Description of the Seminar

This is an advanced research seminar that aims to explore and analyze the interaction between communication technology, society, economy, politics, and culture in an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspective. The focus of the seminar will be the generation of new knowledge on these issues. Students will be required to develop research and original thinking, and to engage in empirical, analytical work leading to research papers of publishable quality. Students are welcome to use the seminar to develop research related to their theses and dissertations.

The seminar will be organized around three elements:

a) A series of presentations by the instructor on selected themes, followed by in-depth discussion in the seminar

b) Supporting readings for every theme treated in the seminar, and specifically recommended readings for students engaged in a given research topic

c) An original, empirical study conducted by the students participating in the seminar, leading to the writing of a research paper by the end of the semester. Research topics will be selected in agreement with the instructor. The paper should constitute a small contribution to knowledge in the field, in the form of a potentially publishable article. Students must present their work in progress in at least one full session of the seminar during the semester. The session will consider the student’s research in its broader theoretical and methodological context. Active participation by all students in each session is required.

The seminar will meet once a week, in a three hour session. Topics for the research paper will be selected within the first 2 weeks of the seminar. All presentations by the instructor will take place in a pre-determined sequence in the first half of the semester.
Students should engage in their research early on, and make their own presentations in the second half of the semester. Presentations should be brief, leaving at least two hours for full discussion in the seminar. Special attention will be given to the methodology of research.

**Prerequisites**

This is in principle a seminar for PhD Students, although some special cases may be considered. Social science background is necessary.

**Enrolment is limited to 12 students.** Priority by disciplines:

- a) Communication
- b) Planning
- c) Sociology
- d) International Relations

No auditing students will be allowed.

**Requirements and Grading**

Active participation in every session. Engagement in a research project defined in the seminar. Presentation(s) of the project in the seminar. Writing of a research paper. Overall work for this paper is evaluated in about 50 hours of library research, Internet research, calculations and/or field work.

Final paper accounts for 50% of the grade. Research work for 20%. Participation in the seminar for 30%.

**Themes of Presentations by the Instructor (chronological sequence, one theme per week)**

1. Theories of the Network Society: From Postindustrialism to Informationalism
2. The Institutional and Cultural Diversity of the Network Society: Silicon Valley, Finland, China, and beyond.
3. The Political Economy of the Network Society: From the New Economy to the Financial Crisis
5. The Geography of the Network Society: Space of Flows, Space of Places, and the Networked Metropolis
6. Sociability 2.0: Social Networks and Social Life in the Internet.

7. Surveillance and Counter-Surveillance in a Digital Environment

8. Power and Counterpower in the Network Society

9. Culture(s) and Identitie(s) in the Network Society

**Suggested research topics for students in the seminar** (this is only indicative, other topics are possible).

a. Restructuring of media business: the interplay between technology, business, and culture
b. The advertising industry and media business: technological and organizational transformation
c. User produced content and the rise of the creative audience
d. Mobile communications and social networks in the formation of a new youth culture
e. Open source and intellectual property rights
f. Social movements and communication technology
g. Women on the Internet: Is there gender specificity in the digital culture?
h. Privacy, liberty and surveillance on the Internet in the aftermath of 9/11
i. The global digital divide and the new model of development
j. Ethnicity and inequality in the information economy
k. Flexible labor markets and immigrant labor
l. The interaction between telecommunications infrastructure and the spatial structure of metropolitan regions
m. The politics of regulation of communication networks: the debate on net neutrality
n. The uses of the internet in public services
o. E-Government and E-Governance
p. Cyberwars
q. Digital art and cultural change
r. Globalization and the Network Society

(Note: All topics may be located in a variety of societies, not necessarily the American context, although only when and if there are accessible sources of information to treat the subject.)
Supporting Readings for the Themes Presented by the Instructor

1. Required Reading

(the entire book in this short reading list is required in every case, because the materials are all relevant to the seminar, but there will be no control of the reading. The knowledge of this material, or equivalent, will be assumed in the presentations and discussions)


d) Manuel Castells and Pekka Himanen (eds) *Re-conceptualizing Development in the Global Information Age*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014 (particularly chapters on Silicon Valley, Finland and China)


### 2. Recommended Reading

Recommended readings are organized by number according to the themes in the sequence of presentations by the instructor. These readings are advised, not required, as a research seminar assumes a great deal of intellectual autonomy among the students enrolled in the seminar. When the reference is a whole book, it is not expected that the entire book will be read. Instead, the student must find in the book the chapter or chapters that best fit into the issues discussed in the seminar. If any seminar participant needs more specific indications about the reading the instructor will provide it. Books are expected to be in the library and/or the Annenberg Resource Center, not in the bookstore. Any book that is not available on campus is not expected to be read during this semester.

### 1. Theories of the Network Society


2. The Network Society in a Comparative Perspective: Silicon Valley, Finland, China, and Beyond.


3. The Political Economy of the Network Society: From the New Economy to the Financial Crisis


5. The Geography of the Network Society: Space of Flows, Space of Places, and the Networked Metropolis


6. Sociability 2.0: Social Networks and Social Life in the Internet.

Gustavo Cardoso, Angus Cheong and Jeffrey Cole (Editors), “*World Wide Internet: Changing Societies, Economies and Cultures.*” University of Macau. 2009.


Sonia Livingstone, *Children and the Internet*, London; Routledge, 2007


7. Surveillance and Counter-Surveillance


8. Power and Counterpower in the Network Society


9. **Culture(s) and Identitie(s) in the Network Society**


APPENDIX: RELEVANT BIBLIOGRAPHY ON TOPICS RELATED TO THE NETWORK SOCIETY


Academic Policies of USC Annenberg School for Communication

**Plagiarism / Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one’s own. The following is the Annenberg School for Communication’s policy on academic integrity: Since its founding, the USC Annenberg School of Communication has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and will be dismissed as a major from the School of Communication. There are no exceptions to the school's policy.

**Academic Accommodations**

Any students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the professor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The office is located in the Student Union, Room 301 and their phone number is (213) 740-0776.