IS/COMM 6310
Behavior and Information Technology
Fall 2015

[As of 8/17/15. Updated versions available on Blackboard site]

Tuesday, 1:25-4:00
Room: Gates 114

Instructor: Susan Fussell
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Course Description and Objectives

This course, one of the IS core graduate courses, explores the behavioral foundations of communication technology and the information sciences. It focuses on the ways in which theories and methods from the behavioral sciences play a role in understanding people’s use of, access to and interactions with information and communication technologies. The course will examine multiple levels of analysis -- individual, small group, and larger collectives -- and present multiple disciplinary perspectives. The course has three primary goals:

- It will provide an introduction to behavioral science theories and approaches to understanding the use of current information technologies, to identify needs that are not currently being met, and to inform the design of future IT.
- It will introduce students to common research methods and statistical techniques used in the behavioral sciences, with a focus on being able to understand research reports using these methods and statistics.
- It will provide practice in conducting and reporting behavioral science research.

As an introductory course, much examination of the substantive areas of study will necessarily be cursory, and students are expected to acquire greater depth of understanding of specific areas through additional course work, independent reading and research.

The course is structured into three segments, corresponding to three different levels of analysis: individual, group, and community.

I. Cognitive science approaches to attention, perception, reasoning and persuasion (Weeks 2-5)
II. Social psychological approaches to language, emotion, coordination and awareness in groups and teams (Weeks 6-10)
III. Behavioral approaches to large scale social systems including social networks online communities, and crowd-sourcing (Weeks 11-13)
Required texts:

Readings will be available on Blackboard. There will be 3-6 readings each week. Complete reading of each piece is required prior to class.

Student Responsibilities and Grading

1. Participation and Attendance (10%): Students are expected to prepare for each class; they should read and note the specified texts, and participate actively in class discussions and exercises. Students may be called on to summarize the major arguments, strengths, weaknesses, or problems, in any assigned reading. Regular attendance is expected. Failure to attend regularly and be prepared will be grounds for a grade reduction at the instructor’s discretion.

2. Blackboard Discussion (10%) Each week, students are expected to post comments on two or more of the assigned readings on the blackboard forum set up for that week. Posts can include reactions to ideas in the readings, reflections on the readings based on your own experiences, or ideas or questions for future research. You can post separately for each of your two readings or write a longer post that ties two or more readings together, e.g. by discussing how the readings build on each other, are inconsistent with each other, etc. Students can start their own discussion threads or add to those started by other students. Across all posts for a given week, students should expect to contribute at least 250 words. Posts must be completed by 11 AM on Tuesday of the week of the readings to receive credit.

3. Short Papers (4 x 10%): Students are expected to write four short papers on over the course of the semester, each worth 10% of the final grade. Each paper will require analysis and synthesis of a subset of course readings and/or small-scale data collection and analysis. Paper assignments will be given out 1-2 weeks in advance of the deadline.

3. Research Project (30%): Each student will conduct a research project using behavioral science approaches and methods, analyze the results, and write a report of the project using standard report-writing style (e.g., introduction, hypotheses, method, results, discussion). Students will have the option of working alone or in a team of up to four students. Reports can be submitted in the format of the team’s target conference or journal. The report should be no longer than 15-20 pages (double spaced) or 8-10 pages (ACM SIGCHI format). To earn full credit for the research project, students must also submit interim materials at the indicated points in the syllabus, including: topic, outline of methods, IRB materials, and first draft. Please note the intermediate deadlines for the term paper (topic description, research method section, etc.).

4. Class Presentation (10%): In the last week of class, research project team will present its research and results to the class via a short oral presentation and a poster. Further details will be provided later in the semester.
Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is crucial to your personal scholarly identity. Your rights and responsibilities in this area are outlined in the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity [http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm](http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm). Violations of the code include but are not limited to:

- Submitting work in this class that has also been submitted for a grade in another course without prior permission of both instructors.
- Using, obtaining, or providing unauthorized assistance on examinations, papers, or any other academic work.
- Misrepresenting another person's work as your own. You are responsible for obeying the Code of Academic Integrity. Ignorance of the code is not an excuse.

The most common problem for many students is plagiarism, which will not be tolerated and will be sanctioned by failure of the course. Students from other cultures should be aware that American standards of acknowledgement and use of material prepared by others can be different than those in other cultures. **All students MUST complete the tutorial at [http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm](http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm).**

Misrepresenting another's work as your own means presenting somebody else's words or ideas without proper attribution. Proper attribution includes quotation marks and page numbers for any words taken directly from any piece of another author's work, and/or a citation when you have paraphrased or summarized somebody else's work. Sources need not be published to be cited; any document that you use as a source that you are not the sole author of must be cited or attributed in this way. If you have any questions about how to attribute or whether a source must be cited, ask for clarification. Academic integrity is a serious matter and will be treated as such.

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to [Turnitin.com](http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Note: Course materials posted on Blackboard or distributed in class are intellectual property belonging to the author(s). Students are not permitted to buy or sell any course materials, including but not limited to syllabi, PowerPoint presentations, teaching materials, or class exercises without the express permission of the instructor. Such unauthorized behavior constitutes academic misconduct.

Accommodations

It is Cornell policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students who have a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, or systemic) that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services and their instructors for a confidential discussion of their individual need for academic accommodations. Student Disability Services is located in 420 CCC. Staff can be reached by calling 607-254-4545. **Students are advised to meet with me early in the semester to make arrangements for accommodations.**
Week 1 – Aug. 25: Behavioral Science Approaches to Information Science; Overview of Behavioral Science Methods.

Cognitive Science Approaches to Attention, Perception, Reasoning and Persuasion

Week 2 – Sept. 1: Perception and Attention; Behavioral Science Methods, cont’d

**Research project ideas posted to Blackboard by Sept. 6.**


Week 3 – Sept. 8: Cognition & Cognitive Modeling; Team selection

**Team selection**

**Short paper 1 distributed**


Week 4 – Sept. 15: Cognitive load; Interruptions and Multi-tasking

**Short paper 1 due by start of class**


**Week 5 – Sept. 22: Affect, Cognition and Creativity; Brief updates from project teams**

**Teams provide brief updates on their research ideas**

**IRB materials due by Friday Sept. 25 by midnight**


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**Communication, Coordination and Awareness in Groups and Teams**

**Week 6 – Sept. 29: Conversational Grounding in Computer-Mediated Communication**

**Short paper 2 distributed**


**Week 7 – Oct 6: Emotion, Affect and Trust in Computer-Mediated Communication**

**Short paper 2 due by Friday Oct 10**

Tausczik, Y., & Pennebaker, J.W. (2010). The psychological meaning of words: LIWC and


Oct. 13: Fall Break, no class

**Week 8 – Oct. 20: Coordination and Teamwork; Brief updates from project teams**

**Teams provide brief updates on their research ideas**

**Short paper 3 distributed**


**Week 9 – Oct. 27: Awareness, Availability and Interruptions**


Week 10 – Nov. 3: Interacting with and Through Agents and Robots

**Short paper 3 due by start of class**


Week 11 – Nov. 10: Social networks and Social capital; Brief updates from project teams

**Short paper 4 distributed**

**Teams provide brief updates on their research ideas**


Week 12 – Nov. 17: Online Communities


York, NY, USA, 321-330.


Week 13 – Nov. 24: Recommender Systems; Crowdsourcing

**Short paper 4 due by start of class**


Week 14 – Dec. 1: Class Presentations (Poster Session)

**Final Project Papers Due Mon. Dec. 14 at midnight***