PERS 2750
Exploring the Information Society

Spring Semester 2012
Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00-11:50am
Odum Library, Room 1480
2 Credit Hours

Instructors: Michael Holt, MA, MLIS; Jeff Gallant, M.Mus., MSLIS
Office: Odum Library, Reference Offices, 2nd Floor (2120, ask for us at the Reference Desk)
Office Hours: drop-in or by appointment
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Course Description
An exploration of information, examining how it is generated, evaluated, organized, and used. Students will investigate the impact of information in society from regional, national, and global perspectives, with a focus on the political, economic, and ethical aspects.

Standards, Goals, Objectives or Outcomes

- To understand what information is
- To explore the concept of an information society
- To examine the historical context of the information society
- To explore current theories of the information society
- To understand core conceptual issues (technological determinism, public sphere, media) in the study of the information society
- To explore a variety of topics and issues regarding the information society

Course Readings
There is no text book, but you will be required to read a book for Assignment 2, whether through a library, through purchasing it, or through using open-access/Creative Commons material on the list. Supplemental readings and news articles will be available from the BlazeVIEW course management system (http://blazeview.valdosta.edu/).

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory.

Each day's attendance is worth 10 points, with a total of 300 points available – more than any other assignment or exam in this course! If you are present and participate, you get a 10 for the day. Unexcused absences get a 0.

Severe tardiness will count as an absence. Unexcused absences on the day of an exam mean a 0 on the exam (if you are late, you will have only the remaining amount of exam time to finish the exam). If you need to leave early, speak to us at the beginning of class; leaving class early with no explanation and proper documentation counts as an absence. Excused absences will require at least a 24-hour notice via BlazeVIEW e-mail or phone, unless it is a sudden illness. You must always have a legitimate excuse with proper documentation to have your absence waived.   Examples of sufficient documentation include:

- Medical professional's note (doctor, RNP, surgeon) for illness
- Signed and underlined notarized letter for a family emergency
- Court notice for a court date

We do not require a textbook for this class in order to save you money; if you need to pay a copayment to visit a medical professional when sick, please set some money aside for this.

Exceptions to these policies can be made in the case of University-approved events as defined by the Dean of Students Office, and these will require documentation. There are no incompletes for the course except under extremely rare circumstances. If you have an ongoing medical problem that may keep you from class, including chronic pain or migraines, please provide proper documentation at the beginning of the course in case of emergency, and continue to give advanced notices of any absences.

Please contact your instructors (or the Access Office for Students with Disabilities if applicable) if you are having an in-school or out-of-school situation that will hinder your progress in PERS 2750 as soon as possible. Informing us of these difficulties too late after the fact, especially after the course is over and grades have been issued, will give us very little options to help you.

Contacting Instructor Using Email
When contacting your instructors through email, please use BlazeVIEW, and send the message to both Michael and Jeff.

Americans with Disabilities Act
Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications due to a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in the Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (V/VP) and 219-1348 (TTY).

Class Participation

No one likes a boring class! We all must participate in class in order to make the class interesting. You will often work in groups, and you will be expected to contribute to class discussions, the class environment, and to your groups. Violations of the following class participation ground rules will result in a reduction in your class attendance score:

- Arrive on-time and stay until class is concluded by the instructors.

- Be respectful to your classmates, instructors, and any visiting faculty.

- All electronic devices (including music players, laptops, tablets, and cell phones) must be turned off before entering class. If you have a situation that requires such a device be left on, please discuss this with the instructor prior to class.

- Work for any other classes cannot be done during this class time.

- Food and drink are allowed in class as long as you dispose of the trash properly and it is not distracting to other students. Any spills are to be cleaned up by the student. Violations of this rule will also result in a prohibition of food and drink.

- Come to class with open minds, hearts, and ears. Our discussions and class activities about the Information Society will involve sensitive topics and relationships such as gender, politics, race/ethnicity, religion/culture, socioeconomic class differences, poverty, and war, which exist and thrive in cultural contexts that could be unfamiliar to you or to which you may be personally attached.

