IDS 2395 - Rhetoric & Privacy in the Digital Age

Summer 2023

MWF 2nd | Turlington 2342

TR 2nd | Flint 0111

Primary General Education Designation: S*, Q2*

Writing Designation: WR (2000 words)

*A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit. Writing assignments must meet word length requirements and be graded for grammar for WR credit.

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Office Hours Optional Zoom Link: TBA in Canvas

I. Course Description

1. General Topic Description

The possibility of privacy is challenged by the ubiquity of data collection. Increasingly we find ourselves living under surveillance without the means of separating our private from our public lives. We are tracked as we shop, as we travel, as we work, as we drive, even as we sleep or brush our teeth. Facial recognition software deployed in shops, theme parks, stadiums, and other public spaces tracks our activities. Our digital searches for information reveal our vacation plans, our health concerns, our hobbies, and our political opinions. From the smart speaker that listens to every sound made in the room to the history of our social media interactions to the watch that monitors our heart rate, unprecedented surveillance of our daily lives places enormous amounts of personal information in the hands of data aggregators.

Even if we choose not to "share" much personal information online and manage our social media privacy settings carefully, an increasingly pervasive "internet of things" adds to the panoply that watches us, reveals us, catalogues us, and can testify against us as it expands surveillance into formerly private spaces and contexts. In this relationship we are no longer in control of drawing the line between what we wish to keep private and what we are willing to make public, and our relationships with fellow humans are altered in ways we may not anticipate.

More importantly, all this data can also be used to shape us and our society by predicting our behaviors, curating what we see or hear, placing persuasive messaging in our path, and motivating us to take actions we might not have taken without that surveillance and the curated messaging that follows it.

In this course we will investigate how specific social structures are being altered or more deeply inscribed through specific uses of aggregate data. Students will learn how to use qualitative research methods from the social sciences to better understand the societal effects of data aggregation and the relationship between concepts of privacy and concepts of property. This is a Social Science course for UF General Education with a Quest 2 designation that will also provide you with 2,000 words for the UF Writing Requirement. You must earn a C or better to earn that credit.

For this course we will examine the following pressing questions about the necessity and limits of privacy in the digital age:

- What interests are served by privacy? What interests are served by surveillance? To what extent is privacy still possible today?

- What is the relationship between concepts of privacy and concepts of property? How have specific rhetorical narratives and macroeconomic principles shaped or challenged concepts of privacy?
- How does the interconnected nature of some types of data and some types of data sharing challenge the concept of privacy? How does it challenge the concept of property?
- What is lost when we give up or lose a specific right to privacy? What happens when the data about us is wrong?
- What constraints or controls should be enforced on different types of data collection, maintenance, and access?

2. Major Assignments Description

Two exams will be used to assess student learning of the introductory material covering the history of the concept of privacy, its current legal and social structures, the history of data aggregation and its uses, the macroeconomic forces affecting data aggregation, and the social science methods for examining the impact of these technologies on society and Western concepts of privacy and property.

During the first part of the course students will also learn experientially by conducting their own data privacy audit to produce a data privacy analysis and reflection paper (750 words). The assignment will offer students the opportunity to reflect both on what kinds of data should remain private and on how they can change their own online behaviors to protect their data in the future.

During the second part of the course students will further develop skills in qualitative social science research by proposing a research project to investigate their own research question about a data privacy issue discussed in class, collecting original research data to answer their own research question, and analyzing their results in a critical analysis paper (1250 words). After completing their research, students will reflect on what they found, share their results with the class using an infographic poster, and propose specific solutions related to that issue in a final poster project presentation. The poster presentation will reflect both on what they've learned through their research and what suggestions they have for addressing that pressing issue. Participation in discussion sections will be evaluated through activities that will guide student's early research efforts for their critical analysis paper. Additionally, students will be taught about avoiding plagiarism and using Chicago citation style, which will be assessed in the use of this style in the critical analysis paper.

Required & Recommended Course Materials (to purchase or access)

- *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: the fight for a human future at the new frontier of power* by Shohsana Zuboff (Purchase this book online or in paperback.)
- *The Internet in Everything: freedom and security in a world with no off switch* by Laura DeNardis (This Ebook is on Library Reserve, but you can purchase a copy if you choose.)
- The Chicago Manual of Style (17th edition) – https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html
- Other fair use and open source reading & viewing materials (pdfs, links to websites) will be provided through the class eLearning course shell and a few documentary films will be shown during class sessions.

