DTC 356: Electronic Research and the Rhetoric of Information
Fall 2015 MWF 1410–1500 Murrow 307

Dr. Mike Edwards   Avery 341   509 335 8818
mike.edwards@wsu.edu   http://public.wsu.edu/~preterite/   office hours by appointment

Description

> This course examines how the social, cultural, legal, economic, and political roles of information relate to research with and on electronic and digital sources and subjects. More specifically, it asks you to examine how research functions in the information age: not only the searches and research that you do, but the research that is done to and on you. That examination investigates possible parallels among academic research, market research, security research, and government surveillance. Course topics include the production, validation, storage, retrieval, evaluation, coding, analysis, use, abuse, and impact of electronic research and digital information.

Required Materials

- Doctorow, Cory. *Homeland*. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 2013.
- Pasquale, Frank. *The Black Box Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015.
- Weinberger. *Too Big to Know*. New York: Basic Books, 2011.
- A laptop, smartphone, or tablet to use in class (for class-related purposes only, please).

Goals and Outcomes

- Explore information as a social, cultural, legal, economic, and political asset. (WSU Learning Goals 1, 4, 7; DTC Outcomes 3, 5)
- Explore the ways information is produced, distributed, gathered, used, and reproduced. (WSU Learning Goals 1, 4, 7; DTC Outcomes 3, 5)
- Explore, understand, and apply research methods in digital environments. (WSU Learning Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 7; DTC Outcomes 3, 5, 6)
- Examine how privacy and intellectual property function in digital environments. (WSU Learning Goals 1, 3, 4, 7; DTC Outcomes 3, 5)
- Understand the relationships among information, inequality, and ethical research practices. (WSU Learning Goals 1, 4, 6, 7; DTC Outcomes 3, 5)
- Build and analyze datasets and communicate the results of that analysis in appropriate media to specific audiences. (WSU Learning Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; DTC Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6)

Major Assignments

> **Weekly writing, reviewing, and revising in Eli Review.** For 9 weeks of the semester, you will write brief summaries of and responses to the previous week's readings and submit them to Eli Review before the start of class on Mondays (300-600 words). In class on Mondays, you will use Eli Review to respond to one anothers' writing. Before the start of class on Wednesdays, you will review the feedback you received and integrate the most useful feedback into revision plans. Before the start of class on Fridays, you will submit your revised summary and response documents (400-800 words). You may miss one week of this work without penalty. (10 points for initial writing, 15 points for peer review feedback, 5 points for revision plan, 15 points for revised writing = 360 points.)

> **Midterm project.** You will use topic modeling and distant reading research strategies to identify sets of topics from the Eli Review writing assignments that you're interested in researching. You will write brief project plans (800-1200 words) proposing research questions and research protocols, including data gathering and analysis methods, that will allow you to investigate those topics for final projects for the course. Project plans must include a bibliography of relevant texts from this course and other courses you've taken. (200 points.)

> **Final project.** You will compose a well-designed 3000-4000 word essay, article, or webtext that fulfills the expectations you set up in your midterm, poses specific research questions and hypotheses responding to those questions, places those questions in the course's broader context using the sources from the midterm's bibliography, and uses at least one of the methods of data analysis covered in the course to try to demonstrate the validity of those hypotheses (150 points). The project must include a visualization of the dataset (50 points), a section describing the research methods employed (50 points), and a section presenting the data itself and the texts from this course and other courses relevant to the project (50 points). You will give brief peer-evaluated multimodal presentations about your projects in the final week of class (40 points). The project should recycle or incorporate prose you wrote for the midterm and the weekly summary and response assignments in Eli Review. (340 points total.)

> **Classroom participation and respectfulness.** You must contribute regularly to the classroom discussion in a productive and respectful manner. (100 points.)

Academic Integrity

> Academic work builds upon, responds to, and explicitly acknowledges the work of others. The Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) Statement on Plagiarism notes that "In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." The WSU Academic Integrity Policy, which is based on State of Washington Code, expands the CWPA definition of plagiarism and explains other categories of academic misconduct. As a WSU student, you are bound by these

policies and are responsible for being aware of and abiding by them. Students who commit plagiarism will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students and will fail the class. Students who pass this course will have demonstrated the ability to work collaboratively and to responsibly respond to and acknowledge the work of others.

Attendance

Because so much of the work we do in class is hands-on and collaborative, attendance is important. We meet for 43 sessions, of which you are offered one week of "leave": you are allowed three absences total, no questions asked, with no penalty to your grade. Beyond those three absences, each missed class of the remaining 40 sessions will deduct 25 points (1/40) from your final grade. If you know you are going to be absent, you may avoid the penalty by arranging ways to complete the work of the class ahead of time and turn it in early, in class, at least two class sessions before the planned absence. I am not permitted to ask for medical documentation for absences, so there are no excused or unexcused absences.

