



SURVEILLANCE AND SOCIETY

SOCI 3811 ADE 2021

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY

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Online Course: See D2L Site

Course Description

“As information itself becomes the largest business in the world, data banks know more about individual people than the people do themselves. The more the data banks record about each one of us, the less we exist.” – Marshall McLuhan

There have always been fears about how we are being watched by God, family, community, Big Brother, or multinational companies. Only in 2013 were some of these fears vindicated when Edward Snowden blew the whistle regarding the US NSA surveillance program. Now, all of those minor events and theories regarding surveillance have taken on a new and more serious tone for scholars and citizens. In this course, we will take a broad view on issues of surveillance as they relate to society, culture, and individuals, with a focus on historical and contemporary examples of surveillance and their sociological context. You will be introduced to the central readings and concepts within the growing field of surveillance studies and its sociological significance. With this goal we shall discuss, among other topics: concepts (surveillance, sousveillance, new surveillance/information, privacy), control (security, discipline, panopticism, control, bio-politics), capital (Taylorism, workplace surveillance, metadata, advertising, political economy, surveillance capitalism), culture (synopticism, viewer society, participatory surveillance, Covid-19 surveillance), and counters (countersurveillance, masking, reflectionism, resistance). The cutting edge-nature of these theories, concepts, and problems are one of the premiere issues of contemporary society

Please note that this is an online course and will be conducted entirely through the course website. The website will include class discussion forums, course readings and modules, course information, as well as our exams. There are no in-person or video lectures, but modules to be studied in their place each week in conjunction with course readings. As well, this is a compressed course where an entire semester is concentrated into three weeks. Each module is a week's worth of work in a normal course, condensed into a single day. Please be prepared for the different workload as we study surveillance online!

Course Objectives:

“Those who would give up Essential Liberty, to purchase a little Temporary safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety.” – Benjamin Franklin

By the end of this course, you should have accomplished the following in pursuit of the listed goals:

1. **Reading:** In this course you will read not only textbook and course notes, but theoretical texts, primary and analytical sources, and social/cultural cases. You will further develop your reading skills with regards to comprehension and retention; our focus will be on reading the variety of sources connected to surveillance and how they can be read and analyzed through the sociological perspective.
2. **Analysis:** Many of the examples of surveillance in society and popular culture are well known, especially in connection to privacy and legality. What is less well understood are the social and individual effects of these examples. By the end of this course you should be able to not only identify and describe many of the major cases in surveillance and society but the theoretical and critical issues that make these issues so much more than concerns about privacy and information alone.
3. **Society and Culture:** Surveillance studies are often limited to the practical and legal context of surveillance. Our focus will be how these surveillance systems and apparatuses function *in* society, not independently of it. We will discuss how surveillance impacts not only privacy but race, gender, sexuality, labour, population, and even popular culture. Not only is surveillance represented in society and culture, but reciprocally affects them as well.
4. **Praxis:** As sociologists our concern is not only to analyze the social effects of surveillance, but also to look towards what can be done with this knowledge. As such, this course will always be attendant to the personal, legal, political, and ethical dimensions of surveillance and how these can be affected through policy, politics, personal projects, and protest.



Course Evaluation:

“Intelligence collection programs naturally generate ever-increasing demands for new data. And once intelligence has been collected, there are strong pressures to use it against the target.” – United States Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (“The Church Committee”)

Course Activity	Grade Value
Participation and Discussion	30%
Mid-Term #1 (July 30 th)	20%
Mid-Term #2 (August 6 th)	20%
Final Exam (August 17 th)	30%
Total Grade	100%

a) Participation and Discussion (30%)

As an online course, much of the interaction between you, your peers, and your professor will be conducted through the course website. In order to foster a fruitful and engaged discussion about the weekly topics, readings, and concepts, participation in this course will be mandatory and graded. Alongside each module one or two discussion questions will be posted on the course D2L site. These questions will be available to be answered until the Saturday of each week: Modules 1-4 until July 31st, Modules 5-8 until August 7th, and Modules 9-12 until August 14th. You must submit your answers by midnight EDT (Thunder Bay time) of the listed date to receive a grade for your discussion responses.