II. Coursework & Schedule

1. List of Graded Work

Assignment	Description	Requirements	Points
Exam #1	Covers readings, lectures, discussions & Study Guide #1		150
Exam #2	Covers readings, lectures, discussions & Study Guide #2		150
Data Privacy Audit Reflection Paper	Conduct a data privacy audit of your behavior (both online and when engaged with real time data collection devices that don't have a user interface), analyze and assess your privacy risks based on that data collection, and then reflect on what you've learned and how you expect this knowledge might alter your behavior in the future.	Minimum 750+ Word Data Analysis Paper in Chicago style	150
Discussion Group Activities	Each student will locate and discuss with their group of 4-5 students unique academic or professional grey literature research sources that are relevant to their group's chosen issue of interest. We will use Canvas groups to manage both the sharing of sources within groups and the discussion report submissions.	Discussion Reports (2 @ 50 points each)	100
Critical Analysis Paper	Each student will produce their own original qualitative social science research by investigating a research question about a data privacy issue discussed in class, collecting original research data to answer their research question, and analyzing their results in a critical analysis paper.	Minimum 1250+ Word Research Paper in Chicago Style	300
Infographic Poster Presentation and Reflection	Each student will present a creative solution to the issue examined in their critical analysis paper in an infographic poster and provide a summative reflection statement to the class. Your infographic should pitch your proposed solution to the problem you researched in your critical analysis project, while your oral	Infographic Poster & Oral Presentation	150

| | | reflection statement should reflect on what you've learned from doing this research and from our class discussions. Infographic posters will be submitted in Canvas and shared with the class. | | |

2. Weekly Course Schedule

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Assigned Work Due
WEEK 1 July 3 – 7	Topics	**What is privacy? What are the challenges to privacy in the digital age? How have specific rhetorical narratives and conditions shaped concepts of a right to privacy? How have specific theories about macroeconomic principles affected the right to privacy?**	
	Summary	After reviewing the syllabus, we begin examining the political, legal, and socio-economic conditions that influence Western concepts of privacy and then turn to discussion of how those conditions and our concepts of privacy are being reshaped by the digital age. The connections between definitions of privacy and those of property will also be explored as knowledge about people becomes IP. We will examine who benefits from privacy protections and who benefits from unregulated surveillance. The answers are complex, and the goal is to encourage deep questioning and identification of our *a priori* assumptions and values. Students are given the "privacy behavior worksheet" to help them collect data on how their own behaviors are being tracked. Students will learn how to examine the boundaries of privacy they establish, maintain, or fail to maintain in their own lives by gathering and analyzing that data.	
	Reading Due	**Read the Syllabus & the Zuboff book pages 27 through 127**	**7/5**
	Viewing	The Facebook Dilemma (Parts 1 & 2)	
	Reading Due & Assignment	**Read the Zuboff book pages 128 through 231** **Begin Data Collection: Privacy Behavior Worksheet**	**7/7**
WEEK 2 July 10 – 14	Topic	**How does the interconnected nature of some types of data and some types of data sharing challenge the concept of privacy? What is lost when we give away or lose a specific right to privacy? What interests are served by surveillance in the digital age? What interests are served by privacy? What constraints or controls should be enforced on data collection, maintenance, and access? What happens when the data about us is wrong?**	

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Assigned Work Due
	Summary	In class we will discuss Zuboff's analysis of the macroeconomic forces that shaped Google's transformation into profitability as the first true "surveillance capitalist" company, including the impacts of the commodification of surveillance and the use of specific rhetorical devices in that process, and discuss the impact of Zuboff's analysis on a variety of human institutions impacted by the changing relationships among corporations, governments, people, and things. Study Guide #1 will be distributed.	
	Reading Due	**Read the Zuboff book pages 232 through 375**	**7/10**
	Assignment Due	**Data Privacy Audit Reflection Paper Due @ 11:59 pm**	**7/12**
	Viewing	*Coded Bias* documentary	**7/13**
	Reading Due	**Read the Zuboff book pages 376 through 492**	**7/14**
WEEK 3 July 17 – 21	Topic	**How do we respond to *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*?**	
	Summary	This week we will reflect on what we have learned, study for and take the first exam, and begin discussing DeNardis' analysis of privacy and security risks in the IoT. Study Guide #2 will be distributed.	
	Exam	**First Exam**	**7/18**
	Viewing	*In the Age of AI* documentary	**7/19**
	Reading Due	**Read DeNardis book pages 3 through 162**	**7/21**

Week 4 July 24 – 28	Topic	**Living with *The Internet in Everything:*** **From Communication to Control / The Global Politics of Cyber-Physical Systems / Rethinking Internet Freedom & Governance**	
	Summary	We will discuss how the ubiquity of internet-connected devices alters power structures and human institutions, including the global nature of the threats to cyber-physical systems and the IoT. Discussion will also cover the risk to democracy inherent in the commodification and weaponization of predictive behavioral data as well as risks due to hacked access to the IoT and how all of these conditions affect the concept and possibility of privacy.	
	Reading Due	**Read DeNardis book pages 163 through 230**	**7/26**
	Activity	**Review DeNardis & Study Guide #2**	**7/27**
	Exam	**Second Exam**	**7/28**

