

## PLATFORM GOVERNANCE: TECHNOLOGY, POLICY & POWER (CCI660), FALL 2024

**Instructor:** Dr. Martin Riedl [*pronounced like “needle” rather than “riddle”*], Assistant Professor, School of Journalism and Media, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

**Contact:** mriedl1@utk.edu

**Office Location:** Office #341, 333 Communications Building

**Student Hours:** By appointment (Zoom or in person); I love to meet with students and am here to help. In addition to in-person meetings, I'm also available for Zoom consultation. Please email me to schedule a meeting.

**Class Sessions and Location:** Wed, 4.10 pm – 6.40 pm @ Communications and Univ Extens 207

**Course Description:** Digital platforms like TikTok, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Uber, or Tinder steer the lives, communications, and content of billions of people. As platform power – accelerated by surveillance capitalism – compounds, this has severe ramifications for democracy and political participation; governance and administration; freedom of expression, media, and speech regulation; markets and labor; privacy and surveillance; propaganda and state power; as well as individual user safety, harms, and (identity-based) forms of violence. This seminar provides a multidisciplinary playground for the social-scientific exploration of platformization: how a multitude of societal domains are increasingly subjected to the economic, infrastructural, and regulatory principles of platforms.

**Course Objectives:** This course introduces PhD (and advanced Master's) students to the field of platform studies – the ways in which the activities of large technology corporations affect society writ large. To this end, its objectives are to:

- Familiarize students with the field of platform studies – its history, evolution, and future
- Help students advance reasoning, writing, research, and analytical skills
- Promote the comprehension of principles and concepts and evaluation of platform studies scholarship
- Instill routines and practices important in academic professionalism
- Advance students' abilities to recognize issues that affect professionals working in platform industries

**Learning Outcomes:** At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and understand major theories, concepts, and frameworks in the research and policy landscape of platform studies
- Develop skills to synthesize and critically evaluate the perspectives used in the research of others
- Cultivate scholarly routines and communicative skills
- Develop an effective original research project or proposal

**Textbook:** There is no textbook for this course – all readings are available for free through the University of Tennessee libraries. It is the student's responsibility to complete readings before the start of the class period and contribute to class discussions based on the readings.

**Other sources:** While mandatory readings will primarily come from journal articles as outlined in the course schedule, some weeks will have additional readings, podcasts, or videos that will be uploaded/linked to Canvas.

You are expected to stay up to date on recent developments in the realm of technology, media, and platforms. Throughout the semester, please make sure to frequently check general tech news sources such as [Wired](#), [The Verge](#), [TechCrunch](#), [MIT Technology Review](#), Casey Newton's [Platformer](#), [404 Media](#), or [Tech Policy Press](#).

Make sure to also check the output of academic research centers and think tanks who operate in this space. This includes organizations such as the [Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University](#), Yale Law School's [Information Society Project](#), the [Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society](#) at Harvard University, the [Center for Democracy and Technology](#), [Data & Society](#), the [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#) (particularly their [Technology and International Affairs](#) group), the [Brookings Institution](#) (particularly their stream on [Technology & Information](#)), the [AI Now Institute](#), the [Weizenbaum Institute](#), the [Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society](#), UNC's [Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life](#), UT Austin's [Center for Media Engagement](#), UCLA's [Center for Critical Internet Inquiry](#), the [Stanford Cyber Policy Center](#), UW's [Center for an Informed Public](#), NYU's [Center for Social Media and Politics](#), Oxford University's [Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism](#) & the [Oxford Internet Institute](#), the [Social Science Research Council](#), [Meedan](#), or the [Platform Governance Research Network](#).

**Contacting the Professor:** When you reach out to me, please include all the information I might need to know to help you out. Keep in mind that I only respond to emails sent to me from your official University of Tennessee email address or via Canvas. I try to respond to emails within 24 hours of receiving them. I do not respond before 9 am, after 6 pm, or on weekends. Please make sure to check your email and Canvas notifications/messages regularly, so you don't miss updates about class.

**Turning in Assignments:** All your assignments must meet the requirements described in class and/or on Canvas. Unless already posted in this syllabus, I will provide instructions at least one week before an assignment is due. Submit word documents (doc or docx) – Google Docs or links to Google Docs or other online documents will not be accepted. Always include a header (with your name, the title of the class, and the date). Please turn in all assignments by their respective deadlines. Unless stated otherwise, assignments are due on Sundays at 11:59 pm, and should be double-spaced, in Times New Roman, with 1-inch-margins, 12-point font and meeting, but not substantively exceeding the recommended word or page count. For citations, please use the American Psychological Association's (APA) latest (7<sup>th</sup> edition) style guide. Helpful instructions can be found through Purdue OWL (<https://owl.purdue.edu/>).

