Proposal For Listing an Existing Course as Writing Intensive

Media Studies 362W: Surveillance

# SURVEILLANCE

# Fall 2021 PROF. RICHARD MAXWELL

MEDIA STUDIES 362W

**Course Description**:

Surveillance systems spread through digital media technologies, from social media and online consumption to military and strategic government networks. This course examines the variety and scale of this surveillance in the US and its relation to global data trade, the uses of surveillance for social organization and control, as well as questions of information ownership, human and civil rights, and public policy concerning privacy and data protection. These themes are explored through classroom discussion, analytical writing projects, exercises, and screenings of relevant film and TV clips.

This is a writing intensive course. Each student produces approximately 15-20 pages of original writing in two research based papers. Students are expected to discuss their work in class and in consultation with the Professor with the aim of revising and improving essays. Students will also read and comment on a classmate’s writing.

Requirements and Grading. All assignments must be completed and turned in on time in order to receive credit. **Late assignments will receive an F without a chance for rewriting or extra credit**. Academic dishonesty—such as plagiarism, cheating, buying or selling terms papers—is subject to discipline, including but not limited to failure in the course and suspension or dismissal from the College. Incompletes are not available in this course except in extraordinary cases. Your grade will be assessed as follows:

Reading Discussion Leadership (20%)

Overall Class Participation (15%)

Introductory Research Exercise (15%)

Two Papers (25% each)

**Reading Discussion Leadership**. Students will be assigned to discussion leadership groups that will alternate responsibility for initiating and leading class discussion. Criteria: clear demonstration of your understanding of the readings and positive initiation of engaged discussion gets an A.

**Class Participation**: Each week each student will prepare a summary of the weekly reading assignment to prepare for class discussion. Class participation is essential for achieving the goals of this class. Grading Criteria: Based on the quantity and quality of the student’s contribution to furthering class discussion about course themes and the writing process.

**Writing Assignments**. Two essays, each addressing a problem selected by the Professor outlined in a take home assignment.

**The Writing Process**. Students will submit the very best version of their paper for review by a fellow classmate and for review and grading by the professor. Students will revise and edit their papers for resubmission to the Professor. Students are expected to strive for perfect writing in both first and second submissions. Rough drafts are not permitted and will be seriously downgraded—this means students must submit papers that they think are perfect. This is essential if you are to learn about your own writing process and push yourself to a higher level of writing quality. Each version of each essay will receive a grade, the highest grade will be the only one counted. The first version must be turned in with the second.

## TEXTBOOKS

John Gilliom and Torin Monahan. *SuperVision* (U Chicago Press 2012) **Gilliom & Monahan**

David Lyon. *Surveillance After Snowden* (Polity Press 2015) **Lyon**

Frank Pascuale. *The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms that Control Money and Information* (Harvard University Press, 2015). **Pascuale**

**Additional Readings Will Be Placed on Reserve.**

### **WEEKLY THEMES AND READINGS**

## Week/Dates

1/ Aug. 27 Introduction to major themes

**Hand out:** **Assignment #1: Introductory exercise: metaphors of surveillance.**

#### Part 1 Surveillance Society

2/ Sept. 3 Surveillance and Everyday Life (Group 1 leads discussion)

Read Gilliom & Monahan, Intro, Ch 1-3

Exercise: How many CCTV cameras did you spot in a day?

**DUE: Assignment #1**

3/ Sept. 10 Surveillance and Institutional Life (Group 2 leads discussion)

Read: Gilliom & Monahan Ch. 4-6 and conclusion

Exercise: Have you ever had to fight to correct false personal information?

**Hand out**: **Essay #1 research question**

4/ Sept. 17 After 9-11, Snowden, & Cambridge Analytica (Group 3 leads discussion)

Read: Lyon Ch. 1-2; McChesney, *Catalyst* interview (pdf)

Exercise: On Writing

5/ Sept 24 Surveillance Capitalism (Group 4 leads discussion)

Read: Bellamy Foster and McChesney, “Surveillance Capitalism;” and Zuboff, “The Secrets of Surveillance Capitalism”

Exercise: On Critique of Writing

**DUE: First version of essay assignment for distribution to classmates**

6/ Oct. 15 Some Theory and History (Group 1 leads discussion)

Read: Foucault, “Panopticism;” Mattelart, “Surveillance: Delinqency as a Political Observatory.”

Exercise: On What Works and Doesn’t in Student Paper Drafts

**DUE: Return classmate’s essays with comments and suggestions**

##### Part 2 Possibilities of Surveillance

7/ Oct. 22 Algorithmic Control over Reputations (Group 2 leads discussion)

Read: Pascuale, Ch. 2; Lyon, Ch. 3; Mistreanu, “Life Inside China’s Social Credit Laboratory.”