Week 5 July 31 – August 4	**Topic**	**How do we respond to *The Internet in Everything*? How do we use Qualitative Social Science Methods?**	
	Summary	We will turn our attention to student research projects that use qualitative social science methods. Students will begin topic development and data collection for their critical analysis research paper. We will also cover use of Chicago style, how to avoid plagiarism, and how to effectively synthesize research sources in an academically honest way.	
	Readings	Links will be provided in the class Canvas site to sources on research methods and on various digital privacy issues that will help students develop their own research topics on a digital privacy issue and evaluate or create a potential solution. Readings include additional research sources located by students or shared by instructor based on student's chosen research question and study method.	
	Discussion Report #1	**Assignment includes a topic proposal for your research project. (topic/research question(s) statement for approval)**	**7/31**
	Discussion Report #2	**Assignment includes a final research project proposal explaining proposed research question and specific method of addressing it (interview/survey question approval is also required if using this method for data collection)**	**8/1**
Week 6 Aug. 7 – 11	**Topic**	**Researching & Presenting Solutions for Specific Privacy Problems**	
	Summary	The critical analysis research project and social science research design will continue to be discussed as students work on their final projects. We will discuss various ways of creating effective posters and infographics to explain complex issues and students will present potential solutions to the privacy problem they examined in their critical analysis research papers. Oral presentations of a reflection statement on what they've learned through this research project and the class overall will be heard during the last three days of class.	
	Assignments	**Critical Analysis Paper Due @ 11:59 pm** **Infographic Poster & Reflection Statement @ 11:59 pm**	**8/7** **8/8**
Friday August 11th	**Course Review**	There is no cumulative final exam in this class. The infographic **poster presentation & oral presentation of the reflection statement** is the last assignment.	**8/11**

III. Grading

3. Statement on Attendance and Participation

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance is required. Exempt from this policy are those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. For absences to be excused due to illness or injury, your instructor requires a signed doctor's note. No medical information is required. The date of the illness or injury is required. The note needs to be provided soon after the student returns to class. For absences due to university-sponsored events, your sponsor should provide a note with the dates of planned absences before they occur. Planned absences from class do not excuse you from meeting assignment deadlines for work not completed during class time. All assignments are due via Canvas eLearning, with the sole exception of the poster presentation. For the final oral presentation, if you are ill and cannot present in person, contact me before the end of semester for an online video submission option.

Participation is required, particularly during discussions about the texts and documentaries. No grade will be given for participation as it is simply expected that you will participate. Your grades on other work will likely benefit from your having participated in discussions. For the shy, active listening is actually a form of participation and you should not be penalized for quiet attention during whole class discussions. You will need to give a brief oral presentation at the end of the course. Let me know if you expect diagnosed anxiety issues will hinder that level of participation and we can work out an accommodation.

3a. WR Statements and Grading Rubric

Writing Assessment Rubric

	SATISFACTORY (Y) (grades A to C)	UNSATISFACTORY (N) (grades C- to E)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION & COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT & SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.

	of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

- The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Use of generative AI in creating written work for this course is prohibited as it is antithetical to the purpose of the writing requirement. We are trying to train you to write effectively using your brain, not trying to replace your brain with a machine "intelligence."
- The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on all of the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.
- WR course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.
- This is a general rubric for all writing courses. Assignment specific rubrics will be used for grading. They will be available with each assignment's directions.

4. Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/

A	94 – 100% of possible points		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%

B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

IV. General Education (S) & Quest 2 Objectives

Social and Behavioral Sciences Objectives ➜	Quest 2 Objectives ➜	This Course's Objectives ➜ (This course will….)
Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences.	Address in relevant ways the history, key themes, principles, terminologies, theories, or methodologies of the various social science disciplines that enable us to address pressing questions and challenges about human society and/or the state of our planet.	Students will learn how economic, psychological, and legal aspects of society are changing in the digital age and how social scientists are analyzing these changes. Readings and lectures for this course will address underlying theories, terminology, and qualitative methods used in the fields of economics, psychology, political science, and data science that are relevant to an analysis of our pressing questions.
Students will learn to identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures or processes.	Present different social science methods and theories and consider how their biases and influences shape pressing questions about the human condition and/or the state of our planet.	Students will be able to apply social science knowledge and use qualitative analysis methods in an original analysis of a specific issue related to privacy with critical awareness of prior work in these areas that identifies appropriate limitations and influences. They will also reflect on pressing questions concerning the impact of digital surveillance on people and human institutions.