**Assignment Feedback:** My goal is to return feedback within two weeks of an assignment due date, but I reserve the right to take longer. For the final project, you will be submitting a set of items over the course of the semester, including a full first draft, on which I will provide detailed feedback, and you will also receive peer reviews from colleagues. I expect you to revise your final paper based on my feedback from the draft version, as well as the peer review feedback. I'm always happy to provide additional feedback on your progress in the class more generally during office hours, as requested.

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments will be automatically reduced by 10 percentage points of the total possible points for each day they are late. For example, if you turn in an assignment 48 hours after it is due, the highest possible grade percentage you can earn on the assignment would be 80%. If you are unable to meet a deadline for a critical reason, please let me know as soon as you can before the deadline passes. Attendance in this class is mandatory, but you can miss up to two sessions, no questions asked. Please note that you cannot miss sessions that your presentation is scheduled for, during which we have a guest speaker, or when it is your turn to be discussion leader. It is my goal to be flexible and understanding of students' needs, but I cannot do so if you reach out to me after you've already missed a deadline. In other words, please come talk to me before an assignment is due if you run into issues. Assignments will no longer be accepted a week after they are due, and no make-up work opportunities will be offered. Over the course of the semester, there may (or may not) be opportunities to receive extra credit.

**Student Expectations:** Students are expected to: (1) be open-minded; (2) engage in the course material and in class discussions; (3) respect their peers and instructor; (4) work hard; (5) be aware of information and materials posted on Canvas and disseminated by the instructor via e-mail, including deadlines or changes to the schedule and/or assignments; and (6) discuss their concerns with the instructor as they arise.

A point of note: Some of the materials that we will cover in this course may be challenging on an emotional level. I ask that you engage with an open mind and critical eye, respectful of each other (and me), as well as ready and prepared to engage in fact-based and thoughtful debate.

**Instructor Expectations:** You should expect me to be: (1) open-minded; (2) respectful and constructively critical of you, your opinions and your work; (3) helpful in achieving the course objectives; and (4) responsive, both in terms of providing feedback and addressing your concerns. I am passionate about this topic, and excited to help you learn more about it. In this class, I will be your teacher, your editor and your coach. I'll share my knowledge and my perspective on your work, and I will provide honest and constructive feedback. My goal is to help you develop your own voice, as well as the skills and critical thinking ability required to be successful.

**My Pedagogical Approach:** My role as a teacher is to share knowledge about platform studies with my students while encouraging them to think, critically and deeply, about the world. That means encouraging you to take interest in and ownership of the lessons you learn in class while fostering the curiosity, critical thinking and self-directed learning skills that will drive you to continue developing your knowledge and perspectives once you leave my classroom. And throughout this semester, I will be learning from you and alongside you as you learn from me and the materials we'll explore together. I'm here to support you, encourage you and challenge you through in-depth discussion, practical application, and feedback.

**Course Schedule:** Below is a tentative outline of the dates and topics for class meetings during the semester. The schedule, as well as the rest of the syllabus, are subject to change, and I reserve the right to update this schedule throughout the semester. I will inform you of any changes (in class, through email, or via Canvas). Please check Canvas every week to access additional readings and materials related to class topics that will be added as the semester progresses. All readings listed must be completed **before** attending class. A full tentative schedule can be found further down in this syllabus.

Week	General Topic	Readings	ProfDev/ Guests	Assignments
<b>W1:</b> August 21	Introductions & terminologies	Gillespie, Gorwa, Poell et al., Bucher & Helmond, van Dijck	Citation managers, reading, notetaking	<p><b>Send me an email</b> and tell me: 1. what interests you most in this class, 2. how the course intersects with your own interests, and 3. your top three class periods for discussion leader (Aug. 25, 11.59pm)</p> <p>Do <b>key readings</b> after class (if you haven't gotten around to do them yet)</p>
<b>W2:</b> August 28	Histories, politics, ideologies	Barlow, Barbrook & Cameron, Hallinan et al., Daniels, Karppi & Nieborg	Academic journals & article structure	<b>Meet with instructor (1/2)</b> - any time during the week
<b>W3:</b> September 4	Governance	Klonick, Balkin, Helberger et al., Gorwa, Goldman, DeNardis & Hackl	Plagiarism	<b>Concept explication</b> (Sep. 8, 11.59pm)
<b>W4:</b> September 11	Infrastructure and public interest	Plantin et al., Napoli, Zuckerman & Rajendra-Nicolucci, Cruz & Harindranath, Small/Klinenberg	Academic CV	
<b>W5:</b> September 18	Democracy	Suzor, Haggart & C. Keller, douek, Siapera, Bennett & Livingston, D. Keller	<b>Guest speaker: Rob Gorwa</b>	<p><b>Submit questions for guest speaker</b> (Sep. 17, 11.59pm)</p> <p><b>Annotated bibliography</b> (Sep. 22, 11.59pm)</p>
<b>W6:</b> September 25	Power, markets, and competition	Popiel, Khan, Scholz, van Dijck et al., Couldry & Mejias	Conferences	<b>Meet with instructor (2/2)</b> - any time during the week
<b>W7:</b> October 2	The governance of AI	Jungherr, Bender et al., Crawford,	Academic publishing 101 (part 1)	

		Denton et al., Aula & Bowles		
<b>W8:</b> October 9	Platform labor 1 – the gig economy	Irani, Nakamura, Stephany et al., Fuchs, Posada	Academic publishing 101 (part 2)	<b>Proposal</b> (Oct. 13, 11.59pm)
<b>W9:</b> October 16	Platform labor 2 – content moderation	Roberts, Caplan, Gillespie, Matias, Jhaver et al., Alizadeh et al.	<b>Guest speaker: Shagun Jhaver</b>	<b>Submit questions for guest speaker</b> (Oct. 15, 11.59pm)
<b>W10:</b> October 23	Violence and harassment	Hoffmann, Riedl et al., Chesney & Citron, Hasinoff & Schneider, Schoenebeck et al.	Peer review	<b>Outline</b> (Oct. 27, 11.59pm)
<b>W11:</b> October 30	Race and gender	Are, D'Ignazio & Klein, Noble, Costanza-Chock, Musgrave et al., McMillan Cottom	Online presence for academics	
<b>W12:</b> November 6	Surveillance and privacy	Zuboff, Chan, McGuigan et al., West, Csenkey & Bindel	The 'public academic' (op-eds, and public writing)	
<b>W13:</b> November 13	Creators and creativity	Cunningham & Craig, Duffy & Meisner, Hallinan et al., Zeng & Kaye, Ye et al.	Presenting your work	<b>Final paper first draft</b> (Nov. 17, 11.59pm)
<b>W14:</b> November 20	Presentations and <b>last in-person class day (!)</b>			<b>Presentation of your research paper/project</b> (Nov. 20 during class)  <b>Peer review</b> (Nov. 24, 11.59pm)
<b>W15:</b> November 27	No class - THANKSGIVING			
<b>Final:</b> December 6	<b>Final draft due on Friday, December 6, 8.30pm</b>			

**Assignments and Grades:** The assignment types in this course are:

1. **Attendance and participation (10% of grade):** Students should come to class ready to discuss the readings and relevant current affairs developments as they pertain to our class content. Since this is a graduate-level course, emphasis will be placed on thoughtful conversations and contributions during class. This is a seminar – while I will be doing occasional lectures, the

primary focus is on us having insightful discussions. Attending classes, being present, and involving yourself in respectful discussion is important for a successful classroom experience. Active participation also includes meeting at least twice with the instructor over the course of the semester, and coming prepared for guest speakers that will join the course. You can miss up to two sessions throughout the semester, no questions asked. Beyond this, missing class will affect your grade. Please note that you cannot miss sessions that (a) your presentation is scheduled for, (b) during which we have a guest speaker, or (c) when you are the discussion leader. If you have a conflict, please come speak to me in advance. Your attendance and participation will be counted in three ways: 1. for showing up, 2. for knowing the materials, and 3. for actively participating. The attendance and class participation grade consists of the following (which together make up 10% of your overall course grade)