These discussion questions and responses are our replacement for classroom interaction *and* a course essay and are worth a significant portion of your grade for this course. As a result, your responses will not be graded simply for completion but must show evidence of engagement with the discussion, thought about the topic, and writing to clarify and expand the issue. Your responses are expected to comprise a lengthy, well-written, and thoughtful paragraph for each question, evidencing your reading and understanding of the course material and further understanding about the topic. You may respond to your peer’s responses (see **Student Expectations** below) but the same requirements for your response still apply—you can agree with your peers and expand or redirect their response *or* offer an alternative viewpoint, as long as you remain respectful and original in your response.

These discussion responses will each be graded out of a possible 4 marks:

- 0 Marks: No answer or answer reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of the question or content.
- 1 Mark: Answer reveals you have read the relevant material and provided an answer.
- 2 Marks: Answer shows an understanding of the material being asked about and appropriately addresses the question.

- 3 Marks: Answer illustrates a full understanding of the material and the question, as well as the capacity to engage with the discussion beyond merely answering the question.
- 4 Marks: Answer proves that you have not only understood the material and question, but are able to deeply discuss the sociological issues provoked by the question and the material.

b) Mid-Term Exams (2x20%)

The mid-term exams for this course are written online through the course website. There are two mid-term exams in this course, summarizing Week 1 and Week 2 of the course material respectively, on July 30th and August 6th respectively. These exams will be held at 5pm EDT (Thunder Bay time) on the course website and you will be given one hour to complete them on each date. Any material answered after 6pm will not be graded. The date and time of the exam are firm.

Each mid-term exam will be composed of multiple-choice and paragraph-length response questions about the course material for that week. These exams are **open-book** and you will have access to the modules, course readings, and your own notes during the exam.

Any exam accommodations must be made through the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) office.

c) Final Exam (30%)

The final exam for this course is written online through the course website on August 17th as designated by the Registrar. The exam will be held at 5pm EDT (Thunder Bay time) on the course website and you will be given two hours to complete it. Any material answered after 7pm will not be graded. The date and time of the exam are firm.

The final exam will comprise two parts. The first will be a “third” mid-term summarizing Week 3 with multiple choice and short answer questions, similar to the two mid-term exams. As well, it will contain a portion that is cumulative of all course material and written in essay response format. This exam is **open-book** and you will have access to the modules, course readings, and your own notes during the exam.

Any exam accommodations must be made through the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) office.

Course Content:

Students are responsible to read and understand all of the:

1. Course readings as assigned below.
2. Course modules as posted on the course website.
3. Any content linked to or indicated within the course modules (may include news articles, videos, documentaries, etc).

Course Readings and Schedule:

“Surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action.” – Michel Foucault

All course readings will be made available through the course website. You are not required to purchase any texts or resources to complete this course.



Week 1

Module 1 (July 26)

Concepts: Introduction to Surveillance

Readings: a) The New Transparency Project, “Introduction: How Canadian Lives Became Transparent to Watching Eyes,” b) Gary T Marx, “Defining the Terms of Surveillance Studies.”

Module 2 (July 27)

Concepts: “I’ve Got Nothing to Hide”

Readings: a) Colin J. Bennett, “In Defense of Privacy: The Concept and the Regime,” b) Daniel Solove, “‘I’ve Got Nothing to Hide’ and Other Misunderstandings of Privacy.”

Module 3 (July 28)

Control: Keeping an Eye on the Bad Guy

Readings: a) Brandon C. Welsh and David P. Farrington, “The Politics of Surveillance for Crime Prevention,” b) Dan Lett, Sean Hier, and Kevin Walby, “Policy Legitimacy, Rhetorical Politics, and the Evaluation of City-Street Video Surveillance Monitoring Programs in Canada.”

