SOCY 427 Identification, Surveillance and Citizenship

Winter 2019
Monday 2:30 pm- 5:30 pm Bioscience 2111

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Course 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


Requirements

1. Participation (20%)
   Participation is essential to this 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 other cases in the world and your own surroundings will get extra credits.

2. Short essay: “social effects of mass surveillance” (10%)
   A 750-word critical response essay about effects of mass surveillance, such as the NSA systems we have discussed about in the class. Choose one or two specific examples of mass surveillance systems or technologies (surveillance camera, biometrics, face or voice recognition system, ID card, loyalty card, social media, online shopping, etc.) and discuss the social impacts of the system critically from multiple perspectives, such as political, economic, social and cultural dimensions. Look carefully at what is advertised about the system, and find what is not officially told but are crucial effects for public, including both intended and unintended consequences. You can also think about what the real purposes of the system are, who benefits most from the system, who are targeted, or who are most severely affected. Due: January 21, in-class submission by hard copy, or onQ electronically by 2:30 pm.

3. Book Review (20%)
   A 1000-word critical review of *Identifying Citizens* or *Surveillance After Snowden*. 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 11, in-class submission by hard copy, or onQ electronically by 2:30 pm.

4. Presentation (15%)
   Choose a specific topic, present it to the class, and lead the discussion. 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 and have it approved by February 11 (before the reading week), to obtain advice and resources. Please sign up for seminar slots, and talk to the instructor after the class or during the office hour for the approval.

5. Term Paper (35%)
   Each student will prepare a 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. Students do not have to use
primary sources (original, archival or interviews), but academically written, multiple secondary sources are necessary for evidence. Due 2 weeks after the seminar presentation. In-class submission or onQ.

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

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.
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 devise. I am here for you!

Schedule

**January 7: Introduction (no reading)**
I will describe and give an overview of the course. Come prepared to introduce yourself, discuss your interests in the course, and sign up for class presentation.

Film Screening: Laura Poitras *CITIZENFOUR* (114 minutes, take notes for the discussion next week).

**Part I Theory & History of Identification**
*(Why Does Identification Matter?)*

**January 14: Identification and Social Sorting**

Required reading
Lyon, *Surveillance After Snowden*. Chapter 1 Snowden Storm, 16-42.

Lyon, *Identifying Citizens*. Introduction and Chapter 1 Demanding Documents. 1-38
(you will read the rest of either book by yourself, and write a book review, due on Feb 11).

Recommended reading

Discussion (questions for class discussion will be updated and posted onQ in the previous week)

*CITIZENFOUR*
1. What are the most revealing parts for you?
2. Why do the technology companies cooperate the NSA?
3. How does the NSA surveillance influence our everyday communications? Does this film affect your online and offline behaviours and activities?

*Identifying Citizens*
1. According to Lyon, “Identification is the starting point of surveillance” (2009: 4). Why and how?
2. What are the major areas in which identification systems developed historically? What were the major purposes of those systems in the big picture of the society?
3. What have new technologies brought to identification systems?
4. What is social sorting?

**January 21: Panopticon and Biopower**

*Short Essay Assignment Due*
Required reading


Recommended Reading


Discussion
“Coming and Going”
1. Torpey says, modern nation-states identify who belongs and who does not unambiguously (p241). For what reasons do they so?
2. What does the author mean by that modern states “embrace” the population, rather than “penetrate” it?
3. How does this article change your view of the global issues of “illegal” migrations and refugees?

4:30-5:15
Lecture: Japan’s national ID system of Koseki

January 28: Inclusion and Exclusion
Required reading


Recommended reading

Discussion
Imagined Communities
1. Anderson defines a nation as an imagined political community (p. 15). Why does he think so, and what kinds of images come up with a nation? (you can find some definitions in the text, but can you add some more features?)
2. In Chapter 2, Anderson suggests that the nation was imagined in the transformation from the previous ruling structure (p.40). What are the main elements of the structure he discusses? He also sees the significant roles of language, literature and media to grow nationalism (p.
Can you find any examples in the Canadian case? What are the important language, literature, and media, to imagine Canada as a nation?

“Politics, bare life and sovereign power”

1. What is bare life or *homo sacer*? How is it produced?
2. How does the state of exception relate bio-politics?
3. Why does Agamben think that Nazi’s concentration camp, refugees, and the “War on Terror” are examples of the state of exception?