Grading

Eli Review drafting, feedback, and revising:		360 points
Initial submissions: 9 @ 10, with lowest 1 dropped =	80 points	
Feedback: 9 @ 15, with lowest 1 dropped =	120 points	
Revision plans: 9 @ 5, with lowest 1 dropped =	40 points	
Completed revisions: 9 @ 15, with lowest 1 dropped =	120 points	
Participation and respectfulness:		100 points
Midterm project:		200 points
Final project:		340 points
Bibliography and dataset =	40 points	
Methods =	50 points	
Visualization =	50 points	
Presentation =	50 points	
Essay, article, or webtext =	150 points	
Total:		1000 points

Discrimination, Harassment, and Misconduct

According to the [WSU Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct](#) and [WSU Standards of Conduct for Students](#), discrimination, discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct (including stalking, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence) are prohibited. If you have experienced or witnessed discriminatory conduct, contact the WSU Office for Equal Opportunity (http://oeo.wsu.edu) or a WSU Title IX Coordinator (http://oeo.wsu.edu/title-ix/) to discuss reporting options and resources, including a list of confidential resources. WSU employees who have information regarding sexual harassment or sexual misconduct are required to report the information to OEO or a Title IX Coordinator.

Disability

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509 335 3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. Accommodations must be approved through the Access Center.

Campus Safety

Please be aware of the Campus Safety Plan (http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/) and visit the Office of Emergency Management web site (http://oem.wsu.edu/) for a comprehensive listing of university policies, procedures, statistics, and information related to campus safety, emergency management, and the health and welfare of the campus community.

Calendar

Date	Reading / Preparation	Topic / Activity
M 8/24		envelope; projects; Eli introduction
W 8/26	Ribes & Jackson, "Data;" Zimmer, "NGram"	data sources discussion; NGram
F 8/28	Rogers, "Digital Methods"	definitions; Eli sign-up
M 8/31	Doctorow 11–41, 393–6 (1, 2, biblio); draft	Eli: map all the things
W 9/2	Weinberger 1–17 (1); Mueller, "Nephological"	all the things, over time; NGram again
F 9/4	Pasquale 18–38 (2.1); revision	metadata (New Yorker, EFF, Guardian)
M 9/7	**Labor Day**	**no class**
W 9/9	Raley, "Dataveillance;" Banks & Eble, IRBs	informed consent; Google SEO
F 9/11	syllabus; WSUV Rushkoff study guide	syllabus, assignments, approach
M 9/14	Doctorow 42–74 (3, 4); draft	Eli; filter bubbles; what's in a secret?
W 9/16	Weinberger 19–41 (2)	induction/deduction; Latour's ANT
F 9/18	Pasquale 38–58 (2.2); revision	ChoicePoint; "What They Know"
M 9/21	DMI "Link," "Website," try one; draft	Eli; methods; midterm word clouds
W 9/23	DMI "Engine," "Spheres," try one	Zotero and big data guest lecture
F 9/25	DMI "Webs," "Networked," try one; revision	data gathering; text analysis tools
M 9/28	Doctorow 75–117 (5, 6); draft	Eli; explore nsaplayset.org
W 9/30	Weinberger 47–68 (4)	median, mode, range; distribution
F 10/2	Pasquale 59–80 (3.1); revision	inferential statistics
M 10/5	midterms	STRATA guest lecture

W 10/7	Weinberger 69–91 (5)	homophily and edit wars
F 10/9	Pasquale 80–100 (3.2)	mid-semester evals; privacy threats
M 10/12	Doctorow 118–152 (7, 8); draft	Eli; midterms returned; oppression
W 10/14	Weinberger 93–119 (6)	how to not read a Victorian novel
F 10/16	Pasquale 101–120 (4.1); revision	information and market failure
M 10/19	Doctorow 153–200 (9); draft	Eli; Grokster and ripping; DRM
W 10/21	Weinberger 121–143 (7.1)	crowdsourcing research
F 10/23	Pasquale 120–139 (4.2); revise	financial derivatives literacy
M 10/26	Blythe, "Coding;" gather data on own	coding discussion; C4 to 0:20:02
W 10/28	gather data on own	C4 0:20:03–1:06:14
F 10/30	gather data on own	C4 1:06:15–1:51:00
M 11/2	Doctorow 201–263 (10, 11); draft	Eli; findings, implications
W 11/4	Weinberger 143–57 (7.2); Sayers, "Big Data"	visualization periodic table
F 11/6	Pasquale 140–165 (5.1); revise	dataviz guest lecture
M 11/9	Drucker, "Graphical Display"	data analysis discussion
W 11/11	**Veterans Day**	**no class**
F 11/13	Project draft; prepare review criteria	small group workshopping
M 11/16	Doctorow 264–325 (12, 13); draft	Eli; Obama SIGINT; Paul Revere
W 11/18	Weinberger 159–171 (8)	CALDOL and networked learning
F 11/20	Pasquale 165–188 (5.2); revise	integrating readings and projects
11/23–27	**Thanksgiving**	**no class**
M 11/30	Doctorow 326–81 (14, 15, epilogue); draft	Eli; UN Privacy Declaration
W 12/2	Weinberger 173–196 (9)	technodeterminism; philosophies
F 12/4	Pasquale 189–218 (6); revise	work returned
M 12/7	Doctorow 383–390; prepare presentations	presentations
W 12/9	prepare presentations	presentations
F 12/11	prepare presentations	presentations
W 12/16	finals week	projects due NLT 10 AM 12/16