Anthropology 2284G

MOBILE PHONES AND THE INTERNET IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

January 2018

Instructor: Dan Jorgensen
Lectures: M 12:30-1:30, W 1:30 – 2:30
Tutorials: W 12:30 – 1:30
Place: HSB 11
Office: SSC 3314
Office Hours: M 1:30-3:30; Th 10:30-11:30
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Introduction:

By 2000 mobile phones and the internet had become features of the everyday life of millions of people in the developed world. By 2005, however, mobile phone subscriptions in the Global South surpassed those in the developed world, and this growth continues into the present. With the emergence of internet cafés and, more recently, smart phones, the internet has also become available to people in poor countries who could not afford personal computers. For the developing world these new "information and communications technologies," or ICTs, have leap-frogged weak or absent infrastructure at relatively low cost – a fact that has drawn the attention of governments, development planners and international agencies.

In this course we will examine an emerging body of work that considers what we have learned about the role of new ICTs in the developing world. We will look at improvements in livelihoods or the delivery of health services, but we will also look at the many other uses of new communications technologies in people’s lives. In the process we will use a comparative approach to shed light on the social and cultural dimensions of technological
change and develop an appreciation for the diversity of ways in which ICTs have presented opportunities, risks, and puzzles for people living in low-income countries.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students in this course will develop an understanding of:

- The role of new ICTs in economic development, poverty alleviation, and service delivery in the Global South;
- The relation between instrumental and social uses of new ICTs;
- The role of cultural differences in the adoption of new ICTs;
- How the role of new ICTs is affected by differences of gender and generation;
- The place of new ICTs in relations arising from transnational migration flows;
- The political impacts that new ICTs have in the developing world;
- Anthropology’s contribution to a cross-cultural understanding of the role of ICTs in the contemporary world.

**Course Prerequisites:**

No prerequisites

**Course Requirements and Evaluation:**

Weekly Tutorial Quizzes – (10%)
Meeting to discuss essays - between January 26 and February 9 (5%)
Midterm Exam – February 14 (20%)
Research Essay – March 14 (35%)
Final Examination (30%) – Date TBA

Please note these dates in your calendars. My general expectation is that you will attend lectures and tutorials, and prepare for them by doing the appropriate readings according to the topic sequence shown. If you have questions, ideas, or would just like to chat, I would encourage you to drop in during office hours (or, by making an appointment). Do not be shy about seeking advice or help with the course.

**About tutorial quizzes**

The first half of our two-hour class meetings will be devoted to tutorials. At the start of the tutorial there will be a brief quiz on the assigned readings for that date. I will count your ten best quizzes (at 1% each) towards your final marks.

**About meeting to discuss essays**

Each of you will be required to make an appointment to meet with me between January 26 and February 9 to discuss possible essay topics. This meeting will take approximately 20 minutes. Failure to schedule and keep such an appointment will reduce your course mark by 5%. My aim here is to begin discussions early and consider various approaches to the
topic or topics that interest you. Nothing written is required for these meetings (though it could help).

About research essays

The research essay will sum the outcome of your research on a topic related to the course. It must include a clear line of argument, drawing primarily from anthropological sources. The paper should be 8 to 12 pages in length, double-spaced, inclusive of bibliography. In general, your work will be evaluated on the basis of several factors, including:

- overall coherence (consistency, logical construction)
- insight and originality of thought
- grasp of key issues
- ability to link ideas with ethnographic material

You should arrive at a topic in consultation with me or one of the TAs. Further details about papers and format will be available in due course. Please note that this course carries the essay designation, and submitting an essay is a mandatory requirement; if you do not submit an essay, you will not pass the course.

For other course policies see the Appendix at the end of this outline

READINGS

There are two required books for this course in the bookstore:


The remainder of the readings are available either via Weldon’s periodicals holdings or the class OWL site.

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS**

**Introduction: Anthropology and ICTs**


Connectivity and access I


Video: We can connect you anywhere you are...

Connectivity and access II


Adoptions and appropriations


ICT4D: mobile phones and development I


Video: *Cellmoni*

**ICT4D: mobile phones and development II**


**MIDTERM EXAM**

* * * * *READING WEEK* * * *

**Migration, diasporas**


Gender, youth and ICTs I


Gender, youth and ICTs II


Gender, youth and ICTs III


Video: *Digicel flash mob, Vision City*
**Uncertain communications, shady dealings**


**Popular politics and the public sphere**


**ICTs and expanded worlds**


Appendix: Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

Deadlines and missed exams – medical accommodation
Occasionally illness or other medical issues make it impossible to meet deadlines or to take exams as scheduled; in such cases adequate documentation must be submitted to Academic Counseling of your home faculty, according to the terms of the Senate policy regarding medical accommodation as specified at:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Providing such documentation is submitted, reasonable effort will be made to accommodate your situation. If such documentation is not provided, I will impose a penalty of 5% per day (including Saturday and Sunday) on late assignments; missed exams will be given a mark of zero. Note that if you are late in handing in an assignment, it is your responsibility to ensure that I receive it.

Essay Requirement
As stated above, this is an essay course and the essay is a mandatory component for this course. If you do not submit an essay, you cannot pass the course.

Use of Electronic Devices (including laptops)
No electronic devices of any kind (including but not limited to cell phones, Blackberries, iPods, other MP3 players, voice recorders, etc.) will be allowed during tests and examinations. Laptops may only be used during lectures for note taking or other course-related purposes; cell phones, iPods, MP3 players and other such devices are not to be used during class. Voice recorders (digital or tape) are not allowed without express permission.

Plagiarism and Scholastic Offences
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com). Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Support Services
Registrar’s Services: http://www3.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm
Student Development Services: http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/