Informatics 709: Social Informatics Seminar II

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Meeting time: Tuesdays, 2:30-5
Location: 611 N. Woodlawn (across street from Informatics West)

Formal Description
Topic: Contemporary Informatics approaches and related theories. This Ph.D. seminar will be held as reading and discussion courses, divided into sections. This means that the courses will to a large extent be self- and/or group-study oriented with support from faculty. More advanced readings and discussion than I609. 3 cr.

Introduction

Increasingly, we live in a world where organizations, institutions, groups, networks, and similar agglomerations of individuals interact in ways mediated by multiple information technologies. Exploring these topics requires delving into literatures from numerous disciplines because the units of analysis stubborn and the methods vary widely. Research in this arena is heavily influenced by business and organizational studies, information science, communication, science, technology, and society (STS), economics, and the other social sciences. In this course, we will explore some of the historical and "classic" literature in this arena to give us context, relate it to contemporary issues, and (hopefully) connect it to topics of our own interests. Knowing that each topic could easily encompass a universe of courses and that there's a wide variety of topics we COULD cover, I've structured it to move from an overview of groups and organizations, then deconstructed those groups and organizations to focus on various constitutive elements of groups (communication, identity, goods, access, and labor), then put things back together to look at dimensions interacting in various practices. The last week will be devoted to reading and thinking about the university and scholarship as institutions, something we all have in common. I have high hopes that you all will fill in topics in your areas of interest.

This course is part of the social informatics track in the School of Informatics and Computing and could just as appropriately be called organizational informatics. It is the study of computing in organized contexts, including formal and structured organizations as well as looser networks of individuals who work, create, and share goods together. In turn, understanding the interplay of groups and information/information technology will have profound effects on how we develop new technologies, form institutions, and create and institute policy.

In addition to exploring and discussing the content of the readings, we will also use this opportunity to develop our skills as readers and writers. Reading literature critically,

thinking about how different authors are in conversation with each other (or not), and examining how the writing practices and discourse of different disciplines are constructed are essential to the art and science of scholarship.

Structure of the class

Like most Ph.D. courses, this one will be heavily oriented to discussion and writing. Through the first part of the course, we will focus on the articles and chapters I assign. Towards the end of the course, I will ask each of you to assign 2-3 articles/chapters that you feel ties in the themes of the class to your own interests and lead discussion. On those days, we will focus part of the class on readings I assign and the rest on yours. I will use Oncourse for uploading course materials.

Assignments

Participation in discussion (20%)

Reading responses (30%): The night before class, please email me no more than one single spaced page response to the readings. Response should include:
- Targeted analysis of one piece of your choice. This should be a summary of the key points, methodological approach(es) taken, theoretical framework, and whether the conclusions were merited by the approach taken
- Your analysis of how the readings fit together (or don't) in conversation with each other
- Any points/themes that were unclear
- One or more discussion questions for class

10 of these are due throughout the semester (each is worth 3 points) and you can choose the weeks you will submit.

Leading of class discussion (20%): Each student will lead a 1 hour (approximate) discussion during the semester based on student's interests. Each student will assign 2-4 articles/book chapters/conference papers for all of us to read and submit a one page summary beforehand of why the articles were chosen, of the topics and themes readers should focus on, and lead discussion. **LIST OF WORKS AND SUMMARY DUE 2 WEEKS BEFORE YOU ARE TO LEAD DISCUSSION**

Analysis of an institution (30%). Each student will submit an 8 page final paper in which they conduct an analysis of a group, network, organization, or institution using approaches studied in the class. This project will be require students to identify the group, the theoretical and methodological approaches they will be using, and literature. Since this will potentially require observations, virtual observations, social network analysis, interviews, etc, this project will be broken down into several pieces (which we will discuss further):

Description of group, methods, sample references bibliography: 5 points

Midterm progress report: 10 points
Final paper: 15 points

Weekly Assignments:

We may change some readings as we go along, esp. later in the semester. We will be drawing sections from some books/readers in several weeks so I'm putting the larger reference here; individual chapters are mentioned below.

Hackett, E.J., Amsterdamska, O., Lynch, M., and Wajcman, J., eds. (2008). The
       Handbook of Science and Technology Studies. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
Hinds, P.J., Kiesler, S., eds. (2002). Distributed Work. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
Hess, C. and Ostrom, E. (2007). Understanding Knowledge as Commons: From Theory
     to Practice. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Week 1, August 30: **Intro to groups and online communities**
    a. Wellman, B. et al. (2001). Computer networks as social networks. *Science*,
       293(14 September), 2031-2034.
    b. Resnick, P. (2000) Beyond bowling together: Sociotechnical capital.
       Chapter 29 in *HCI in the New Millenium*, ed. John M. Carroll. Addison-
       Wesley, 247-272.
    c. Simon, H. (1991). Bounded rationality and organizational learning.
       Organization Science, Special Issue: Organizational Learning: Papers in
       Honor of (and by) James G. March, 2:125-134
    d. Ellis, D., Oldridge, R. & Vasconcelos, A. (2004). Community and virtual
       community. *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*, 38:
       145-168.

Week 2, September 6: **Frameworks of study and analysis**
    a. Star, S.L. and Clarke, A. (2007). Social Worlds, *Handbook of Science,
       Technology, and Society*
    b. Hine, C.M. (2005). Virtual Ethnography, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
       Publications, selected chapters
    c. Baym, N.K. (2005). Introduction: Internet Research as It Isn't, Is, Could
       Be, and Should Be. *The Information Society*, 21: 229-232.
    d. Latham, R. and Sassen, S. (2005). Digital formations: constructing an
       object of study. Introduction to Latham and Sassen, eds., *Digital
       formations: IT and New Architectures in the Global Realm*, Princeton, NJ:
       Princeton University Press.

