Information Systems
PhD Research Seminar
Winter 2023

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is intended to deepen students’ understanding of the philosophical, theoretical, and empirical foundations of the social research on technology. The course involves reading and discussion of a set of classic, seminal papers covering major topics in information systems, supplemented by relevant research in organization theory, strategy, organizational behavior, operations management, international business, etc. The course emphasizes the integration of diverse literatures and the application of different perspectives. Students are encouraged to identify their research topics, and leverage this course to explore and develop their own ideas.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
• Internalize a set of core literature related to technology, organization, and strategy
• Identify and evaluate potential research topics for further in-depth study
• Integrate different research streams to form a theoretical foundation

COURSE ACTIVITIES
• This is a seminar, which means that it is based on active class interaction. Students are expected to come to class fully prepared to discuss all the readings on a particular topic. Class participation grades will be allocated on the basis of both the quality and quantity of contribution.
• Students are required to lead and facilitate several class sessions during the course of the semester. This involves activity before, during, and after the class session. Before the class session, all students should become familiar with all the readings for that class and prepare themes and questions for class discussion. During the class session, the student will provide a 10 - 15 minute overview of the important themes and issues raised by the readings, will then facilitate a discussion of these and related topics for the remainder of the session, including closing the session in the last 10 - 15 minutes of the class. Grades for facilitating a session will depend on the level of preparation, framing of overview and summary, and quality of discussion facilitated.

• For each session, each student is also required to find two recent publications from a major outlet, and discuss the connection between the identified papers and the required reading. Such connection can include: how the identified publications apply, integrate, extend, and/or contradict the readings that week. Students are expected to send their found papers 36 hours before the class to all classmates. All students need to skim the papers received from other classmates and be prepared to participate in discussions during class.

• Each student will prepare two reaction papers on assigned readings. These 1-page (single space) papers are due at the beginning of each class, and are intended to evoke some thoughtful consideration of the material read, for example, exploring an issue or concept in greater depth, raising some theoretical or empirical questions, comparing and contrasting approaches or findings across the readings, etc. Students also need to present and discuss your reaction paper during the session.

• After submitting the reaction paper, each student is responsible for preparing takeaways after the corresponding class. The takeaways should summarize thoughts and ideas developed during class discussion. Takeaways can be short - less than 1 page would be sufficient - and submitted to the professor after the class.

• To integrate course material, students will write a 20-page research proposal paper, which is due at the end of the term. This paper provides an opportunity for students to reflect upon and integrate ideas across sessions. The paper should formulate an interesting research question on technology in organizations and society and position the research question within background literature. Unlike a standard research proposal, the paper should conclude with only a very short methodology section that identifies possible venues for gathering data to address research question.
GRADING AND METHODS OF EVALUATION

- Leading Class Discussion: 15%
- Discussing Latest Papers: 10%
- Class Participation: 10%
- Pre-class Reaction Papers: 10%
- Post-class Takeaways: 10%
- Research Proposal Paper: 45%

PLAGIARISM / ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.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).

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western’s Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page http://www.music.uwo.ca, and our own McIntosh Gallery http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca.

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html.

To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/education/module.html. This module is 30 minutes in length and provides participants with a basic understanding of mental health issues and of available campus and community resources. Topics include stress, anxiety, depression, suicide and eating disorders. After successful completion of the module, participants receive a certificate confirming their participation.
DETAILED SESSION SCHEDULE

SESSION 1: Understanding Philosophical Foundations

Readings:


Su, N. “Positivist Qualitative Methods,” In Catherine Cassell, Ann Cunliffe, and Gina Grandy (Eds.), The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods, Sage, 2018: 17-32.


SESSION 2: Conceptualizing Technology

Readings:


SESSION 3: Designing Technology - I

Readings:


SESSION 4: Designing Technology - II

Readings:


SESSION 5: Technology Adoption

Readings:

SESSION 6: Technology and Communication

Readings:
SESSION 7: Technology and Culture

Readings:

SESSION 8: Technology and Knowledge

Readings:
SESSION 9: Technology and Capability

Readings:


SESSION 10: Technology and Strategy

Readings:


SESSION 11: Organizational Design

Readings:

SESSION 12-13: Reflection, Wrap-Up, and Presentation

Readings: