We live in surveillance societies. Almost all aspects of everyday life are subject to multiple forms of surveillance. Often these experiences are especially connected to security practices: from CCTV cameras to security screening at airports to the need for and use of ID cards at places like businesses and border crossings. Yet surveillance also occurs in more mundane activities like with online monitoring, consumer loyalty cards, routine medical check-ups and more. Surveillance has become so ubiquitous in our cultures that many of us now participate willingly if not enthusiastically is surveillance systems. Yet the continuous attention paid to our personal information through these practices has a dramatic effect on our social experiences, not to mention our private lives.

Surveillance however concerns more than our personal experiences. These systems add up to an information infrastructure, which has become essential in the broader functioning and structuring of contemporary societies. Surveillance is about the integration of surveillance technologies into the infrastructure and built fabric of cities. It is part of the transnational networks of satellites and telecommunications from the Internet to mobile telephones. Surveillance is intimately involved in the prevention, perpetuation, making and ending of wars and conflicts, the monitoring of climate, ecosystems and the lives of other species, and the maintenance of a global economic order.

AIMS

The course aims to provide a critical introduction to surveillance and the emerging interdisciplinary field of Surveillance Studies. It offers a historically-grounded, theoretically-informed and empirically-illustrated survey of the practices, technologies and social relations of surveillance from different perspectives. Students will learn how theoretical understandings of surveillance connect with its empirical practice, and a particular emphasis will be given to the sociopolitical dimensions of surveillance by looking at comparative case studies. A critical understanding of both theories and practices of surveillance will be examined drawing from an analysis of surveillance processes (such as social sorting and data flows) and its potential drawbacks (i.e. privacy and ethical issues).

OUTCOMES

By the end of this course students should have a good understanding of:

- What surveillance is and what it is not;
- The varied forms of surveillance in contemporary and historical societies;
- The different ways of conceptualizing and analyzing surveillance from a range of philosophical and social theoretical viewpoints;
- The social relations around surveillance;
- Current trends and debates in the study of surveillance.

COURSE READING

The required reading listed for each week will be provided on Moodle for students to read online or print. No paper handouts will be provided.
Readers and Introductions:
There are two excellent introductory texts available:

There is currently only one ‘reader’ currently available:

There is an absolutely awesome Handbook, from which I will be using excerpts throughout the course. This is hardback only and very expensive but if you intend to go on to do a thesis on the topic of surveillance or do graduates studies in the area, you should get it:

Key Texts:

Journals:
The following journals are recommended, although you should not limit yourself to these – articles on surveillance appear in many disciplinary and interdisciplinary journals:
•  *Surveillance & Society
•  Identity in the Information Society (IDIS)
•  Information, Communication & Society (ICS)
•  New Media & Society
•  Media, Culture & Society
•  Theory, Culture & Society

ASSESSMENT
It is essential that students attend class regularly and keep up with course readings. Attendance will be monitored through an attendance sheet.

1. Movie review
Topic: Students are asked to write a review of a movie dealing with surveillance. A list of movies in the Surveillance Studies Centre library is available, and these movies are pre-approved for review. Other movies can be chosen with the permission of the instructor. The film should be placed in an academic and cultural context, and referenced. This is not simply about your personal opinion of the film!
Format: 1000 words in length, double-spaced.
Value: 25% of the final mark.
Submission: By Midnight, Saturday 31st January, 2015, to the SOCY309 Moodle site (electronic submission).

2. Critical Essay Question and Abstract
For the second assignment, you should choose a topic use it to create a critical question for your term paper (Assignment 3). The ‘question’ can be an actual question, a question with sub-questions, a statement to be discussed, a hypothesis to be tested, or any other way you can think of to problematize the subject. (The question can have a subtitle, and up to three sub-questions but no more).
The question must be:
1. Critical, that is it must challenge and go beyond the ‘common-sense’ and the mundane;
2. Of sociological or more broadly social scientific interest;
3. Possible to answer given the constraints of time and resources available to you;
4. Justified with an abstract, a brief 250-word outline.
5. Supported by 10 indicative references (key examples of the kinds of sources you will use).

Value: 25% of the final grade.

Submission: Assignment 2 should be uploaded by midnight on Sunday 8th March, 2015, to the SOCY309 Moodle site (electronic submission).

3. Term paper
Answer your critical essay question, as amended following the grading of the question...

It is expected that you show familiarity with social theories and empirical research, and approach the subject in a critical manner.