- **Attendance and participation in classes (8%)**
  - **Meetings with the instructor (1%)**
  - **Submitting questions for guest speakers (1%)**
2. **Concept explication paper (10% of grade):** You'll identify a key concept within the domain of platform studies, and which pertains to your own interests for this class and provide a two-page explication. The concept must be approved in advance by the instructor via email. The concept explication is an important step in setting you up for success for your final project – and you may be able to reuse some of the work you do in it for your final paper. While we'll discuss concepts and concept explication in class, your writing should be informed by McLeod & Pan's (2005), as well as Reese's (2023) recommendations (see references at the bottom of this section).
  3. **Reading reflections/participation comments (20% of grade):** Over the course of the semester, you will be asked to submit a total of 6 (for PhD students) or 4 (for MA students) reading reflections/participation comments on a weekly Canvas discussion board. These will be graded as *complete/incomplete*. Responses are **always due on Tuesday night (11.59pm)** and might pertain to materials from any of the assigned readings of the week. I will be providing a prompt on the discussion board that is based on assigned readings/materials (i.e., podcasts, short videos, etc.), but which may also pertain to current affairs and require you to connect course content with recent developments in platform studies. All students will be doing the same prompt, but for PhD students there will be an additional question that needs to be answered for the assignment to count as complete. Your reflections will be graded on your ability to thoughtfully summarize and reflect on the materials, and responses will be used to inform subsequent class discussions. To receive all points, you must earn a *complete* on at least 6 (for PhD students) or 4 (for MA students) of the 12 reading reflections/participation comments (offered W2 through W13), and your posts must be substantive and engage with the materials/questions. If your post does not do that, I reserve the right to grade it as *incomplete*. There are no extra points if you submit more than the required number of reading reflections over the course of the semester, but should you have received an *incomplete*, you might have an opportunity to make up for it. You cannot do a reading reflection for the week that you are discussion leader.
  4. **Discussion leadership (10% of grade):** Each student will be responsible for leading seminar discussion during one week of the semester. Not every week will have a discussion leader, but each student must be a discussion leader once. As a discussion leader, you are expected to:

- **Read the papers for that week** (for PhD students: assigned AND optional papers, for MA students: assigned papers only, but you are welcome to also read the others). N.B.: Reading assigned materials is always the expectation, but even more so when you are the discussion leader.
  - **Prepare and send me a handout.** Create a handout where you include a 2-3-sentence summary for each of the papers (for PhD students: assigned AND optional papers, for MA students: assigned papers only, but you are welcome to also include the others). Send the handout to me via email the night before class by 11.59pm. I will print the handouts and bring them to class.
  - **Come to the meeting prepared with discussion questions (at least 5) related to the readings.** You are expected to facilitate conversation through identifying interesting issues, topics, and areas of inquiry within the readings. You are also expected to point out and lead discussion on larger overarching themes across readings. You are welcome to use slides, whiteboard, or other materials that can help with the discussion, but this is not a requirement.
5. **Peer review (5% of grade):** The peer review process is one of the cornerstones of modern scientific research; therefore, it is important that you start practicing now. Toward the end of the semester, you will be asked to review two of your fellow students' final paper first drafts. For each paper, you must write a 1–2-page (single-spaced) review of their work, focusing both on strengths and weaknesses, and with specific suggestions for improvement. The goal is to make you better at critiquing work and to help improve the work that you review.
6. **Scholarly research paper/project (40% of grade):** Like in many graduate classes, your final research paper/project will make up the bulk of your grade. Your final project in this class is a scholarly research paper (ca. 15-20 pages without references and abstract page) on a topic of your choice that is related to class. Your paper should strive for a level of quality so that it could be submitted to an academic conference. You will select a topic in consultation with me, collect relevant literature, present findings, and write discussion & conclusion sections. We will discuss in class how to go about identifying research topics and materials to analyze. A successful paper engages with existing literature, identifies gaps, and adds to our knowledge. While we will discuss components of academic papers in detail in class, the structure for your paper should include the following sections: Abstract, introduction, literature review, methods (if applicable), findings/discussion, conclusion, references. MA students have the option to do a paper proposal instead of a full paper, which includes abstract, introduction, literature review, a sketch of methods/research questions/hypotheses, a brief discussion of how the topic could be studied empirically, future research, and references. For PhD students, the expectation is that of a full paper as outlined above. There will be benchmark assignments (these are the same for both tracks) throughout the class to ensure you are slated to complete the final paper/project successfully. They include the following:
- **Annotated bibliography** (10-15 academic sources) (5%)
  - **Paper proposal** (1 page) (5%)
  - **Outline** (2-3 pages) (5%)
  - **Final paper first draft** (10%) (graded complete/incomplete)
  - **Final draft** (peer review and instructor review incorporated) (15%)

7. **Presentation of your research paper/project (5% of grade):** During the last class period on November 20 (N.B.: our last class will actually be BEFORE Thanksgiving), you will present your research in class. Pursuing an academic career involves constantly presenting your research, and it's important to start practicing now. As with most academic conferences in our field, the format will be 12-15 minutes of presentation (with visual aids), followed by questions from the audience.

