

IDS 2751

Privacy in the Digital Age

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Spring 2025
- T 4 / R 4-5
- Weimer 1076 / McCarty 3194

Instructor

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Course Description

Examines the concept of privacy, the effects of surveillance, the societal roles of data aggregation, and ways data is used to shape human behavior and social structures. Introduces students to qualitative analysis methods in social science research and their utility in a variety of disciplines.

Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 2
- Social & Behavioral Sciences
- Writing Requirement (WR) 4000 words

This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

The possibility of privacy is today 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 and associations. Our digital searches for information reveal our vacation plans, our health concerns, our hobbies, and our political opinions. An unprecedented level of surveillance in our daily lives places enormous amounts of personal information in the hands of companies and governments directly or through 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 the presence of the IoT we are often unable to draw any line between what we wish to keep private and what we are willing to make public, and our relationships with fellow humans and institutions are altered in ways we may not anticipate. More importantly, all this data can 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 examine through case analysis and qualitative study the effects a lack of privacy creates for individuals and for social structures. The pressing question for the digital age and this class has two parts: why does individual privacy matter? and how can a society built on ubiquitous use of personal data protect individuals and societies from abuses of power through use of aggregated data? Multidisciplinary course materials are included from the disciplines of psychology, political science, history, economics, and data science.

Required Readings and Works

- *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 might wish to purchase a copy.)
- The Chicago Manual of Style (17th edition) – <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>
- Other reading materials (assigned journal articles, chapters from books, pdfs, links to websites) will be provided through the class eLearning course shell, the university library, and a few documentaries from the PBS series FRONTLINE will be shown during two-hour class.

II. Graded Work

Description of Graded Work

Assignment	Description	Requirements	Points
Quizzes	Short quizzes will be given on assigned readings on the day they are due for discussion.	On Canvas to be completed prior to discussion of the reading.	100
Exam	This exam will cover the readings, lectures, and documentary film content from the course.	Exam is given on paper during class	150

Personal Data Privacy Audit & Analysis	Follow the directions for the data privacy audit of your behavior (both online and when engaged with real time data collection devices), then chart and analyze data on how you have been surveilled and assess your level of data privacy. See assignment description in Canvas for methods of collecting data.	750 words Chicago style	100
Case Analysis Reports	Provide your analysis of the privacy issues connected to each focus area covered in the readings: 1. Sharing, Search & Manipulation; 2. Health Data Privacy; 3. Privacy, Policing & Politics; and 4. Internet of Things.	500-Word Case Analysis Reports (4 @ 25 points each)	100
Research Proposal	Write a MEMO proposing your research question, methodological approach, and annotated source list for the Critical Analysis / Research Report.	Chicago Style	100
Critical Analysis Research Report	Write a critical analysis of a specific privacy challenge in the digital age beginning with what you have learned in this class and through your own study of the topic. Your own original critical analysis will be a qualitative study following one of these methodological types: qualitative analysis of recent privacy legislation/regulation, phenomenological study of human behavior and level of knowledge about surveillance, or case study using interview or survey methods.	1500 Words Chicago Style	300
Infographic Presentation	Create an informative infographic using Canva that is written for the general public and explains the privacy challenge you researched and the best solution(s) to that privacy challenge. In the oral presentation during our class mini-conference on the Thursday prior to Thanksgiving, you will present your infographic and reflect on what you learned by doing this project and on your role in the process of academic inquiry and practical problem solving.	Canva Infographic & Presentation	100
Reflection MEMO	Students will reflect on what they've learned during their research project and from the materials, lectures, and discussions in the course and evaluate if and how what They have learned will help them navigate their future.	250 Words Chicago Style	50

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academicregulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 – 100%		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

Grading Rubric(s)

Writing Assessment Rubric and Statements

	SATISFACTORY (Y) (74% - 100%)	UNSATISFACTORY (N) (0-73.9%)
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 AND 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 AND 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 of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
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.
- The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback before the end of the course 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.

