



**Academic Year 2025-2026
Syllabus
Anthropology of Globalization
CFU 6
Prof Laura Brandimarte**

Course Description

This class explores the social, legal, cultural, and ethical implications of technology – social networks, apps, connected devices, algorithms, artificial intelligence and other new and evolving technologies have a profound impact on human culture and interactions. Contrasting perspectives are offered in the readings and explored through lectures, student presentations, and discussion. Special attention is given to issues of privacy and security, as the management of our online persona becomes more challenging and complex.

Living in a networked world generates significant, tangible benefits to the economy and to society as a whole, but at the same time it raises various social and ethical concerns which, while not always tangible or easy to measure, should be taken into consideration. In this course, we will study the privacy and security implications of various technologies, how to address them – both via further technological advances and regulation – as well as other ethical issues associated with them. We will discuss (potentially) privacy-intrusive and privacy-enhancing technologies, and what their respective properties and capabilities are; issues of commercial and government surveillance; recent developments in regulation; pros and cons of artificial intelligence-enabled products, service personalization, and algorithmic decision making. This course will give you a holistic view of privacy and security issues in the world of “big data.”

Teaching Method

The course is based on lectures introducing students to a variety of topics related to the impact of technologies on society. Lectures will be partially held online. Students actively collaborate and cooperate in their learning through group discussions, presentations, forums. Much of the content to be discussed is drawn from current or recent news, as ethical issues (both ordinary and extra-ordinary) of newer and older technologies abound in everyday life. Some topics to be covered are listed below, but students may collaborate in selecting topics of interest, suggesting to skip or add some.

Schedule of Topics

Topic 1	Privacy, Security, Anonymity
Topic 2	Privacy Intrusive Technologies
Topic 3	The Internet of Things
Topic 4	Privacy Enhancing Technologies
Topic 5	Non-Government Surveillance, Targeted Advertising
Topic 6	Government Surveillance
Topic 7	Hactivism
Topic 8	Research Ethics
Topic 9	Personalization and the Filter Bubble
Topic 10	Ethics of Algorithms and Artificial Intelligence
Topic 11	Ethics of Information Dissemination
Topic 12	Net Neutrality
Topic 13	Privacy Regulation
Topic 14	Privacy and Online Social Networks

Textbook and Materials

There is no required textbook – all reading material will be made available in digital format as the semester proceeds. In addition, each student will choose a book to read from the list below, and at the end of the semester everyone will present a final group project inspired by the book. More on this in the Assessment section.

List of books for the final project:

[AI Snake Oil](#), by Arvind Narayanan and Sayash Kapoor

[Power and Prediction](#), by Ajay Agrawal, Joshua Gans, and Avi Goldfarb

[Book of Anonymity](#), by Anon Collective

[Privacy is Hard and Seven Other Myths](#), by Jaap-Henk Hoepman

[The Voice Catchers](#), by Joseph Turow

[Living in Data](#), by Jer Thorp

[Atlas of AI](#), by Kate Crawford

[The New Breed: What Our History with Animals Reveals about Our Future with Robots](#), by Kate Darling

[The Shallows](#), by Nicholas Carr

[New Laws of Robotics](#), by Frank Pasquale

[The Black Box Society](#), by Frank Pasquale

[The Smarter Screen](#), by Shlomo Benartzi

[Machine, Platform, Crowd](#), by Andrew McAfee and Erik Brynjolfsson

[Click Here to Kill Everybody](#), by Bruce Schneier

[Irresistible](#), By Adam Alter

[The Sharing Economy](#), By Arun Sundararajan

[Uberland](#), by Alex Rosenblat

[Automating Inequality](#), by Virginia Eubanks

[The Age of Surveillance Capitalism](#), by Shoshana Zuboff

[Permanent Record](#), by Edward Snowden

[Everything is Obvious](#), by Duncan Watts

[Superintelligence](#), by Nick Bostrom

[Dark Data: Why What You Don't Know Matters](#), by David J. Hand

[The Ethical Algorithm](#), by Michael Kearns and Aaron Roth

[Artificial Unintelligence](#), by Meredith Broussard

[Algorithms of Oppression](#), by Safiya Umoja Noble

[Weapons of Math Destruction](#), by Cathy O'Neil

Assessment of Attending Students

This course involves many activities, some of them are recurring activities, others will only occur once.

One-off activities:

Presentations. Tentatively each week one or two groups of students are assigned or volunteer to work on a presentation (no longer than 10 minutes) on one of the recommended (i.e., not required) readings.