#### References for concept explication:

McLeod, J., & Pan, Z. (2005). Concept explication and theory construction. In S. Dunwoody, L. B. Becker, D. McLeod, and G. Kosicki (Eds.), *The evolution of key mass communication concepts* (pp. 13–76). Hampton Press. <https://dshah.journalism.wisc.edu/files/McLeod-Pan-2005.pdf>

Reese, S. D. (2023). Writing the conceptual article: A practical guide. *Digital Journalism*, 11(7), 1195–1210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.2009353>

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** There are no exams in this course, but continuous in-depth engagement with the course content, and thinking strategically on what you'd like to get out of the final research paper/project is key to being successful. I highly recommend thinking early, deeply, and carefully about a topic for your research paper/project and picking a topic for your concept explication accordingly – so to build up toward your final paper.

#### Course Assignments and Points:

<b>Attendance and class participation</b> 8% Attendance and participation in classes 1% Meetings with the instructor 1% Submitting questions for guest speakers	<b>100 points / 10%</b>
<b>Concept explication paper</b>	<b>100 points / 10%</b>
<b>Reading reflections/participation comments</b>	<b>200 points / 20%</b>
<b>Discussion leadership</b>	<b>100 points / 10%</b>
<b>Peer review</b>	<b>50 points / 5%</b>
<b>Scholarly research paper/project</b> , consisting of: 5% Annotated bibliography 5% Paper proposal 5% Outline 10% Final paper first draft (complete/incomplete) 15% Final draft	<b>400 points / 40%</b>
<b>Presentation of your research paper/project</b>	<b>50 points / 5%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000 points / 100%</b>

#### Letter Grades:

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Only half points are round up: so, 66.5 is rounded to 67, but 66.49 is not.

A	93-100	Superior
A-	90-92	Excellent



B+	87-89	Very Good
B	83-86	Good
B-	80-82	Satisfactory
C+	77-79	Fair
C	73-76	Average
C-	70-72	Below Average
D	60-69	Unsatisfactory
F/WF	59 and below	Failure/Withdrawn Failing

**Reading Tips:** Reading academic articles can be taxing as the language is sometimes verbose and forbidding, but there are some shortcuts and tips that I want to share with you. [This piece](#) in *Inside Higher Ed* on reading academic work might be helpful.

When you read, be sure to take notes. You should focus your efforts on:

1. Summarizing the essential message and themes of the assigned content
2. Situating its message in the context of the class (relating to other course materials)
3. Addressing its usefulness to your own interests, goals and work
4. Listing any questions you have

(Reading tips courtesy of Samuel Woolley)

### Longform Course Schedule:

#### W1, August 21: INTRODUCTIONS & TERMINOLOGIES

##### Read:

- Gillespie, T. (2010). The politics of 'platforms'. *New Media & Society*, 12(3), 347-364. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444809342738>
- Gorwa, R. (2019). What is platform governance? *Information, Communication & Society*, 22(6), 854-871. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1573914>
- Poell, T., Nieborg, D., & Van Dijck, J. (2019). Platformisation. *Internet Policy Review*, 8(4), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.14763/2019.4.1425>
- Bucher, T., & Helmond, A. (2018). The affordances of social media platforms. In J. Burgess, A. Marwick, & T. Poell (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of social media* (pp. 233-253). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473984066>
- van Dijck, J. (2024). Governing platforms and societies. *Platforms & Society*, 1, 1-2. <https://doi.org/10.1177/29768624241255922>

##### Optional:

- Harris, B. C., Foxman, M., & Partin, W. C. (2023). "Don't make me ratio you again": How political influencers encourage platformed political participation. *Social Media + Society*, 9(2), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231177944>
- Evans, S. K., Pearce, K. E., Vitak, J., & Treem, J. W. (2017). Explicating affordances: A conceptual framework for understanding affordances in communication research. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 22(1), 35-52. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12180>
- Helmond, A., & Van der Vlist, F. N. (2019). Social media and platform historiography: Challenges and opportunities. *TMG-Journal for media history*, 22(1). <https://doi.org/10.18146/tmg.434>