III. Annotated Weekly Schedule

2. Weekly Course Schedule (Due dates may be changed in Canvas.)

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Work Due
Thurs → Tues			
<u>Week 1</u>	Topic	Privacy & Surveillance -- Introduction	
	Summary	The political and socio-economic conditions that shape privacy rights and how those conditions are evolving under surveillance capitalism.	
	Readings/Works	<p>Reading: “Privacy matters...or does it? Algorithms, rationalization, and the erosion of concern for privacy” <i>Current opinion in psychology</i>. 2020 (31) pp. 44-48</p> <p>Reading: "Privacy in the digital age: comparing and contrasting individual versus social approaches towards privacy" <i>Ethics and Information Technology</i> (2019) 21:307–317</p> <p>Reading: “Being observed in the digital era: conceptualization and scale development of the perception of being observed” <i>Psychology & Marketing</i> 2022 (39) pp.1992-2008</p> <p>Viewing: The Facebook Dilemma (Part One) 55 minutes</p>	
	Assignment	Read the Syllabus & Complete Assigned Readings by Quiz #1	8/25 8/26
<u>Week 2</u>	Topic	Psychology of the Surveilled	
	Summary	Philosophies that shape our understanding of privacy and the acceptable limits of surveillance as well as the effects of surveillance on human behavior.	

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Work Due
	Readings/Works	<p>Reading: “Bentham, Deleuze and beyond: an overview of surveillance theories from the panopticon to participation” <i>Philosophy & Technology</i>. 2019 (30) pp. 9-37</p> <p>Reading: “The right not to be subjected to AI profiling based on publicly available data—privacy and the exceptionalism of AI profiling” <i>Philosophy & Technology</i> 2023 (36:14) pp. 1-22</p> <p>Viewing: The Facebook Dilemma (Part Two) 54 minutes</p>	
	Assignment	<p>Complete Assigned Readings by</p> <p>Quiz #2</p> <p>Data Privacy Audit Paper Due</p>	<p>9/1</p> <p>9/2</p> <p>9/4</p>
<u>Week 3</u>	Topic	Economic Motivations for Surveillance	
	Summary	Who benefits from privacy protections and who benefits from surveillance, and how does this economic benefit shape information ecosystems? The Digital Privacy Audit will be introduced so that students can begin collecting data on their online behaviors and analyzing how much surveillance data about their activity is collected.	
	Readings/Works	<p>Reading: “Situating methods in the magic of big data and AI” <i>Communication Monographs</i> 2018 (85:1) pp. 57-80</p> <p>Reading: “Measuring user confidence in social media security and privacy” <i>Education for Information</i> 2021 (37) pp. 427-442</p> <p>Reading: “Privacy Laws and Privacy by Design Schemes for the Internet of Things: A Developer’s Perspective.” <i>ACM Computing Surveys</i> 54, no. 5 (2021): 1–38</p>	
	Assignment	<p>Complete Assigned Readings by</p> <p>Quiz #3</p>	<p>9/8</p> <p>9/9</p>

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Work Due
<u>Week 4</u>	Topic	Sharing, Search & Manipulation	
	Summary	This week we will discuss the commodification of surveillance and the use of specific rhetorical and technological tools in that process.	
	Readings/Works	Reading: “The search engine manipulation effect (SEME) and its possible impact on the outcomes of elections” 2015 (8) pp. E4512-E4521 Reading: “Can Biased Search Results Change People’s Opinions about Anything at All? A Close Replication of the Search Engine Manipulation Effect (SEME).” PLoS ONE 19 (3): 1–17	
	Assignment	Complete Assigned Readings by Quiz #4 Case Analysis 1 – Search Manipulation	9/15 9/16 9/18
<u>Week 5</u>	Topic	Health Data Privacy	
	Summary	Lecture will add to the reading with cases involving 23&Me as crime lab, reverse engineering patient identities from an aggregate blind data source, and other challenges to privacy in online health care.	
	Readings/Works	Reading: “Privacy and artificial intelligence: challenges for protecting health information in a new era” 2021 (22) BMC Medical Ethics pp. 1-5 Reading: “Health Care Privacy Risks of AI Chatbots.” JAMA 330, no. 4 (2023): 311–12 Reading: “AI, Machine Learning, and Ethics in health care” <i>Journal of Legal Medicine</i> (39) pp. 427-441	
	Assignment	Complete Assigned Readings by Quiz #5 Case Analysis 2 – Health Data & Privacy	9/22 9/23 9/25
Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Work Due
<u>Week 6</u>	Topic	Privacy & Policing with AI	
	Summary	The impact of recent surveillance mechanisms on a variety of human institutions impacted by the changing relationships among corporations, governments, people, and things.	

