SI 657

Information Technology and Global Development

School of Information, University of Michigan

Fall 2021

Instructor: Joyojeet Pal

Office Hours: Th 12-1 / by appointment

Please email me in advance if you wish to use a zoom option (https://umich.zoom.us/my/joyojeet)

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This class has no prerequisites and is open to students from all departments

OVERVIEW:

Students working in technology are increasingly likely to find themselves in a work environment involving new cultures and geographies where an appreciation of contemporary and historical issues in technology and society can be very valuable. This is especially true for the global south, which is rapidly seen through not just an emerging market for goods and services designed for primary markets in the West, but as an active partner, producer, and participant in the international technology economy and information society. More importantly, beyond markets, our political and social economies are increasingly tied in with the ways technology is used, adapted, and developed elsewhere in the world.
This course will introduce students to issues around the use of technology in its global context, with an overview of debates in international development, contemporary scholarly research works, and case studies of real world technology us on issues such as growth, infrastructure, culture, environment, citizenship, and healthcare. This course is largely readings and discussion-based, and the deliverables in the class are mostly class papers.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

This is an “ICTD” class, acronym for Information and Communications Technology and Development, an interdisciplinary body of research that has drawn from humanities, social sciences, design, and engineering over the last two decades. The goal here is to leave students with a good footing into the contemporary issues being faced in the Global South, and how these issues may help us better understand the design, adoption, or broader philosophical consequences of technology the world over.

By the end of SI 657, all students are expected to be able to:

- **Identify** some of the key issues in international development, and the various perspectives on these from the range of readings
- **Understand** transnational economic, institutional, and political factors shaping the nature and use of ICTs in developing country settings;
- **Discuss** the key policy positions, interests, and strategies of major stakeholders in the information policy field;
- **Analyze** and **contribute** to current theoretical and practical debates in IT and global change
These learning objectives will be met through a combination of readings, lectures, discussion, and individual and small group assignments, as described below.

**READINGS:**

The class is reading intensive, half the grade is for your readings, and this is not a class for you if you don’t enjoy reading. A significant part of the readings are popular commentary readings that are quicker to go through than some of readings from scholarly sources. The first couple of weeks will give you a good idea of what kind of weekly time commitment you can expect to put in.

**MSI REQUIREMENTS:**

Reading Notes: (50%)

To appropriately recognize the importance of class readings for this course, the readings have a very significant weight in your overall grade for the class. Each week has two classes, and each class carries 2 points for your reading notes (13 * 2 * 2), which gives you some buffer with reading points. For each reading, you need to upload a ‘review’ of 100-200 wds very briefly summarizing the reading and expressing the key questions that a reading raised for you. The submission page closes at 8 PM the night before class (Mondays and Wednesdays), and there are no extensions.

Midterm Paper: (20%)
**Class paper 1: Social Media Activism in the Global South**

Choose an aspect of social media use by a nation-state, a political system, an interest group, or a cause set in the Global South. Trace its history, comment on its current state, and speculate on its consequences.

or

**Class paper 2: Future of work App in the Global South**

Choose an application that is attempting to change workplace practices in a region in the global south. Comment on its contemporary importance within the context of labor practices and prospects.

The word limit for the paper is 2500 words, not including references. Your Midterm is due Oct 25.

**Final Paper: (30%)**

Unless you have an existing source of data that you wish to work with for a final paper project (this can also be an applied project or a business plan), all final papers will be critical examinations of an idea within technology and development contextualized to the range of readings we have been through in class. All final paper ideas need to be discussed with me in person. The word limit for the final paper is 3000 words, not including references.

**Late Assignments**

There are no late assignments possible for class readings. For the midterm or final, you lose 5 points for being late for the first 24 hours. No grade is offered thereafter.
Technology in class

The aim is to give you a quality classroom experience that is engaging for you and your classmates, and sadly the distractions are detrimental for a class like this which relies heavily on exchange from the students. As a general rule, I ask that you avoid technology in class unless it is necessary for your functioning. If you have concerns, I am happy to discuss. This class is not offered asynchronously.

Communication

The course syllabus and schedule are hosted on Google Docs, which can be accessed via the course Canvas site. The lecture slides will be made available via Canvas. Assignment descriptions and submissions will be handled via Canvas. You are responsible for keeping up-to-date with the materials on Canvas, as dates, assignment details, and lecture topics may change as the semester progresses. The instructors will broadcast announcements via the Canvas email list whenever significant changes are made to the materials on the course site.

Academic Integrity

All assignments in this course are clearly designated as "group" or "individual" assignments. For the sole individual assignment, all submitted work must be your own, original work. For each group assignment, all submitted work must be the original work of the group.

