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Zero Textbook Cost Syllabus for LIB 3040 (Information and Society)

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Baruch College, City University of New York
LIB 3040: Information and Society
Spring 2018 Tue 6:05-9:05pm

SYLLABUS

Instructor: Kimmy Szeto

Office:

Email:

Office Hours: Tuesday before class; by appointment

Bulletin Description

LIB 3040 Information and Society. 3 hours; 3 credits. Prerequisite: ENG 2100. This course examines the nature, production, value and uses of information in historical perspective; the latest development in information technology; the ways information is produced and disseminated and how they affect business, politics, media, science, arts and culture; the growth of the “information society;” and major information policy issues. (Cross-listed with COM 3040 and PAF 3040)

Additional Information

- An open, logical mind and a methodical work ethic are essential.
- Basic knowledge in computer and internet technologies is extremely useful.

Instructional Method

This course applies a combination of lectures, demonstrations, discussions, readings, hands-on exercises and assignments, projects, and presentations. Lectures and discussions cover concepts and theories. In-class exercises require students to work in groups to explore practical manifestations of these concepts and theories and develop skills. Readings and demonstrations reinforce these concepts and skills. Classroom project presentations allow students to share their experience and receive feedback from the entire class.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the nature, value, and uses of information in the past and present
2. Describe the principles of the organization, production, and dissemination of information
3. Describe the impact of the latest development in information technology in social, cultural, political, and economic contexts
4. Analyze major issues in information policy and ethics
5. Be able to identify an information need, find and evaluate information, and use information for a specific purpose
6. Acquire basic competency in Microsoft Excel

Required Purchases and Supplies

Required purchases: None. All course documents are available via the college library, Blackboard, and in-class handouts.



Required equipment: A computer or device with internet access is required for some class meetings.

Exams, Assignments and Grading

In-class activities	10%
Short Essays (4)	20%
Lab Presentation (1)	20%
Reading Presentation (1)	20%
Midterm exam	15%
Final exam	15%

There will be no extra credit assignments. Letter grades for the course are assigned following the Spring 2018 *Baruch College Undergraduate Bulletin* table of Letter Grades and Grade Point Equivalents (<https://www.baruch.cuny.edu/confluence/display/undergraduatebulletin/Letter+Grades+and+Grade+Point+Equivalents>).

A	93.0-100	C+	77.1-79.9
A-	90.0-92.9	C	73.0-77.0
B+	87.1-89.9	C-	70.0-72.9
B	83.0-87.0	D+	67.1-69.9
B-	80.0-82.9	D	60.0-67.0
		F	Below 60.0

Reading assignments are due at the start of the class on the date listed on the Course Schedule.

In-class writing (12): Each class will begin with a free write. (There is no make-up if you are late.) While your free writes will not be collected, they will serve as the basis of class discussion, short essays, and exam questions. Free writes are part of the “in-class activities” grade.

Short Essays (4): You are required to write 4 short essays (2 before the midterm, 2 after the midterm) and post them on the Blackboard discussion board. These posts will be shared with the class, and should be refined and thoughtful essays of no more than 500 words. All posts are due by the start of the next class. (You can think of these essays as practice for exam questions.)

Lab Presentation (1): There will be 6 “labs” where, working in groups, you will produce, organize, and disseminate information first-hand. Each group produces exactly one lab report in the semester. Each group must commit to give the report at least one week in advance. Each report includes a typed report and a 5-minute presentation, both due *in print* at the start of the the next class following the lab. Late assignments are not accepted. Each group should submit one report; every member of the group receives the same grade.

Reading Presentation (1): Each group leads exactly one discussion in the semester based on an assigned reading (chosen from “*” entries on the reading list). Your group will prepare to lead the discussion of the reading in class, and submit a response essay of no more than 1,500 words and a



slide deck of no more than 5 slides. The essay should be typed, and is due *in print* at the start of the next class after the in-class activity. Late assignments are not accepted. Each group should submit one essay/slide deck; every member of the group receives the same grade.

Quizzes are given randomly at the start of the class period. You must be present to take the quiz. There are no make-up quizzes. Quizzes are part of the “in-class activities” grade.

The **midterm and final exams** are closed book exams covering all topics, readings, writing, class activities, reports, presentations, lectures and discussions up through the end of the previous class meeting. Exam papers may be retained by the Department, and may be reviewed by instructors in the Department and used for assessment purposes. Exam dates are listed in the course schedule. You must notify the instructor in writing at least two weeks in advance of a scheduling conflict. Make-up exams may be given only under extraordinary circumstances at the instructor’s discretion.

Classroom Courtesy

Be present and be punctual. If you arrive late or leave early, be unobtrusive in doing so. There is no excused lateness or excused absence. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to ask your classmates about what you missed and make up the work.