Format: 3000 words, double-spaced.

Value: 50% of the final mark.

Submission: By midnight, Sunday, 12th April, 2015 (the week after the term ends), to the SOCY309 Moodle site (electronic submission).

The style and referencing guide for sociology students is available on the Queen’s sociology website: http://www.queensu.ca/sociology/about-us/style-and-reference-guide

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is in three parts. The first part offers the grounding for the course, consisting of three lectures and associated seminar / workshop: What is Surveillance? Why Surveillance Studies?; Understanding Surveillance; and The Histories of Surveillance.

The second considers surveillance in five key conceptual areas: Surveillance, Categorization and Knowledge; Surveillance, Norms and Morality; Surveillance, Power and Authority; Surveillance and Technology; and Surveillance, Space and Materiality.

The third part deals with contemporary and future dilemmas of surveillance with four lectures: Surveillance and Globalization; Surveillance, War and Terror; The Synopticon – Surveillance, Performance and Popular Culture; and Towards Ubisurv?.

Many lectures will be accompanied by suggested artistic, visual and literary material, some of which will be considered in excerpts in class and discussed in the WebCT discussion forum for the course.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

What is surveillance? Why Surveillance Studies?

In the first week, the course will be outlined, and the expectations, outcomes and assessment introduced. We will look at the various definitions and understandings of surveillance, and try to arrive at our own preliminary definition of the concept. We survey the contemporary prominence of the subject in politics, media and popular culture, with the use of many examples from different media sources. We also examine the growth of the study of surveillance and the need for, and rise of, ‘Surveillance Studies’ as one of a number of interdisciplinary fields that do not attempt to replace traditional academic disciplines but rather identify key organizing principles or points of analysis around which scholars of many disciplines can come together.

Reading:
2 Theorizing Surveillance

In the second week, in this introduction to surveillance theory, we examine the multiple ways in which one might conceptualize surveillance. The session covers a range of approaches, in particular: Marxist and neo-Marxist theories of surveillance as part of the reproduction of class relations; Weber’s understanding of bureaucracy; Foucault’s genealogy of the modern subject and its development by Giddens, Bauman and other post-structuralist thinkers like Deleuze and Poster; Baudrillard and theorists of media and simulation; and, finally contemporary theorists working specifically in Surveillance Studies, such as Graham, Haggerty, Lyon and Gary Marx, and other key individual philosophers, in particular Virilio and Agamben. We will return to all of these throughout the course.

Reading:

3 The Histories of Surveillance

Surveillance has many histories. In the third week, we consider a global historical overview, providing both some clear trajectories of development, and an understanding of the diversity of surveillance practices, technologies and relations. It will in particular aim to problematize:

i. any generic or standard (and particularly ‘western’) model of the development of surveillance, keeping the students alert to social, spatial and temporal specificity; and to the complex interrelationships between cultures over time and space.

ii. the technocentric conception of surveillance as an artifact of technological development.

Reading:
PART TWO: UNDERSTANDING SURVEILLANCE

4 Surveillance, Categorization and Knowledge

Drawing on Foucault, Beck, Law and Bowker and Star, in this fourth week, we consider surveillance as a form of knowledge-generating practice and organizing metaphor. We look at the ways in which information is acquired, organized and used. We consider documentation, classification, categorization, identification, verification, and as surveillance, whilst recognizing that that is not all they are, and warn specifically against falling into the trap of ‘everything is surveillance’. We place the rise of surveillance-generated knowledge as a response to uncertainty, anxiety, fear and risk, and consider the notion of a ‘risk-surveillance society.’ And finally, we consider the role of the database, to which we shall return in Week 7.

Reading:

5 Surveillance, Power and Authority

For many, surveillance is equated with ‘Big Brother’, Orwell’s fictional dictator, and the operation of surveillance is bound up with both intentional and unintentional forms of social control, and has a complex and ambiguous relationship with authority and power. The fifth will consider surveillance in authoritarian regimes, concentrating particularly on the former East Germany and on pre-war fascist states, as well as contemporary China. It will also consider the relationship between surveillance, power and authority in democratic states and the role surveillance plays in distinguishing between different forms of governance.