Unless otherwise specified in an assignment all submitted work must be your own, original work. Any excerpts, statements, or phrases from the work of others must be clearly identified as a quotation, and a proper citation provided. Any violation of the School’s policy on Academic and Professional Integrity (stated in the Master’s and Doctoral Student Handbooks) will result in serious penalties, which might range from failing an assignment, to failing a course, to being expelled from the program. Violations of academic and professional integrity will be reported to UMSI Student Affairs. Consequences impacting assignment or course grades are determined by the faculty instructor; additional sanctions may be imposed by the assistant dean for academic and student affairs.
Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let the instructor know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way we teach may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; ssd.umich.edu/) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information will be treated as confidential as possible.

Student Wellbeing

Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, mental health, alcohol or other substances, identities, finances, food insecurity, or other external stressors. If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help is a courageous thing to do for yourself and those who care about you. If the source of your stressors is academic, please contact UMSI's academic advisors or me so that we can find solutions together.

For personal concerns, U-M offers the following resources:

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) - confidential; For mental health support, you can access CAPS by calling the central office at (734) 764-8312 or by emailing the School of Information Embedded CAPS Psychologist, Ashley Evearitt, Psy.D., at evearitt@umich.edu. If you are in crisis, please call CAPS at 734.764.8312, or the UM Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES) at 734.936.5900, or 911. Directions to PES are here:http://www.psych.med.umich.edu/contact/er.asp

Dean of Students Office - 734-764-7420; provides support services to students and manages critical incidents impacting students and the campus community

Ginsberg Center for Community Service Learning - 734-763-3548; opportunities to engage as learners and leaders to create a better community and world

Maize and Blue Cupboard at the University of Michigan provides food, kitchen and cooking supplies, personal and household items, and support services for students experiencing food insecurity.
Multi-ethnic Student Affairs (MESA) - 734-763-9044; diversity and social justice through the lens of race and ethnicity

Office of Student Conflict Resolution - 734-936-6308; offers multiple pathways for resolving conflict

Office of the Ombuds - 734-763-3545; students can raise questions and concerns about the functioning of the university.

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) - 734-763-3000; accommodations and access to students with disabilities

Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) - confidential; 734-764-7771 or 24-hour crisis line 734-936-3333; addresses sexual assault, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and stalking

Spectrum Center - 734-763-4186; support services for LGBTQ+ students

Trotter Multicultural Center - 734-763-3670; intercultural engagement and inclusive leadership education initiatives

University Health Service (UHS) - 734-764-8320; clinical services include nurse advice by phone, day or night

Well-being for U-M Students website - searchable list of many more campus resources

Wolverine Wellness - confidential; 734-763-1320; provides Wellness Coaching and much more

**Wolverine Culture of Care**

The university is committed to meeting its educational mission while aiming to protect the health and safety of the community, which includes minimizing the spread of COVID-19. The entire community is responsible for protecting the collective health of all members by being mindful and respectful in carrying out the guidelines laid out in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](https://example.com) . Since our aim is to keep us all safe, here are some specific UM policies we must follow: [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](https://example.com) which requires a complete covering of mouth and nose at all times indoors. Please follow the link for more specifics. I will give the class breaks periodically for people to step out if they wish.
Masking is mandatory in all U-M buildings and classrooms at all times. You must keep your [ResponsiBLUE app](Links to an external site.) up to date if you plan on being on campus.

**In addition, we have some class norms:**

If you are feeling ill to not come to class in-person. Your grade will not be negatively impacted by not attending class due to illness or your need to care for those who are ill. As long as the mask mandate is in force, there is **no eating or drinking** in class unless you have a need due to a medical condition.

Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face-covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the Office for Institutional Equity. In this classroom, all students are expected to adhere to the required safety measures and guidelines of the State of Michigan and the University of Michigan, wearing a face-covering that covers the mouth and nose in all classrooms, and not coming to class when ill or in quarantine.

**Class Recordings**

We will be doing audio and video recording of all sessions to enable those who cannot attend class in person on a given day to access the content. These recordings will not be made available publicly. Recordings of all sessions will be available on Canvas only to students registered for this class. As part of your participation in this course, you may be recorded. If you do not wish to be recorded, please contact the professor during the first week of class to discuss alternative arrangements. The camera only picks up the front of the room, but this may require you to sit in a particular place in the room, outside the cameras' view. Our classroom has a recording set up that picks up student voices, only the instructor's microphone records audio in the room. Further, students may not share these sessions with those not in the class, or upload them to any other online environment (this is a violation of the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)).

