CULS 5413 User-Generated Content & Digital Culture
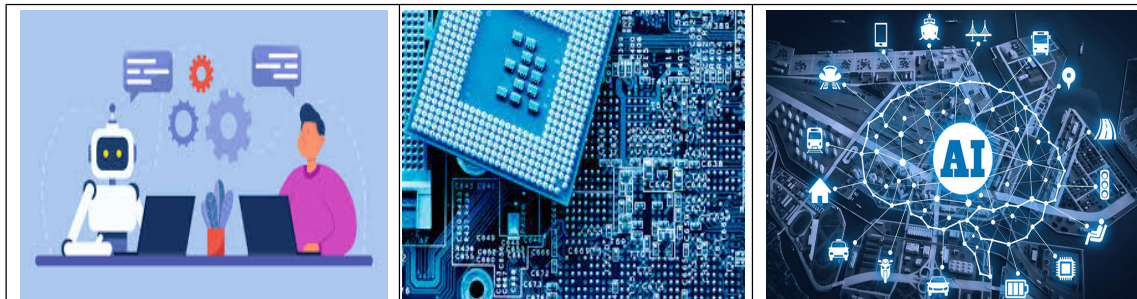## Semester 1 2024/2025

Lecturer: Dr. Peichi Chung

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Venue: Office: Room 319 Leung Kau Kui BLDG

Date: Thursdays 18:45 – 21:30

Venue: FYB 405

Course Description:

This course introduces intercultural research of user-generated content in today's data society. The aim of this course is to cultivate students' ability to critically understand the working of culture in the globally connected electronic world. Students are expected to apply cultural theories to realize the meaning of their digital presence through the use of social media. The course includes three sections. The first section includes introduction of history and academic background to learn about the working of culture in the emerging computational world. The second section focuses on discussion of concepts related to user-generated content and digital culture enabled by AI-powered technologies. We will cover important new media phenomena to evaluate terms such as data literacy, digital labor, participatory creativity, networked community and data governance and etc. The third section focuses on specific cases to present ways that platform data shape people's lives nowadays. The course studies cultural implications of user-generated data in the platform media of Tinder, Youtube, Google and Twitch. The class presents new research direction on mobile technology and guide students to evaluate the meanings of subculture, human agency, multiculturalism, stereotype, hybridity and surveillance through technology in the form of big data. Students are expected to cultivate critical ability to examine the value of knowledge learnt in this course. We will challenge problems raised in the examination process when students approach theory and method in their own projects. The course provides a new approach toward understanding computation, digital culture and user-generated content. The final goal of this course is to encourage students to comprehend the many dimensions of culture, to understand how cultural politics and power works and to realize the complicate roles of communication technology that emerge in the form of social data as we witness these data play an increasingly important role to impact meaning-making process of our lives in today's AI-driven society.

Learning Outcomes:

The learning outcomes of this course includes:

- Learn to honor and share their own digital culture while developing an understanding of many other cultures through their use and creation of new media
- Progress from a traditional understanding of media culture to learn with innovative thinking that recognizes the diversity of cultural activities engaged by users due to the progress of computational technology
- Demonstrate a balance of use in theory and method in the analysis of user-generated content when conducting intercultural research about social media

and big data
- Understand the power of an effective cultural producer on the internet

Course Assessment:

Attendance and participation	25%
Weekly lead discussion	20%
Social data workshop	10%
Final paper proposal	10%
Final presentation	10%
Final paper	25%
Total mark	100%

- Attendance and participation (25%): Your weekly presence to class lectures and regular participation for the entire semester in class discussion are the main factors to lead to your successful learning outcome of the class.

- Weekly lead discussion (20%): Students will work in groups to select one topic from week 4 to week 11 to do group presentation. The presentation format can be creative and the length of presentation is 20 minutes. Students should consult with the teacher and the TA to seek individual support. The presentation will include a case report that is related to the readings. Students should prepare questions and lead class discussion during their presented weeks.

- Social data workshop (10%): There will be a workshop on methods to study social data on week 3 (September 19, 2024). We will invite a guest speaker to share the trends of big data analysis and its implication to media cultural studies. The guest speaker will host a workshop to teach big data analysis softwares. Students are highly recommended to apply their learning of softwares to analyze data that are collected and analyzed in the final assignments. In addition, students are highly encouraged to take courses offered by the library to learn more new data analysis softwares.

- Final paper proposal (10%): Students will pair in groups to write a research proposal of their selected topics. Each group will constitute 2 members. The maximum length of the proposal is 3 pages doubled space with font size of 12. More guideline will be provided in class. The proposal is due on October 17, 2024 (week 7).

- Final paper presentation (10%): The students will present their final papers in the 12th and 13th weeks on November 21 and Nov 28, 2024. Specific presentation guideline will be announced in class.

- Final paper (25%): Students will write their final papers to conclude their learning for the semester. The topics should reflect their feedback to knowledge delivered in the class. Students are free to select their final paper topics. The language of use can be English or Chinese. The maximum number of word limit for the main section of the paper is 4,000 in English and 6,000 in Chinese, excluding title, chart, table, image and references, etc.

- Students are highly recommended to consult the teacher and TA as soon as possible whenever they encounter learning difficulties in the semester. We are happy to support and enhance learning interests of the students.