Grading Policy

Class Attendance and Participation	300 pts (10pts/day)
Practice Quizzes (Due on the day of unit exams)	**~120 pts (10 pts/paper)**
Assignment 1: ICT Journal	**100 pts**
Assignment 2: Critical Review	**200 pts**
Exam 1	100 pts
Exam 2	100 pts
Exam 3	100 pts
Total	1020 pts (estimate)

You can check your up-to-date grades on BlazeVIEW at any time by clicking on "My Grades." Your final grade will be based on the percentage of your total points versus the total possible amount of points. Decimal places from .5 and higher will be rounded up, lower than .5 will be rounded down.

100-90% = A
89-80% = B
79-70% = C
69-60% = D
59% and lower = F

Class Attendance and Participation is the most heavily weighted part of the class for a reason. Please show up for each class, and please contribute in a meaningful way. Refer to the **Attendance Policy** above for details.

Practice Quizzes are a way for you to review the most important material for the class. These are on BlazeVIEW, and **you can take these quizzes as many times as you need to**. Each one is worth ten points, and each quiz is due by the test on the unit they correspond with.

Assignments

The following assignments will be explained in further detail (including a grading rubric) in their own handouts, but here are short descriptions of the assignments:

Assignment 1: Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Journal

The purpose of this assignment is to help you gauge the amount of time using ICTs and the reasons we choose the specific kinds of ICTs we interact with.

Part 1: You will keep an ICT Journal for one weekday (only Monday through Friday). You will log the types of ICTs you interact with during that day, the amount of time you spent using the ICTs, and the type of interaction. For example, was the computer just playing background music, or were you writing a paper? This can be in any format, including a handwritten journal, a Word document, or a spreadsheet, but it must be legible to the instructors.

Part 2: Type a short essay reflecting on the ICTs you use the most in your daily life.

Assignment 2: Critical Review:

This assignment allows you to explore an aspect of the information society that interests you the most, allows you to synthesize your knowledge from this course with the author's views, and allows you to voice your opinion on the issue, guided by both a detailed work about a subject and course material.

At the beginning of the semester, you will get a list of books to choose from. You must select one of these books (or book series, if indicated on the list) and **report which one you are reading, with book in hand (or link if it's an ebook) on Thursday, February 2.** Not every book on the list is the same, and you want to make sure you find one you like! Be sure to take notes on anything that sounds interesting and information society-related (include the page number and paragraph in your notes – it helps).

Type a paper that includes:

- A short biography of the author or authors
- A short, broad summary of the book
- An evaluation of the material, using your knowledge of the course material and your own personal opinions and experiences

Exams

There will be three exams that check your understanding of the core concepts that we discuss in class. They will be in handwritten essay format; while most essays should be about two to three paragraphs, it's up to each student to determine when they've fully answered the question. If you have trouble writing essays during tests, please contact the VSU Student Success Center – they are here to help, and they will happily connect you with a writing tutor.

Exams will correspond with three units in the class – Units 1, 2, and 3. Practice Quizzes on BlazeVIEW for each unit are due on the exam day they correspond with, at midnight (or 11:59pm that night if you're technical about it!).

If you are late for the exam (unexcused), you will only have the rest of the class period to finish the exam, so please arrive on time.

PERS 2750 Academic Integrity Document

Your instructors are both Reference Librarians; when you use someone else's work on a test or paper as if it were your own, we will find out. Do not cheat or plagiarize - it is not worth it, and it will get you nowhere in this class. According to the Student Handbook, Revision 1, 2011-2012, page 61:

- "No student shall engage in plagiarism, which is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were the student's own. Essays, term papers, laboratory reports, tests, online writing assignments, and other similar requirements must be the work of the student submitting them."

- "No student shall use or attempt to use unauthorized materials or devices to aid in achieving a better grade or a component of a class."

Violations of any part of the Academic Integrity sections of the Student Code of Conduct will result in a severe penalty per the Student Handbook. The maximum penalty is a failing grade for the course and a Report of Academic Dishonesty that will be part of your Student Disciplinary Record.

By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to SafeAssign, a tool within BlazeVIEW. For more information on the use of SafeAssign at VSU, see:

SafeAssign for Students (http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml).

By enrolling in classes at VSU, you have already agreed to abide by the Academic Integrity sections of the Student Handbook. **Signing this document verifies that we have re-informed you of these rules, and that you will abide by them in this course.**

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Signature   **Date**