Assignment. There will be one assignment (an Information Diary) this semester in the form of a long essay.

Written exam. During the regular January exam session (3 short essay questions to be completed in 1 hour).

Final project. The final project is a creative effort based on the book you read. Being creative requires commitment and effort. Final projects can be research papers, stories, poems, cartoons, comics, videos, movies, paintings, board games, online games, websites, apps, hacking tools... pretty much anything creative you can think of. The topic of your final project needs to be based on the book you read, and in your final paper you will explain your project, how the book inspired it, and how your project is connected to the contents of the course. You will work in groups but each of you must read the entire book, or else it would be impossible to follow along and understand the message the book sends.

At the end of the semester, you will have 10 to 15 minutes to present your final project during class: we will adjust our schedule so every group can present.

Recurring activities:

Attendance. 80% attendance is required to be considered an attending student. Active participation is required by all in discussions during class meetings; infrequent or low-quality participation will lower the final grade.

Key questions about readings. Be prepared to pose a question about the current reading or topic, and to discuss it, at each class meeting. Put thought into a question that would enrich our face-to-face inquiry into the week's theme.

Most simply: do every assignment given to you, and do it in a better-than-perfunctory manner, and you will get at least a pass. Do every assignment in a more-or-less excellent fashion and you will get at least a 27.

In the table below, a grade percentage shows how grades will be distributed. The Instructor will be tracking your performance, but the numbers are not all there is to the story. Your grade will depend on the quality of your classroom participation, online group conversations, and demonstration of diligently engaging with the assignments and learning activities. You are also welcome to meet with the Instructor, remotely or in person, to get a sense of how you are performing and to brainstorm ways to improve during the semester. The Instructor is always available via email to discuss the course, issues related to the course content, and your learning.

Activities	% on Final Grade
Presentation	15%
Assignment	15%
Written Exam	35%
Final Project	35%

Assessment of Non-Attending students

Students who do not attend lectures (class attendance below 80%) will take a mandatory written exam based on the course material (5 short essay questions to be completed in 2 hours) and work on an individual final paper based on a book picked by the student from the list above.

Given that all students must put in the same amount of work for the course, non-attending students are required to compensate for their lack of class attendance by putting in more work for the final examination, hence, the above modalities for the assessment of non-attending students.

Office hours

Contact email address: lbrandimarte@arizona.edu

Contact the Instructor via email to schedule meetings.

NOTE: If you are an Erasmus or a non Global Governance student who would like to attend one or more courses in the Global Governance programme, please be aware that, before enrolling in the course, you should have read the code of conduct and the procedural rules characterizing our programme. We assume that, if you enrol in the course, you have read and accepted all Global Governance values and rules. Notice that attendance is expected from the very first lesson and you need to attend at least 80% of the course to be considered an attending student.

Description of the methods and criteria for testing learning

The examination assesses the student's overall preparation, ability to integrate the knowledge of the different parts of the programme, consequentiality of reasoning, analytical ability and autonomy of judgement. In addition, language property and clarity of presentation are assessed, in accordance with the Dublin descriptors (1. knowledge and understanding; 2. applying knowledge and understanding; 3. making judgements; 4. learning skills; 5. communication skills).

The final grade will be related 70% to the degree of knowledge and 30% to the expressive capacity (written and oral) and autonomous critical judgement demonstrated by the student.

The examination will be graded according to the following criteria:

Unsuitable: important deficiencies and/or inaccuracies in the knowledge and understanding of the topics; limited capacity for analysis and synthesis, frequent generalisations and limited critical and judgement skills; the topics are exposed in an incoherent manner and with inappropriate language.

18-20: barely sufficient knowledge and understanding of the topics, with possible generalisations and imperfections; sufficient capacity for analysis, synthesis and autonomy of judgement; the topics are frequently exposed in an inconsistent manner and with inappropriate/technical language;

21-23: surface knowledge and understanding of the topics; ability to analyse and synthesise correctly with sufficiently coherent logical argumentation and appropriate/technical language.

24-26: fair knowledge and understanding of the topics; good analytical and synthetic skills with rigorously expressed arguments but not always appropriate/technical language.

27-29: complete knowledge and understanding of the topics; considerable capacity for analysis and synthesis. Good autonomy of judgement. Arguments presented in a rigorous manner and with appropriate/technical language.

30-30L: very good level of knowledge and thorough understanding of topics. Excellent analytical and synthetic skills and independent judgement. Arguments expressed in an original manner and in appropriate technical language.
