Learning, the Internet and Society

Academic Year 2015-16 Hilary Term
Day and Time: Tuesdays 10:00am-12:30pm
Location: Seminar Room G/H, Department of Education, 15 Norham Gardens

Course Convenor
Rebecca Eynon, Oxford Internet Institute, rebecca.eynon@oii.ox.ac.uk

This course is co-taught by the Department of Education. Other lecturers on this course are Niall Winters and Anne Geniets from the Department of Education. For all comments and enquiries please contact Rebecca Eynon.

Background
The Internet and related technologies have significant implications for learning within and outside the classroom. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have the potential to transform how, what and where people learn, facilitate or inhibit people’s access to educational opportunities, challenge existing ideas of what the purpose and nature of formal education is and what the future of education should be. Over the 8 weeks of this course the changing nature of society and technology and the implications this has for learning will be explored from a range of theoretical, empirical and policy perspectives.

Course Objectives
This course will provide students with an opportunity to understand and explore some of the debates around the use of the Internet for learning in relation to the academic literature on this topic; and will also draw on theories and concepts from other research that investigates the social implications of the Internet in other areas of everyday life.

At the end of the course students will have a critical understanding of the theoretical debates, key concepts and appropriate methodologies that could be used to explore this rapidly developing area.

Learning Outcomes
1. Gain an in-depth understanding of the potential of the Internet for learning in a variety of contexts
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the theoretical perspectives which have been developed to understand learning and new technologies with an awareness of the wider social context
3. Develop an ability to assess and evaluate the inter-related factors that affect the success of using the Internet for learning and education

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4. Understand how research on learning and new technologies can benefit from, and contribute to, theories and concepts from other research that investigates the social implications of the Internet

**Teaching Arrangements**

The course will be taught during Hilary term in eight weekly classes, each consisting of a lecture followed by student discussion.

**Assessment**

Students will be assessed through a final essay that is no longer than 5000 words which must be submitted to the Examinations School by 12 noon of Monday of Week 1 of Trinity term. Students may choose a question on a topic related to their research interests in consultation with the Course Tutor (Rebecca Eynon) in advance. The essay should be clearly related to the topics of the course.

**Formative Assessment**

Students will also be required to write one short (advised length: 1500-3000 words) essay on any of the 8 topics covered. This essay will provide a means for students to obtain feedback on the progress they have achieved.

**Submission of Assignments**

All coursework should be submitted in person to the Examinations School by the stated deadline. All coursework should be put in an envelope and must be addressed to ‘The Chairman of Examiners for the MSc in Social Science of the Internet C/o The Clerk of Examination Schools, High Street. Students should also ensure they add the OII coversheet at the top of the coursework and that two copies of the coursework are submitted. An electronic copy will also need to be submitted to the department. Please note that all coursework will be marked anonymously and therefore only your candidate number is required on the coversheet.

Please note that work submitted after the deadline will be processed in the standard manner and, in addition, the late submission will be reported to the Proctors’ Office. If a student is concerned that they will not meet the deadline they must contact their college office or examinations school for advice. For further information on submission of assessments to the examinations school please refer to http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/submission/. For details on the regulations for late and non-submissions please refer to the Proctors website at https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/proctors/examinations/candidates/.

If a student fails a piece of coursework they will need to resubmit in September. The resubmission dates will be assigned by the examinations school nearer the date. Please refer the examinations school website at http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/schools/oxonly/timetables/index.shtml.

**Topics**

1. Theories of Education, the Internet and society
2. Digital inclusion and learning
3. Technology, development & learning: a social justice perspective
4. The social shaping of technology: applications in international development  
5. Digital youth and digital literacies  
6. The political economy of education and technology  
7. The Internet and civic participation  
8. Future trends in the role of technology in learning

**Key to Readings**

A reading list is given below for each class. Those items marked with an asterisk (*) are essential reading and MUST be read by all students in preparation for the class. Items which are not marked with an asterisk are additional readings. A pre-course reading list is available for those students who have no background in educational studies. Further readings will be introduced during the sessions.

**General Readings**

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**Week 1: Theories of Education, the Internet and Society**

This session will provide an introduction to the module, critically exploring what we mean by learning and the role of education in society; and the relationships between learning, the Internet and society.

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Week 2: Digital Inclusion and learning

This session will explore the various dimensions of the digital divide in relation to learning and education. What the digital inclusion means for educational policy and practice and how education can play a role in overcoming these divides will be a key focus of the discussion.

*Webster, Frank
- Chapter 2 & 3

* Dijk, J and Hacker

Lee, L.

Helsper, E. J.
A corresponding fields model for the links between social and digital exclusion. 2012 Communication Theory, 22(4), 403-426.

*Robinson, L

Warschauer, M., Knobel, M. and Stone, L.

Week 3: Technology, development and learning: a social justice perspective

This session will explore if and how technologies can be used to support learners from low income countries, utilising a social justice lens.

*Farmer, P.
Medicine & Social Justice 2005
http://americamagazine.org/issue/100/medicine-and-social-justice

*Selinger, Michelle

*Tikly, L. and Barrett, A.

United Nations Children’s
Children, ICT and Development: Capturing the potential, meeting the challenges. 2013. Innocenti Insight, Florence: UNICEF Office
### Week 4: The social shaping of technology: applications in international development

This session will critically consider how we conceptualise technology in learning and technology research.

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<td>* Dale, Roger Robertson, Susan Shortis, T.</td>
<td>You can’t not go with the technological flow, can you?’ constructing ‘ICT’ and ‘teaching and learning’.</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td><em>Journal of Computer Assisted Learning</em>, 20, pp. 456-70.</td>
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### Week 5: Digital Youth and digital literacies

This session will consider how young people use the Internet and other new media in their everyday lives and the implications this may have for learning; and explore competing definitions of digital literac(ies), and how schools can support the development of the associated skills and competencies.
Week 6: The political economy of education and technology

This session will critically examine the relationships between education and commerce in the development and use of ed tech.

*Ball, S. J.*

* Friesen, Norm and Lowe, S.

Hartley, D.
Education and the culture of consumption: personalisation and the social order. 2012 Routledge

Schiller, D.

Noble, D. F.
Digital diploma mills: The automation of higher education. Science as culture, 1998 7(3), 355-368

Robins, K., & Webster, F.
Week 7: Internet and Civic Participation
This session will focus on the complex question of whether or not the Internet can encourage civic participation, and the role of schools in this process.


Week 8: Future trends in the role of technology in learning
This session will explore what the future of education and learning may be; both in terms of what people will need to learn in order to participate effectively in society and how technical innovations may support learning in novel ways


*Selwyn, N., & Facer, K. (Eds.). The politics of education and technology: Conflicts, controversies, and connections.2013 Palgrave Macmillan. (chapter 10)