles: an invitation to contribute to a JPS Forum." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 49.1 (2022): 1-28.

AI concept of the week: what do we mean by models?

<https://medium.com/data-science-at-microsoft/how-large-language-models-work-91c362f5b78f>

Week 8: Labor, Automation, and the Gig Economy

Required:

- De Stefano, Valerio. "The rise of the just-in-time workforce: On-demand work, crowdwork, and labor protection in the gig-economy." *Comp. Lab. L. & Pol'y J.* 37 (2015): 471.
- Srnicek, Nick. *Platform capitalism*. John Wiley & Sons, 2017. Intro, Ch 1.
- Zukin, Sharon. *The innovation complex: Cities, tech, and the new economy*. Oxford University Press, 2020. Intro, Ch 1.
- Munn, Luke. *Automation is a Myth*. Stanford University Press, 2022. Intro, Ch 1.

Suggested:

Couldry, Nick, and Ulises A. Mejias. *The costs of connection: How data is colonizing human life and appropriating it for capitalism*. Stanford University Press, 2020.

Pollio, Andrea, and Liza Rose Cirolia. "Fintech urbanism in the startup capital of Africa." *Journal of Cultural Economy* 15.4 (2022): 508-523.

Nyabola, Nanjala. "Africa's Digital Public Sphere." *Routledge Handbook of African Political Philosophy*. Routledge, 2023. 315-329.

Mindell, David A. *Our robots, ourselves: Robotics and the myths of autonomy*. Viking, 2015.

Dauvergne, Peter, and Genevieve LeBaron. *Protest Inc.: The corporatization of activism*. John Wiley & Sons, 2014.

Fan, Jennifer S. "Woke capital: The role of corporations in social movements." *Harv. Bus. L. Rev.* 9 (2019): 441.

AI concept of the week: what do we mean by 'agency laundering'?

<https://www.technologyreview.com/2014/08/19/74207/in-praise-of-efficient-price-gouging/>

Week 9: CRISPR, genomes and biohacking

Required:

- Greely, Henry T. *CRISPR people: the science and ethics of editing humans*. MIT Press, 2022. Part 1 **or** Wang, Joy Y., and Jennifer A. Doudna. "CRISPR technology: A decade of genome editing is only the beginning." *Science* 379.6629 (2023): eadd8643.
- Ikemoto, Lisa C. "DIY bio: hacking life in biotech's backyard." *UCDL Rev.* 51 (2017): 539.
- Garner, Samuel A., and Jiyeon Kim. "The privacy risks of direct-to-consumer genetic testing: A case study of 23andMe and Ancestry." *Wash. UL Rev.* 96 (2018): 1219.

Suggested:

Morley, Jessica, et al. "The ethics of AI in health care: a mapping review." *Social Science & Medicine* 260 (2020): 113172.

Char, Danton S., Nigam H. Shah, and David Magnus. "Implementing machine learning in health care—addressing ethical challenges." *The New England journal of medicine* 378.11 (2018): 981.

Fins, Joseph. *Rights come to mind: brain injury, ethics, and the struggle for consciousness*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

AI concept of the week: What do we mean by synthetic data?

<https://research.ibm.com/blog/what-is-synthetic-data>

Week 10: Surveillance and Privacy

Required:

- Zuboff, Shoshana. "Big Other: Surveillance Capitalism and the Prospects of an Information Civilization." *Journal of Information Technology*, April 2015.
- Lyon, David. "Surveillance, Snowden, and Big Data: Capacities, consequences, critique." *Big Data & Society*, July-Dec. 2014.
- Ball, Kirstie, and Laureen Snider, eds. *The surveillance-industrial complex: A political economy of surveillance*. Routledge, 2013. Intro Ch 1.
- Aho, Brett, and Roberta Duffield. "Beyond surveillance capitalism: Privacy, regulation and big data in Europe and China." *Economy and Society* 49.2 (2020): 187-212.

Suggested:

Sadowski, Jathan. "When data is capital: Datafication, accumulation, and extraction." *Big data & society* 6.1 (2019): 2053951718820549.

Smith, Gavin JD. "Surveillance, data and embodiment: On the work of being watched." *Body & Society* 22.2 (2016): 108-139.

Benjamin, Ruha, ed. *Captivating technology: Race, carceral technoscience, and liberatory imagination in everyday life*. Duke University Press, 2019.

Braman, Sandra. *Change of state: Information, policy, and power*. Mit Press, 2009.

AI concept of the week: Are faces, public or private?

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/03/18/magazine/facial-recognition-clearview-ai.html>

Week 11: Hybrid Warfare

Required:

- Hoffman, Frank G. "Hybrid warfare and challenges." *Strategic Studies*. Routledge, 2014. 329-337.
- Johnson, Robert. "Hybrid war and its countermeasures: a critique of the literature." *Small wars & insurgencies* 29.1 (2018): 141-163.
- Ramazani, Vaheed. "Exceptionalism, metaphor and hybrid warfare." *Culture, Theory and Critique* 59.3 (2018): 193-214.

Suggested:

Nye, Joseph. "How sharp power threatens soft power." *Foreign affairs* 24 (2018).

Murray, Williamson, and Peter R. Mansoor, eds. *Hybrid warfare: fighting complex opponents from the ancient world to the present*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Driedger, Jonas J., and Mikhail Polianskii. "Utility-based predictions of military escalation: Why experts forecasted Russia would not invade Ukraine." *Contemporary Security Policy* 44.4 (2023): 544-560.

AI concept of the week: how deep do fakes have to be?

<https://www.theverge.com/2019/3/5/18251736/deepfake-propaganda-misinformation-troll-video-hoax>

Week 12: Digital Diplomacy

Required:

- Bjola, Corneliu, and Marcus Holmes. Digital diplomacy: Theory and practice. Routledge, 2015. Intro, Ch 1.
- Barrinha, André, and Thomas Renard. "Cyber-diplomacy: the making of an international society in the digital age." Global Affairs 3.4-5 (2017): 353-364.
- Bousfield, Dan. "Revisiting cyber-diplomacy: Canada–China relations online." Globalizations 14.6 (2017): 1045-1059.

Suggested:

Manor, Ilan, and Elad Segev. "Social media mobility: Leveraging Twitter networks in online diplomacy." Global Policy 11.2 (2020): 233-244.

Adesina, Olubukola S. "Foreign policy in an era of digital diplomacy." Cogent Social Sciences 3.1 (2017): 1297175.

Duncombe, Constance. "The politics of Twitter: emotions and the power of social media." International Political Sociology 13.4 (2019): 409-429.

Dittmer, Jason, and Daniel Bos. Popular culture, geopolitics, and identity. Rowman & Littlefield, 2019.

AI concept of the week: what are the ethical considerations when we use AI?

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/10/ethical-concerns-mount-as-ai-takes-bigger-decision-making-role/>

APPENDIX TO UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINES DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

<https://politicalscience.uwo.ca/undergraduate/docs/outlines/2025-26/APPENDIX%20TO%20UNDERGRADUATE%20COURSE%20OUTLINES1.pdf>

Accessibility at Western: Please contact poliscie@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

Mental Health at Western: If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for more information on these resources and on mental health.

Other relevant links:

[Requests for Relief from Academic Decisions](#)

[Undergraduate Procedures](#)

[Scholastic Offences](#)

[Undergraduate Procedures](#)

[Senate Review Board Appeals](#)

[Procedures](#)

[Course Numbering Policy, Essay Courses, and Hours of Instruction](#)