<p style="text-align:center">Course Syllabus</p>

<p style="text-align:center">(Final Version to be Available on the First Week of the New Semester)</p>

* Theme One: Cultural Studies and Big Data

Week 1: Introduction and Overview (Sept 5)

Lliadis, A. & Russo, F. (2016). "Critical data society: An introduction," *Journal of Big Data & Society* 3 (2): 1-7.

Week 2: Theory on Data Literacy: User Generated Content in Digital Economy (Sept 12)

Lobato, Ramon, Thomas, Julian & Hunter, Dan. (2011). "Histories of user-generated content: Between formal and informal media economies." *International Journal of Communication* 5: 899-914.
<http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/viewFile/981/568>

Van Dijck, Jose. (2013). Chapter One: Engineering Sociality in a Culture of Connectivity. In "The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media." Cambridge: Oxford University Press.

Week 3: Method: Social Data Workshop (Sept 19)

Anne Beaulieu (2016). Chapter 3. "Vectors for Fieldwork: Computational Thinking and New Modes of Ethnography." In Larissa Horjth et al (Eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Digital Ethnography*. Routlege: New York.

Workshop Title: To be announced.

➔ Students will be learning big data gathering skills in the workshop. The guest speaker will give a workshop on big data gathering skills through simple data analytic softwares. Students are also recommended to attend the library's research data workshop to enhance data analytic skills. The registration link is [here]:

** Theme Two: Issues on User-Created Content

Week 4: Digital Labor in Cultural Production (Sept 26)

Fuchs, Christian (2013). Class and Exploitation on the Internet. In *Digital Labor: The Internet As Playground and Factory*. (Ed.) Trebor Scholz. Pp. 211-224. New York: Routledge. < http://fuchs.uti.at/wp-content/CFdigitallabor.pdf>

Graham, Mark & Hjorth, Isis (2017). "Digital Labor and Development: Impact of Digital Labor Platforms and the Gig Economy on Worker Livelihood," *Transfer* 23(2): 135-162.

Week 5: Participatory Culture and Computational Creativity (Oct 3)

Jenkins, H. (2014). "Rethinking 'Rethinking Convergence Culture,'" *Journal of Cultural Studies* 28(2): 267-297.

Gunkel, David (2021). "Computational Creativity: Algorithm, Art and Artistry" In *The Routledge Handbook of Remix Studies and Digital Humanities*. New York:

Routledge.

Week 6: Self and Community (Oct 10)

Turkle, S. (2015). Chapters One and Two in *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*. New York: Penguin Press.

Week 7: Big Data and Governance (Oct 17)

West, Sarah M. (2019). "Data Capitalism: Redefining the Logics of Surveillance and Privacy", *Journal of Business and Society* 58(1): 20-41.

Mick Timmermana (2017). "The Political Effects of Algorithms: A Look at Facebook and Google." Diggit Magazine. Article Available at < https://www.diggitmagazine.com/papers/political-effects-algorithms>

➔ Final paper proposal due. Electronic submission to Blackboard.

*** Theme Three: Case Studies of Platform Media

Week 8: Gender Politics & Dating Apps (Oct 24)
Chan, Lik-Sam (2021). Chapters 1 and 4 in *The Politics of Dating Apps: Gender, Sexuality and Emerging Publics in Urban China*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Week 9: Algorithm & Youtube (Oct 31)

Kearn, Michael & Roth, Aaron (2020). Chapters 3 & 4 in *The Ethnical Algorithm: The Science of Socially Aware Algorithm Design*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Giansiracusa N. (2021) Autoplay the Autocrats. In: *How Algorithms Create and Prevent Fake News*. Apress, Berkeley, CA.

Week 10: Racial Representation & Google (Nov 7)

Noble, Safiya Umoja (2018). Chapter 6 in *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. New York: NYU Press.

 Chun, Wendy (2021). Introduction Chapter. In *Discriminating Data: Correlation, Neighborhoods and the New Politics of Recognition*. Boston, MA: The MIT Press.

Week 11: Playful Esports & Twitch (Nov 14)

Taylor, T. L. (2018). Chapters 3 In *Watch Me Play: Twitch and the Rise of Game Live Streaming*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Lin, Zhouxuan & Zhao, Yupei (2020). "Self-Enterprising eSports: Meritocracy, Precarity and Disposability of Esports Players in China", *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 23(4): 582-599.

Week 12: Student Presentations & Review (Nov 21)

Week 13: Student Presentations and Conclusion (Nov 28)

➔ Final Paper Due. Electronic Submission to Blackboard.

Honesty in Academic Work: A Guide for Students and Teachers:

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on honesty in academic work submitted by students, and adopts a policy of *zero tolerance* on cheating and plagiarism. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies at the University. Students must submit their assignments via
VeriGuide: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/veriguide.

Although cases of cheating or plagiarism are rare at the University, everyone should make himself/herself familiar with the content of this website and thereby help avoid any practice that would not be acceptable.

Section 1	What is plagiarism [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p01.htm]
Section 2	Proper use of source material [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p02.htm]
Section 3	Citation styles [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p03.htm]
Section 4	Plagiarism and copyright violation [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p04.htm]
Section 5	CUHK regulations on honesty in academic work [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p05.htm]
Section 6	CUHK disciplinary guidelines and procedures [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p06.htm]
Section 7	Guide for teachers and departments [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p07.htm]
Section 8	Recommended material to be included in course outlines [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p08.htm]
Section 9	Recommended declaration to be included in every assignment han in [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p09.htm]
Section 10	Electronic submission of term papers [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p10.htm]