Module 4 (July 29)

Control: Panopticism and Discipline

Readings: a) Michel Foucault, from *Discipline and Punish*.

Mid Term #1 (July 30 @ 5pm EDT)

Week 2

Module 5 (August 2)

Control: Social Panopticism/Biopolitics

Readings: a) Michel Foucault, from *Society Must be Defended*, b) Didier Bigo, “Globalized (in)Security: the Field and the Ban-opticon.”

Module 6 (August 3)

Capital: Taylorism: Watched While You Work

Readings: a) Jeffrey Stanton and Krathryn Stam, “Employee Monitoring, Surveillance, and Privacy,” b) Kirstie Ball, “Workplace Surveillance, An Overview.”

Module 7 (August 4)

Capital: Your Information is Your Value

Readings: a) José van Dijck, "Datafication, Dataism, and Dataveillance: Big Data Between Scientific Paradigm and Ideology," b) Jason Pridmore, "Consumer Surveillance: Context, Perspectives and Concerns in the Personal Information Economy," c) Mark Andrejevic, "Surveillance in the Big Data Era."

Module 8 (August 5)

Capital: The Economy of Surveillance

Readings: a) Christian Fuchs, "Political Economy and Capitalist Surveillance," b) Shoshana Zuboff, "Big Other: Surveillance Capitalism and the Prospects of an Information Civilization."

Mid Term #2 (August 6 @ 5pm EDT)

Week 3

Module 9 (August 9)

Culture: Watching Eachother

Readings: a) Thomas Mathieson, "The Viewer Society: Michel Foucault's 'Panopticon' Revisited," b) Emily West, "Amazon: Surveillance as Service," c) Priya C Kumar, Jessica Vitak, Marshini Chetty, Tamara L Clegg, "The Platformization of the Classroom: Teachers as Surveillant Consumers," d) William Clyde Partin, "Watch Me Pay: Twitch and the Cultural Economy of Surveillance," e) Ngai Keung Chan, "The Rating Game: The Discipline of Uber's User-Generated Ratings."

Module 10 (August 10)

Culture: Surveillant Voyeurism

Readings: a) Anders Albrechtslund, "Online Social Networking as Participatory Surveillance," b) Alice E Marwick, "The Public Domain: Social Surveillance in Everyday Life," c) Hille Koskela, "Webcams, TV Shows, and Mobile phones: Empowering Exhibitionism."

Module 11 (August 11)

Culture: The Surveillance Culture of Coronavirus

Readings: a) Martin French and Torin Monahan, "Dis-ease Surveillance: How Much Surveillance Studies Address Covid-19?," b) Binoy Kampmark, "The Pandemic Surveillance State: An Enduring Legacy of Covid-19," c) Daniel Trottier, Qian Huang, Rashid Gabdulhakov, "Covidiot as Global Acceleration of Local Surveillance Practices."

Module 12 (August 12)

Counter: Who Watches the Watchmen?

Readings: a) The Invisible Committee, "Fuck Off, Google," b) Torin Monahan, "The Right to Hide? Anti-Surveillance Camouflage and the Aestheticization of Resistance," c) Colin J. Bennett, "Privacy Advocates, Privacy Advocacy, and the Surveillance Society."

Final Exam (August 17th @ 5pm EDT)

Student Expectations (Behaviour, Plagiarism, Grading, Etc.)

All students are expected to be familiar with the entirety of the *Lakehead Student Code of Conduct* and to follow it fully. When these policies are not sufficient, judgement shall be referred to the Department of Sociology. All violations of these policies will be fully investigated.

In addition, as sociologists we should all be aware of the needs and demands of others and act with respect and camaraderie in all interactions with others in the course. All course discussion and communication forums (including e-mail) will not tolerate any racist, sexist, classist, homophobic, etc, language.