Please turn off all electronic devices before class unless otherwise instructed. The instructor may inspect the source of any sounds emitted during the class period.

Ask questions if you are confused; be patient with fellow students who may need more time to understand something. Respect others’ turn to speak—refrain from interrupting when someone else is speaking.

Familiarize yourself with the regulations set forth in the Spring 2018 *Baruch College Undergraduate Bulletin* available at <https://www.baruch.cuny.edu/confluence/display/undergraduatebulletin/>.



Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
1	Jan 30	Course introduction ; overview of terminology Lab 1: M&Ms	Manjoo (2017, Oct 12)
2	Feb 6	Information in Society Lab discussion: limits of humans and machines	Keshav (2016); Cairncross (1997); Brown (2000a)
3	Feb 13	Technology in Community Lab 2: collecting tombstone data	Marx (2010); Brown (2000b) *Cairncross (2001)
4	Feb 20	No class ; Monday Schedule	-
5	Feb 27	Information and Technology Lab discussion: life and death, risk and insurance	Kline (2006); Mathew & Cheshire (2017); *Brown (2017)
6	Mar 6	People and Systems Lab 3: home energy bills	Ackerman (2000); Norman (2009); *Geiger & Ribes (2010)
7	Mar 13	Ethics in Information Lab discussion: consumption and its costs	Taylor (1919); Kitchin (2014); *Brin & Page (1998)
8	Mar 20	Review Lab 4: weather	Review Lab 4: weather
9	Mar 27	Midterm exam	-
10	Apr 3	No class ; spring recess	-
11	Apr 10	Social Media Lab discussion: modeling and simulation	Gehl (2015); Gillespie (2010); *Confessore et al. (2018, Jan 27)
12	Apr 17	Algorithms Lab 5: ecological footprint	Friedman (1996); Christian & Griffiths (2015a); *(2015b)
13	Apr 24	Advertising Lab discussion: interacting with datasets	Reddy (1979); Vertesi (2011); *O'Neil (2016a)
14	May 1	Values in Design Activity 6: searching for yourself online	Flanagan et al. (2008); *O'Neil (2016b)
15	May 8	News and Journalism Lab discussion: personal data and privacy	Silverman (2015a); (2015d); *(2015b); *(2015c)
16	May 15	Course review	-
17	May 22	Final exam	-

This syllabus and the course schedule are subject to change with notice given in class.



Reading List

1. Terminology
 - Manjoo, F. (2017, October 12). Why tech is starting to make me uneasy. *The New York Times* (p. A2). (Reprinted (2017, October 11). Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/11/insider/tech-column-dread.html>)
2. Information in Society
 - Keshav, S. (2007). How to read a paper. *ACM SIGCOMM Computer Communication Review*, 37(3), 83-84. [Accessible via the Baruch College Library ([link](#))]
 - Cairncross, F. (1997). Preface; The Trendspotter's guide to new communications. In *The death of distance: How the communications revolution is changing our lives* (pp. vii-xvii). Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press. [See [Blackboard](#)]
 - Brown, J. S., & Duguid P. (2000a). Introduction: Tunneling ahead. In *The social life of information*, 1st ed. (pp. 1-10). Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press. (Republished in *First Monday* 5(4). Retrieved from <http://www.firstmonday.dk/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/737/646>)
3. Technology in Community
 - Marx, L. (2010). Technology: The emergence of a hazardous concept. *Technology and Culture*, 51(3), 561-577. [Accessible via the Baruch College Library ([link](#))]
 - Brown, J. S., & Duguid P. (2000b). Limits to limitation. In *The social life of information*, 1st ed. (pp. 11-34). Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press. (Republished in *First Monday* 5(4). Retrieved from <http://www.firstmonday.dk/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/738/647>)
 - *Cairncross, F. (2001). Preface; The Trendspotter's guide to new communications. In *The death of distance: How the communications revolution is changing our lives*, paperback ed. (pp. ix-xvii). Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press. [See [Blackboard](#)]
4. No class
5. Information and Technology
 - Kline, R. (2006). Cybernetics, management science, and technology policy: The Emergence of "information technology" as a keyword, 1948-1985. *Technology and Culture*, 47(3), 513-535. [Accessible via the Baruch College Library ([link](#))]
 - Mathew, A. J., & Cheshire, C. (2017). Risky business: Social trust and community in the practice of cybersecurity for internet infrastructure. In *Proceedings of the 50th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (pp. 2341-50). Waikoloa, HI, USA. [Accessible here: <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/41438>]
 - *Brown, J. S., & Duguid P. (2017). Reassessing the social. In *The social life of information*, 2nd ed. (pp. xi-xxvi). Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press. [See [Blackboard](#)]
6. People and Systems



