SOCY 427 Identification, Surveillance and Citizenship

Winter 2018
Friday 11:30 am- 2:30 pm Humphrey Hall 132

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Description and Objectives
This is an advanced course of the Surveillance Studies that analyze society through the lens of surveillance, increasingly prevalent in the digital era. The course explores a wide range of surveillance practices from everyday interpersonal interactions, to political economic backgrounds of new technologies and systems, through in-depth discussions. First, we start with situating identification as a starting point of surveillance, and learn that roles and effects of identification systems are not only the verification of a person, but also the classification and categorization of people. Furthermore, identification systems contribute to producing certain identities in individuals to fit into categories, which are shaped by political, economic, social and cultural driving forces. Next, the course will provide some key theories that help students analyze identification and surveillance practices around themselves, as well as important empirical studies revealing previously unknown consequences of surveillance. As surveillance systems have been increasingly limiting and restraining the exercise of citizenship and human rights in democratic institutions, this course pays special attention to the growing effects of surveillance, experienced as inequalities and violence among marginalized groups. Colonial histories and neoliberal policies are comparatively discussed as social backgrounds of surveillance from intersectional sociological perspectives (race/ethnicity, class and gender). Through the historical lens of surveillance, we achieve a better understanding of contemporary surveillance-related issues, such as the “War on Terror”, the NSA surveillance system revealed by the whistleblower Edward Snowden, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, the global tendency toward authoritarian governments, and refugee waves. The goal of this course is encouraging students’ critical thinking on the past, present and future of identification, surveillance and citizenship, and to improve their ability to take action for their own futures, individually and collectively, with civil liberties, equality and social justice.
Key Resources


Online Journal *Surveillance & Society* Archives:
https://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/surveillance-and-society/issue/archive

Requirements

1. **Participation (15%)**
   Participation is essential to seminar course. Students are expected to finish required reading prior to the class, and actively contribute to discussion during the class with questions and opinions relevant to the reading. With engaging in the reading, constant efforts to connect your own situations and surroundings will get extra credits.

2. **Short essay: “Is this surveillance?” (10%)**
   A 3-page 750-word critical response essay that finds examples of systematic surveillance in your own personal experience, and describes how you reacted to it in the first place. Then, think critically of that experience in relation to the course materials, how it can identify and classify you and others, for what kinds of purposes, who can benefit from the surveillance, and how it can affect your formation of identity. Due: January 26, in-class submission by hard copy.

3. **Book Review (20%)**
A 3-page 750-word critical review of *Identifying Citizens*. Your writing should include these points: what are the key themes of the book? How and why have identification and/or surveillance systems expanded in modern societies? Which part of the book appealed you most, and how would you like to add your argument, opinion, or other example to that part? Due: February 16, in-class submission by hard copy.

4. **Presentation (20%)**
   Students choose a specific topic, present on it, and lead the discussion in the class. Work done by each student should be closely related to the term paper. The presentation may be supported digitally. The duration will be decided in the class. Students will discuss the topic with the instructor in advance, to have it approved and to obtain advice and resources. Please sign up for seminar slots.

5. **Term Paper (35%)**
   Each student will prepare a 15-18 page (3,750-4,500 word) grammatical, fully referenced (ASA style) sociological essay that relates to the seminar presentation. A combination of good empirical evidence with thoughtful application of theories will garner the best grades. Due 2 weeks after the seminar presentation.


**Evaluation**

**A+ Exceptional.** Critical, careful, well-read, well-structured and a clear sociological argument where theory and empirical evidence support each other. Eye-opening.

**A Outstanding.** Critical, careful, well-read, well-structured, and a clear sociological argument where theory and evidence are connected. Product of independent thought.

**A- Excellent.** Critical, careful, well-read, well-structured and a clear sociological argument that engages in appropriate theories and evidence. Strong case and well-referenced.

**B+ Very Good.** A very solid writing with good argument and references, that shows good understanding of theory and evidence.

**B Good.** A solid writing with good argument, but missing some references or not consistently supported by evidence, while showing good understanding of the course materials.

**B- Good enough.** A solid writing with good argument, but less references, evidence or theories, while showing reasonable understanding of the course materials.
C+ Competent. Relying on course materials and showing the fair understanding of them, with specific argument, but not fully supported by theory and evidence.

C Fairly Competent. Relying on course materials and showing the fair understanding of them, with specific argument, but not presented persuasively with theory or evidence.

C- Barely Competent. Relying on course materials, but understanding them with some errors. Argument is connected to reading, but not persuasively enough.

D+ Passing. A few evidence of understanding course materials and a limited argument with errors and weak presentation.

F Fail. No evidence of understanding course materials and no reasonable argument.

Late Penalty and Extension

Written work handed in late will be penalized by 10% of that assignment per day. Please speak to the instructor before the due if you need more time. Extensions will be granted for medical or compassionate reasons only and may require appropriate documentation.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available on the Arts and Science website, and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

Email Correspondence

Emails should be used for urgent matters or matters requiring short clarification. If you have
any questions about course content and assignments, these should be directed in person to the instructor in class or during the office hours. I strongly encourage you to take the advantage of seminar where students and instructor can communicate in face-to-face. Face-to-face can exchange more precise and rich information than electronic devices. I am here for you!

**Schedule**

**January 12: Introduction (no reading)**
Describe the course, introduce ourselves (identity talk?), ask students’ interests in the course, and sign up for class presentation.

Film Screening: Laura Poitras’s *CITIZENFOUR*, or Oliver Stone’s *Snowden* (take notes for the discussion next week).

**January 19: Identification/Identity and Social Sorting**
Required reading:

Discussion: *CITIZENFOUR*

**January 26: Panopticon and Biopower**
Required reading:

Discussion: What was the “Canada 150”? Whose identities did it represent? And, what kinds of identities does it make among people? (Additional reading and guest speaker may be arranged.)

**Short Essay Assignment Due**

**February 2: Inclusion and Exclusion**
Required reading

Lecture: Japan’s national ID system of Koseki

1:30-2:30

Find your topic for presentation and term paper project by this day. We will meet Sylvia Andrychuk in the Stauffer seminar room for an introduction to Surveillance resources in and though the library. She can help you find relevant resources.

**February 9: Colonial Surveillance: Necropower**

Required reading:


Lecture: Japan’s colonial ID systems in occupied China.

Discussion: Share examples from the short essay. Personal question and answer time for the approval of your presentation/term paper topic.

**February 16: Internet and Social Media**

Required reading:


*Student Presentation 1*

*Book Review Due*

**February 23: Reading week, no class**

**March 2: Nation-State and Nationalism**
Required reading:


**Student Presentation 2**

**March 9: “War on Terror” and Neoliberalism**

Required reading:


Guest Lecture may be arranged.

**Student Presentation 3**

**March 16: Political Economy of Big Data Surveillance**

Required reading:


**Student Presentation 4**

**March 23: Race, Body and Biometrics**

Required reading:


Student Presentation 5

March 30: Good Friday, no class

April 6: Refugee, Migration and Global Turn to Authoritarianism
Required reading:
Topak, Ozgun. 2014. “No Limits to Brutality: Deaths at the Greece-Turkey Borders”, openDemocracy, May 19.
https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/özgün-topak/no-limits-to-brutality-deaths-at-greece-tu rkey-borders

(Student Presentation 6, and/or guest speaker may be arranged on refugee issue)

There are a number of other books, journal articles and films that can be useful resources for your presentation/term paper project. I can provide a brief bibliography upon your request. So, ask me any time you are up to learning more.