

PRIVACY AND MEDIA

**New York University
Dr. Emma Stamm**

MCC-UE 1303 001 | Spring 2021 | Online

Meeting times: MW 12:30-1:45PM

Office hours: W 2:30-4:30PM and by appt



Image Credit: Spencer Whalen, *USA TODAY* (left); *Video Economist Blog* (right)

Description

This course examines the relationship between digital information technologies and privacy. The definition of privacy varies across sites of government and private-sector surveillance, practices of data mining and interpretation, and various cultural milieus. Privacy may be an experience, an affordance, a right, or a virtue, and is indelibly linked with race, gender, class, and ability, among other dynamics of identity. Digital media not only supply and invade privacy, but construct its meaning in concert with evolving social norms. Although it eludes simple definition, privacy is implicated wherever humans meet information networks.

“Privacy and Media” engages a broad array of empirical and theoretical materials. These include but are not limited to ethnographies, works of historical research, and critical analyses of contemporary technologies. Students learn to develop original theories and salient research questions on the meaning of privacy after the digital turn.

Outcomes

Students are expected to develop the following capacities:

- 1) Identify key technologies that mediate, enable, and limit privacy.
- 2) Indicate various social, political, legal, cultural, and historical approaches to the study of technology and privacy.
- 3) Analyze and critique narratives that guide current debates about the impact of information technologies on individual privacy.
- 4) Apply mixed methods to develop original research in the context of the course.

Materials

Please purchase *The Known Citizen: A History of Privacy in Modern America* by Sarah E. Igo through the NYU bookstore or any other vendor. All other course materials are provided through hyperlinks on this syllabus and our NYU classes page.

Grade Components and Evaluation*Grade Rubric*

A = 94-100, A- = 90-93, B+ = 87-89, B = 84-86, B- = 80-83, C+ = 77-79, C = 74-76, C- = 70-73, D+ = 65-69, D = 60-64

Participation (15 pts)

Consistently engage with course materials, respectfully contribute via comments, questions, and feedback in and beyond our remote meetings.

In-class moderation (10 pts)

For this component, students will assist the instructor with in-class moderation once per term. This includes providing responses to assigned readings, fielding student questions, and/or referencing additional sources.

Discussion posts (5 pts each; 20 pts total)

Submit a total of four discussion posts, each worth five points, about assigned readings on our blog app on NYU Classes. You will be provided specific prompts for these assignments. (300 words)

Privacy in Technological Context (10 pts)

For this assignment, students will describe and analyze a contemporary technology. This may be a proprietary tool, e.g. Google Home, Siri, or Uber, or a non-proprietary category of digital media, such as virtual reality. If you choose a non-proprietary technology, you will select one or two real-world/patented examples of the tool (e.g. Oculus Rift). Imagine you are describing its functionality, consequences, and dependencies to a peer who is unfamiliar with it. Then, explain how it permits or limits the privacy of its users and any individuals that may be accessed through it. (500 words)

OpEd/Open Letter (15 pts)

For this assignment, students will write an op-ed or an open letter concerning an aspect of international, domestic, state, or city policy concerning surveillance. (700 words)

Final Project (First draft: 10 points; Final submission: 15 points; In-class presentation: 5 points; 30 points total)

For this assignment, you have two options: 1) A research paper or 2) A comprehensive proposal for a long-term project about any topic relating to technology and privacy.

First draft: 800-1000 words; final draft: 1400-1600 words; presentation: 10 minutes

More information on assignments and evaluation will be provided throughout the semester in our Zoom meetings and on our NYU Classes page.

Policies

Scheduling and Attendance

We plan on meeting regularly via Zoom (access through our NYU Classes page). For those in different time zones, recorded lectures will be made available on NYU Classes. If you can't make a class meeting, please contact me in advance. It is your responsibility to communicate with me about any issues that arise regarding the course and your ability to participate.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams to making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours.

You violate the principle of academic integrity when you cheat on an exam, submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors, receive help on a take-home examination that calls for independent work, or plagiarize.

Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning, and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated.

Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score, and/or other materials that are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following: copy verbatim from a book, an article, or other media; download documents from the Internet; purchase documents; report from other's oral work; paraphrase or restate someone else's facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; or copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

To avoid academic dishonesty:

- Organize your time appropriately to avoid undue pressure, and acquire good study habits, including note taking.
- Learn proper forms of citation. Check with your professors of record for their preferred style guides. Directly copied material must always be in quotes; paraphrased material must be acknowledged; even ideas and organization

derived from your own previous work or another's work need to be acknowledged.

- Always proofread your work to be sure that quotation marks, footnotes, and other references were not inadvertently omitted. Know the source of each citation.
- Do not submit the same work for more than one class without first obtaining the permission of both professors even if you believe that work you have already completed satisfies the requirements of another assignment.

Accessibility, accommodations, and more

Students requesting accommodations due to a disability are encouraged to register with the Moses Center for students with Disabilities. You can begin the registration process by completing Moses Center Online Intake. Once completed, a Disability Specialist will be in contact with you. Students requiring services are strongly encouraged to register prior to the upcoming semester or as early as possible during the semester to ensure timely implementation of approved accommodations.

If you are experiencing undue personal and/or academic stress during the semester that may be interfering with your ability to perform academically, the NYU Wellness Exchange (212 443 9999) offers a range of services to assist and support you. I am available to speak with you about stresses related to your work in my course, and I can assist you in connecting with the Wellness Exchange. Additionally, if you anticipate any challenges with completing the assignments, readings, exams and other work required in this course, I encourage you to register with the Moses Center (212 998 4980) in advance so that you may be granted the proper academic accommodations.

Selected Student Resources

- [Moses Center for Student Accessibility](#)
- [NYU Writing Center](#)
- [MCC Undergraduate Advising](#)
- ❖ *Course Schedule*

Unit I: Contexts and Theories

Week 1: Introduction

Monday 2/1

Course Introduction and syllabus review

Wednesday 2/3

Sarah E. Igo: Introduction to *The Known Citizen: A History of Privacy in Modern America*

David Lyon: [“Surveillance Culture: Engagement, Exposure, and Ethics in Digital Modernity”](#)

Week 2: Privacy and Inequality

Monday 2/8

Mary Madden: [“How Technology Experiences and Resources Vary by Socioeconomic Status, Race, and Ethnicity”](#)

Wednesday 2/10

Sarah E. Igo: “Technologies of Publicity” (Chapter 1) and “Documents of Identity” (Chapter 2) from *The Known Citizen*

KERA:Think: [“Is Privacy Still Possible?”](#)

Week 3: Panopticism

Monday 2/15

Michel Foucault: “Panopticism” from *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*

Ivan Manohka: [“Surveillance, Panopticism, and Self-Discipline in the Digital Age”](#)

Wednesday 2/17

Rainer Diaz-Bone: [“Statistical Panopticism and Its Critique”](#)

Christine M. Hassenstab: [“The Inspection House: Panopticism, Gynopticism and Prenatal Genetic Screening”](#)

Week 4: Context as an Approach to Surveillance Studies

Monday 2/22

Helen Nissenbaum: [“A Contextual Approach to Privacy Online”](#)

Wednesday 2/24

Jenny L. Davis and Nathan Jurgenson: [“Context Collapse: Theorizing Context Collusions and Collisions”](#)

Alice E. Marwick and danah boyd: [“Networked Privacy: How Teenagers Negotiate Context in Social Media”](#)

Week 5: Privacy and the Self/Other Divide

Monday 3/1

Luke Stark: [“The Emotional Context of Information Privacy”](#)

Sarah E. Igo: “The Porous Psyche,” Chapter 3 from *The Known Citizen*

Wednesday 3/3

Rachael Kent: [“Social Media and Self-Tracking: Representing the ‘Health Self’”](#)