- McCammon, M., & Lingel, J. (2022). Situating dead-and-dying platforms: technological failure, infrastructural precarity, and digital decline. *Internet Histories*, 6(1-2), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24701475.2022.2071395>
- Knittel, M., & Menking, A. (2024). Bridging Theory & Practice: Examining the State of Scholarship Using the History of Trust and Safety Archive. *Journal of Online Trust and Safety*, 2(2). <https://tsjournal.org/index.php/jots/article/view/173>

## W2, August 28: HISTORIES, POLITICS, IDEOLOGIES

### Read:

- Barlow, J. P. (1996). *A declaration of the independence of cyberspace*. Electronic Frontier Foundation. <https://www.eff.org/cyberspace-independence>
- Barbrook, R., & Cameron, A. (1996). *The Californian ideology*. *Science as Culture*, 6(1), 44-72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09505439609526455>
- Hallinan, B., Scharlach, R., & Shifman, L. (2022). Beyond neutrality: Conceptualizing platform values. *Communication Theory*, 32(2), 201-222. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtab008>
- Daniels, J. (2015). "My brain database doesn't see skin color:" Color-blind racism in the technology industry and in theorizing the web. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 59(11), 1377-1393. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764215578728>
- Karppi, T., & Nieborg, D. B. (2021). Facebook confessions: Corporate abdication and Silicon Valley dystopianism. *New Media & Society*, 23(9), 2634-2649. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820933549>

### Optional:

- Hicks, M. (2013). De-programming the history of computing. *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing*, 35(1), 88-88. <https://doi.org/10.1109/MAHC.2013.3>
- Bivens, R. (2014). Morozov principle. In K. Harvey (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of social media and politics* (pp. 851-852). SAGE. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452244723>
- Cotter, K. (2023). "Shadowbanning is not a thing": black box gaslighting and the power to independently know and credibly critique algorithms. *Information, Communication & Society*, 26(6), 1226-1243. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1994624>
- Van Dijck, J., de Winkel, T., & Schäfer, M. T. (2023). Deplatformization and the governance of the platform ecosystem. *New Media & Society*, 25(12), 3438-3454. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211045662>
- Are, C. (2023). Flagging as a silencing tool: Exploring the relationship between de-platforming of sex and online abuse on Instagram and TikTok. *New Media & Society*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241228544>
- Riedl, M. J., Martin, Z. C., & Woolley, S. C. (2023). 'I get suppressed': pro-and anti-abortion activists' folk theories of platform governance and shadowbanning. *Information, Communication & Society*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2023.2289976>

### W3, September 4: GOVERNANCE

#### Read:

- Klonick, K. (2017). The new governors: The people, rules, and processes governing online speech. *Harvard Law Review*, 131, 1598-1670. <https://harvardlawreview.org/print/vol-131/the-new-governors-the-people-rules-and-processes-governing-online-speech/>
- Balkin, J. M. (2018). Free speech is a triangle. *Columbia Law Review*, 118, 2011-2056. <https://columbialawreview.org/content/free-speech-is-a-triangle/>
- Helberger, N., Pierson, J., & Poell, T. (2018). Governing online platforms: From contested to cooperative responsibility. *The Information Society*, 34(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01972243.2017.1391913>
- Gorwa, R. (2024). Explaining government intervention in content moderation. In *The politics of platform regulation: How governments shape online content moderation* (pp. 53-73). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197692851.001.0001>
- Goldman, E. (2018). The complicated story of FOSTA and section 230. *First Amendment Law Review*, 17, 279-293. <https://scholarship.law.unc.edu/falr/vol17/iss2/8/>
- DeNardis, L., & Hackl, A. M. (2015). Internet governance by social media platforms. *Telecommunications Policy*, 39(9), 761-770. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2015.04.003>

#### Optional:

- Gillespie, T. (2018). Governance of and by platforms. In J. Burgess, T. Poell, & A. Marwick (Eds.), *SAGE handbook of social media* (pp. 254-278). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473984066>
- Medzini, R. (2022). Enhanced self-regulation: The case of Facebook's content governance. *New Media & Society*, 24(10), 2227-2251. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444821989352>
- Jhaver, S., Frey, S., & Zhang, A. X. (2023). Decentralizing platform power: A design space of multi-level governance in online social platforms. *Social Media+ Society*, 9(4), 20563051231207857. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231207857>
- Katzenbach, C., Magalhães, J. C., Kopps, A., Sühr, T. & Wunderlich, L. (2021). The Platform Governance Archive. Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society. <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/XSBPT>
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#### Read:

- Plantin, J. C., Lagoze, C., Edwards, P. N., & Sandvig, C. (2018). Infrastructure studies meet platform studies in the age of Google and Facebook. *New Media & Society*, 20(1), 293-310. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816661553>
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#### Optional:

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## W6, September 25: POWER, MARKETS, AND COMPETITION

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- Popiel, P. (2024). Emerging platform governance: Antitrust reform and non-competitive harms in digital platform markets. *Information, Communication & Society*, 27(1), 92-108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2023.2174791>
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- Denton, E., Hanna, A., Amironesei, R., Smart, A., & Nicole, H. (2021). On the genealogy of machine learning datasets: A critical history of ImageNet. *Big Data & Society*, 8(2), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517211035955>
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### Read:

- Irani, L. (2015). The cultural work of microwork. *New Media & Society*, 17(5), 720-739. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444813511926>
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**W9, October 16: PLATFORM LABOR 2 – CONTENT MODERATION**

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- Roberts, S.T. (2016). Commercial content moderation: Digital laborers' dirty work. In S.U. Noble, and B.M Tynes (Eds.), *The intersectional internet: Race, sex, class and culture online* (147-160). Peter Lang. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/commpub/12/>
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## W10, October 23: VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

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- Han, C., Seering, J., Kumar, D., Hancock, J. T., & Durumeric, Z. (2023). Hate raids on Twitch: Echoes of the past, new modalities, and implications for platform governance. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 7(CSCW1), 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3579609>
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## W11, October 30: RACE AND GENDER

### Read:

- Are, C. (2022). The shadowban cycle: An autoethnography of pole dancing, nudity and censorship on Instagram. *Feminist Media Studies*, 22(8), 2002–2019. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2021.1928259>
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## W12, November 6: SURVEILLANCE AND PRIVACY

### Read:

- Zuboff, S. (2015). Big other: surveillance capitalism and the prospects of an information civilization. *Journal of Information Technology*, 30(1), 75-89. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jit.2015.5>
- Chan, A. (2018, May 2) The Facebook and Cambridge Analytica scandal, explained with a simple diagram. Vox. Retrieved from: <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/3/23/17151916/facebook-cambridge-analytica-trump-diagram>
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- Turner Lee, N., & Chin, C. (2022, April 12) Police surveillance and facial recognition: Why data privacy is imperative for communities of color. Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/police-surveillance-and-facial-recognition-why-data-privacy-is-an-imperative-for-communities-of-color/>
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## W13, November 13: CREATORS AND CREATIVITY

### Read:

- Cunningham, S., & Craig, D. (2019). Creator governance in social media entertainment. *Social Media + Society*, 5(4), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119883428>
- Duffy, B. E., & Meisner, C. (2023). Platform governance at the margins: Social media creators' experiences with algorithmic (in)visibility. *Media, Culture & Society*, 45(2), 285-304. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437221111923>

- Hallinan, B., Reynolds, C. J., & Rothenstein, O. (2024). Copyright callouts and the promise of creator-driven platform governance. *Internet Policy Review*, 13(2), 1-43. <https://doi.org/10.14763/2024.2.1770>
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- Meisner, C. (2023). The weaponization of platform governance: Mass reporting and algorithmic punishments in the creator economy. *Policy & Internet*, 15(4), 466-477. <https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.359>
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## General Course Policies:

**Students with Disabilities:** The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment for all students. If you anticipate or experience a barrier in this course due to a chronic health condition, a learning, hearing, neurological, mental health, vision, physical, or other kind of disability, or a temporary injury, you are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at 865-974-6087 or [sds@utk.edu](mailto:sds@utk.edu). An SDS Coordinator will meet with you to develop a plan to ensure you have equitable access to this course. If you are already registered with SDS, please contact your instructor to discuss implementing accommodations included in your course access letter.

**Diversity Policy:** CCI recognizes and values diversity. Exposing students to diverse people, ideas and cultures increases opportunities for intellectual inquiry, encourages critical thinking, and enhances communication and information competence. When all viewpoints are heard, thoughtfully considered, and respectfully responded to, everyone benefits. Diversity and fairness unite us with the wider professional and global community. <https://cci.utk.edu/diversity>

**Drop/Withdrawal Policy:** You are responsible for understanding the university's policies and procedures regarding withdrawing from courses. Instructions, deadlines, penalties, and forms can be found at [http://registrar.utk.edu/academic\\_calendar/index.shtml](http://registrar.utk.edu/academic_calendar/index.shtml)

**Academic Integrity:** Each student is responsible for their personal integrity in academic life and for adhering to UT's Honor Statement. The Honor Statement reads: "An essential feature of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the university, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity."