**DUE: Essay #1 to Prof**

8/ Oct. 29 Interlocking Systems of Digital Surveillance (Group 3 leads discussion)

Read: Pascuale, Ch. 3; Christl, Ch. 3, “Relevant players within the business of personal data.” (pdf)

**Hand out:** **Essay #2 research question**

9/ Nov. 5 The Power and Obscurity of Financial Algorithms (Group 4 leads discussion)

Read: Pascuale, Ch. 4; Lewis, “Michael Lewis Reflects …”

Exercise: How do you avoid surveillance?

**DUE: Resubmission to Prof of Essay #1 Revised—include first version**

##### Part 3 Privacy and Other Political Problems

10/ Nov. 12 The Problem of Privacy (Group 1 leads discussion)

Read: Lyon Ch. 4-5

Exercise: Social versus individual problems of privacy

11/ Nov. 19 Policing, Profiling and Racial Discrimination (Group 2 leads discussion)

Read: The Economist, “Data Detectives”; Heiden, “Broken Windows, Shattered Lives”; Angwin et al., “Machine Bias.”

**DUE: First version of Essay #2 for classmate review**

12/ Nov. 26 Resisting Surveillance, Watching the Watchers (Group 3 leads discussion)

Read: Gilliom, “Resisting Surveillance”; Pascuale, Ch. 5

Exercise: How do you avoid surveillance?

#### Part 4 Regulating Surveillance and Designing for Privacy

13/ Dec. 3 The Meaning of European Union Data Protection Law (Group 4 leads discussion)

Read: Garcia Sanz, “Your Guide to the GDPR”; Wired article on EU.

Recommended: General Data Protection Regulation (REGULATION (EU) 2016/679 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL) pdf.

**DUE: Essay #2 to Prof**

14/ Dec. 10 Designing Surveillance with a Privacy Blueprint (open discussion)

Read: Hartzog, “Part Three: Applying Privacy’s Blueprint.”

Exercise: How would you redesign the surveillance functions of media technologies?

15/ Dec 17 Finals Week

**DUE: Resubmission to Prof of Essay #2 Revised—include first version**

**MEDST 362W: Surveillance**

**Prof. Maxwell**

**Research Essay Assignment #1**

**Metaphors of Surveillance**

**Requirements:**

1. Write Definitions for: Big Brother (from Orwell’s 1984), Panopticism (from Bentham and Foucault), and Bureaucracy (from Kafka’s *The Trial).* You can use any source you want, but a good place to start is in this book by D Solove: <https://www.danielsolove.com/the-digital-person-2/> (see pages 27-42).
2. Which metaphor best describes American society and why? Don’t relate to your individual experience. Keep your explanation focused on societal level.
3. Which metaphor resonates with your personal experience?

**Page minimum:** 7 pages of text plus the bibliography; double spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font.

**Grading criteria:**

F—Late or plagiarized

D—Fails to complete requirements for C

C—Complete all 3 sections. One or two writing errors.

B—Satisfies requirements for a C without writing errors.

A—Satisfies requirements for a B and demonstrates extra effort to find multiple sources that enhance the clarity, thinking, and explanation.

**MEDST 362W: Surveillance**

**Prof. Maxwell**

**Research Essay Assignment #2**

**DUE DATES:** First revised version for Prof. Maxwell is due Dec. 3, 2021. Second revised version (if needed) for Prof. Maxwell is due on Dec. 17, 2021.

**Topic:** The company **Palantir is the main focus**. This is an essay about private surveillance companies contracted by the government, with a specific focus on ICE, immigration, and border surveillance.

**Your paper:** will identify and analyze the role of Palantir in the policing of populations in the United States, with specific examples drawn from 10 sources on the company’s role in immigration, border surveillance, and surveillance of immigrant populations within the US.

**Page minimum:** 7 pages of text plus the bibliography; double spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font.

**Source minimum:** 10 distinct sources.

**Here are 5 links to help you get started**.

How ICE Picks Its Targets in the Surveillance Age

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/02/magazine/ice-surveillance-deportation.html?smid=tw-nytimes&smtyp=cur>

Private Surveillance Is a Lethal Weapon Anybody Can Buy

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/19/opinion/private-surveillance-industry.html?action=click&module=Well&pgtype=Homepage&section=Opinion>

The Spy Business Is Booming and We Should Be Worried

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/20/opinion/sunday/the-spy-business-is-booming-and-we-should-be-worried.html?action=click&module=privacy%20belt%20recirc%20module&pgtype=Article>

Mijente’s website and Palantir

<https://mijente.net/?s=Palantir>

Revealed: This Is Palantir’s Top-Secret User Manual for Cops

<https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/9kx4z8/revealed-this-is-palantirs-top-secret-user-manual-for-cops>

Grading criteria:

F—Late or plagiarized

D—Fails to complete requirements for C

C—Complete all 3 sections. One or two writing errors per page

B—Satisfies requirements for a C without writing errors

A—Satisfies requirements for a B and demonstrates extra effort to find multiple sources that enhance clarity, thinking, and explanation.