Social and Behavioral Sciences Objectives ➜	Quest 2 Objectives ➜	This Course's Objectives ➜ (This course will….)
These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques.	Enable students to analyze and evaluate (in writing and other forms of communication appropriate to the social sciences) qualitative or quantitative data relevant to pressing questions concerning human society and/or the state of our planet.	This course will teach students to use qualitative methods, including phenomenological study, grounded theory study, and case study. Additionally, pressing questions about the future of democracy in the digital age will be addressed throughout the course content. Students will be taught to communicate effectively.
Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes or human behavior.	Analyze critically the role social sciences play in the lives of individuals and societies and the role they might play in students' undergraduate degree programs.	Students will learn how economic, psychological, and legal practices have shaped and continue to shape privacy practices online and how those dynamics affect governments, human populations, and the potential for a democratic future. Students will reflect on their own digital privacy practices and how individual decision-making can be affected by surveillance structures. Students will learn about the interdisciplinary nature of privacy concerns and how different social science disciplines approach these problems.
Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.	Explore or directly reference social science resources outside the classroom and explain how engagement with those resources complements classroom work.	This course will highlight the ethical perspectives inherent in individual and societal decisions in the readings and lectures for this course. We will also explore various open access social science resources and Electronic Frontier Foundation resources that help connect student learning with real struggles over the challenges presented by the changing boundaries of privacy.

V. General Education (S) & Quest 2 SLOs

	Social and Behavioral Sciences SLOs ➔ Students will be able to…	Quest 2 SLOs ➔ Students will be able to…	This Course's SLOs ➔ Students will be able to…	Assessment Student competencies will be assessed through…
Content	**Identify, describe, and explain** the history, underlying theory and methodologies used.	**Identify, describe, and explain** the cross-disciplinary dimensions of a pressing societal issue or challenge as represented by the social sciences and/or biophysical sciences incorporated into the course.	**Identify, describe, and explain** how economic, psychological, and legal aspects of society are changing in the digital age and how various social scientists are analyzing these changes. Content will address underlying theories, terminology, and qualitative methods used in the fields of economics, psychology, and political science that are relevant to an analysis of our pressing questions.	Two exams, technical definition paper, analysis paper using qualitative social science methods, and presentation of potential solutions in a poster session.
Critical Thinking	**Identify and analyze** key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives.	**Critically analyze** quantitative or qualitative data appropriate for informing an approach, policy, or praxis that addresses some dimension of an important societal issue or challenge.	**Identify and analyze** the commodification of surveillance and the use of specific rhetorical and technical devices in that process. They will also reflect on pressing questions concerning the impact of digital surveillance on people and human institutions.	Audit of personal data practices, two exams, technical definition paper, analysis paper using qualitative social science methods, and presentation of potential solutions in a poster session.

Social and Behavioral Sciences SLOs ➔ Students will be able to…	Quest 2 SLOs ➔ Students will be able to…	This Course's SLOs ➔ Students will be able to…	Assessment Student competencies will be assessed through…
Communication Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively.	**Develop and present**, in terms accessible to an educated public, clear and effective responses to proposed approaches, policies, or practices that address important societal issues or challenges.	**Develop and present** in clearly written prose their own analysis and potential solution(s) for a specific privacy challenge.	Analysis paper using qualitative social science methods and presentation of potential solutions in a poster session.
Connection N/A	**Connect course content** with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.	**Connect course content** with critical reflection on their own data privacy behaviors and on how the conditions of surveillance capitalism will affect their intellectual, personal, and professional futures.	Reflection paper on personal audit of data practices, analysis paper using qualitative social science methods, and presentation of potential solutions in a poster session.

VI. Required Policies

10. Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

11. UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or

via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

12. University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

13. Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Students in Distress

For guidance during distressing situations, please contact U Matter We Care or the Dean of Students Office. They can help students navigate resources and academic procedures for personal, medical, and academic issues.

- U Matter We Care: http://umatter.ufl.edu, umatter@ufl.edu, 352-294-2273 (CARE)Dean of Students: https://dso.ufl.edu/, 202 Peabody Hall, (352) 392-1261
- Counseling and Wellness Center: https://counseling.ufl.edu/, 3190 Radio Road, (352) 392-1575
- Field and Fork Pantry: https://fieldandfork.ufl.edu/, located near McCarty B, 352-294-2208
- Student Health Care Center: http://shcc.ufl.edu/, multiple locations, (352) 392-1161
- Aid-a-Gator: https://www.sfa.ufl.edu/aidagator/, S-107 Criser Hall, (352) 392-1275

Academic Resources

- *E-learning technical support*: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- *Career Connections Center*: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- *Library Support*: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- *Teaching Center*: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- *Writing Studio*: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by

becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/ or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

- *Student Complaints On-Campus*: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.
- *On-Line Students Complaints*: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.