Sun-Ha Hong: [“Data’s Intimacy: Machinic Sensibility and the Quantified Self”](#)

Unit II: Privacy and Urbanity

Week 6: Predictive Policing

Monday 3/8

Rashida Richardson et al.: [“Dirty Data, Bad Predictions: How Civil Rights Violations Impact Police Data, Predictive Policing Systems, and Justice”](#)

Data & Society: [“Race After Technology: Ruha Benjamin”](#)

Wednesday 3/10

Christian Sandvig: [“Finding the Protests”](#)

ESC: [“Race, Policing, and Detroit’s Project Green Light”](#)

Week 7: Smart Cities

Monday 3/15

Natasha Tusikov: [“What Are ‘Smart Cities’?”](#)

Zaheer Allam: [“Privatization and Privacy in the Digital City”](#)

Wednesday 3/17

Sara Safransky: [“Geographies of Algorithmic Violence: Redlining the Smart City”](#)

Wendy Chun et al.: [“Homophily: The Urban History of an Algorithm”](#)

Week 8: Covid-19 and Privacy

Monday 3/22

Benjamin H. Bratton: [“18 Lessons of Quarantine Urbanism”](#)

Wednesday 3/24

Patrick Howell O’Neill et al.: [“A Flood of Coronavirus Apps are Tracking Us. Now it’s Time to Keep Track of Them”](#)

Matthew Gault: [“New York Is Turning Into a Silicon Valley Science Experiment”](#)

Oxford Sparks Big Questions: [“How Tricky is it to Make a COVID-19 Tracing App?”](#)

Unit III: Views from the Margins

Week 9: Surveillance and Queerness

Monday 3/29

Alexander Cho: [“Default publicness: Queer youth of color, social media, and being outed by the machine”](#)

Antonia Anna Ferrante: [“Biopower Is the New Black, Again. Queer Bodies Beyond Bars”](#)

Wednesday 3/31

Nicholas L. Clarkson: [“Incoherent Assemblages: Transgender Conflicts in US Security”](#)

C. Ray Borck and Lisa Jean Moore: [“This is My Voice on T: Synthetic Testosterone, DIY Surveillance, and Transnormative Masculinity”](#)

Week 10: Campus Surveillance

Monday 4/5

Selena Nemorin: [“Post-panoptic Pedagogies: The Changing Nature of School Surveillance in the Digital Age”](#)

Drew Harwell: [“Colleges are Turning Students’ Phones into Surveillance Machines. Tracking the Locations of Hundreds of Thousands”](#)

Wednesday 4/7

Priya C. Kumar et al.: [“The Platformization of the Classroom: Teachers as Surveillant Consumers”](#)

Monica Chin: [“Exam Anxiety: How Remote Test-proctoring is Creeping Students Out”](#)

Chris Stokel-Walker: [“Zoom is a Big Privacy Headache. Here’s How You Can Lock it Down”](#)

Week 11: Counter-Measures

Monday 4/12

Finn Brunton and Helen Nissenbaum: [“Vernacular Resistance to Data Collection and Analysis: A Political Theory of Obfuscation”](#)

DJ Pangburn: [“How to Disappear in a Fog of Data \(and Why\)”](#)

Harris Kornstein: [“Under Her Eye: Digital Drag as Obfuscation and Counter-Surveillance”](#)

Wednesday 4/14

Kelly Ross: [Watching from Below: Racialized Surveillance and Vulnerable Sousveillance](#)

Payal Arora: [General Data Protection Regulation—A Global Standard? Privacy Futures, Digital Activism, and Surveillance Cultures in the Global South](#)

Week 12: Conclusions

Monday 4/19

Spring break: no class

Wednesday 4/21

Gilles Deleuze: [“Postscript on the Societies of Control”](#)

Jonas Čeika: [“What are Societies of Control?”](#) (video)

Week 13: Presentations

Monday 4/26: Student presentations

Wednesday 4/28: Student presentations

Week 14: Presentations

Monday 5/3: Student presentations

Wednesday 5/5: Student presentations