CS300T Computers in Society

Course Syllabus

Instructor: G. Hill Price

Meeting Time: 11:00 - 11:50 MonWedFri
Meeting Place: various (Distance Learning)

Course Text.

none.

Course Objectives.

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will have gained an increased awareness of the relative impact that the technological development of the digital computer has had and is expected have on society. The primary focus will be on the problems posed by and benefits offered by computers. Students will research areas of computers in society along with the technological hardware advances and the software that are used in the systems. Students will explore the applications of computers in education, government, business, transportation, medicine, and the home. The secondary focus will evaluate the impacts of computers on personal privacy, constitutional issues, computer crime and fraud, and the importance of studying reliability and encryption. The views and opinions of all students will be presented in open forum discussions on specific topics. The students will be partly responsible for the "current events" component of the lectures. The text focuses more on the problems and their possible solutions in relation to the secondary focus. We will utilize other resources to augment the benefits portion of our discussions.

Course Limitations.

The subject area of "Computers in Society" is so vast that CS 300 can do nothing more than scratch the surface. We will aim for breadth rather than depth in the lectures and for depth rather than breadth in the forum presentations and written assignments. We will strive to strike a balance between a systematic approach and a current-events dominated approach. Current event presentations will begin each class period, and may consequently drive each lecture.

Course References.

Supplements from the World Wide Web will be utilized. The instructor's web page contains copies of the syllabus, project, and forum descriptions. It also contains copies
of the presentation slides used in the lectures and a list of useful URLs.

Course Topics.

The following topics are planned:

- History of computers and definitions of a society
- History of the Internet and current uses
- Societal issues due to computers
- Computers and their roles in the areas of:
  - Communications
  - Computer Crime, Prevention, and Privacy
  - Intellectual Property/Constitutional Issues
  - Reliability
  - Education
  - Medicine
  - Transportation
  - Business, Finance and Marketing
  - Entertainment

Course Requirements.

Each class will include a discussion of current events concerning computers and their impact on the related societal topic. It is expected that students will contribute significantly to this discussion. Information may be found in any of the following areas, but is certainly not limited to them: newspapers, magazines, television, and the Internet. As this is an important part of the class, participation in this segment will form a portion of the final grade.

Each student will complete an assignment that will consist of a final paper. The project must address issues relevant to the spectrum of course topics.

Students will be placed into groups of 4 or 5 students to prepare a forum presentation, which will summarize salient issues relative to a given topic. The intent is to educate the class and incite class discussion.

There will be three tests.

Course Evaluation.

Grading will be on the following numerical scale (90-100 A, 87-89 B+, 83-86 B, 80-82 B-, 77-79 C+, 73-76 C, 70-72 C-, 67-69 D+, 60-66 D, below 60 F). Final grades will be based on the following weights:

- Forum (Group Project) Presentation 20%
Forum Critiques of other groups  10%
Research Paper  20%
Three Tests  15% each
Classroom Participation  5%

Course Logistics.

The following dates should be noted:

The "or" part of the below table splits the two class sections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 24</td>
<td>First class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 7</td>
<td>Labor Day Holiday (no classes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 9</td>
<td>Forum Group preferences (if any)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 18</td>
<td>Forum topics/dates due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 21</td>
<td>Written paper prospectus due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 25</td>
<td>Group Assignment ONE due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 28</td>
<td>Test ONE due via email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 10 - 13</td>
<td>Fall Break (no classes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 2</td>
<td>Test TWO due via email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 3</td>
<td>Last Day to Withdraw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 20</td>
<td>Written project due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 25 - 29</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday (no classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2</td>
<td>Test THREE due via email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>Last class</td>
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Course Policies.

Read the Classroom Rules. (Some items are NOT applicable to TV classes.)

If the course research paper is not turned in on the due date or the presentation dates are missed, a grade of ZERO will be assigned for the missed grading element unless the instructor has given permission. Any student who fails to perform in a satisfactory manner on the forum project may not pass the course regardless of the student's overall point total.

Because the class period is important and discussions cannot be reproduced, absences cannot be made up. Excessive absences may have a negative effect on a student's learning and performance. Any student who must miss a class is expected to have the initiative necessary to properly cover the material missed (i.e. assignment given or modified, due dates established or modified, any handouts, etc.). Students must meet all course deadlines.