**Policy on Plagiarism and Ethics:** Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor.

Because students in the program take many of the same courses and the assignments from one semester to the next may be very similar, any sharing of assignments from previous semesters, using any previously completed work, or sharing of previously used test questions will be considered cheating. Both the person who shared their work and the person who used the previously completed work will be pursued with ethics charges.

**Copyright Policy:** The instructor of this class owns the copyright to the syllabus, handouts, assignments, quizzes, and exams associated with the class. All presentations developed by the instructor, as well as the instructor's lectures, are also protected by copyright, whether these presentations and lectures are delivered live in-class, shared through Zoom or other videoconference platforms, or uploaded to Canvas or similar sites. Sharing any of this material without the written permission of the instructor is a violation of copyright law, and is therefore also a violation of the University's policy on acceptable use of information technology resources (UT policy number IT0110). That policy states that students will not commit copyright infringement, "including file sharing of video, audio, or data without permission from

the copyright owner”, and that file sharing is a violation of the university’s student code of conduct. I will report all such violations to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

**AI Policy: Not Permitted in this Course:** In this course, it is expected that all submitted work is produced by the students themselves, whether individually or collaboratively. Students must not seek the assistance of Generative AI Tools like ChatGPT. Use of a Generative AI Tool to complete an assignment constitutes academic dishonesty.

**Civil Discourse:** A true university education is one in which students hear, study, and discuss ideas that challenge their thinking and encourage them to consider points of view different from their own. Students should expect to hear ideas that make them uncomfortable, should be able to explain and master concepts they disagree with, and should feel free to take opposing views as part of civil academic discourse. We remind all members of the campus community that the Campus Free Speech Protection Act (<https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/acts/1110/pub/pc0336.pdf>)—signed into state law in 2017—applies to everyone. The act endorses the fundamental responsibility of the university by defining what we are not to do: “It is not the proper role of an institution to attempt to shield individuals from free speech, including ideas and opinions they find offensive, unwise, immoral, indecent, disagreeable, conservative, liberal, traditional, radical, or wrong-headed.” These principles are recognized in the Board of Trustees Policy Affirming Principles of Free Speech for Students and Faculty (BT0010) (<https://policy.tennessee.edu/policy/bt0021-policy-affirming-principles-of-free-speech-for-students-and-faculty/>).

**Your Role in Improving the Course Through Assessment:** At UT, it is our collective responsibility to improve the state of teaching and learning. During the semester you may be requested to assess aspects of this course, either during class or at the completion of the class, and through the TNVoice course evaluation. Please take the few moments needed to respond to these requests as they are used by instructors, department heads, deans and others to improve the quality of your UT learning experience.

**Wellness:** The Center for Health Education and Wellness (<https://wellness.utk.edu/>) empowers all Volunteers to thrive by cultivating personal and community well-being. The Center can answer questions about general wellness, substance use, sexual health, healthy relationships, and sexual assault prevention. The Student Counseling Center (<https://counselingcenter.utk.edu/>) is the university’s primary facility for personal counseling, psychotherapy, and psychological outreach and consultation services.

Any student who has difficulty affording hygiene products, groceries, or accessing sufficient food to eat every day is urged to contact the Big Orange Pantry (<https://dos.utk.edu/big-orange-pantry/>) for support. The Big Orange Pantry, located in Greve Hall, is a free resource for all students, faculty, and staff, no matter how great or small their need is. Students who need emergency financial assistance can also request funding from the Student Emergency Fund (<https://dos.utk.edu/student-emergency-fund/>).

Students who are experiencing non-academic difficulty or distress and need assistance should call 974-HELP or submit an online referral (<https://studentlife.utk.edu/care/>). The 974-HELP team specializes in aligning resources and support to students experiencing mental health distress.

**Emergency Alert System:** The University of Tennessee is committed to providing a safe environment to learn and work. When you are alerted to an emergency, please take appropriate action. Learn more about what to do in an emergency and sign up for UT Alerts (<https://safety.utk.edu/>). Check the emergency posters near exits and elevators for building specific information. In the event of an emergency, the course schedule and assignments may be subject to change. If changes to graded activities are required, reasonable adjustments will be made, and you will be responsible for meeting revised deadlines. <https://prepare.utk.edu/be-ready>