

SURVEILLANCE AND SOCIETY

SOCI3811/MDST3010 WDE 2017

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. With this goal we shall discuss, among other topics: practice (discipline, control, bio-politics, panopticism, privacy), identity (race, gender, sexuality), culture (popular culture, big data, advertising, information studies), society (population, crime, urban studies, security, terrorism, war, civil rights, production and consumption, globalization), and activism (social media, ethics, law, policy, international relations, advocacy, and 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 weekly group and class discussion forums, course readings, assignment details, course information, as well as the location of the final exam and many of the course readings. There are no in-person or video lectures, but modules to be studied in their place each week in conjunction with weekly readings which are lengthier than a “in person” course. 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	20%
Blog Entry (18 February)	20%
Course Essay (31 March)	30%
Final Exam (To Be Announced)	30%
Total Grade	100%

a) Participation and Discussion (20%)

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. Each week you will be expected to respond to two discussion questions each week (except Week 1). These 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. Part (or no) marks may be issues for insubstantial discussion: please contact the professor if you are concerned. As well, you may post a well-thought and engaging question in addition to the three each week provided for your peers by Prof. Yuri to answer as one of your discussion responses for a given week.

b) Blog Post (20%)

The first writing assignment for this course will be a 1000-1500 word writing assignment written as if for a specialized blog due on 18 February 2017. As such, this writing assignment need not meet all the criteria for formal academic writing as long as it communicates its point. For this assignment, you will choose one from the list of terms to made available, or one of your own, and connect it to a contemporary news event regarding surveillance (since 2015). Your blog post will explain both the concept and news story you choose together, in a manner that conveys academic content without an academic format.

A list of possible terms and news events, as well as specific details, for this blog post will be in released Week 3 of the course. It is your responsibility to investigate successful academic blogs and to determine a method that works for your writing style. You may want to consider successful sociology blogs such as [The Everyday Sociology Blog](#) or [Understanding Society](#) to get you started.

c) Course Essay (30%)

The formal essay for this class will be a 10 page essay due on 31 March 2017. This essay will be written in American Sociological Association (ASA) Style and must meet all academic criteria as a formal research paper with a substantial organizing argument. The page limit is a hard limit and will be penalized for going under or over it, as well as attempting to meet it through trickery (adjusting borders, font sizes, line spacing, title size, etc).

A list of topics and specific details regarding this essay will be released in Week 7 of the course, along with a primer for writing sociological and theoretical research, the specifics of ASA style, and a guide for conducting academic research. You are encouraged to begin investigating this assignment immediately.

d) Final Exam (30%)

The final exam for this course will be written online through the course website. It will be cumulative of all course material, including course notes, primary and secondary readings, videos and documentaries, and discussions. The exam will be scheduled within the regular Winter exam schedule. It will include multiple-choice and essay questions.

This is an online course with online exams and so no attempt can be made to make this exam “closed-book.” As such, the assumption for your exam will be that you will have all of your books, notes, sources, etc. and the exam will be prepared accordingly. The exam will be timed and will not offer enough time to “look up” each answer in your books, notes, or Google. Do not make the mistake of assuming that you do not need to study for open-book exams.

Course Readings and Schedule:

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

The following texts are the required readings for this course (available at the Lakehead Bookstore); any edition of these titles can be used, but these will be the editions referred to in the course notes. All other readings and sources will be made available via URL or uploaded directly to the course website:

1. Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. Random House. (0679752552)
2. Lyon, David. *Surveillance After Snowden*. Polity. (9780745690858)
3. Marx, Gary T. *Windows into the Soul*. University of Chicago Press. (9780226285917)
4. Orwell, George. *1984*. Penguin. (9780141036144)

Week 1: Introduction Surveillance and Society

Readings: Torin Monahan, “Surveillance as Cultural Practice”

Week 2: Privacy or Security

Readings: Dan Lett, Sean Hier, and Kevin Walby, “Policy Legitimacy, Rhetorical Politics, and the Evaluation of City-Street Video Surveillance Monitoring Programs in Canada”; Daniel Solove, “‘I’ve Got Nothing to Hide’ and Other Misunderstandings of Privacy.”

Week 3: Surveillance as a Complete Institution

Readings: Orwell, *1984*.

Week 4: Concepts and New Surveillance

Readings: Marx, *Windows Into the Soul* (1-85).

Week 5: Panopticism and the Mechanism of Surveillance

Readings: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (3-31, 156-69, 195-228).

Week 6: Banopticism and the State of Surveillance

Readings: Giorgio Agamben, "The Camp as the 'Nomos' of the Modern"; Didier Bigo, "Globalized (in)Security: the Field and the Ban-opticon"; Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (249-56) and "Society Must Be Defended."

Week 7: Reading Week! (Get started on David Lyon's *Surveillance After Snowden*)

Week 8: Synopticism and the Culture of Surveillance

Readings: Thomas Mathieson, "The Viewer Society: Michel Foucault's 'Panopticon' Revisited"; Marx, *Windows Into the Soul* (173-241).

Week 9: *Surveillance After Snowden*

Readings: Lyon, *Surveillance After Snowden*.

Week 10: Consumer and Capitalist Surveillance

Readings: Christian Fuchs, "Political Economy and Capitalist Surveillance"; Jeffrey Stanton and Krathryn Stam, "Employee Monitoring, Surveillance, and Privacy."

Week 11: Technical Solutions

Readings: Marx, *Windows Into the Soul* (265-322); The Royal Academy of Engineering, "Dilemmas of Privacy and Surveillance."

Week 12: Resisting Surveillance at the Governmental Level: Ethics and Law

Readings: Mariam Botsford Fraser, "9/11, National Security, Counter-Terrorism, and CCLA"; Ray Coleman and Michael McCahill, "Deconstructing Surveillance, Crime and Power"; Craig Forcese, "Law, Logarithms, and Liberties: Legal Issues Arising from CSE's Metadata Collection Initiatives."

Week 13: Resisting Surveillance at the Social Level: Civil Liberties and Protest

Readings: Ivan Greenberg, "The State Response to Occupy: Surveillance and Suppression"; Marx, *Windows Into the Soul* (140-178); The Invisible Committee, "Fuck Off, Google."

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

All students are expected to be familiar with the entirety of the Lakehead *Code Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures* and to follow it fully

(<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/policies/student-related/code-of-student-behaviour-and-disciplinary-procedures>). 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.