Week 3, September 13: **Communication**
    a. Yates, J., & Orlikowski, W. (1992). Genres of organizational
       communication: A structurational approach to studying communication
       and media. *Academy of Management Review,* 17:299-326.
    b. Ducheneaut, N., & Watts, L. A. (2005). In search of coherence: A review
       of e-mail research. *Human-Computer Interaction,* 20:11-48.

    c. Barak, A., and J. Suler. (2008) Reflections on the psychology and social science of cyberspace. In A. Barak (Ed.), *Psychological aspects of cyberspace: Theory, research, applications.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Week 4: September 20: **Public Goods**
    a. Hardin, G. (1968). The tragedy of the commons. *Science*, 162: 1243-1248.
    b. Ostrom, E. (2000). Collective action and the evolution of social norms. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14:137-158.
    c. Hollingshead, A.B., Fulk, J., Monge, P., Fostering intranet knowledge sharing: an integration of transactive memory and public goods approaches, in *Distributed Work*
    d. Hess, C. and Ostrom, E., A framework for analyzing the commons, in *Understanding Knowledge as Commons*

Week 5: September 27: **Labor**
    a. Suchman, L. (1995). Making work visible. *Communications of the ACM,* 38: 56-ff.
    b. Baym, N.K. (2005). Amateur experts: international fan labor in Swedish independent music. *International Journal of Cultural Studies.* 12: 1-17
    c. Poteete et al. (2001). *Working Together: Collective Action, the Commons, and Multiple Methods in Practice.* Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press, selected sections

Week 6: October 4 **Access**
    a. Willinsky, J. (2006). *The Access Principle*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, selected chapters
    b. Lakhani., K. R., & Hippel, E. v. (2003). How open source software works "free" user-to-user assistance. *Research Policy* (Special Issue on Open Source Software Development), 32: 923-943.
    c. Boyle, J. Mertonianism unbound, in *Understanding Knowledge as Commons*,

Week 7: October 11 **Cyberinfrastructure**
PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY AND DESCRIPTION FOR FINAL PAPER DUE
    a. Downey, J. (2001), Virtual webs, physical technologies, and hidden workers: The spaces of labor in information internetworks, *Technology and Culture* 42: 209-35
    b. Lee, C.P., Dourish, P., Mark, G. (2006) The human infrastructure of cyberinfrastructure, *Proceedings of the 2006 20th anniversary conference on Computer supported cooperative work*, Banff, Canada, 483-492.
    c. Ribes, D. and Finholt, T. (2009), The long now of technology infrastructure: articulating tensions in development., *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 10: 375-398.

d. Baker, K. S., Millerand, F. (2007). Articulation work supporting information infrastructure design: Coordination, categorization, and assessment in practice. *40th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS'07).*

Week 8: October 18 Guest instructor

Week 9: October 25: Class canceled; work on projects

Week 10: November 1: **Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) MIDTERM PROGRESS REPORT DUE**

a. Malone, T., & Crowston, K. (1994). The interdisciplinary study of coordination. *ACM Computing Surveys,* 26: 87-119.
b. Cramton, C. D. (2001). The mutual knowledge problem and its consequences for dispersed collaboration. *Organization Science*, 12: 346-371.
c. Baltes, B.B. et al. (2002). Computer-mediated communication and group decision making: A meta-analysis. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 87:156-179.
d. Brown, J.S and Duguid, P. (1991). Organizational learning and communities-of-practice: Toward a unified view of working, learning, and innovation. *Organization Science*, Special Issue: Organizational Learning: Papers in Honor of (and by) James G. March, 2:40-57.

Week 11: November 8 **Technology and local knowledge**
a. Cozzens et al, Knowledge and Development, *Handbook of STS*
b. Boast, R., Bravo, M., Srinivasan R. (2007). Return to Babel: emergent diversity, digital resources, and local knowledge , *The Information Society* 23: 395-403.

Week 12: November 15 **Sociality and Surveillance, Student Presentation**
a. Patton, J.W. (2000). Protecting privacy in public? Surveillance technologies and the value of public places." *Ethics and Information Technology* 2:181-187
b. Blanchette, J.-F. and Johnson, D.G.. (2002). Data retention and the Panoptic society: the social benefits of forgetfulness." *The Information Society* 18:33-45

Week 13: November 22 **Social Movements; Student Presentations**
a. Castells, M. (1997). *The Power of Identity*, Boston, MA: Blackwell, selected chapters
b. Hess et al, Science, Technology, and Social Movements, *Handbook of STS*
c. Rogers, E. (1962). *Diffusion of innovations,* New York: Free Press.

    d. Briscoe, F. & Safford, S. (2008). The Nixon-in-China effect: activism, imitation and the institutionalization of contentious practices, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 53: 460-491. Special Issue: Social Movements in Organizations and Markets

Week 14: November 29 **Student Presentations**

Week 15: December 6 **The University as Institution**
    a. Mark C. Taylor, "The End of the University as we know it" http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/27/opinion/27taylor.html
    b. Stanley Fish, "The Last Professor", New York Times Blog, January 18, 2009, http://fish.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/18/the-last-professor/
    c. Michelle Glaros, "The Academy in the Age of Digital Labor", http://aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/academe/2004/JF/Feat/glar.htm

FINAL PAPER DUE: Monday, December 13, 2010, 5 PM