

Course report Internet, Society and Politics, Spring term 2015

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The course

This course supplies broad knowledge and skills regarding societal development of Internet, particularly regarding the heterogeneous array of user generated platforms that we call social media. The course is part of the Librarian program as an optional course for campus and Erasmus students and it was held for the first time during the fourth period of the spring term 2015.

Characterization of the lectures and course literature

The course was supported by several lectures, held by Jan Nolin, Alen Doracic, Veronica Johansson, Nasrine Olson and Mathias Klang (recorded lecture). All of the literature was supported by lectures and discussed during the group work and workshop.

The course is divided in three parts, each of these focused on a book in the course literature. The first part of the course is supported by the book *Misunderstanding the Internet* and introduces the history, regulation and governance of the Internet and social media. Regulation of personal data is dealt with in the lectures as well as the complex issue of privacy in the digital age. The anthology the *Social Media Reader* belongs to the second part of the course and deals with the variety of different concepts and ideas related to the Internet and social media. Legal issues regarding cultural production and consumption, digital sharing and collaboration, open source as well as the issues of digital labor, transparency and surveillance are some example of those. The third part of the course is supported by the book *The Culture of Connectivity* that introduces an approach for the critical study of social media platforms and presents the most significant social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube and Wikipedia.

During the course one group work was conducted about Facebook and Googles EULA (End-User License Agreement) with the purpose to get familiarized with user agreements and to critically examine some of the most basic issues, concepts, terms and conditions. By this exercise students received a practical opportunity to make a connection between business models and user rights.

The first and second part of the course where examined through reading and presentation tasks at the workshop. Part three was exanimated by an individual written assignment.

Results

17 students, of which four exchange students, were registered on the course. 12 have completed the course. Of those, 10 passed with honors (VG) and 2 with grade pass (G).

Student response in course evaluation

Of 17 registered students, 5 replied to the survey with 29% answering frequency.

Questions were structured in order to measure degrees of appreciation regarding various features of the course, where "1" indicated very low extent and "5" indicated very high extent.

In the following, the average mean score for each question is presented.

- To what extent did you perceive that the learning objectives of the course were clear, allowing you to understand what was expected of you to do during the course?
4
- To what extent do you feel that you have accomplished the learning objectives of the course? **4.2**
- To what extent does the content of the course reflect the actual course plan?
4.2
- To what extent has the course literature served as support for attaining the learning objectives of the course? **4**
- To what extent have the lectures facilitated progress toward learning objectives?
4.4
- How well do you perceive that the examination has reflected the learning objectives of the course? **4.2**
- To what extent have the workshop been suitable towards the learning objectives?
4
- To what extent have you been engaged in the work of progressing toward the learning objectives? **4**
- To what extent have you attended the lectures of the course?
4.6
- To what extent have you read the course literature?
4.2
- To what extent has the requirement of the course been suitable for a workload of 7.5 hp? **4.6**
- To what extent have the group work concerning the EULA been suitable towards the learning objectives? **4.4**

The course received a rather high rating with average 4.3 (total score of 50.8 divided by 12 questions) which is very good since the course is new and was given for the first time.

Especially pleasing is it to see that none of the survey questions received score under 4.

Lectures were especially appreciated as well as the work load which received average of 4.6.

EULAs group work as well as lectures helped toward learning objectives received average of 4.4. The course administration and the content have lived up to students expectations.

However there is need for improvement when it comes to be clearer about the understanding

of the learning objectives and expectations of the course which received the average grade of 4. Other areas that can be improved are how the content of the course can reflect the course plan in a better way as well as developing workshop as an examination form.

Nevertheless, the written comments in the evaluation survey tend to confirm the very positive experience of the course. Several students have stated that this was a very interesting and giving, a kind of an eye-opening, course.

It was especially nice to see a high degree of engagement by students who were stimulated by literature and variety of contemporary issues throughout the course, especially during the group work and workshop. Facebook, Tumblr, Vimeo, YouTube, Tumblr and LinkedIn were social media platforms that students choose to analyze in their individual written assignment with issues concerning the privacy, business models and internet politics/governance/internet democracy.

Finally, engagement and integration of Swedish and exchange students worked very well!

/Course coordinators