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Work Due
	Readings/Works	<p>Reading: “Surveillance, Privacy, and Law Enforcement in the Digital Era.” <i>Journal of Policy & Law</i> 45, no. 2 (2023): 134-159</p> <p>Reading: “Predictive Policing: Review of Benefits and Drawbacks.” <i>International Journal of Public Administration</i>, 42(12), 1031–1039</p> <p>Viewing: Global Spyware Scandal: Exposing Pegasus (Part 1 54 min.)</p>	
	Assignment	<p>Complete Assigned Readings by Quiz #6</p> <p>Case Analysis 3 – Privacy & Policing</p>	<p>9/29</p> <p>9/30</p> <p>10/2</p>
Week 7	Topic	Governance in the Age of AI	
	Summary	How security and privacy impacts of the ubiquity of internet-connected devices alters power structures and presents risks to individuals and human institutions, often affecting human potential for agency.	
	Readings/Works	<p>Reading: DeNardis pp. 3-58</p> <p>Viewing: Global Spyware Scandal: Exposing Pegasus (Part 2 -- 54 min.)</p>	
	Assignment	<p>Complete Assigned Readings by Quiz #7</p>	<p>10/6</p> <p>10/7</p>
Week 8	Topic	Internet of Things & Surveillance	
	Summary	The global nature of the threats to cyber-physical systems and the IoT and the importance of structural “privacy by design” principles.	
	Readings/Works	Reading: DeNardis pp. 59-162	
	Assignment	<p>Complete Assigned Readings by Quiz #8</p> <p>Case Analysis 4 – IoT & Privacy by Design</p>	<p>10/13</p> <p>10/14</p> <p>10/16</p>
Week 9	Topic	<i>Rethinking Internet Freedom & Governance</i>	
	Summary	Risks inherent in the commodification and weaponization of predictive behavioral data and hacked access to the IoT and what should be done.	
	Readings/Works	Reading: DeNardis pp. 163-230	
	Assignment	<p>Complete Assigned Reading by Quiz #9</p>	<p>10/20</p> <p>10/21</p>

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Work Due
<u>Week 10</u>	Topic	Living with <i>The Internet in Everything</i>	
	Summary	How do we respond to privacy risks in light of what we've learned about the integration of this technology throughout human socioeconomic systems?	
	Readings/Works	Viewing: In the Age of AI (1:54 run time) Research sources chosen for individual projects and the Social Science Research Methods Introduction. Students will begin topic development for their critical analysis research paper.	
	Assignment	Exam	10/30
<u>Week 11</u>	Topic	Qualitative Social Science Research Methods	
	Summary	Students will prepare for the exam by reviewing their reading notes, lecture notes, and prior graded quizzes.	
	Readings/Works	Reading: "The science of scientific communication." American Scientist. (pdf, 12 pages) Additional research sources located by student or shared by instructor based on student's chosen focus area as well as collection and analysis of original survey or interview data if student's project design requires it.	
	Assignment	Research Proposal Complete Assigned Reading by Quiz #10	11/4 11/5 11/6
<u>Week 12</u>	Topic	Qualitative Social Science Research Methods	
No Class on Tuesday = Veteran's Day (11 th month, 11 th day, 11 th hour Armistice signed for WW1)	Summary	Social science study methods and tools for data collection and analysis will be reviewed, including use of Qualtrics. Students will be collecting and synthesizing research sources for the introduction and methodological description of their critical analysis research paper.	
	Readings/Works	Additional research sources based on student's chosen research focus area and methodology.	

