Introduction
Since the mid-1990s, as the Internet went public, talk of revolution has filled the air. Information revolution appears to have transformed politics, economics, and the nature of social life in general. This course explores the social implications of, inter alia, robotics, artificial intelligence, platform capitalism, blockchain, big data, and algocratic governance, in the global age. Global media and global audiences, telecommunication networks shrouding the planet, global cryptocurrencies, transnational virtual communities, global financial flows, transnational 24-hour work regime extending across nation pose novel challenges to social research. Given this emergent reality of unprecedented financial, political, corporate, and cultural networks, this course seeks to develop new ways of analyzing and researching a world that is simply too complex to be captured in previous vocabulary.

Texts
We’ll be reading select chapters from the following books. You can buy used/new or electronic copies of these books online and build your personal library:


Assignments
This course presents a variety of requirements designed to tap the full array of your academic strengths and skills (if you don’t have them, you will develop them):

Deep Thoughts: Every week, you are expected to write a brief summery of each chapter assigned, discussing points that you believe constitute a real strength of the material (100-word summary for each article, totaling 300 words for the three weekly articles). Each summary must end with a question about the material for class discussion. You will post your deep thoughts and questions on D2L discussion forum BEFORE our weekly meetings (35%).
**Discussion and Presentation:** Most of our meetings will be led by students. Each student will be expected to lead at least one class discussion during the semester (10%).

**Towards an application paper:** You will apply some of the frameworks learned in class to a topic of your choice, and develop a final application paper, which will be due soon after the class ends.

I. **Paper Topic and Bibliography:** One month before the course ends, each student will develop a paper topic addressing any of the substantive areas of interest. Students must provide a one-page description of their project, and generate a list of 12 bibliographic citations representing their topic, including a clear framework for analysis (10%).

II. **Paper:** Students have proposed a paper topic and explored some relevant literature. At this stage, students revisit and revise their topic, expanding it to something akin to a short article. This paper should be 12-15 pages in length (35%).

**Attendance:** I will view student input as vital to this course. Faithful attendance is a must, and students are expected to come to class prepared and ready to enter discussion. Attendance and participation will constitute 10% of your final grade.

**Calendar**
The following schedule is how we will, more or less, move forward.

**Week 1: September 5**
Introduction to the course

**Week 2: September 12**
*Ulrich Beck: Risk Society*
Chapter 1: On the logic of wealth distribution and risk distribution
Chapter 2: The politics of knowledge in the risk society
Chapter 7: Science beyond truth and enlightenment
Chapter 8: Opening up the political

**Week 3: September 19**
*Niklas Luhmann: Risk: A Sociological Theory*
Introduction to the Aldine Transaction
Chapter 1: A concept of risk
Chapter 2: The future as risk
Chapter 5: The special case of high technology

**Week 4: September 26**
Lin, Abney, and Jenkins. 2017. Robot Ethics 2.0
Chapter 11: What lies on silver tongues: why robots needs to deceive (and how)
Chapter 12: “Who’s Johnny?” Anthropomorphic Framing in Human-Robot Interaction
Chapter 15: The Internet of Things and dual layers of ethical concern
Chapter 18: Military robots and the likelihood of armed combat
Chapter 22: Artificial intelligence and the ethics of self-learning robots

**Week 5: October 3**
Nick Bostrom. *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies*
Chapter 1: Past developments and present capabilities
Chapter 2: Paths to superintelligence
Chapter 3: Forms of superintelligence
Chapter 11: Multipolar scenarios (wages, unemployment, capital, welfare, etc.)

Week 6: October 10
Timothy Mitchell. *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*
Introduction
Chapter 1: Machines of democracy
Chapter 5: Fuel economy
Conclusion: No more counting on oil

Week 7: October 17
De Filippi and Wright. *Blockchain and the Law: The Rule of Code*
Introduction
Chapter 1: Blockchains, bitcoin, and decentralized computing platforms
Chapter 2: Characteristics of blockchains
Chapter 3: Digital currencies and decentralized payment systems
Chapter 4: Smart contracts and derivatives
Chapter 8: The future of organizations

Week 8: October 24
O’Neil, Cathy. *Weapons of Math Destruction*
Introduction
Chapter 1: What is a model?
Chapter 4: Online advertising
Chapter 5: Justice in the age of big data
Chapter 6: Getting a job
Chapter 10: Civic life

Week 9: October 31
Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 3: The hidden logics of search
Chapter 4: Finance’s algorithms
Chapter 6: Toward an intelligible society

Week 10: November 7
Castells, Manuel. *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*
Networked social movements (pp. 200-245)
Changing the world in the network society (pp. 246-271)
Networked social movement and political change (pp. 271-313)
Week 11: November 14
Srnicek, Nick. *Platform Capitalism*
Introduction
Chapter 1: The long downturn
Chapter 2: Platform capitalism
Chapter 3: Great platform wars

Week 12: November 21
Vaidyanathan, Siva. *Antisocial Media: How Facebook Disconnects Us and Undermines Democracy*
Introduction
Chapter 1: The pleasure machine
Chapter 2: The surveillance machine
Chapter 5: The protest machine
Chapter 6: The politics machine

Week 13: November 28
Ruben Andersson. 2014. *Illegality, Inc.: Clandestine Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe*
Introduction
Chapter 2: A game of risk
Chapter 4: The Border Spectacle
Conclusion

Week 14: December 5
Eubanks, Virginia. *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor.*
Introduction
Chapter 2: Automating eligibility in heartland
Chapter 4: The Allegheny Algorithm
Angwin, Larson, Mattu and Kirchner. *Machine Bias*

Week 15: December 12
Presentations
You will present your work, and submit your papers.
UNIVERSITY AND SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Secretary of the University maintains a web page that contains university policies that affect the instructor and the students in this course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. The link to that page is: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/news_events/upload/Syllabus-Links.pdf

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.** In the pursuit of equal access and in compliance with state and federal laws, the University is required to provide accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is expected that a statement be placed on your syllabus informing students to contact you to arrange needed accommodations. A sample syllabus statement can be found here: https://uwm.edu/arc/wpcontent/uploads/sites/97/2015/08/Recommended-Syllabus-Statement.pdf.

**Religious Observances.** Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm

**Students called to active Military Duty.** Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty are found at the following: https://uwm.edu/active-duty-military/

**Incompletes.** You may be given an incomplete if you have carried a course successfully until near the end of the semester but, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond your control, have been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of course work. An incomplete is not given unless you prove to the instructor that you were prevented from completing the course for just cause as indicated above. The conditions for awarding an incomplete to graduate and undergraduate students can be found at the following: https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_31_INCOMPLETE_GRADES.pdf

**Discriminatory Conduct** (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Policies regarding discriminatory conduct can be found at: https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discriminatory_Policy.pdf

**Academic Misconduct.** Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Policies for addressing students cheating on exams or plagiarism can be found at the following: https://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/

**Complaint Procedures.** Students may direct complaints to the Sociology Department Chair or the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the Sociology Department Chair, the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences, or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. Policies may be found at: https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discriminatory_Policy.pdf

**Grade Appeal Procedures.** A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the sociology department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College of Letters & Science. Procedures for undergraduate student grade appeal can be found at: https://uwm.edu/letters-science/advising/answers-forms/policies/appeal-procedure-for-grades Procedures for graduate student grade appeal can be found at https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/appealing-academic-decisions/

**Final Examination Policy.** Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm

**Book Royalties.** In accord with Department of Sociology policy, the royalties from the sale of faculty-authored books to students in their classes are donated to a UWM Foundation/Sociology Account to support future awards and activities for UWM students in Sociology.

Update 08/2018