4:30-5:15
Lecture: Japan’s colonial ID systems in occupied China.

**February 4: Necropolitical Identification**

Required reading:


Recommended Reading

**Modernity and the Holocaust**

1. Bauman argues that *sociology must* examine the Holocaust as a major problem of modernity and civilization (p. x, xiv), which had him write this award-winning book. What are the reasons he believes so?
2. Bauman suggests that rationality played a key role for the Nazi’s systematic killing of the Jews. How does relationality relate the Holocaust? (p.12-18)
3. However, killing others is against moral virtue, for most of the time. How did the Nazi have the Germans and others drop it off when they involved the Holocaust? (p. 18-27)
4. How does Bauman’s argument relate Black’s *IBM and the Holocaust*?

**IBM and the Holocaust**

1. How did the Nazi identify the Jews? What are the definition of Jews, and how were the data collected?
2. Black says, “The Holocaust would have proceeded—and often did proceed—with simple bullets, death marches, and massacres based on pen and paper persecution. But there is reason to examine the fantastical numbers Hitler achieved in murdering so many millions so swiftly, and identify the crucial role of automation and technology. Accountability is needed.” (p11) Can you relate any concepts from Foucault and Agamben to account for it?
3. Black found “Watson was no Fascist. He was a pure capitalist.” (p69) Then, why did he corporate the Nazi? How can fascism and capitalism support each other?
4. “Solipsistic and dazzled by its own swirling universe of technical possibilities, IBM was self-gripped by a special amoral corporate mantra: if it can be done, it should be done. To the blind technocrat, the *means* were more important than the *ends.*” (p8) Can you find any other example of such a technological solutionism?
Special Workshop: Indigenous Experiences of Identification and Surveillance
led by the guests from the Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre at Queen’s University.

**February 11: Colonial Surveillance: Marriage of Bureaucracy and Violence**

*Book Review Due*

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


**Discussion**

“Identity card, ethnic perception and genocide in Rwanda”

1. How did the identity card contribute to the Rwandan Genocide of 1994?
2. Who created the distinctions of Tutsi, Hutu and Twa, for what purposes?
3. What are your sociological findings from this historiographical article, in relation to identification, surveillance and citizenship?

**3:30-3:45**

**Group work on case studies**

Students will split into three groups to research the empirical cases the instructor assign, such as Maher Arar, Hassan Diab or Jamal Khashoggi, in relation to identification and surveillance. The instructor will assign one of the cases to each group. Students are expected to find some newspaper, journal articles or other reliable resources about the case assigned during the subsequent library session and the reading week for the next class.

**4:00-5:00**

We will meet Librarian Sylvia Andrychuk in the Stauffer seminar room for an introduction to surveillance resources in and though the library. The student groups can learn how to use the search engines to find relevant articles for the case studies, and also for the individual presentation and term paper project. Ms. Andrychuk can help you find resources.

**February 18: Reading week, no class**

**Part II Present Issues of Surveillance and Citizenship in the Societal Conditions**

(For What Purposes Are the Identification Systems Used, under What Circumstances?)

**February 25: “War on Terror” and Neoliberalism**

Find your topic for presentation and term paper project, and have it approved by this day.
Required reading

Recommended reading

4:00-5:15
Group work on case studies
Students will first share the articles and information they found on the assigned case within the group, and have a mutual understanding of what happened to the subject person. Then, discuss how the case is related to identification and surveillance, and what should be done for social justice. Lastly, each group presents what they found in the case studies to other groups.

**March 4: Internet and Social Media**
Required reading


Discussion

*Student Presentation 1*

**March 11: Political Economy of Surveillance**
Required reading


Discussion

*Student Presentation 2*

**March 18: Social Inequalities: Race, Class and Gender**
Required reading
Nagra, Baljit. 2017. *Securitized Citizens: Canadian Muslims’ Experiences of Race Relations and*


Recommended Reading

Discussion

Student Presentation 3

March 25: Body, Border and Biometrics
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-turkey-borders

Discussion

Student Presentation 4

April 1: From Authoritarian to Totalitarian Surveillance?
Required Reading


Discussion

Student Presentation 5

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.