Personal recordings are prohibited except with permission. Students are prohibited from recording/distributing any class activity without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.
DOCTORAL REQUIREMENTS:

Doctoral students should meet me in person to discuss the final paper, they have the option to work on the final paper as a longer, conference or journal quality submission.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

31-Aug

Introduction    Development Studies Surface Scratching

- Rostow, W.W. -“Marx was a city boy or, why Communism may fail” Harper's Magazine, Feb 1955, Pg 25-30

- Andre Gunder-Frank, “The Development of Underdevelopment,” in J. Timmons Roberts and Amy Bellone Hite, eds. The Globalization and Development Reader: Perspectives on Development and Global Change pp 76-


2-Sep

Technology and Society: Thinking about Technology

7-Sep

**Development: Development and Dependence**

- Collier, P. “The Bottom Billion: Introduction” “Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it”

9-Sep

**Development: Resources and Curses**

- Hochschild, and Bleasdale, M. “Blood and Treasure: Why one of the world’s richest countries is also one of its poorest” Mother Jones March/April 2010 Pg 53-65
- Wright, L. “Lithium Dreams” New Yorker, Mar 22, 2010, 86(5) Pg 48

https://fragilestatesindex.org/ (browse the site and provide an overview of your key findings)


14-Sep

**Finances: Microfinance and the world**


16-Sep

Finances: Responsibility


-Walzer, M. “On Humanitarianism: Is helping others charity, or duty, or both?” Foreign Affairs, July/Aug 90(4) Pg 69-80


21-Sep

Globalization: Borders


-Finnegan, “The countertraffickers” New Yorker, May 5, 2008 84(12) Pg 44

23-Sep

Globalization: War
- Andersen, “How multilateral development assistance triggered the conflict in Rwanda” Third World Quarterly, 21(3) Pg.441


- McClelland, M. and Falise, T. “For us surrender is out of the question” Mother Jones, Mar/Apr 2010 Pg 36-50

28-Sep

Guest Speaker: Philip Neff, Center for Human Rights, University of Washington

Crises: Migration and the Global Order


- Thompson, G. (2020) Inside the Chaos of an Immigration Court. Longreads


30-Sep

Crises: Geographies

- Taub, Lake Chad, The World's Most Complex Humanitarian Disaster


- Harr, “Lives of saints” New Yorker, Jan 5, 2009, 84(43) Pg 48

5-Oct

**Guest Speaker: Nithya Sambasivan, Google**

**The Gaze: Development of Others**

- Ali, “Books vs bombs? Humanitarian development and the narrative of terror in Northern Pakistan” Third World Quarterly 31(4) Pg 541-559


7-Oct

**Gaze: Making and Unmaking**


- Lindtner, S. (2018) Inventing Shenzen: How the copy became the prototype, or: how China out-wested the west and saved modernity

- Gourevitch, “Climbers” New Yorker, Jul 11, 2011 87(20) Pg. 66


12-Oct

**ICTD: The roots of 2000s ICTD**


14-Oct

ICTD: Aspirational State


21-Oct

Technology and the Environment: Conservation


- Goldberg, (2010) “The Hunted” New Yorker, Apr 5 2010, 86(7), Pg. 43


26-Oct

Lived Spaces: Infrastructure
28-Oct

**Lived Spaces: Tourism**

- Griffin, T., Muldoon, M. (2020): Exploring virtual reality experiences of slum tourism,” Tourism Geographies


2-Nov

**Enterprise: Digital Entrepreneurship**

- Bidwell, S. Murray, W., Overton, J. (2018) Ethical agro-food networks in global peripheries: The rise and recommodification of fair trade and organics, Geography Compass


4-Nov

**Enterprise: Appspaces**


- Razaq, L., Ahmad, T., Ibtasam, S., Ramzan U., Mare, S. (2021) We Even Borrowed Money From Our Neighbor. CSCW1, Article 41


9-Nov

**Society: Gender I**


11-Nov

**Society: Gender II**

- Thompson, R., Figueroa, S. (2020) #MeToo and LGBTQ+ Salvadorans: social and leadership challenges. Gender in Management: An International Journal Vol. 35 No. 4, pp. 373-389


- Ibtasam, S. et al (2019) “My cousin bought the phone for me. I never go to mobile shops.”: The Role of Family in Women’s Technological Inclusion in Islamic Culture. CSCW 2019

16-Nov

**Information Environments: Political Media**


- Newton, C. “Bodies in Seats” The Verge


18-Nov

**Information Environments: Surveillance and Resistance**


- Biddle, S. (2021) Facebook’s secret rules about the word “Zionist” impede criticism of Israel


23-Nov

Healthcare: Diagnosis and Observation

-Specter, “A deadly misdiagnosis” New Yorker, Nov 15, 2010, 86(36) Pg. 48


30-Nov

Guest: Sachin Pendse, Georgia Tech

Healthcare: Intervention