- Ackerman, M. (2000). The intellectual challenge of CSCW: The gap between social requirements and technical feasibility. *Human–Computer Interaction*, 15(2-3), 179-203. [Accessible via the Baruch College Library ([link](#))]
- Norman, D. A. (2009). Cautious cars and cantankerous kitchens. In *The design of future things* (pp. 1-34). New York: Basic Books. [Accessible via the Baruch College Library ([link](#))]
- *Geiger, R. S., & Ribes, D. (2010). The work of sustaining order in Wikipedia: The banning of a vandal. In *Proceedings of the 2010 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work* (pp. 117–126). New York: Association for Computing Machinery. [Accessible here: <http://stuartgeiger.com/papers/cscw-sustaining-order-wikipedia.pdf>]

7. Ethics in Information

- Taylor, F. W. (1919). Fundamentals of scientific management. In *The principles of scientific management* (pp. 9-29). New York: Harper & Brothers. [Accessible here: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/coo1.ark:/13960/t3gx4w556>].
- Kitchin, R. (2014). Ethical, political, social and legal concerns. In *The data revolution: Big data, open data, data infrastructures & their consequences* (pp. 165-183). London: SAGE Publications. [See [Blackboard](#)]
- *Brin, S., & Page, L. (1998). The anatomy of a large-scale hypertextual web search engine. Retrieved from: <http://infolab.stanford.edu/~backrub/google.html>

8. Review

9. Exam

10. Spring Break

11. Social Media

- Gehl, R.W. (2015). The case for alternative social media. *Social Media + Society*, 1(2): 1-12. [Accessible via the Baruch College Library ([link](#))]
- Gillespie, T. (2010). The politics of ‘platforms.’ *New Media & Society*, 12(3): 409-425. [Accessible via the Baruch College Library ([link](#))]
- *Confessore, N., Dance, G. J. X., Harris, R., & Hansen, M. (2018, January 27). The follower factory. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/01/27/technology/social-media-bots.html>

12. Algorithms

- Friedman, B., & Nissenbaum, H. (1996). Bias in computer systems. *ACM Transactions on Information Systems* 14(3): 330–47. [Accessible via the Baruch College Library ([link](#))]
- Christian, B., & Griffiths, T. (2015a). Introduction: Algorithms to live by. In *Algorithms to live by: The computer science of human decisions* (pp. 1-8). New York: Henry Holt. [See [Blackboard](#)]
- *Christian, B., & Griffiths, T. (2015b). Optimal stopping: When to stop looking. In *Algorithms to live by: The computer science of human decisions* (pp. 9-30). New York:



Henry Holt. [See [Blackboard](#)]

13. Advertising

- Reddy, M. (1979). The conduit metaphor. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and thought* (pp. 284-324). New York: Cambridge University Press. [See [Blackboard](#)]
- Vertesi, J., & Dourish, P. (2011). The value of data: Considering the context of production in data economies. In *Proceedings of the 2011 ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work* (pp. 533-42). New York: Association for Computing Machinery. [Accessible via the Baruch College Library ([link](#))]
- *O'Neil, C. (2016a). Arms race. In *Weapons of math destruction: How big data increases inequality and threatens democracy* (pp. 50-67). New York: Crow. [See [Blackboard](#)]

14. Values in Design

- Flanagan, M, Howe, D., & Nissenbaum, H. (2008). Embodying values in technology: theory and practice. In E. van den Hoven & J. Weckert (Eds.), *Information technology and moral philosophy* (pp. 322-54). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [See [Blackboard](#)]
- *O'Neil, C. (2016b). Propaganda machine. In *Weapons of math destruction: How big data increases inequality and threatens democracy* (pp. 68-83). New York: Crow. [See [Blackboard](#)]

15. News

- Silverman, C. (2015a). What we know about the what, how, and why of rumors. In *Lies, damn lies, and viral content* (pp. 17-56). New York: Tow Center for Digital Journalism. [Accessible here: http://towcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/LiesDamnLies_Silverman_TowCenter.pdf]
- Silverman, C. (2015d). Conclusions and recommendations. In *Lies, damn lies, and viral content* (pp. 141-153). New York: Tow Center for Digital Journalism. [Accessible here: http://towcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/LiesDamnLies_Silverman_TowCenter.pdf]
- *Silverman, C. (2015b). Rumor and debunking, part A. In *Lies, damn lies, and viral content* (pp. 57-68). New York: Tow Center for Digital Journalism. [Accessible here: http://towcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/LiesDamnLies_Silverman_TowCenter.pdf]
- *Silverman, C. (2015c). The alarming dissonance between headlines and body text. In *Lies, damn lies, and viral content* (pp. 99-109). New York: Tow Center for Digital Journalism. [Accessible here: http://towcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/LiesDamnLies_Silverman_TowCenter.pdf]

16. Review

17. Exam