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)	Work Due
<u>Week 13</u>	Topic	Qualitative Social Science Research Methods (Applied)	
	Summary	Workshop session will focus on clear science writing and creating effective infographics for communicating with the general public about the digital privacy issues each student examines in their research project. Mini-Conference Infographic Session Part 1. (ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED FOR BOTH SESSIONS FOR FULL CREDIT ON THE ASSIGNMENT.)	
	Readings/Works	Additional research sources located by student or shared by instructor based on student's chosen paper topics.	
	Assignment	Critical Analysis Paper / Research Report Infographic Presentations @ Assigned Time	11/18 11/20
Thanksgiving Holiday Break			
<u>Week 15</u>	Topic	Reflection & Conclusions	
	Summary	MEMO with reflection on what student learned through their research project, their search for solution(s), and the course content. Complete course review. Mini-Conference Infographic Session Part 2. (ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED FOR BOTH SESSIONS FOR FULL CREDIT ON THE ASSIGNMENT.)	
	Readings/Works	https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/	
	Assignment	Reflection MEMO Infographic Presentations @ Assigned Time	12/2 12/2

IV. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Course Learning Outcomes

- ✦ Students will be able to identify, explain, and analyze how economic, psychological, and legal aspects of society are changing in the digital age and how social scientists are analyzing these changes. Students will analyze the interdisciplinary nature of privacy concerns and how different social science disciplines approach these problems.
- ✦ Students will reflect on their own digital privacy practices and how individual decision-making can be affected by surveillance structures. Students will also compose a reflection statement evaluating what they learned from their work for this class and advocate for their preferred solution to the privacy issue they researched in a poster session.
- ✦ Students will be able to apply social science knowledge and use qualitative analysis methods in their own research project on a specific issue related to privacy with critical awareness of prior work in these areas that identifies appropriate limitations and influences.

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) learning outcomes as follows:

Content: *Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).*

- **Social and Behavioral Sciences**

- ✦ **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 question. [Assessments: 10 Quizzes, 1 Exam, 4 Brief Case Analysis Reports, Research Proposal, Critical Analysis Research Report]

Critical Thinking: *Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).*

- **Social and Behavioral Sciences**

- ✦ **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. [Assessments: 10 Quizzes, 1 Exam, 4 Brief Case Analysis Reports, Research Proposal, Critical Analysis Research Report, Infographic]

Communication: *Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).*

- **Social and Behavioral Sciences & Quest 2**
 - ✦ **Develop and present** in clearly written prose and well-articulated oral presentation their own analysis and potential solution(s) for a specific privacy challenge. [Critical Analysis Research Report, Infographic, Oral presentation]

Connection: *Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.*

- **Quest 2**
 - ✦ **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. [Personal Data Privacy Audit Report, Reflection MEMO, Oral Presentation]

V. Quest Learning Experiences

1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

This course includes an experiential learning component that engages students in researching a digital privacy issue, developing a research question to examine, choosing an appropriate method for answering their research question, collecting their own data, analyzing that data, and presenting their findings in an original report on their research. Students may choose to interview an individual with relevant experiences, survey participants about their knowledge and behavior, or use other methods of qualitative analysis appropriate to their research interests.

2. Details of Self-Reflection Component

This course includes two graded self-reflection components. The first is a personal audit of their online practices and the variety of ways that they are surveilled. Using data from their phones and other devices as well as online sources that can help them understand how data collection on their behaviors might be used, students assess their personal privacy risks. The second is the oral presentation component of their infographic presentation which requires that they both present what they believe are the best solutions to the challenges they researched and reflect on the impact of the course on their privacy expectations, data practices and future plans. Students are encouraged to choose research topics overlapping with the privacy issues in their major field of study.

VI. Required Policies

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required and will be taken at the start of class. Quizzes will also be given at the start of class. Be on-time and courteous of others if arriving late. (Do not enter class while a quiz is being administered.) **Excused** absences will be permitted for documented illness, university sponsored

performances, and religious holidays as per UF policies. Excessive **unexcused** absences (more than 3) will result in a **grade penalty of 10 points per unexcused absence on your final course grade**. (There are 1000 total course points for course assignments.) Also, you will not be permitted to make-up work that you failed to complete due to an UNEXCUSED absence. If your absence is EXCUSED, then you will discuss with the instructor a revised deadline for submission of the work as soon as possible. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

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.

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/>.

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 Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. *See the UF Conduct Code website for more information.* If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/> , 3921575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

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.

In-Class Recordings

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.