Reading:
- Country reports from Amnesty International and Privacy International

6 Surveillance, Norms and Morality

In the sixth week we look at the place of surveillance in relation to social norms, moral values and ethical philosophy. The lecture emphasizes the dual nature of surveillance in intention and application. It considers first how practices of surveillance have been guided by religious and ideological considerations and normative expectations, looking at the way in which surveillance has been and is used to produce ideal societies, good conduct, safety, welfare, and so on. It also looks at the way in which surveillance has challenged or transformed other norms and values, and in particular at the complex relationship between surveillance, privacy and trust. Finally, it considers the arguments that contemporary forms of surveillance attack the very basis of moral or normative considerations of surveillance.
7

Surveillance and Technology

Whilst previous sessions have tried to steer students away from technologically-determinist views of surveillance, it is still crucial to understand the interaction of technologies and surveillance, and the material outcomes of surveillance relations. Week 7 concentrates on the latter. In this session, we examine the technologies of surveillance, using particular case studies of photography (including film, video and CCTV), face recognition biometrics, and RFID tagging. We argue that these technological systems in themselves have important social effects, but that it is their place in political economies, and their social construction, that makes them powerful. We further consider the crucial role of technologies of storage and connection, and why the linking together of different systems constitutes a significant development.

Reading:

8

Surveillance, Space and Materiality

In Week 8, we consider the relationship of surveillance to the construction of space and the material form of our societies. We look at various architectural aspects of social ordering and surveillance through history, including walls, gates, guard-posts, ghettos and prisons, and consider surveillance as both an alternative to and an integral part of, design and architectural approaches to social order. We move on to consider the relationship between urban forms and surveillance in the Twentieth and early Twenty-first Century, in particular examining the rise of neoliberal urbanism with its shopping centers, theme parks and gated communities. We consider various ways of understanding this as merging of consumption, surveillance and simulation in the built environment, from Sorkin’s arguments about theme parks and ideas of ‘brandscapes’ to Agamben’s conception of ‘the camp’.

Reading:

**PART THREE: CONTEMPORARY DILEMMAS OF SURVEILLANCE**

**9 Surveillance and Globalization**

Surveillance has always been concerned with mobility and movement, circulations and flows. Surveillance practices are used to speed or facilitate the flow of some people and things and to slow or limit the movement of others. But the scale at which surveillance operates is now shifting from the local and national to the transnational and global. In the ninth week, we examine the relationship between surveillance, globalization and neoliberalization, arguing that the global scale is increasingly where circulations that are seen as disorderly or undesirable are governed: be those movements of illegal immigrants, viruses and bacteria, or malware on the Internet. This leads to the attempt to reconfigure borders and boundaries both at traditional sites and in more flexible ways. However, I will also argue that increasingly surveillance is being used as a way of securing the globalization of particular flows, particularly financial flows, and that this is in many ways the most consequential form of surveillance.

**Reading:**

**10 Surveillance, War and Espionage**

The tenth week considers the contemporary nexus of surveillance, war and espionage in the wake of the Snowden revelations. We saw in Week 5 that militarism has always had an intimate relationship with surveillance, here we seek to unpack that relationship further in the context of the world where the ‘state of emergency’ is, if not constant, at least always a possibility. This lecture looks at both military surveillance practices and technologies as they have been used in an effort to produce a ‘closed world’ from the Twentieth Century to the present; the interaction between militarism, modernism and managerialism in contemporary societies; and the schemes for increased surveillance for reasons of ‘national security’ in the ‘war on terror’.

**Reading:**
• Greenwald, G. (2014) *No Place to Hide*. (+ see archive of Snowden revelation articles from *The Guardian* newspaper and *The Intercept*)
The Synopticon: Surveillance, Performance and Popular Culture

In Week 11, we consider the ‘bright side’ of surveillance, where both watching and being watched provides new forms of empowering and pleasurable social relations. Dealing with the reconsideration of surveillance based on ‘desire’ and ‘performance’ advocated by Weibel, McGrath, Andrejevic, Koskela and others, this session considers why so many people enjoy surveillance and participate in it actively and willingly, and what this means for future social development.

Reading:

Towards Ubisurv?

In the final week, we examine the convergence of politics, technologies and social processes towards a society of ubiquitous computing (ubicomp) or ambient intelligence (AmI), which is inevitably also a society of ubiquitous surveillance (ubisurv). It examines the various utopian and dystopian portrayals of such a society, from the transhumanist ‘singularity’ to technological authoritarianism and dehumanization, and sketches out possibilities for its emerging socio-technical relations. The lecture uses futurological thinking to encourage the students to develop more critical understandings of the trajectories of surveillance societies and how we shape them and live within them.

Reading: